

**LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY**

**A CONTRIBUTION TO THE STUDY OF  
*VÖLKISCHE IDEOLOGIE AND DEUSCHTUMSARBEIT*  
AMONG THE GERMANS IN CANADA  
DURING THE INTER-WAR PERIOD**

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**BY**

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**Canada**

**To Eva**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| AA    | <i>Auswärtiges Amt</i> : Foreign Office   |
| AO    | <i>Auslands-Organisation der NSDAP</i> : Foreign Organization of the NSDAP  |
| DAGO  | <i>Deutsche Arbeitsgemeinschaft Ontario</i> : German "Co-operative Society" of Ontario  |
| DAI   | <i>Deutsche Auslands-Institut</i> : German Foreign Institute  |
| HJ    | <i>Hitler Jugend</i> : Hitler Youth   |
| NS    | <i>Nationalsozialistisch</i> or <i>Nationalsozialismus</i> : National Socialist or National Socialism (also abbreviated as "Nazi")      |
| NSDAP | <i>Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei</i> : National Socialist German Workers' Party (also abbreviated as the "Nazi Party") |
| NW    | <i>Der Nordwesten</i> : German language newspaper, published in Winnipeg, Manitoba  |
| PA AA | <i>Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes</i> : Political Archive of the [German] Foreign Office                                      |
| PROMI | <i>Propaganda Ministerium</i> : Ministry of Propaganda (a Nazi Party creation)  |
| RMI   | <i>Reichs Ministerium des Inneres</i> : the Reich's Ministry of the Interior  |
| USNA  | United States National Archives   |
| VDA   | <i>Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland</i> : Association for Ethnic Germans Abroad   |
| VOMI  | <i>Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle</i> : Ethnic German Central Office (a Nazi creation)  |

## GLOSSARY

*Auslandsdeutsche.* Initially the term used to designate all Germans, Reich citizens or not, living outside of Germany. The Nazis changed its meaning to include only those Germans living abroad who possessed Reich citizenship.

*Deutschtum.* Loosely translated as the German ethnic group.

*Deutschtum im Ausland.* All ethnic Germans who resided outside of Germany, regardless of citizenship.

*Deutschtum in Canada.* The ethnic Germans in Canada, regardless of citizenship.

*Deutschtumsarbeit.* Endeavours centred on the protection and fostering of German ethnicity and culture among Germans living beyond the borders of the Reich.

*Grenzdeutsche.* Germans who, as a result of the terms of peace following World War One, found themselves living beyond the immediate borders of the Reich.

*Volksdeutsche.* Ethnic Germans who never had been, or who, after 1919, were no longer citizens of the Reich.

*Volkstum.* Loosely translated as the national, or ethnic group. Although this term could be applied to any nationality or ethnicity, it was usually used to refer to that of the Germans.

*Volkstumsarbeit.* See *Deutschtumsarbeit*, above.



## INTRODUCTION

Between World Wars I and II, the ethnic Germans in Canada strove to retain their language and culture. The impetus came on the heels of the Great War because lingering anti-German sentiment and assimilationist policies threatened to destroy their culture and traditions. Canada's ethnic Germans were not alone in such endeavours, as German communities around the world also attempted to retain their identity. Within Germany, there flourished a movement designed to aid and foster the protection of German ethnicity around the globe. The movement encompassed private, semi-official and official agencies. The scope of their activities touched upon every aspect of ethnic retention and affected every country in which a sizable German element resided. Funding, materials, and guidance flowed from Germany to the ethnic Germans abroad, greatly influencing the direction and content of their attempts to retain their heritage, and this included the ethnic Germans in Canada. This thesis will give perspective to *Deutschtumsarbeit* in Canada by placing it within the context of the global movement orchestrated from Germany.

During the inter-war period, the ethnic Germans around the world were divided into four categories: "*Reichsdeutsche*," "*Grenzdeutsche*," "*Auslandsdeutsche*," and "*Volksdeutsche*." The suffix, "*-deutsch(e)*" (German[s]), indicates that the prefix defined

the relationship of the group or individual to the German community. Thus, *Reichsdeutsche* denoted those Germans who lived within the borders of the German Reich. *Grenzdeutsche* referred to Germans who lived outside the revised borders of the Reich. That is, they lived in territories which were severed from Germany and Austria-Hungary as a result of the peace treaties signed by these countries to conclude World War I (WWI): Versailles (28 June 1919), St. Germaine (10 September 1919) and Trianon (4 June 1920).<sup>1</sup> The term "*Auslanddeutsche*" was determined by Rudolf Hess, in 1934, to apply henceforth only to those abroad who possessed German citizenship, while "*Volksdeutsche*" was to be used to refer to ethnic Germans who no longer, or never had, possessed Reich citizenship.<sup>2</sup> Previously, the term *Auslandsdeutsche* had been used to denote any member of the German community living abroad, regardless of citizenship.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Regions in which *Grenzdeutsche* resided were: North Schleswig, Holland, Limburg, Eupen-Malmedy, Luxembourg, East Belgium, Alsace-Lorraine, Switzerland, South Tyrol, Carinthia, Styria, the Hungarian portion of Transylvania, South and North Moravia, Bohemia, Silesia, Poland and the Memel Territory (Otto Schäfer, *Sinn und Wesen des V.D.A.: Volksbundes für das Deutschtum im Auslande* [Opladen: Müller & Co., 1933], 31 [hereafter cited as V.D.A.]).

<sup>2</sup>See Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, ed., *Hans Steinacher, Bundesleiter des VDA 1933-1937: Erinnerungen und Dokumente* (Boppard on the Rhein: Harald Boldt Verlag, 1970), doc. no. 31: "Der 15. Oktober 1934 und seine Folgen," 164. [Hereafter cited as *Steinacher*.]

<sup>3</sup>See Hugo Grothe, ed. *Grothes Kleines Handwörterbuch des Grenz- und Auslandsdeutschtums* (Munich: Verlag von R. Oldenbourg, 1932), 21 and Fittbogen, "Auslandsdeutschtum," 138. According to Grothe's *Kleines Handwörterbuch* (page 20) the citizens of Switzerland, Luxembourg and Liechtenstein were not *Auslandsdeutsche*, since these countries were independent states. However, this dictionary (page 21) asserts that the Austrians are to be considered *Auslandsdeutsche* because they were forced to belong to a state against their will (i.e., the terms of the peace treaties ending WWI prevented Austria's union with Germany).

The *Deutsche Auslands-Institut* (DAI, German Foreign Institute) argued until 1938 with the government of the Third Reich for the retention of the original meaning of *Auslanddeutsche* on the grounds that it would alienate the *Volksdeutsche* abroad (Bohle to Strölin, 8 December 1937, United States National Archives [USNA], microcopy no. T81, roll 417, frame 5163419 [hereafter cited as: USNA, microcopy number/reel number/frame number(s)]). Furthermore, the Institute was concerned with the fact that such an interpretation would involve the renaming of many things, including its bi-monthly journal (unsigned DAI memorandum, 29 October 1937, USNA T81/417/5163347-48). However, the head of the *Auslands-Organisation der NSDAP* (AO, Foreign Organization of the Nazi Party), Wilhelm Bohle, was adamant, and gave a speech in Budapest on 24 January 1938 reiterating the official designations of the

The change in designation was done in the interests of the Reich and its foreign policy,<sup>4</sup> in order to give the appearance that Germany was not meddling in the internal affairs of foreign nations by treating with their citizens.<sup>5</sup> The term used to refer to all Germans abroad, regardless of citizenship, was *Deutschtum im Ausland*.<sup>6</sup>

The connected concepts of *Volkstum* and *Deutschtum* convey much more than direct translations, the national or ethnic group, and the German ethnic group, would indicate. As Hans Steinacher, head of the *Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland* (VDA, Association for Germans Abroad) from 1933-1937, explained in the rather typically

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terms (see Lammers to the leading Reich authorities, 25 January 1938, USNA T81/417/5163331). The DAI was finally forced to accede, and in that year the name of its journal was changed from *Der Auslanddeutsche* (*Der Auslandsdeutsche* for the years 1936 and 1937) to *Deutschtum im Ausland* (USNA T81/417/5163332). A controversy over spelling had also arisen; eventually it was decreed that the correct spelling of the word would be *Auslandsdeutsche* rather than *Auslanddeutsche*.

<sup>4</sup>Bohle to Strölin, 8 December 1937, USNA T81/417/5163418.

<sup>5</sup>Such considerations, and the concern for potential repercussions to which the recipient might be subjected, eventually induced the DAI to detail a policy with regard to the proper means by which to end correspondence. The *Auslandsdeutsche* were to receive correspondence signed off with "Heil Hitler!". The *Volksdeutsche*, however, were to receive correspondence which ended with the salutation, "Mit deutschem Gruss" (With German greetings) ("Hinweise für Briefstil und Schreibweise beim DAI," 26 October 1937, USNA T81/501/5262994).

<sup>6</sup>There existed three other designations for all Germans abroad. The first, and least utilized, was *Außendeutschtum* (outer Germans) see Heinz Kloss, *Brüder vor den Toren des Reiches: Vom volksdeutschen Schicksal* (Berlin: Propaganda Verlag Paul Hochmuth, 1940), 3; hereafter cited as *Brüder vor den Toren*. The second was *Gesamtdeutschtum* (all Germans). Ernst Ritter claims in his book, *Das Deutsche Ausland-Institut in Stuttgart 1917-1945: Ein Beispiel deutscher Volkstumsarbeit zwischen den Weltkriegen* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag G.M.B.H., 1976, 126 [hereafter cited as DAI]) that this was the officially designated term. But he based this upon Bohle's instruction to the DAI of 11 October 1937. A little more than two months later, however, Bohle was forced to reverse his judgement and designate the phrase *Deutschtum im Ausland* as the comprehensive appellation for the *Reichsdeutsche* and *Volksdeutsche*. The final decision in the matter had come from Adolf Hitler himself (see Lammers to the leading Reich authorities, 25 January 1938, USNA T81/417/5163331). The third term was *Volksgenosse* (peoples' comrade). Although the Nazis were very fond of employing this term during their reign in the 1930s, I was unable to find any official proclamation as to its use. Throughout this thesis the English term "ethnic Germans" will be used to convey the same meaning as "*Deutschtum im Ausland*." Similarly, "ethnic Germans abroad" and "ethnic Germans in Canada" will be used to interpret "*Deutschtum im Ausland*" and "*Deutschtum in Canada*," respectively.

romantic and somewhat mystical language associated with the movement:

*Volkstum* is a community of being and simultaneously is a community of experience: a community of being in the sense of the commonness of speech, origins, kinship,...culture, customs, history, myth, country and climate; community of experience in the sense of a continuous reformation of the *Volkstum*. Community of being is heritage and land-tenure, community of experience is task and creation anew. Precisely because of these factors our German *Volkstum* is distinguished by an extraordinary diversity. Therefore, the demand arises for us Germans to secure, from the love of the individual, from the respect of the peculiarity of the manifestation of the landscape, the vision of the unity and the entirety [of the *Volk*]. *Volkstum*, as the true community, stands [high] above the individual in worth. The individual receives his life from the whole.<sup>7</sup>

Efforts to protect and foster this world-wide community, its language and its customs, were labelled *Deutschtumsarbeit* or *Volkstumsarbeit* (ethnic German work or ethnic work, respectively). Underlying *Deutschtumsarbeit* was an ideology based on the concept of the German *Volk*. This concept of "*Volk*" denoted a people of a shared origin, language and culture, as opposed to the more political concept of nation (i.e., a people with congruent state and citizenship affiliations).<sup>8</sup> This differentiation can also be extended to the adjective "*völkisch*," literally defined as "racial" or "national," but again connoting the essence of a shared origin, language and culture. However, the term also encompassed such divergent ideas as political strength, cultural theories and literary directions.<sup>9</sup> *Völkische Ideologie* was conservatively based: it was anti-liberal and anti-

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<sup>7</sup>Jacobsen, Steinacher, doc. no. 13: "Grundlagen und Ziele der Volkstumsarbeit", 69.

<sup>8</sup>Ritter, DAI, 12.

<sup>9</sup>Martin Broszat, "Die völkische Ideologie und der Nationalsozialismus," *Deutsche Rundschau* 84 (1958): 56. [Hereafter cited as "Die völkische Ideologie."]

democratic, with strong tendencies of authoritarianism and racism.<sup>10</sup>

Had *Deutschtumsarbeit* been limited exclusively to cultural and social parameters, it could have been viewed as being within entirely legitimate rights. However, the ideology behind *Volkstumsarbeit* "made its thrust not primarily cultural and social, but rather political and potentially revolutionary."<sup>11</sup> This rested largely upon a major post-war tenet of *völkische Ideologie*, which placed one's loyalty to the *Volk* above that to the state in which one lived.<sup>12</sup> As Sander A. Diamond wrote, proponents of *völkische Ideologie* believed that "blood was stronger than citizenship or place of birth, and the magnetism of *völkisch* racial bonds transcended time and space. . . .it was the historical and biological duty of all Germans to unite around the concept of race."<sup>13</sup> Many Germans who now found themselves to be unwilling minority elements in post-WWI non-German states began to subvert the cultural and social designs of *Volkstumsarbeit* to political ends. They attempted to undermine the recently imposed political status quo and "unite the *Volk* in order to express nationalist political feelings."<sup>14</sup> Although pan-Germanism had, almost from the beginning, been part of the rationale behind *Volkstumsarbeit*, following WWI, revisionism and irredentism also became evident in this

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<sup>10</sup>Ronald M. Smelser, *The Sudeten Problem, 1933-1939: Volkstumspolitik and the Formulation of Nazi Foreign Policy* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1975), 5. [Hereafter cited as *Sudeten Problem*.]

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup>Sander A. Diamond, *The Nazi Movement in the United States, 1924-1941*, (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1974), 40.

<sup>14</sup>Smelser, *Sudeten Problem*, 6.

work; especially after the National Socialist "seizure of power" in 1933.<sup>15</sup>

For the NSDAP, *völkische Ideologie* contained virtually all of the elements of its *Weltanschauung* (world-view): anti-Semitism, the idea of the *Volksgemeinschaft* (national or ethnic community living according to Nazi principles), and the blood and soil theories of their new Germanic myth.<sup>16</sup> Central to this *Weltanschauung* was the sense of obligation which Germans everywhere owed to their race and homeland. In the words of Hans Steinacher:

Aside from state-citizenship [*staatsbürgerliche*] responsibilities, every German in the world also has ethnic-citizenship [*volksbürgerliche*] responsibilities. These responsibilities cannot simply be extinguished if the cultural community is protected; the German people, attacked as a whole in war and afterwards, must also defend itself as a whole, that is, they must arrive at a communal will beyond state borders. It must become one political nation.<sup>17</sup>

Hess, during his speech before the 1936 Nuremberg Party Rally, went beyond admonishment by declaring that failure on the part of Germans to fulfil these duties was tantamount to treason against both the *Volk* and Providence.<sup>18</sup> The changing concepts of *völkische Ideologie* were reflected in the evolution of *Deutschtumsarbeit* itself.

*Deutschtumsarbeit* began in the 1840s when private individuals identified the need

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<sup>15</sup>The terms National Socialism and National Socialist (or simply NS for either) are abbreviations for the National Socialist German Workers Party (*Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*, or NSDAP, or Nazi) and in the abstract, of its ideology.

<sup>16</sup>Broszat, "Die völkische Ideologie," 56.

<sup>17</sup>Jacobsen, *Steinacher*, doc. no. 9: "Denkschrift Steinachers vom 10.4.1933 zur Reorganisation der Volkstumspolitik," 54.

<sup>18</sup>Diamond, *The Nazi Movement*, 79.

to retain German culture among those who had emigrated from German lands.<sup>19</sup> As early as 1845 authors began publishing works on the fate of their brethren abroad and the regions into which they had ventured.<sup>20</sup> Emigration Societies were eventually formed. The service of providing potential emigrants with information concerning countries accepting immigrants, and the condition of the *Deutschtum* already resident there, was to become a major tenet of *Deutschtumsarbeit* within the Reich—a very logical step since the emigrants would thereby have formed ties with the movement before they ever set foot outside of Germany. And once abroad they might be more inclined to send reports and information back to the various organizations.

By the early 1880s, other interest groups began to appear, such as the *Schutzvereinen* (Protection Associations) and the *Schulvereinen* (School Associations) from which the VDA was born.<sup>21</sup> Eventually, there existed a plethora of private, official and semi-official clubs, organisations and protective societies, all variously active in *Deutschtumsarbeit*.<sup>22</sup> They all shared in common the desire to protect the spiritual,

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<sup>19</sup>Gottfried Fittbogen, "Die wissenschaftlichen Aufgaben der Kunde vom Auslanddeutschtum," *Mitteilungen der Akademie zur wissenschaftlichen Erforschung und zur Pflege des Deutschtums* 2 (July 1933): 166. [Hereafter cited as "Auslanddeutschtum."]

<sup>20</sup>Wilhelm Stricker wrote *Die Verbreitung des deutschen Volkes über die Erde* in this year, see Ritter, *DAI*, 6-7.

<sup>21</sup>Fittbogen, "Auslanddeutschtum," 166.

<sup>22</sup>Anthony Komjathy and Rebecca Stockwell claim in *German Minorities and the Third Reich: Ethnic Germans of East Central Europe between the Wars* (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, Inc., 1980, 1, [hereafter cited as *German Minorities*]) that by the inter-war period, there existed over 100 different organisations within the Reich, representing various social, political and religious concerns. An example of one of the oldest organisations devoted to *Deutschtumsarbeit* was the *Alldeutscher Verband* (Pan-German League). Founded in 1890, this nationalistic Organisation sought to unite all Germans, and the territories which they inhabited, into a Greater Germany (*Großdeutschland*). During the inter-war period membership declined greatly, from 40,000 in 1922 to 8,000 in 1933 (*ibid.*, 3). Nevertheless, it survived the Nazi take-over of power in 1933, and remained a bastion of conservatism until its dissolution by order of SS Obergruppenführer Reinhard

material and financial well-being of Germans abroad and to maintain the German culture and language among them. As Smelser explains, "*Volkstumsarbeit*, can be defined as an intense concern for the welfare of ethnic German groups and an attempt to foster closer ties between these groups and the Reich German population through social, economic, and cultural assistance."<sup>23</sup> Some results of this German and Austrian<sup>24</sup> labour among the Germanic communities abroad were the founding of schools, the stocking of libraries and the extension of economic assistance to business ventures.<sup>25</sup> There also arose an extensive amount of literature and journalism spouting *völkisch* concepts: from institutionally generated periodicals and dictionaries, to school textbooks, to a multitude of literary works.<sup>26</sup>

Smelser has identified several motivating factors underlying *Deutschtumsarbeit*.<sup>27</sup> The first was the relatively late date of German unification into a nation-state--the Second Reich was not founded until 1871. Even then, many Germans still found themselves to be outside the boundaries of this new state. Such Germans were to be found not only

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Heydrich on 13 March 1939 (*ibid.*, 1-2 and 8-9).

<sup>23</sup>Smelser, *Sudeten Problem*, 4-5.

<sup>24</sup>Although the emphasis of this thesis is upon the German Reich's *Deutschtumsarbeit* as it related to Canada, it must be stated that Austria led the way in the world-wide movement, both before WWI and in the first few years of the inter-war period (Felix Kraus, "Fünf Jahre Schutzbundarbeit," in *Volk unter Völkern: Bücher des Deutschtums*, vol. 1, ed. Karl Loesch and A. Hillen Ziegfeld [Breslau: Ferdinand Hirt, 1925], 31 [hereafter cited as "Schutzbundarbeit"]). Despite the fact that a good and close working relationship existed between the groups in Austria and Germany, separate identities had to be maintained due to an Austrian law which forbade the spread of the Austrian organisations to German soil (Schäfer, *V.D.A.*, 26).

<sup>25</sup>Smelser, *Sudeten Problem*, 5.

<sup>26</sup>Broszat, "Die völkische Ideologie," 60-61.

<sup>27</sup>Smelser, *Sudeten Problem*, 5.



in neighbouring European countries, but (and herein lies the second factor) they were also scattered across the globe after centuries of emigration from their various Germanic homelands. The third reason was the rise of Slavic nationalism in eastern Europe in the late nineteenth century, which resulted in the diminution of the status of the Germans resident in Slavic lands. Smelser's fourth and final reason for the profusion of *Deutschtumsarbeit* was the loss of WWI by Austria and Germany. Their defeats gave the greatest impetus to the expansion of *Deutschtumsarbeit* because of the ensuing erosion of power, prestige and economic standing of the many Germans who became minority elements in the newly constituted or enlarged nations of Europe. Furthermore, *Deutschtumsarbeit* enabled many Germans within the Reich to demonstrate their political dissatisfaction with the democratic government imposed upon them by Versailles, while simultaneously demonstrating that they were still loyal to the German *Volk*.<sup>28</sup> Another inducement to become involved in *Deutschtumsarbeit* was the disappointment felt by many *Reichsdeutsche* that the ethnic Germans abroad had lacked sufficient German nationalist feelings. Had they been sufficiently imbued with German nationalism, it was reasoned, more countries would have been convinced by their respective ethnic German elements to remain neutral in the last war.<sup>29</sup> Over the years, the above-mentioned reasons led to the founding of various private, semi-official and official organizations within the Reich which tried to maintain the "cultural integrity" and improve the

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<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>29</sup>Edgar Boedicker, "Die Auslandsdeutschen als Faktor der deutschen Außenpolitik," *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte* 2, no. 18 (September 1931): 418.

"material welfare of ethnic Germans everywhere."<sup>30</sup>

Within the private sphere of *Deutschtumsarbeit*, the largest and most influential organization in the Reich was the *Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland*. The VDA's semi-official counterpart was the *Deutsche Auslands-Institut* (DAI, German Foreign Institute). Both organizations expended large amounts of time, energy and funding in order to maintain and foster world-wide *Deutschtum*. The governments of inter-war Germany had several reasons for becoming involved in *Deutschtumsarbeit*, both in their own right and in support of the other organisations. These reasons ranged from considerations of economics to irredentism; but these considerations were always based first on the needs and interests of the Reich and only secondarily on those of the ethnic Germans entertained. This was as true for the governments in the Weimar era as it was for the National Socialists. The main official Reich organization engaged in *Deutschtumsarbeit* during the Weimar era was the *Auswärtiges Amt* (AA, Foreign Office). The AA, through its embassy and consular staffs, defended the interests of Reich citizens abroad. Officially, members of the AA were not to concern themselves with the *Volksdeutsche*, because this represented a violation of the sovereignty of foreign states, but, unofficially, liaisons and cooperation did exist. Once again, this was especially prevalent under the NS regime. When the National Socialists came to power, this governmental body continued its work among the *Deutschtum im Ausland*. But it was now faced with competition for hegemony in this field by various NSDAP organizations, both official and semi-official.

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<sup>30</sup>Smelser, *Sudeten Problem*, 5.

Already during the 1920s members of the NSDAP had recognised the potential which the Germans abroad represented for the growing movement.<sup>31</sup> However, nothing was done in this regard until the National Socialists scored their first major victory at the polls on 14 September 1930, at which time two windfalls came their way.<sup>32</sup> The first windfall was the international press coverage of the elections which brought the movement and its ideals to the attention of ethnic Germans around the world. Canada's ethnic Germans were no exception; for example, the *Nordwesten* gave Hitler and his movement much press in the months immediately following the election.<sup>33</sup> The second windfall was that with electoral success came funding for the previously financially strapped Party. The National Socialists could now afford to propagandise among the ethnic Germans abroad. Thus the *Auslands-Abteilung der Reichsleitung der NSDAP* (Foreign Department of the Reich Leadership of the NSDAP), was established in 1931 by order of Gregor Strasser.<sup>34</sup> When, in 1933, the threat arose that the Department would be dissolved under pressure from Robert Ley and Alfred Rosenberg, Rudolf Hess

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<sup>31</sup>Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, "Die Gründung der Auslandsabteilung der NSDAP (1931-1933)," in *Gedenkschrift Martin Göhring Studien zur Europäischen Geschichte*, ed. Ernst Schulin (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GMBH, 1968), 353-355.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, 355-356.

<sup>33</sup>See "Hitlers Geheimnis," and "Hitler erwartet bald Neuwahlen," in *Der Nordwesten* [Winnipeg], 15 October 1930 [hereafter cited as *NW*]; "Hitlers Idee eines Reform-Parlaments," *NW*, 22 October 1930; "Der sichere Sieg Hitlers," *NW*, 29 October 1930; and "Hitler über Deutschland und England," *NW*, 05 November 1930.

<sup>34</sup>Gregor Strasser joined the NSDAP in 1921, and participated in the Hitler *Putsch* of 1923. His activities for the Party, as a speaker, an organizer and a member of the Reichstag, from 1924 to 1933, made him one of the most influential Party functionaries with respect to its early development. Positions he held within the Party included: *Gauleiter* (District Leader) of Lower Bavaria and North Germany in 1921 and 1925 respectively, *Reichspropagandaleiter* from 1926 to 1927, and *Reichsorganisationsleiter* from 1928 to 1932. In 1932 he resigned from his Party offices over a falling out he had with Hitler. He was murdered by the SS in June 1934.

intervened to ensure its continuation.<sup>35</sup>

The man who had convinced Hess of the need for the survival of the *Auslands-Abteilung*, and who then became its new leader, was Ernst-Wilhelm Bohle. Bohle had been born in England and raised in South Africa.<sup>36</sup> He had travelled to Germany to attend university, receiving a Bachelor of Commerce degree in Berlin in 1923. He stayed on in Germany and joined the NSDAP in December 1931, the same year he joined the *Auslands-Abteilung* as the specialist on the Union of South Africa. Bohle was appointed head of the Department by Hess in May 1933, and in October of the same year was elevated to the position of *Gauleiter* (District leader). In 1934, the name of the *Auslands-Abteilung* was changed to the *Auslands-Organisation der NSDAP* (AO, Foreign

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<sup>35</sup>Born in 1890, Robert Ley joined the NSDAP in 1924 and became *Gauleiter* (district leader) of the Rheinland in 1925. He was a member of the Prussian *Landtag* from 1928, and a member of the *Reichstag* from 1930. After Gregor Strasser withdrew from his offices in 1932, Ley became exclusive head of the office of the Political Organization of the NSDAP. He carried out the coordination of the German labour unions in May 1933, and then headed the Nazis' replacement organization for all unions, the *Deutsche Arbeitsfront*. Ley hung himself in 1945 while awaiting trial by the Allies in Nuremberg.

Alfred Rosenberg was born in Reval in 1893 and joined the NSDAP in 1919. He was intimately involved with the Nazi Party paper, the "Völkischer Beobachter," from 1923. Rosenberg sat as a Nazi member of the *Reichstag* from 1930 to 1945. He was *Reichsleiter* of the Party from 1933 to 1945, and head of the *Außenpolitisches Amt der NSDAP* (APA, Foreign Political Office of the NSDAP), also from 1933. Rosenberg was sentenced to death at Nuremberg in 1946.

Rudolf Hess, born in 1894 in Alexandria, Egypt, became a member of the NSDAP in 1920. Hess took part in the Hitler Putsch in 1923, for which he was imprisoned with Hitler. While in jail, Hess helped to write Hitler's book, *Mein Kampf*. Hess became Hitler's personal secretary in 1925, Chairman of the political *Zentralkommission* in 1932, and Deputy *Führer* in 1933. From 1933 he was a *Reichsminister* without portfolio, and from 1939 he was a member of the *Ministerrat für Reichsverteidigung* (Ministerial Council for the Defence of the Reich). Hess was appointed second in line to replace Hitler on 1 September 1939. With the intention of securing a separate peace with England in order that Germany and England could then combine forces to defeat the Soviet Union, Hess parachuted into Scotland on 10 May 1941. Arrested, he spent the remainder of the war in prison. He died in 1987 while serving a life sentence handed down to him at Nuremberg in 1946.

<sup>36</sup>Biographical information for Bohle, unless otherwise specified, is from Jonathan F. Wagner, *Brothers Beyond the Sea: National Socialism in Canada*, (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1981), 55-60 [hereafter cited as *Brothers Beyond the Sea*]; and Donald M. McKale, *The Swastika Outside Germany* (Kent State: Kent State University Press, 1977), 45-49 [hereafter cited as *Swastika Outside Germany*].

Organisation of the NSDAP). The two main functions of the AO were to get Germans abroad to join the Nazi Party, and to act as an instrument of National Socialist foreign policy beyond the control of the AA.<sup>37</sup> Thus, beginning in early 1934, Bohle ordered his functionaries abroad to report on the political reliability of the AA diplomats there.<sup>38</sup> Closer to Bohle's heart, however, was his desire to have authority over all Germans abroad, regardless of citizenship.<sup>39</sup> Although Bohle, in October 1934, had been appointed by Hess to assume control of *Volksdeutsche* affairs among the staff of the Deputy Führer, this mandate apparently did not extend beyond the bounds of that office.<sup>40</sup> That is, Hess had already decided a month earlier that the AO was to confine itself to the *Reichsdeutsche*, while the VDA was to have jurisdiction over Bohle's coveted *Volksdeutsche*.<sup>41</sup> Obviously not content with this state of affairs, Bohle began to curry favour with Heinrich Himmler, who by 1935, had himself been granted increased authority over *Volksdeutsche* affairs through the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* which he effectively controlled.<sup>42</sup> Bohle was admitted to the SS in September 1936, and was

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<sup>37</sup>Bob Moore, "Nazism and German Nationals in the Netherlands, 1933-40," *Journal of Contemporary History* 22 no. 1 (Jan. 1987): 46-47. [Hereafter cited as *Nazism and German Nationals*.]

<sup>38</sup>McKale, *Swastika Outside Germany*, 60.

<sup>39</sup>Donald Hawley Norton, "Karl Haushofer and His Influence on Nazi Ideology and German Foreign Policy, 1919-1945," (Ph.D. diss., Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts, 1965), 114-115. [Hereafter cited as "Haushofer and His Influence on Nazi Ideology."]

<sup>40</sup>Jacobsen, *Steinacher*, doc. no. 31: "Der 15. Oktober 1934 und seine Folgen," 163.

<sup>41</sup>Jacobsen, *Steinacher*, doc. no. 62: "Kompetenzkonflikte mit der AO," 265.

<sup>42</sup>Heinrich Himmler, born in 1900, partook in the Hitler *Putsch* of 1923, although he did not join the Party until 1925; the same year in which he joined the newly created *Schutzstaffel* (SS, Guard Detachment). He was Deputy *Gauleiter* of Lower and Upper Bavaria from 1926 to 1930, and was also Deputy Head of Propaganda during the same period. Himmler was a Nazi member of the Reichstag from 1930. In

promoted to *SS-Gruppenführer* ("Major General") in April 1937. Two other signposts of Bohle's rising influence also came in 1937 when his AO was integrated into the AA on 30 January and he was elevated to the position of *Staatssekretär und Chef der Auslands-Organisation im Auswärtigen Amt* (State Secretary and Head of the Foreign Organization in the Foreign Office) on 21 December.<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless, neither Bohle's admission to the SS nor his entry into the AA were enough to secure for him competence over the *Volksdeutsche*: Right up to 1939 the mandate of the AO was still confined, at least officially, to fulfilling the role of the State for German citizens abroad only.<sup>44</sup>

The official status of the AO, like the AA, necessitated its limitation to work among only the *Reichsdeutsche*, but this was largely ignored. In the grab for mini-empires, which typified the governance of the Third Reich, the AO under Bohle's leadership ever attempted to expand its influence and control to the *Volksdeutsche*.<sup>45</sup> That

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1929, he was given command of the SS, with the title *Reichsführer SS*. He secured primacy of place for both himself and his SS over his nominal superior, Ernst Röhm and his army, the *Sturmabteilung* (SA, Storm Detachment; the original Nazi paramilitary organisation, created in 1921) by orchestrating the political murders of high-ranking members of the Nazi Party, and the SA, including Röhm, in the summer of 1934. During the remainder of the decade, Himmler managed to bring under his authority, all elements of the German police, melding it with the SS. He established the concentration camp system, culminating after the outbreak of the Second World War in the extermination camps in which millions perished. Also following the outbreak of the war, he created the *Waffen-SS* (Armed SS) as an army separate and distinct from the *Reichswehr*. In 1939 he became the *Reichskommissar für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums* (Reich Commissar for the Strengthening of the Volk), and under this banner implemented a harsh resettlement and Germanization policy of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. Himmler committed suicide, while in Allied custody, on 23 May 1945.

For information on the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle*, see below, chapter 2, page 131.

<sup>43</sup> Emil Ehrlich, "Die Auslands-Organisation der NSDAP," in *Das Dritte Reich im Aufbau: Übersichten und Leistungsberichte*, vol. 2, ed. Paul Meier-Benneckenstein (Berlin: Junker and Dünhaupt Verlag, 1939), 320.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 296 and 302.

<sup>45</sup> Both Bob Moore (in "Nazism and German Nationals," 48, and John Perkins (in "The Swastika Down Under: Nazi Activities in Australia, 1933-39," *Journal of Contemporary History* 26 no. 1 (Jan. 1991), 111) agree that much of Bohle's leadership and direction of the AO centred on building his own "empire" within the

such a state of affairs was tolerated, if not permitted, is evidence of the NS desire to "coordinate" into their *Weltanschauung* not only every desirable element within the Reich, but also all ethnic Germans abroad. In short, the Nazis picked up the disparate pieces of *Deutschtumsarbeit* already laid before 1933 and moulded them into a tool for their own uses.

The *Deutschtum im Ausland* themselves became involved in *Deutschtumsarbeit* through a growing sense of their ethnicity and from sheer necessity. The identification of the Germans abroad with the *Reichsdeutsche* had been intensified during WWI when soldiers of the Reich had passed through the various ethnic German settlements in the East, and in so doing rejuvenated the settlers' sense of ethnicity. This found partial expression after the war through the coalescence of ancient regional identities into *völkisch* ones which implied no allegiance to the newly formed or enlarged states but rather was an indication of a revitalised pan-Germanism.<sup>46</sup> Another index of a growing ethnic awareness among the *Volksdeutsche* was that the youth who would have formerly enrolled in universities in the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the East, were now doing so within the Reich proper.<sup>47</sup> For those Germans who suddenly found themselves to be living outside of the boundaries of Germany or Austria after WWI, there arose a real need to organize themselves into protective societies as they soon began to experience

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Nazi State. The brief biographical sketches provided above for the likes of Hess, and Himmler, demonstrate that Bohle was not alone in this pursuit.

<sup>46</sup>Broszat, "Die völkische Ideologie," 60-61, and Smelser, *Sudeten Problem*, 6. For example, the Saxons of Transylvania became the Hungarian-Germans; the Swabians of the Banat became the Rumanian-Germans, to which the ethnic Germans of Bessarabia, East Banat and Bukowina also belonged; and the Germans formerly identified separately as those from Bohemia and Moravia joined to become the Sudeten-Germans.

<sup>47</sup>Broszat, "Die völkische Ideologie," 1958, 60-61.

unabashed official assimilationist policies aimed at "de-Germanization."<sup>48</sup> As such, these Germans took an early, active role in the creation of organisations which concerned themselves with laying the foundations for their eventual cultural autonomy within the new states.

For the ethnic Germans in Canada, who also created numerous organisations, especially after WWI, the rationale did not lie in the pursuit of cultural autonomy. In countries such as Canada, where there had been intense anti-German sentiment during WWI, the residual effects of which lasted well beyond the war-years, *Deutschtumsarbeit* was a means by which they could reassert their ethnic identity and reclaim a more equal position with respect to the majority ethnic group of the land. Paramount in these efforts was the retention of the German language, especially in the schools. By the end of the 1920s, however, a politicization of *Deutschtumsarbeit* became noticeable. When the National Socialists secured power within Germany, *Deutschtumsarbeit* in Canada assumed a decidedly political and pro-Nazi bent which lasted until the outbreak of the Second World War. What began in Canada in the 1920s as an innocuous attempt to re-assert German ethnic identity following the First World War was manipulated and transformed during the 1930s into little more than a National Socialist platform from which the ethnic German element in Canada was to be moulded into the *Weltanschauung* of the Third Reich.

Today, attempts to maintain and preserve one's ethnic heritage are not only

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<sup>48</sup>Kraus, "Schutzbundarbeit," 32-33.



common-place but officially encouraged through the concept of multiculturalism. However, this was not always so. As will be shown, the extreme Anglo-Canadian nationalism born of the First World War spurred an intensification of efforts to assimilate the non-Anglophone immigrants. The various ethnic groups were left to defend their languages and cultures as best they could. But they were not entirely bereft of outside aid. Italy, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Yugoslavia, Hungary, the Netherlands, France, Denmark, Sweden and Norway all attempted to help their ethnic kin beyond their borders,<sup>49</sup> as did Germany. The ethnic Germans in Canada were nurtured, funded, and provisioned, both materially and spiritually, by their ethnic brethren in the Reich. Without such assistance, it is probable that the ethnic Germans in Canada would have, nevertheless, continued to fight for the preservation of their ethnicity, particularly among those religious groups, such as the Mennonites, for whom language and culture were indivisibly linked to religion. But the reality was that they were not left to their own devices. In the pursuit of ethnic retention, the *Deutschtum* in Canada accepted and even sought aid available from institutions and governments within Germany, and this left them open to being influenced and directed by these agencies. This very situation, so crucial to a true understanding of German-Canadian attempts at

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<sup>49</sup>See Karl Viererbl, "Auslandsdeutsche Rundschau," *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte* 7, no. 74: 463, and Jacobsen, *Steinacher*, 1970, xxxv, footnote 2. The longstanding existence of concern over ethnic brotherhood raises some interesting questions with respect to conditions in Canada today. For example, do the French continue to interest themselves in the fate of fellow Francophones around the world? If so, how, to what extent, and to what ends are the Québécois separatists affected? That Jacques Parizeau had desired France to be the first country to recognize an independent Québec is not surprising, since at one stroke a reaffirmation of the bonds between these ethnically related peoples would be made and the ignominy of 1763 avenged, albeit belatedly. It is hardly conceivable that France would not concede this "favour," since close cultural and more importantly, economic ties to an independent Québec involved in the North American Free Trade Agreement would give to the "mother country" a *point d'appuie* into this market. Obviously, however, these and similar questions are beyond the scope of this study.

ethnic retention, requires that the history of the inter-war *Deutschtumsarbeit* in Canada be placed into the context of the movement within Germany. To omit doing so would be to paint an incomplete and misleading picture of the situation. Although others, especially Jonathan Wagner in *Brothers Beyond the Sea: National Socialism in Canada*, have investigated the connections between the Reich and the work done in Canada, they have done so primarily with regard to the movement during the 1930s.<sup>50</sup> Providing more information on the major Reich players in *Deutschtumsarbeit* reveals the startling magnitude and scope of the world-wide movement. But this in itself raises a number of problems. The sheer number of organizations involved in *Deutschtumsarbeit* during the inter-war period militates against the undertaking of an exhaustive study within the parameters of a Master of Arts study. Moreover, many records were lost during the Second World War (e.g. those of the Propaganda Ministry). Those extant today are scattered across Germany and the United States in various holdings. Thus, due to considerations of scope and records studied, this thesis will, for the most part, limit itself to an examination of one private, one semi-official and one official Reich organization or agency in an attempt to exemplify the efforts of the entire movement. These are: the *Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland*, the *Deutsche Auslands-Institut* and the *Auswärtiges Amt*. An examination of the *Deutschtumsarbeit* undertaken by these Reich bodies will reveal much direct and indirect evidence of their activities and influence among Canada's *Deutschtum*.

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<sup>50</sup>Jonathan Wagner, *Brothers Beyond the Sea: National Socialism in Canada* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Univ. Press, 1981). For more on this work, see below, chapter 1, pages 69-73.

## CHAPTER 1

### CANADA'S ETHNIC GERMANS

The ethnic Germans in Canada have a long and distinguished history. Unfortunately, it has also been obscured and trivialized. The contribution made by Germans to the settling and development of this country has been great. Prior to 1914 immigrants from the German speaking regions of the world were among the most prized in the eyes of the Canadian immigration authorities. However, the First World War, through rabid propaganda, brought about a loathing not only for Germany but also for all things German--and this included the people who spoke the language, regardless of how long they might have been in the country. Bowing to such racism, many Germans themselves contributed to an obfuscation of the true nature of Canada's cultural composition by abandoning the German language and blurring their racial origin on the census reports. Others, however, were very keen on refurbishing the German image in Canada and also on strengthening the bonds between themselves, their fellow German speakers, and Germany. In short, they were active in *Deutschtumsarbeit*. Although Canadian reactions to the German element during the Second World War were less severe than during the First, much of the progress made in reasserting their ethnicity during the intervening years was undone. This chapter is intended to fill two functions. First, it is a select historiography of monographs published on the German element in

Canada.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, it will present a history of the German element in Canada, up to the inter-war period, in an effort to demonstrate their diversity and highlight a marked trend toward their rapid assimilation. Thus, the difficulties inherent in, and the limited responses aroused by, *Deutschtumsarbeit* in Canada during the inter-war period will be made appreciable.

### Numbers and Settlement Patterns

The definitive work on the history of the Germans in Canada is Gerhard Bassler's translation and editing of Heinz Lehmann's publications of the 1930s. Through *The German Canadians, 1750-1937: Immigration, Settlement and Culture*,<sup>2</sup> the English reader is able for the first time to benefit from Lehmann's German language writings on the German element in Canada. Extensive use of the available German, English, and even French literature enabled Lehmann to produce "the most comprehensive and scholarly account of the immigration and settlement of the entire ethnic German element in

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<sup>1</sup>The extent of historical literature on the Germans in Canada is truly impressive, especially when one includes works written in German. For less focussed but more comprehensive historiographies of German immigration to Canada, see Hartmut Froeschle, "German Immigration into Canada. A Survey," translated by Werner Bausenhardt, *German-Canadian Yearbook VI* (1981): 16-27, [hereafter cited as "German Immigration to Canada"] and K.M. McLaughlin, *The Germans in Canada*, Publication of the Canadian Historical Association with the support of the Multiculturalism Program, Government of Canada, no. 11 (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1985).

<sup>2</sup>Heinz Lehmann, *The German Canadians 1750-1937: Immigration, Settlement and Culture*, trans., ed. and introduced by Gerhard P. Bassler (St. John's Nfld.: Jespersen Press, 1986). [Hereafter cited as *German Canadians*.] The works included, in full or in part, in *German Canadians* are: the books *Zur Geschichte des Deutschtums in Kanada* (published in 1931) and *Das Deutschtum in Westkanada* (published in 1939), his two articles on the post World War I immigration of Germans to eastern Canada, "Das Deutschtum in Ostkanada," *Deutsche Arbeit* 34, 12 (1934): 610-613, and 35, 1 (1935): 12-17, and the analysis of his map of German settlement in western Canada, entitled "Zur Karte des Deutschtums in den kanadischen Prärieprovinzen," *Deutsches Archiv für Landes- und Volksforschung* II, 4 (1938): 859-866.

Canada."<sup>3</sup> Among the primary sources used were questionnaires, German language newspapers, journals published in Germany, British and Canadian official reports on immigration, the *Census of Canada* between 1871 and 1931, as well as the *Census of Prairie Provinces* between 1906 to 1936, and the *Canada Year Book* (under various titles) from 1867 onwards. These were augmented by a truly impressive list of secondary sources.

Lehmann's writings were definitely influenced by the age in which he wrote. That is, he was active in *Deutschtumsarbeit*. In fact, the two largest organizations in Germany devoted to *Deutschtumsarbeit*, the *Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland* (VDA), and the *Deutsche Auslands-Institut* (DAI), provided support for his work during the 1930s.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, he was very much concerned with the rise of German ethnic group consciousness. For example, he bemoaned the total assimilation already suffered by the earliest German settlers in the Maritime Provinces, warned against the impending assimilation of the Germans in central Ontario, and advised how best to maintain and foster the German ethnic identity among those on the Prairies who were least assimilated. As he wrote in the original preface to *Das Deutschtum in Westkanada*, he hoped that his efforts would,

...close [the gap in historical writings about the German-Canadians], and provide an overdue account of the significant contributions of ethnic Germans to the development of western Canada....This book should, above all...familiarize the descendants of our people [in Canada] with their own historical accomplishments, reinforce their ethnic consciousness and give them new strength in their efforts

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<sup>3</sup>Quoted from Bassler's introduction to Lehmann, *German Canadians*, xxv.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, 2 and 5.

for the preservation of their ethnic identity.<sup>5</sup>

One of the more significant aspects of Lehmann's work was his interpretation of the various census materials in arriving at an accurate figure for the number of ethnic Germans in all of Canada, which he estimated to be approximately 450,000 by the end of the 1930s.<sup>6</sup> The German element at that time was concentrated in western Canada, where 71.2 per cent of all German-speakers resided (this represented 11.2 per cent of the entire Prairie population).<sup>7</sup> Since 1871 the census had been taken every decade and requested information on "racial origin." But starting in 1921, a more useful and accurate measure of ethnic retention was inaugurated via the implementation of the category of "mother tongue." According to the 1931 census, 275,660 people were listed as having German as their "mother tongue," as opposed to 258,883 who were listed as German according to "racial origin." Lehmann refuted as too low these official counts of Germans in western Canada. He claimed that 275,000 was the minimum number of German speakers in the West; a more accurate figure would be between 275,000 and

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<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>6</sup>Lehmann's figure of 450,000 ethnic Germans in Canada, accords well with the estimate made by the German Consul General to Canada, Ludwig Kempff (Kempff to Auswärtiges Amt [AA, Foreign Office], journal no. 387, 22 April 1927, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, Bonn, R77347 [hereafter cited as PA AA, followed by the volume number]). Kempff rejected the 1921 Canadian census figure of 294,636 as too low, while he felt that the figure of 1.3 million ethnic Germans given by a Pastor Schmook was very exaggerated. Instead, after adjusting the 1921 census figures (for exactly the same reasons as would Lehmann), and adding some 21,000 post-war immigrants (as of 1926), he felt that the total number of ethnic Germans in Canada could be no higher than 500,000.

Bassler himself contributed to the accuracy of Lehmann's work by verifying his English-language sources and footnotes (Lehmann, *German Canadians*, xxii). From this one can extrapolate that Lehmann's extensive use and collation of the various Canadian census data was accurate and reliable. This greatly facilitates further studies on the German element in Canada since the need to re-invent the wheel, as it were, is reduced if not obviated.

<sup>7</sup>Information and figures for this section on the number of ethnic Germans in western Canada are from *ibid.*, 296-304, unless otherwise stated.

300,000 persons. This discrepancy was due to the effects of assimilation and inaccuracies in reporting the true language spoken at home. A more glaring error in the official figures lay in the reporting of racial origin. Lehmann claimed that former citizenship and ethnic identity were often confused; this assertion was made all the more plausible by the fact that ninety per cent of the German element stemmed not from Germany but rather from eastern or southeastern Europe. Another factor contributing to inaccuracies was that, although eighty per cent of German males in the Prairie provinces married German females, the remainder entered into mixed marriages. The result was a loss of German identity among their offspring. Consequently, Lehmann arrived at the verdict: "Without thorough corrections these statistics [i.e. those based upon "origin" in the various census] should not be used to determine numerical strength."<sup>8</sup>

His reasoning was made clear by a glimpse at the figures for the Mennonites: "among the total of 72,064 unquestionably German-speaking Mennonites of western Canada, only one-third actually acknowledged their German ethnic identity, while 47,282 reported their racial origin to be 'Dutch' or 'Russian.'"<sup>9</sup> The inaccuracies hold equally

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<sup>8</sup>Lehmann, *German Canadians*, 298. Interestingly, just as Lehmann so diligently attempted to determine a more exact figure of ethnic Germans in Canada, so too was he equally diligent in excluding from this figure those he did not consider to be German, that is, the Jews. As he remarked, since Jews for the most part listed Yiddish as their linguistic community, "only a minimal number of Jews may be assumed among the German-speaking category" (*Ibid.*, 297). An excellent history of Jewish German attempts to flee the persecution of the National Socialist regime through immigration into Canada is found in Irving Abella and Harold Troper, *None is too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe, 1933-1948*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: Lester Publishing Ltd., 1983; 1991). The authors clearly demonstrate the appalling apathy and inaction with which these efforts were met by Canadian citizens and their governments.

<sup>9</sup>Lehmann, *German Canadians*, 298-299. Despite the admitted Dutch ancestry of Menno Simons, Lehmann argued that his followers, by the time of their migration from Prussia to Russia, had been thoroughly Germanized. Since then they had stubbornly retained the German language and customs and hence should be considered German.

true for many who reported themselves as: "Austrians," "Russian" Lutherans and Catholics, "Hungarians," "Romanians," "Polish," and "Yugoslavians." Lehmann's deductive revisions of the number of ethnic Germans on the Prairies are presented here in Table 1 (see below, page 25). The distribution of these 360,000 ethnic Germans among the provinces and territories of western Canada is shown in Table 2 (see below, page 25). These figures, which list about 100,000 more ethnic Germans on the Prairies than did the 1931 census were, according to Lehmann, confirmed by the 1936 quinquennial census of the three Prairie provinces. The latter census recorded a rise in the number of those identifying themselves as German which coincided with a decrease in the numbers of those listing themselves as Austrians, Russians, and Poles.<sup>10</sup> Lehmann opined that this greater accuracy in reporting ethnic descent in the 1936 census was a result of the educational effort (*Deutschtumsarbeit*) between 1931 and 1936 among the Germans, as well as of greater clarity in the questions posed by the enumerators. As further proof of the correctness of his figures, Lehmann stated that during this period no Germans immigrated to the Prairies; rather, there was an out-migration to British Columbia, eastern Canada, and even Germany.

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Further confusion as to the heritage of the Mennonites was intentionally propagated by themselves as a result of Great War experiences. The similarities between the word *Deutsch* and the English word Dutch enabled them to escape the persecution resulting from the rampant anti-German racism of the time. Lehmann's analysis of the "Dutch"-*Deutsch* connection was, in fact, an echo of what the German Consul to Winnipeg, Lorenz, reported to the Foreign Office on 20 April 1927 (see the appendix to a letter from Kempff to AA, [Montreal] journal no. 419, 27 April 1927, PA AA, R77347: Lorenz to AA, [Winnipeg] journal no. 177, 20 April 1927).

<sup>10</sup>For a comparison of the difference in reporting German or Austrian origin between the 1931 and 1936 census, see Lehmann's "Appendix Table 5: Comparison of 1931 German Mother Tongue Data With 1931 and 1936 German and Austrian Origin Data," in *German Canadians*, 352.



Table 1.--Ethnic Germans by Origin  
on the Prairies in 1931

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| 258,000   | Germans by origin according to the [1931] census   |
| 47,282    | German Mennonites classified as Dutch or Russian by origin   |
| 30,000    | Austrians by origin  |
| 12,000    | Catholic and Lutheran Germans from Russia who reported themselves as Russian by origin                         |
| 12,000    | persons of German origin erroneously reporting a British, Hungarian, Romanian, Yugoslavian, Polish origin etc. |
| c.360,000 | persons altogether of German origin in western Canada  |

Source: Lehmann, *German Canadians*, Table VIII.4, 301.Table 2.--Ethnic German Distribution  
in Western Canada in 1931

| In                              | persons of German origin |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Manitoba                        | 70,000                   |
| Saskatchewan                    | 173,000                  |
| Alberta                         | 95,000                   |
| British Columbia                | 21,800                   |
| Yukon and Northwest Territories | 200                      |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>360,000</b>           |

Source: Lehmann, *German Canadians*, Table VIII.5, 302.

If Lehmann could rejoice at an apparent rejuvenation of ethnic awareness through *Deutschtumsarbeit* in western Canada, the same could hardly be said of those of German origin in the east.<sup>11</sup> In fact, his assessment of the situation was bleak: he postulated that the German element there was virtually a thing of the past due to an advanced state of

<sup>11</sup>Information and figures on the strength of the ethnic Germans in eastern Canada are from *ibid.*, 304-311, unless otherwise stated.

assimilation.<sup>12</sup> Much of the problem here he identified as resulting from a clear lack of leadership among the German immigrants. Lehmann isolated three important reasons for this. First, most of the *Reichsdeutsche* with leadership potential who had emigrated in the second half of the last century opted for the United States rather than Canada. Secondly, when nationalist ideas were sweeping the world in the 1890s, the concepts of German nationalism were not embraced by the eastern Canadian German element. Finally, the Great War ended any and all pretence of German ethnic separateness in eastern Canada with the destruction of the German language press and the closure of German private schools. In fact, Lehmann believed that, had not some 20,000 of the more than 70,000 German speaking immigrants to Canada between 1923 and 1930 settled in eastern Canada, the remaining 60,000 to 70,000 descendants of those who had come to Canada during the nineteenth century would also have been assimilated. In this regard, Lehmann actually deflated the number of ethnic Germans found in eastern Canada, for he deemed only those who retained the German language as their mother tongue and who held onto German cultural aspirations to be "ethnic Germans." Thus, "ethnic Germans" were to be found primarily among the Mennonites and Lutherans, demonstrating the close relationship between faith and ethnic retention. This was true also of some immigrants who had originally settled in exclusively German Catholic blocs or "closed" colonies. Table 3 (see below, page 27) shows where those who reported German as their mother tongue in 1931 were to be found in eastern Canada.

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<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 304.

Table 3.--Persons in Eastern Canada  
Whose Mother Tongue Was German in 1931

|                                    |               |
|------------------------------------|---------------|
| Ontario                            | 82,089        |
| Greater Montreal                   | 6,068         |
| the rest of the province of Quebec | 1,227         |
| the three Maritime Provinces       | 1,255         |
| <b>Total</b>                       | <b>90,639</b> |

Source: Lehmann, *German Canadians*, Table VIII.8, 307.

This figure of some 90,000 persons in eastern Canada whose "mother tongue" was German fell far short of the official census figures for those who claimed their "origin" as German. In 1921, 164,217 persons living in eastern Canada reported themselves as German by origin; in 1931 this figure was 214,661, an increase of about 30,000 (excluding the 20,000 immigrants who came during that decade). This increase Lehmann attributed to a recovery of "a certain pride in their German descent."<sup>13</sup> However uplifting this sentiment may have been to Lehmann, the inability of approximately 100,000 Anglicized persons to communicate in the German language meant that they were useless to the aims and aspirations of *Deutschtumsarbeit* in the short run. Only if they returned to the Germanic fold through language instruction, for example, would they ever be of any value to the nationalistically minded.

Far more valuable in this regard were those immigrants who had been born in Germany itself. Table 4 (see below, page 28) shows the number of ethnic Germans who

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<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, 307. This analysis echoes that of C.R. Hennings, who in December 1933 wrote that by 1931 many Germans had sufficiently recovered their courage as to re-identify themselves with the *Deutschtum*. This was especially evident among the ethnic Germans in the larger cities of eastern Canada. See C.R. Hennings, "Vom Deutschtum in Kanada: 1. Gesamtübersicht," *Der Auslanddeutsche* 17 (1934): 142. This article provides a very good, succinct overview of the ethnic German element in Canada.

had been born in Germany and were residing in eastern Canada, according to the 1931 census. This census further indicates that 53 per cent of the immigrants born in Germany had not yet been naturalized. Lehmann, writing in 1939, was of the opinion that there still remained about 5,000 of these 13,000 immigrants in eastern Canada who had not become Canadian citizens, since the five year waiting period for naturalization had long since expired for those who had immigrated between 1926-29. This, in his opinion, was attributable to the economic hard times Canada experienced during the early 1930s and to a favourable response among these persons to the rise of National Socialism in Germany thereafter.

Table 4.—Persons Born in Germany  
Residing in Eastern Canada in 1931

|                                    |               |
|------------------------------------|---------------|
| Ontario                            | 10,662        |
| Greater Montreal                   | 2,254         |
| the rest of the province of Quebec | 535           |
| the three Maritime Provinces       | 531           |
| <b>Total</b>                       | <b>13,982</b> |

Source: Lehmann, *German Canadians*, Table VIII.9, 307.

More than 70,000 German speaking immigrants came to Canada between 1923 and 1930.<sup>14</sup> Aside from the 20,000 Mennonites (2,000-2,300 of whom settled in Ontario), these immigrants came not in groups but individually. Integration of these newcomers into the German-Canadian community was somewhat retarded, despite the fact that steps were taken to see them settled among the Germans already established in

<sup>14</sup>Lehmann, *German Canadians*, 306.

Canada. Lehmann lamented that integration did not progress more smoothly, since these latest arrivals were the ones most imbued with the concepts of *völkische Ideologie*; many were neo-nationalists who tended to sympathize with National Socialism. As Lehmann explained:

The new arrivals, due to their experience at the front, did indeed have a better understanding of the commonality of fate among all the many German ethnic groups in the world. Yet they had no influence with the old-established Germans [in eastern Canada], due to their sheer inability to build for themselves a free and secure existence in the country during the years of severe economic crisis. The two groups have come closer together only in the most recent past.<sup>15</sup>

From the perspective of *Deutschtumsarbeit*, the belated formation of ties between old and new immigrants was a most regrettable occurrence, since it was precisely these post-war immigrants who were most concerned about the loss of ethnic identity.

Intimately linked to Lehmann's statistical work on the number of ethnic Germans in Canada was his thorough chronicling of the settlement patterns of the Germans in Canada, from the early eighteenth century to the 1930s. In providing this information, he clearly demonstrated that religious affiliation, not country of origin, was the predominant determinant of where they would settle. Although Germans of many different denominations were to be found in every Prairie province, it would not be inaccurate to state that the majority of Mennonites settled in Manitoba, the Catholics in Saskatchewan, and the Lutherans in Alberta.<sup>16</sup>

Within most areas of ethnic German settlement were to be found representatives of virtually every ethnic German enclave of Europe and elsewhere. German-Canadians

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<sup>15</sup>Lehmann, *German Canadians*, 309.

<sup>16</sup>See Froeschle, "German Immigration into Canada," 24.

hailed from regions such as Transylvania and Dobrudja in pre-war Rumania; the Banat, Galicia, Bohemia and Moravia (Czechoslovakia), and Bukovina in the former Austro-Hungarian Empire; from areas such as Volhynia, the Volga River Valley and the Black Sea area of the Soviet Union; from the former *Wilhelmine Reich*, including areas lost to Poland; from Switzerland; from the United States; and from South America. This multiplicity of origins, itself an obstacle to unifying the entire German element, was compounded by the many denominations to which these ethnic Germans belonged. The most widely adhered-to religions, listed here in order of strength of numbers, were the various Anabaptist congregations as a group (including the Mennonites, Amish, and Hutterites), Catholics, Lutherans, and Baptists.

Many of the German Churches, especially the Anabaptist, were strong proponents of German ethnic heritage retention due to a fear that loss of that heritage would also entail the loss of allegiance to their ancestral faith. That the churches had not been entirely effective in these efforts was attributed by Lehmann to the paucity of clergy who had been trained in Germany proper. The flocks were left in the hands of many who had been born and raised in the United States and who were more amenable to the substitution of English in their services in order to attract more followers. This was especially so with regard to the Catholics and Lutherans, whose congregations Lehmann identified as the most rapidly assimilable.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Lehmann, *German Canadians*, 285-287. See also W.A. Mackintosh and W.L.G. Joerg, eds. *Canadian Frontiers of Settlement* (Toronto: The Macmillan Co. of Canada, 1936), vol. 7, *Group Settlement: Ethnic Communities in Western Canada*, by C.A. Dawson. Dawson attributed the ease of assimilation of the German Catholics to the very universality of their church (*ibid.*, 318-321). The Catholic church was the centre of German social life and the leading proponent of the need to retain the German language, at least in Saskatchewan's closed Catholic settlement of St. Peter's. The inter-racial church could not support such considerations in

The inability or lack of desire on the part of these denominations to work cooperatively with one another for the retention of the German heritage was clearly evident; this was especially so with the Anabaptists, who desired to maintain a separateness from the outside world. Thus, despite the great potential which the concentration of the most recent ethnic German immigrants to the Prairies held for *Deutschtumsarbeit*, denominational concerns tended to diminish, if not negate this potential. As such, the adherence of these groups to an increasingly radical *völkische Ideologie*, after the Nazis came to power in Germany, could hardly be expected. Nevertheless, Lehmann granted to the various denominations much praise for whatever ethnic allegiance still remained in the 1930s.

If the denominations hindered a complete coalescence of all ethnic Germans in Canada, they also provided the basis of a larger ethnic community than would have been possible had the immigrants merely followed settlement patterns based upon place of origin. Furthermore, these closed settlements provided the isolation needed for the preservation and maintenance of the German language and customs. In this regard, Lehmann singled out the Mennonites as the greatest defenders of all things German, asserting that they were the driving force behind the resurgence of a German ethnic identity after World War I (WWI).

Efforts to achieve a greater retention of German ethnicity and cohesion among the German element in Canada were not limited to the ecclesiastic field. By the 1930s,

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congregations where French or English Catholics, for example, were also present. Thus, outside of Quebec, the best medium to communicate the message of the church to all congregationalists was the language of the Anglo-Celtic majority--English.

many German clubs and organizations had been re-established or newly formed across Canada. The repercussions of WWI anti-German sentiment had devastated the pre-war associations which included insurance associations, sports clubs, social groups, and riflemen's clubs. Although some Germans formed these associations along the lines of their places of origin, such as the *Siebenbürger Sachsen-Verein* (Transylvania Saxons' Club) in Manitoba, many were organised according to denominational affiliation. Umbrella organizations were created to coordinate efforts and eliminate duplication of work in the fostering of the German language and culture. But it was not until the 1930s that such organizations achieved any degree of success. National Socialist activists in Canada, such as Bernhard Bott and Franz Straubinger, led the way in overcoming obstacles to organizing the German-Canadian element into central coordinating agencies, especially the *Deutsche Arbeitsgemeinschaften* (German "Co-operative Societies") of Saskatchewan (founded 1934), Ontario (1934), and Québec (1936).

Bernhard Bott was born in Bavaria in 1892, and came to Regina in 1923 in order to become the editor of the German-language weekly, *Der Courier*.<sup>18</sup> His involvement with *Deutschtumsarbeit* in Canada began in the 1920s with his work among Catholic organizations on the Prairies; his commitment to *völkische Ideologie* apparently intensified after the Nazi seizure of power in 1933.<sup>19</sup> Bott became the *Deutscher Bund Canada* western district's publicity and press agent in February 1935.<sup>20</sup> Shortly thereafter, he moved his place of residence from Regina to Winnipeg, the seat of the

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<sup>18</sup>Wagner, *Brothers beyond the Sea*, 82.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup>Wagner, *Brothers Beyond the Sea*, 40.



German Government's diplomatic representation for Western Canada. Bernhard Bott became a member of the Nazi Party on 1 May 1936.<sup>21</sup> Between 1936 and 1939, Bott became the real driving force behind the *Bund*, as its basis of support shifted from Eastern to Western Canada; in fact he eclipsed its leadership which had hitherto been based in the east.<sup>22</sup>

Bernhard Bott began the process which would culminate in the founding of the Saskatchewan *Arbeitsgemeinschaft* in 1929. In this year he formed the *Deutsch-kanadisches Zentralkomitee* (German-Canadian Central Committee) in Regina. Although it was limited to just this one city, its member organizations presaged the creation of an umbrella organization which might represent the common interests of a diverse cross-section of Saskatchewan's *Deutschtum*. By 1934 the *Zentralkomitee* included the following member groups: five German denominational groups (two Catholic, two Lutheran, and one Baptist), three cells of the *Deutsch-canadischer Verband von Saskatchewan* (German-Canadian Society of Saskatchewan), one *Ortsgruppe* of the *Deutscher Bund Canada*, the *Deutsch-Canadischer Club* (German-Canadian Club), the *Deutsch-Canadischer Unterstützungsverein* (German-Canadian Support Association), the *Deutsches Haus* (German House), *Deutscher Verein Germania* (German Association Germania), and the *Deutscher Club Teutonia* (German Club Teutonia).<sup>23</sup> This first step in unifying Saskatchewan's ethnic Germans, regardless of origin or denomination was

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<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>23</sup>Lehmann, *German Canadians*, 277.

followed with Bott's successful creation of the *Deutsche Arbeitsgemeinschaft Saskatchewan*, on 30 June 1934, during the German Day celebrations. The *Arbeitsgemeinschaft's* constituent members included: all thirty-six local groups of the *Volkverein deutsch-canadischer Katholiken* (Peoples' Association of German-Canadian Catholics), all twenty-eight local groups of the *Deutsch-canadischer Verband von Saskatchewan* (German-Canadian Society of Saskatchewan), province-wide representatives of the *Mennonitisches Provinzialkomitee* (Mennonite Provincial Committee), the *Deutsch-kanadisches Zentralkomitee* (German-Canadian Central Committee, based in Regina), and the Saskatchewan *Kreis* of the *Deutscher Bund*.<sup>24</sup> The *Arbeitsgemeinschaft* was intended to act as an umbrella organization which would represent the common interests of all ethnic Germans in Saskatchewan. In Ontario, a similar effort was undertaken by Bott's protege Franz Straubinger.<sup>25</sup>

Franz Straubinger was born in 1905 in Straubing, Bavaria and emigrated to Canada in the 1920s.<sup>26</sup> Shortly after arriving in Regina in 1929, he began working in *Deutschtumsarbeit* under Bott. Straubinger gained experience in organizing and administration while secretary for the *Deutsch-kanadischer Verband von Saskatchewan*, and while organizing the first four German Days in Saskatchewan as a member of the *Deutsch-kanadisches Zentralkomitee*.<sup>27</sup> In late 1933, Straubinger moved to Ontario with

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<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, 277-278.

<sup>25</sup>For more on Bott, see below, chapter 2, pages 126-128.

<sup>26</sup>Unless otherwise stated, biographical information on Straubinger is from Wagner, *Brothers Beyond the Sea*, 85-88.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, 86.

the expressed intention to unify that province's ethnic Germans. And because Straubinger had been a quick convert to the ideals of the New Germany, eventually joining the Party in 1936, this ultimately meant their unification under the banner of National Socialism. Following Bott's example in Saskatchewan, Straubinger, began his work in Ontario by creating in March 1934, the umbrella organisation for clubs in one city, in this case the *Deutsch-kanadisches Zentralkomitee Toronto* (German-Canadian Central Committee of Toronto). It was made up of representatives from the *Deutscher Kulturverband* (German Cultural Society), the *Katholische Gemeinde* (Catholic Community), the *Verein Harmonie* (Harmony Club), and the Toronto *Ortsgruppe* of the *Deutscher Bund Kanada*.<sup>28</sup> Next, Straubinger used this body as the nucleus, in conjunction with other Ontario clubs, to organize Ontario's first German Day. And during this event in late summer 1934, the *Deutsche Arbeitsgemeinschaft Ontario* (DAGO) was called into being. Eventually, as more clubs joined DAGO, it came to represent well the diverse nature of Ontario's *Deutschtum*. Lehmann reported that by the mid-1930s, DAGO included the following groups: *Verein Harmonie* (Toronto), *Deutsche Kulturverband* (Toronto), *Deutsche Gesellschaft* (German Society, Toronto), *Deutsch-Katholischer Verein* (German Catholic Association, Toronto), *Deutsch-Lutherische Gemeinde* (German-Lutheran Community, Toronto), *Stahlhelm* (Steel Helmet, [a Reich-based organization for German veterans of WWI] Toronto local), *Siebenbürger Sachsen und Schwaben Krankenunterstützungsverein* (Transylvanian Saxon and Swabian Health Insurance Association, Kitchener-Waterloo), *Deutsch-Schwäbischer*

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

*Krankenunterstützungsverein* (German-Swabian Health Insurance Association, Kitchener-Waterloo), *Concordia Club* (Kitchener-Waterloo), *Liederkrantz* (Choral Society, Ottawa), *Deutscher Club* (German Club, from both Ottawa and Woodstock), *Verein Deutsches Heim* (Association of the German Home, Hamilton), *Deutsch-kanadischer Verein* (German-Canadian Association, London), *Deutscher Verein Teutonia* (German Association Teutonia, Windsor), *Erster Siebenbürger Sachsen Krankenunterstützungsverein* (First Transylvanian Saxon Health Insurance Association, Windsor), *Deutscher Verein Frohsinn* (German Association Cheerfulness, Kingsville) and three *Ortsgruppe* of the *Deutscher Bund* (Toronto, Kitchener-Waterloo and Ottawa).<sup>29</sup> Despite the obvious diversity of its composite membership, DAGO was, for all intents and purposes a Nazi organization, due to the political leanings of its chairman, Straubinger. This was also the case for Québec's *Arbeitsgemeinschaft*, the head of which was Party member Lothar Pfau. In fact, in a report submitted by Kempff to the AA in 1935, he listed these two groups under the heading of NSDAP organizations.<sup>30</sup>

According to a DAGO report of 1935, the goals of the organization were "to support German schools, to provide travelling libraries, to make available German cultural films, and to organize and stage the *Deutsche Tage* in Ontario."<sup>31</sup> Highest on this list of priorities for the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft* was the education of Ontario's ethnic

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<sup>29</sup>Lehmann, *German Canadians*, 311-312.

<sup>30</sup>"Ergänzungsbericht zu Runderlass vom 11.11.33 Geschäftszeichen 113-00 10/5," [Montreal] journal no. 1432, 20 December 1935, PA AA R77333.

<sup>31</sup>Cited in Wagner, *Brothers Beyond the Sea*, 89. Most likely working towards meeting these stated goals, Straubinger, while visiting Germany in the winter of 1934-1935 requested of the DAI that it send an exhibition on the *Deutschtum im Ausland* to Canada (see Grisebach [DAI] to Gerhard, 28 February 1935, USNA T81/394/5134920).

German youth in *völkische Ideologie* and the Nazi *Weltanschauung*. However, despite much energy expended to these ends, little by way of tangible results was accomplished because participation in the education program was virtually non-existent.<sup>32</sup> Wagner states that, for the most part, the same could be said of similar attempts on the Prairies. He attributed this state of affairs to the indifference, assimilation and anti-Naziism among Canada's ethnic German community in general.<sup>33</sup> As such, the greatest service the *Arbeitsgemeinschaften* performed with respect to *Deutschtumsarbeit* was their central role in organizing the "German Days."

For Lehmann, the greatest expression of a trend towards coordinated unity was the "German Days." Both Edmonton and Winnipeg hosted these annual week-end long celebrations from 1928 to 1939. In 1930, the first German Days were celebrated in Saskatchewan, and continued until 1937. Ontario's Germans were also staging their own German Days by the mid-1930s. Attendance at each was high, averaging several thousand participants. Lehmann explained that,

As celebrations representative of all segments of the German-Canadian community, [the German Days] have already developed a definite pattern. They open in a stadium or a large festival hall, with an official ceremony during which keynote addresses and important resolutions are presented. This is followed by competitions of singing clubs, athletic competitions, performances of costume and folk dance groups, the awarding of prizes for the best academic achievements in German resulting from competition among pupils, etc. Simultaneously, small exhibitions of arts and crafts made in the long winter months by German Canadians, often with great artistic skill, are held.<sup>34</sup>

The resolutions to which Lehmann alluded were indicative of "the cultural life and

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<sup>32</sup>See *ibid.*, 91-94.

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*, 94.

<sup>34</sup>Lehmann, *German Canadians*, 281.

political aspirations of the German ethnic group."<sup>35</sup> The three main areas of concern among leaders of the German Days, as expressed through these various resolutions were:

1. To retain the German ethnic heritage, which included the need to be politically active so that their interests were represented in schools and local administrations
2. To lobby the provincial governments for the reinstatement of the German language as the language of instruction in schools where Germans formed the majority
3. To combat defamatory lies and misinformation about Hitler's New Germany, as well as the Germans in Canada.

Regardless of these intentions and aspirations, however, Lehmann identified lack of leadership in the secular sphere as one of the greatest problems hampering greater adherence of the Germans in Canada to their ethnic roots, which in turn resulted in their assimilation. Compounding this were petty rivalries within the Canadian organizations which tended to drive away potential leaders, while the unemployed, who had the time to act in leadership roles, appear not to have been accepted in this capacity.

Of all the various reasons for loss of the German language and cultural traits among the German-Canadians, Lehmann identified as most significant lost battles waged over the schooling issue, especially in the west.<sup>36</sup> Although attempts had been made prior to WWI by British-Canadian imperialists to rid Canada of non-British influences in the school systems, only the onset of war with Germany in 1914 afforded the opportunity to do so completely. War psychosis and hysteria had by 1916 gained the

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<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, 281.

<sup>36</sup>For details of this contentious issue in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, see *ibid.*, 314-323.

upper hand in Manitoba where bilingual public schools were abolished and German-language private schools prohibited. In Alberta and Saskatchewan, neither of which had made concessions to non-Anglo immigrants by way of bilingual public schools, German as the language of instruction in German private schools was denied through the demand that their curricula be coordinated with that of the public schools. Further reducing the desirability of maintaining separate schools in these provinces was the simultaneous demand that an English public school exist in school districts which, up to that time, had had only a German private school. The added cost to immigrant taxpayers of supporting this government mandated school, compounded by the fact that there would be no deviation from the curriculum, forced the closure of virtually every German private school in Saskatchewan and Alberta. Lehmann also noted that one of the greatest threats posed by the unilingual English school system was the alienation which occurred between the older and younger generations, a situation which tended to make the youth lose their ethnic identity all the more easily.<sup>37</sup>

By way of offering suggestions as to how best to preserve their identity among the German element in Canada, Lehmann states that,

...a more comprehensive and free system of education is needed, which familiarizes the youth of German descent with the great achievements of the German spirit and the emotions and values of the German psyche, and which ties them with strong emotional bonds to their German heritage. This requires the existence of good German libraries in all the larger municipalities, travelling libraries for rural Germans, a travelling German theatre, travelling costume and folk art groups, art exhibitions during German days to stimulate German handicrafts, German film shows, lectures in the form of adult training courses, and direct contact with the intellectual life of the people in Germany by way of radio and short-wave broadcasting. A beginning for all this has been made, yet

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<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, 335.

much work remains to be done in order to achieve lasting results.<sup>38</sup>

However, in the final analysis, the preservation of the German ethnic identity came down to leadership and desire.<sup>39</sup> Because Lehmann had so often noted a lack of leadership among the German element in Canada, one can only surmise that he expected at least some of that leadership to emanate from the Reich itself, i.e., from the leading elements of *Deutschtumsarbeit* including the VDA and the DAI.

Although Lehmann's works were the most comprehensive with respect to the entire *Deutschtum* in Canada, there also exist several complementary, specialized, and extensively detailed works on the various groups of Germans in Canada. Of these works, Frank H. Epp's two volumes on the Mennonites in Canada between 1786 and 1940 are the most notable. But before we move to the topic of the Mennonites, the most widely studied German-speaking group in Canada, which is primarily the story of the peopling of the Canadian West, the history of the first German element in Canada should be told.

### Eastern Canada

Ethnic Germans have been a part of Canada's immigration history for centuries.

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<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, 331. For a good examination of the folk and decorative art traditions of the Germans in Canada and Pennsylvania, see Michael Bird and Terry Kobayashi, *A Splendid Harvest: Germanic Folk and Decorative Arts in Canada* (Toronto: Van Nostrand Reinhold Ltd., 1981). The object of the study is not the elite movers and shakers of the German-Canadians but rather the craftsmen and artisans who generally worked at their tasks on a part-time basis for relaxation and income supplementation after a hard day's work. The authors demonstrate that there was a distinctive craftsmanship among the German settlers, thereby refuting the once widely held notion that much of their furniture had been imported rather than built in Canada. The inclusion of many photographs illustrates well the beauty of the objects and the skill with which they had been made.

<sup>39</sup>See Lehmann, *German Canadians*, 335-344.



In fact, they were responsible for the earliest colonization of what would become Canada's East. By the third decade of the twentieth century, the near total assimilation of their descendants into the Anglo-Saxon culture meant that this region contained marginal soil for the fruits of *Deutschtumsarbeit* to ripen. Several monographs, discussed below, demonstrate how this state of affairs came to pass.

Winthrop Bell's *The "Foreign Protestants" and the Settlement of Nova Scotia: The History of a Piece of Arrested British Colonial Policy in the Eighteenth Century* recounts the history of the foreign Protestants "from antecedent proposals for colonizing with foreign Protestants, and the European origins of the actual migrants, right through to their complete establishment in Nova Scotia."<sup>40</sup> Although many aspects of their history had been previously noted, the complete history had never been told in one volume and with such detail. Furthermore, according to Bell, the previous accounts include inaccuracies.<sup>41</sup> And yet this work is much more than just a study of these immigrants to British America, for Bell does great service to the concept that nothing transpires in a vacuum. He lucidly recounts the relevant events not only of Nova Scotian history but also of larger issues, such as government, population, religion, and the effects of wars, in the histories of Britain, Switzerland, the German states, France and colonial America

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<sup>40</sup>Winthrop Pickard Bell, *The "Foreign Protestants" and the Settlement of Nova Scotia: The History of a Piece of Arrested British Colonial Policy in the Eighteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961), 8. [Hereafter cited as "Foreign Protestants."]

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*, 634. For example, he refutes the contention that Lunenburg was named by, or on the behalf of, the German settlers from Hanover; instead he asserts that the name derived from a demonstration of allegiance to the new British monarchical line (pages 405-407).

as they relate to Canada and its colonization.<sup>42</sup> This mammoth work of 673 pages is perhaps as close to a definitive study of a limited topic as one can get; the history recounted takes place primarily during an eleven year span, between 1749 and 1760! *The "Foreign Protestants" and the Settlement of Nova Scotia* is a well researched work, drawing upon many archival sources and a plethora of secondary authorities. Bell's documentation is so extensive as to compel him to defend it twice--in both his introductory and concluding remarks. The work itself can best be described as comprehensive; it covers virtually every field of history, from social and military to urban and institutional. Its value rests in providing a detailed account of the earliest settlement of the German element in Canada and in accounting for their rapid assimilation. Bell has determined that the transition to the English language among those Germans in the Lunenburg settlement began quickly, in either the first or second generation.<sup>43</sup> The absence of a German speaking clergy is identified as the chief reason for this,<sup>44</sup> and it echoes Lehmann's contention that church and ethnic group sustained one another. Assimilation continued until the 1930s when not one living descendent could

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<sup>42</sup>See *ibid.*, 87-93 for the most valuable example, which is his excellent brief synopsis of German history up to the eighteenth century. It is recapitulated to demonstrate that "there was no real state--empire, kingdom, or what not--by the name of "Germany," as there was a kingdom of Great Britain and one of France. There was, of course, a German language; and while a large part of the territory over which that language was spoken was certainly 'Germany,' Germany in that sense had no precise boundaries" (page 87). Thus does the reader get the sense that Bismarck's unification of most of the German states by the end of the nineteenth century was truly a significant event. Moreover, one can deduce that the inter-war *völkisch* efforts to unite the various ethnic German groups around the globe were not new, just different. In fact, one may go so far as to recognize in all of these efforts an historical trend among the Germans.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, 580-586.

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, 583 and 588. Although the British authorities favoured this situation, the lack of a German clergy was not of their doing; it seems that no German minister could be procured in Europe who was willing to go to Nova Scotia.

be found who still spoke the language, although some of the older inhabitants had spoken it in their youth.<sup>45</sup> Bell's work is a graphic illustration of assimilation which caused *Deutschtumsarbeit* in Canada to be focused on ethnic Germans living in the West, rather than the East.

Jean-Pierre Wilhelmy's *German Mercenaries* is another contribution to the story of eighteenth century German immigration to Canada.<sup>46</sup> The utilization of many secondary sources, including books, articles, and newspapers, as well as extensive archival sources from Canadian, British, American and German depositories, and memoirs, diaries, etc., results in an extensively researched work. Wilhelmy traces the history of these soldiers, including the reasons for their employment, the story of their recruitment in the German states and their arrival in Canada, their conduct in the war, their repatriation, and, for those who remained in Canada, their contributions to the emerging nation.<sup>47</sup> Wilhelmy intersperses the text with many contemporary quotations, which greatly enhance his work by capturing the essence of life among the mercenaries.

The British Crown's motives in hiring these troops centred on the political and moral difficulties involved in trying to raise troops in Britain to put down a rebellion in their own colonies. Once entered into, the decision to hire foreign troops was followed to the full. Wilhelmy estimates that some 30,000 Germans soldiered on behalf of the

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<sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*, footnote 17, 585.

<sup>46</sup>Jean-Pierre Wilhelmy, *German Mercenaries in Canada*, with a preface by Marcel Trudel, trans. by Honey Thomas (Beloeil, PQ.: Maison des Mots, 1984; Beloeil, PQ: Maison de Mots, 1985). [Hereafter cited as *German Mercenaries*.]

<sup>47</sup>Ironically, Wilhelmy states that up to the time of publication other authors had glossed over the importance of these Germans to the British cause, but he returns the favour by writing surprisingly little about the Canadians, British or Indians who fought alongside the central ethnic group of this study.

British during the American Revolution (i.e., from 1776 to 1783); 10,000 of them were stationed in Canada during this period.<sup>48</sup> The German contingent's contribution to the British war effort is revealed by the fact that, although only about 20,000 German mercenaries were on North American soil at any one time, this approximately equalled the total number of British troops stationed in America during the war.<sup>49</sup> When hostilities ceased, about 2,400 officers and men decided to settle in Canada: approximately 1,400 chose Quebec while most of the remainder chose Nova Scotia over what would become Ontario.<sup>50</sup> Many of those who opted to remain in British North America did so because they had already married women of the local population. Wilhelmy contends, quite rightly, that this number was not great in comparison to later waves of immigration but, for the period in question, it was significant both numerically and socially. The influx of some 2,400 men to a total population of about 110,000 represented an increase to the male population of between 3 and 4 per cent.<sup>51</sup> Among those who settled in Canada were many doctors, craftsmen and artisans; they and their descendants added greatly to the pool of skilled and professional men in what was to become Canada.<sup>52</sup>

Wilhelmy's work can be considered revisionist for two reasons. He first strikes

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<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, 15. Although these troops are most commonly referred to as "Hessians," they in fact came from many regions of Germany, including: the Electorate of Hanover, the Duchy of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, the Principality of Waldeck, the Duchy of Anhalt-Zerbst, the County of Hesse-Cassel, the County of Hesse-Hanau, and the Margravate Ansbach-Bayreuth.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, 15 and 208.

<sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*, 203-204.

<sup>52</sup>See the select biographies in *ibid.*, 217-244.

a blow at French-Canadian nationalists who claim a French racial purity dating back to the conquest. The rapidity of assimilation of the Germans into Quebec society is attributed to the fact that many of the mercenaries came from regions in which they would already have learned French and so would quickly abandon the German language. Furthermore, many family names have been altered over the course of time so as to obscure their Germanic origins.<sup>53</sup> Thus, many Québécois who assume a French origin could very well have a Germanic forefather. Consequently, those involved in inter-war *Deutschtumsarbeit* would have been hard pressed to win back for the *Volk*, the thoroughly assimilated descendants of the German mercenaries. The second revisionist aspect results from the fact that not only does *German Mercenaries* bring to the fore the great contribution which these Germans made in defending Canada from American invasion, but it also shows that they were not an army of occupation who oppressed the French populace. Wilhelmy admits that unpleasant incidents did arise, especially due to the practice of billeting troops in the homes of *habitants* who were reluctant to support the British cause. However, he shows that discipline prevailed among the mercenaries and that those who committed crimes were severely punished. The blame for past confusion over this issue rests, according to Wilhelmy, with previous writers who researched their works inadequately.

The history of the German element in Ontario, from the end of the American Revolution to the end of WWI is recounted in Werner Bausenhardt's *German Immigration and Assimilation in Ontario, 1783-1918*.<sup>54</sup> Bausenhardt isolates "the factors having a

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<sup>53</sup>See Wilhelmy's list of such name alterations, *ibid.*, 213-216.

bearing on the image of people of German origin in the province" and in so doing, "reveals that, unlike any other group in the province, the Germans [as a result of WWI] have suffered the fate of a sudden fall from the position of being among the most desirable immigrants to that of the least desirable, and that in a relatively short time."<sup>55</sup> The work is based largely upon secondary sources but is nevertheless a good synthesis of this material. *German Immigration and Assimilation in Ontario* presents the history of the Germans in Ontario in a brief yet enlightening manner.

Much insight is shed upon the larger issues involved in their immigration, such as the push-factors that led to German emigration, their rapid assimilation in Canada, and the reasons for a growing German nationalism among the Germans in Canada following German unification in 1871. Bausenhart gives context from the events of Germany's unification to the resulting patriotism engendered among Germans in Canada. Up to 1871 Germans had belonged only to small, second-rate states in a world dominated by Great Powers. For those in Canada, the new-found prominence of their ancestral homelands resulted in the creation and spread of various German clubs and organizations. Another result was a re-awakened interest in retaining the German language, a language which seemed destined to become extinct in Ontario by the turn of the century. By 1900 German had dropped to the status of a teachable subject in the school system, English had replaced German as the language of religion in many congregations, the use of German was on the decline in public life, and the readership of the German-language

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<sup>54</sup>Werner Bausenhart, *German Immigration and Assimilation in Ontario, 1783-1918* (New York, Ottawa and Toronto: Legas, 1989). [Hereafter cited as *German Immigration*.]

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*, 13.

weeklies was shrinking. For a time, this trend was reversed and was due largely to the efforts of the *Deutscher Schulverein* (German School Association), which had been founded in Berlin, Ontario in 1900. By the second decade of this century, the concern over the issue of language retention had been sufficiently stirred up by this organization that the Waterloo school system witnessed its largest enrolment ever in German language courses. Unfortunately, the effects of WWI reversed this advance.<sup>56</sup> In fact, the impact of war feeling went so far as to bring about a name change for Waterloo County's major urban centre, which, up to 1916, had been called Berlin but has since been known as Kitchener (in honour of the British Field Marshal).

One of the better historical studies of the German community in Waterloo County is *Kitchener: An Illustrated History*, by John English and Kenneth McLaughlin.<sup>57</sup> This is an urban history, using an array of sources, both primary and secondary. Much of the work is devoted to biographical sketches of the entrepreneurs who laid the foundations of the city. But attention is also given to the social history of the city and highlights the assimilation which beset its German inhabitants. Despite a long history of a rich social life based on traditional German events sponsored by German clubs, the retention of German traditions and language was waning in the Waterloo area by the turn of the century; a result of the fact that most residents were already of the second and third generations. The repercussions of WWI ended any further pretence of the Germans remaining apart from mainstream Canadian society (excluding some Mennonites who

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<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*, 88-89.

<sup>57</sup>John English and Kenneth McLaughlin, *Kitchener: An Illustrated History*, (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1983). [Hereafter cited as *Kitchener*.]

opted for migration). Instead, they chose to abandon cultural distinctiveness in favour of full integration into Ontario's economic and political life.<sup>58</sup> Also of great value in this history is the coverage given to nineteenth century German emigration from Europe and the effect that this had on the growth of the region.

The Mennonites were the first settlers to the Waterloo area and began arriving from Pennsylvania in 1786.<sup>59</sup> The 1820s marked both the end of this major influx of Mennonites from the U.S. and the beginning of the immigration of large numbers of non-Mennonite European Germans to the area.<sup>60</sup> This transformed the lifestyle of the township since the newcomers were mostly *petite bourgeoisie* rather than farmers. By 1833, the concentration of German speaking people in the area was reflected in their choice of the name "Berlin" for the emerging town, which was fast becoming the religious and cultural centre of the region. By 1853 Berlin's population was about 700.<sup>61</sup> Two factors, coinciding in the late 1850s, facilitated the direct immigration of European Germans to the area. The first was the completion of the Grand Trunk Railway from Toronto to Berlin in 1856 with the result that immigration officials in Quebec directed non-Anglo-Saxon European immigrants to the area. The second was the opening of direct steamship routes between Europe and British North America in 1857, thereby

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<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*, 212.

<sup>59</sup>For a good treatment of their culture and customs, see J. Winfield Fretz' sociological study, *The Waterloo Mennonites: A Community in Paradox* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1989).

<sup>60</sup>They came from such areas as: Hesse-Darmstadt, Prussia, Waldeck, Württemberg, Alsace, Lorraine, the Baltic states, Saxony, Mecklenburg, and Holstein. See English and McLaughlin, *Kitchener*, 11.

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*, 21.



preventing the United States from absorbing the majority of German emigrants, as had been the case in the 1840s.<sup>62</sup> The economic diversity afforded by the railway and the arrival of skilled immigrants coming directly from Europe combined to turn Berlin into an industrial centre by the 1870s. According to the 1871 census, Berlin's population had risen to 3,000, 73 per cent of whom were ethnic Germans; of these, thirty per cent had been born in Germany.<sup>63</sup> The beginning of the twentieth century saw Berlin's population climb to almost 10,000, about eighty per cent of whom were ethnic Germans.<sup>64</sup> In 1911 the population of Berlin exceeded 15,000, and Berlin was incorporated as a city on 17 July 1912.<sup>65</sup>

Berlin's German citizens displayed much German nationalism prior to 1914. On 2 May 1871 some 10,000 gathered for festivities celebrating Germany's victory over France and the subsequent creation of the Second Reich.<sup>66</sup> In 1897 a monument to Kaiser Wilhelm I was erected in Victoria Park. Annual birthday celebrations were held for both Bismarck and Kaiser Wilhelm II. World War I changed all of this forever.<sup>67</sup> The last birthday celebration held for Kaiser Wilhelm occurred in February 1914. Shortly after the war broke out, members of the local militia tore the bust of the Kaiser from its pedestal in Victoria Park and threw it into the nearby lake. By the end of 1914

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<sup>62</sup>See *ibid.*, 10.

<sup>63</sup>*Ibid.*, 31 and 71.

<sup>64</sup>*Ibid.*, 70 and 71.

<sup>65</sup>*Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>66</sup>*Ibid.*, 32 and 69.

<sup>67</sup>For a thorough survey of the shameful manner in which "patriotic" Canadians treated the Germans in Berlin, Ontario during the war, see *ibid.*, 107-130.

German instruction in the public schools had been halted, German was heard less frequently on the streets, and British-Canadians denounced not only Germany but also "Germanness." Interestingly, the name change from Berlin to Kitchener was not of Anglo-Saxon doing but rather was a decision of the city's own council. Fearing that markets beyond the city might limit trade with city businesses, due to a perception that Berliners were not sufficiently patriotic, the city council decided to change the name on 21 February 1916. Despite a provincial veto on the grounds that this might lead to civil strife in the town, a city-wide plebiscite on 19 May cleared the way for the name to be changed on 1 September 1916, but this did divide the citizenry.<sup>68</sup> Another very divisive event in Kitchener's history was the conscription election of 1917. The fact that the anti-conscription Liberal candidate, W.D. Euler, won, reinforced the impression that Kitchener was a German city. In the final analysis, the war pushed the German element of Kitchener irrevocably into accepting assimilation. The rise of National Socialism in Germany did little to alter this. Although some in Kitchener were sympathetic to Hitler when he first came to power, English and McLaughlin contend that by 1936 most had come to reject his racial and militaristic policies.<sup>69</sup> Despite Kitchener's large ethnic German composition, the potential for this city to become a hotbed of activity for Nazi-dominated *Deutschtumsarbeit* was small.

Gottlieb Leibbrandt, in *Little Paradise: The Saga of the German Canadians of*

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<sup>68</sup>On 2 December 1919 the city council attempted to change the name back to Berlin. However, some 500 persons, mostly veterans, filled the chambers and thus intimidating the council, secured the permanence of the new name. A physical assault of a few aldermen and the ethnic German M.P.P. W.D. Euler followed the meeting, just for good measure.

<sup>69</sup>English and McLaughlin, *Kitchener*, 164-167.

*Waterloo County, Ontario, 1800-1975*,<sup>70</sup> gives an account of the trials, tribulations, and accomplishments of the settlers and their offspring in this once predominantly German area. Under the guise of the "cultural mosaic," the author is actually doing latter-day *Deutschtumsarbeit*--he hopes that the book will "fulfil a practical as well as an academic purpose" to "strengthen the historical consciousness of the German ethno-cultural community."<sup>71</sup> The work often devolves into hyperbole in praise of Germans and Germanness, especially of the various self-made leaders of the Waterloo County German community. All of this makes the book more an object of contemporary interest than of historical value to the student of German-Canadian history. Leibbrandt's approach is not chronological but rather biographical, and in this way he highlights or exemplifies the main events which he desires to present. The author includes the disclaimer that that this is not a complete history of the subject.<sup>72</sup> The focus of the book is upon the non-Mennonite European Germans who settled in Waterloo County. For the most part, *Little Paradise* is well written, although the author does at times display difficulty in connecting his own writings to his lengthy quotations of primary sources.

Herbert Karl Kalbfleisch's study, *The History of the Pioneer German Language Press of Ontario, 1835-1918*, traces the development, growth, and eventual decline of

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<sup>70</sup>Gottlieb Leibbrandt, *Little Paradise: The Saga of the German Canadians of Waterloo County, Ontario, 1800-1975*, trans. by G.K. Weissenborn and M.G. Weissenborn (Kitchener: Allprint Co. Ltd., 1980). [Hereafter cited as *Little Paradise*.]

<sup>71</sup>*Ibid.*, x.

<sup>72</sup>*Ibid.*, ix.

one of the best tools any ethnic group can possess to protect and foster their heritage.<sup>73</sup>

The history of the newspapers is told through very detailed biographical accounts of their founders and editors. This approach enables Kalbfleisch to recount the founding of the many papers, explore the political orientations of the personalities involved, and examine both the quality of the German language used and the contents of the papers themselves.<sup>74</sup>

The retention of a language and culture is very much dependent upon that language being easily accessible. As such, the availability of the printed form of that language is virtually a necessity; so too, however, is a demand for such writings. The one condition cannot exist without the other. For this reason Kalbfleisch concedes that the advanced process of assimilation of the Germans into Anglo-Canadian culture would have spelt the eventual demise of the German language press. The Canadian government's Order-in-Council of 2 October 1918 which banned the publication of newspapers in the German language was, therefore, merely the *coup de grâce*, not the force behind its demise.<sup>75</sup> This Order-in-Council marked

...the end of the pioneer phase of German journalism in Ontario. The revocation of the Order-in-Council at a later date did not bring about any immediate revival of the German newspaper press in the province. Fusion and assimilation of the German community into the predominantly English-speaking pattern precluded

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<sup>73</sup>Herbert Karl Kalbfleisch, *The History of the Pioneer German Language Press of Ontario, 1835-1918* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968). [Hereafter cited as *German Language Press*.]

<sup>74</sup>Kalbfleisch's sources include secondary sources, gazetteers, the files of the various German language newspaper publishing companies, and of course, extant copies of the newspapers themselves.

<sup>75</sup>*Ibid.*, 11. About 30 secular and denominational newspapers were printed in Ontario during the time studied; none of them was ever more than a local weekly. For an analysis of the motives behind the Government's decision to ban the German language press in Canada only six weeks before the end of the war, see Werner A. Bausenhardt, "The Ontario German Language Press and Its Suppression by Order-in-Council in 1918," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 4, 1-2 (1972): 35-48. [Hereafter cited as "Ontario German Language Press."]

any attempt to re-establish the German newspaper....<sup>76</sup>

Those of German extraction who migrated to southern Ontario after the American Revolution were quickly assimilated to the Anglo-Saxon majority around them, in part because they brought no German teachers or preachers with them.<sup>77</sup> Their relatively small numbers also played a role in their inability to counter the effects of the larger cultural group. It is hardly surprising that it fell to the Mennonites, a German-speaking group which depended upon separation from the secular world for its cultural and spiritual survival, to fund the first German language weekly to appear in Upper Canada.<sup>78</sup> In the following half century the German language press flourished as the readership base increased through natural increase and continued immigration. This period merely coincided with, rather than resulted from, the immigration from Europe of the "Forty-eighters," participants in the failed revolution of 1848, since its leaders chose to emigrate to the U.S. rather than Canada.<sup>79</sup>

The period of growth for the German language press in Ontario was followed in the first decade of this century by the amalgamation of many of the German language papers. Amalgamation was the result of several factors: the rapid increase in the number of papers had outstripped the available readership pool; publishing a German language paper was costly due to the added expense of German type, and even labour since

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<sup>76</sup>Kalbfleisch, *German Language Press*, 106.

<sup>77</sup>*Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>78</sup>*Ibid.*, 18 and 20. The *Canada Museum und Allgemeine Zeitung* was first published in Berlin, Ontario on 27 August 1835 by Heinrich Wilhelm Peterson.

<sup>79</sup>Kalbfleisch, *German Language Press*, 41 and 109.

German-speaking typesetters were in short supply; but most important, the ethnic Germans were assimilated into the English-speaking culture. Second and third generation Germans in a predominantly English-speaking Ontario saw less need for retention of the German language than had their forefathers.<sup>80</sup> Amalgamation brought about not only fewer newspapers but also a lower literary quality of the papers as more space was given over to local news. Altered too was the content of foreign news coverage; the once abundant detailed news of events in Europe was reduced quantitatively and qualitatively.<sup>81</sup> This point is especially significant since, and here Kalbfleisch acknowledges Lehmann's analysis of the situation, detailed reportage of events in Germany had been an important "spiritual" link to the homeland for the immigrants.<sup>82</sup> The lessening demand for such news obviated the necessity for an abundance of German language papers. Nevertheless, the German language press in Ontario had made contributions to what would eventually be termed *Deutschtumsarbeit*. The press had

made a substantial and determined effort to raise the general standard of education among its German patronage. But with the exception of a small sprinkling of professional men who had migrated to Canada, the clientèle of the German papers was composed largely of farmers, artisans and shopkeepers. Since the latter groups were by far in the majority, it was to these that the newspapers, for practical reasons, had to address themselves. But it would be unjust and misleading to claim that they lacked a high ideal, even though they may often have fallen short of it.<sup>83</sup>

The German readership of these papers was divided not only by class and education but

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<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

also on the more basic level of dialect. The newspapers had to contend with two distinct groups of ethnic Germans in Ontario. Those who came first, from Pennsylvania, spoke the Low-German dialect, while those who came later, directly from the Reich, used High-German. The editors of the papers made compromises in writing their copy and this resulted in a lessening of the newspaper's power as a bulwark against bastardization of the German language.<sup>84</sup>

The anti-German sentiment generated in Canada by the First World War had resulted in the 1918 ban on the publication of German language newspapers. It was not lifted until January 1920. The German language press in Ontario only recovered after the next world war had run its course. On the Prairies things were a little different. By 1921, circulation of the four western Canadian German language papers which had resumed German-language publication had reached approximately 40,000 (including at least some subscribers in eastern Canada).<sup>85</sup> Assimilation throughout the 1920s, combined with the economic crisis of the Great Depression, had by 1931 combined to reduce circulation to 26,000, despite the immigration of thousands of German speaking persons. In 1921, one in six German-Canadians read German papers; in 1931, only one in twenty did so. According to Kalbfleisch, the inter-war period marked for the west what had gone before in the east in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries--the "rapid fusion and integration of the German racial groups" into the culture of the Anglo-Canadians.<sup>86</sup> For the proponents of *Deutschtumsarbeit* this meant nothing but the

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<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.

<sup>85</sup> Circulation figures for this paragraph are from *ibid.*, 112.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

prospect of tough going in increasingly infertile soil; and ethnic German assimilation goes a long way in explaining why the movement stood little chance of winning overwhelming support among Canada's ethnic German community.

### Western Canada

The bulk of German immigration to western Canada came as a part of the massive immigration boom between 1870 and 1914.<sup>87</sup> Most of the German immigrants came not from Germany but rather from the Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires. They were members of various denominations, especially the Anabaptist, Catholic, and Protestant churches, a mixture of urban and rural settlers, and spoke either High or Low German. Gerald Friesen neatly sums up this inherent diversity, stating that "they were numerous in total but divided into so many parts and so affected by the events of world politics that they never achieved a pan-German identity in Canada. Eventually, they too accommodated to the British-Canadian norm."<sup>88</sup> Nevertheless, the German language and traditions were retained to some degree and for some time. At the time of writing, Lehmann held the most hope for these western Germans to embrace the *völkisch* movement, since they were the most recent arrivals and thus the least assimilated. The pattern of their settlement had much to do with this. Among the Anabaptists and Catholics, settlement occurred primarily in organized groups and closed blocs. Other areas of German concentration were established by "gravitation group settlement," that

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<sup>87</sup>For a good review of the world-wide immigration to Canada's west, see Gerald Friesen, "Immigrant Communities 1870-1940: The Struggle for Cultural Survival," chap. 11 in *The Canadian Prairies: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984). [Hereafter cited as "Immigrant Communities."]

<sup>88</sup>*Ibid.*, 262.



is, "[ethnic German] migrants...arrived independently but were drawn together by mutual attractions".<sup>89</sup> Unfortunately, the numerical strength of the Germans in western Canada is not matched by the availability of historical literature on them. True, much has been written on the Mennonites, but there is definitely room for more detailed works on the other German groups and denominations. Histories of the ethnic German populace of the individual provinces, their major urban centres, as well as comprehensive monographs on the Catholics and Protestants, are lacking.<sup>90</sup> Perhaps we have Lehmann to thank for this; his extensive coverage in the 1930s of the Germans in western Canada may have dampened the enthusiasm of later historians to flesh-out these stories.

Frank H. Epp's *Mennonites in Canada, 1786-1920: The History of a Separate People*, and *Mennonites in Canada, 1920-1940: A People's Struggle for Survival* represent the most comprehensive studies of the Mennonite experience in Canada to 1940.<sup>91</sup> Both volumes draw upon a mountain of sources, both primary and secondary.

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<sup>89</sup>*Ibid.*, 272-273.

<sup>90</sup>Msgr. George Aberle's *From the Steppes to the Prairies: The Story of the Germans Settling in Russia on the Volga and the Ukraine, also the Germans Settling in the Banat, and the Bohemians in Crimea, Their Resettlement in the Americas--North and South America and in Canada* (4th ed. [Dickinson, ND: Bismarck Tribune, 1963]) is a popular history, sanctioned by the Roman Catholic Church, of the German Catholic migrations from, and into, the regions so precisely defined in the title. Although Aberle does describe the German Catholic settlement in western Canada, the scope of the book permits no detailed discussion thereof. Furthermore, much of the information pertinent to the study of German immigration and settlement in Canada can be found in more reliable scholarly studies. The book is devoid of referencing, a bibliography, and objectivity.

A more valuable contribution to the history of the ethnic Germans in Canada's west is Bruce Ramsey's *A History of the German-Canadians in British Columbia* (Winnipeg: National Publishers, 1958). Despite the fact that it is a popular history containing no referencing or bibliography, it nevertheless contains much valuable information about this group, its leading members, and their clubs and organisations.

<sup>91</sup>Frank H. Epp, *Mennonites in Canada, 1786-1920: The History of a Separate People*, illustrations by Douglas Ratchford (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1974); and *Mennonites in Canada, 1920-1940: A People's Struggle for Survival* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1982). [Hereafter cited as *Mennonites, 1786-1920* and *Mennonites, 1920-1940*, respectively.]

A difference does exist between them, however, in the writing style. *Mennonites in Canada, 1786-1920* is clearly written, highly intelligible, and a pleasure to read. On the other hand, *Mennonites in Canada, 1920-1940* is more cumbersome; this is ironic because a greater attention to referencing increases its value as an historical work but leads to a style which is less than smooth. Nevertheless, both of Epp's works are invaluable historical works as they do much to analyze the story of this all-important immigrant group to Canada. Theirs is a story of perseverance in the face of adversity, not only because of the hardships inherent in the life of a pioneer, but also because the early promises of toleration were later rescinded by federal and provincial governments.

Epp begins his study with an overview of the Mennonite and non-conformist movements, from the beginnings of the Reformation to William Penn's most welcome offer to immigrate to his colony which was founded in 1681.<sup>92</sup> By 1776 some 100,000 German speakers from different faiths had settled there.<sup>93</sup> From these various peoples

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<sup>92</sup>Epp, *Mennonites, 1786-1920*, 23-45. For a more comprehensive study of the early Anabaptist movement, see Claus-Peter Clasen, *Anabaptism, A Social History, 1525-1618: Switzerland, Austria, South and Central Germany* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1972). Since virtually every other work concerned with the Anabaptists in Canada contains at least some early history of the movement, this more detailed account is of much value. The limited period and geographic area encompassed by this study was due to the availability of primary source material published since the 1930s. Since much material concerning the Netherlands and Northern Germany remained unpublished at the time of writing, the author concentrated more upon the Hutterites than the Mennonites. Nevertheless, this work is valuable to the student of Mennonite history in the sense that it sheds light upon the earliest period of the Anabaptist movement. Clasen's unbiased approach lends much fairness to his analysis, an example of which is that although he places much blame upon the Catholics and Lutherans for the persecution of the Anabaptists, he is also sensitive to the fact that Anabaptist doctrine was a threat to the established order and claims that perceptions of the persecution suffered by the Anabaptists may have been clouded by their own loathing of their detractors, and might therefore have been exaggerated. This work is very helpful in understanding the bases and extent of the Anabaptists' convictions as well as their revolutionary import which led to the persecution of the Anabaptist groups, their expulsion from various countries and migrations to eastern Europe.

<sup>93</sup>Epp, *Mennonites, 1786-1920*, 43.

arose a Pennsylvania *Deutsch* culture. The strength of this culture was such that, at the time the Mennonites of Pennsylvania contemplated migrating to Canada following the American Revolution, they were still very much German. Language retention was the hallmark: Their religious services were conducted in High German, and their everyday discourse was in the Pennsylvania German dialect.<sup>94</sup> For those who decided to migrate to Canada, retention of their language and culture were a large concern and British North America seemed to offer the best opportunity to achieve this.<sup>95</sup> Such considerations were also evident among the Russian Mennonites who were looking for a new home in the 1870s.<sup>96</sup> Most important, however, were guarantees that their beliefs in non-resistance would be protected.

The first Pennsylvania Mennonites came to present day southern Ontario with just such a guarantee. They had been granted an exemption from militia service through the Militia Act of 1793. Another Anabaptist group induced to leave the United States for Canada were the Amish, who were also extended this exemption.<sup>97</sup> By 1849 the non-resistors had successfully petitioned the Government of the Province of Canada to abolish the fees imposed upon them for such exemption.<sup>98</sup> Not long afterwards, the Mennonites

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<sup>94</sup>*Ibid.*, 54-55.

<sup>95</sup>See *ibid.*, 54-55.

<sup>96</sup>For an overview of the history of the Mennonite European migrations which brought them first to Prussia and then to Russia in the 1700s, see *ibid.*, 23-45.

<sup>97</sup>The Amish were a conservative off-shoot of the Mennonites, the result of a schism between Jacob Ammon and his Swiss Mennonite congregation in 1693. Orland Gingerich's *The Amish of Canada* (Waterloo, ON: Conrad Press, 1972) is a sociological and historical treatment of the subject. Because it was among the first complete histories of this group, it is a valuable contribution to the history of the Anabaptist movement in Canada, despite a lack of referencing and a rather scant bibliography.

<sup>98</sup>See Epp, *Mennonites, 1786-1920*, 93-111.

in Russia and Prussia experienced a reversal in their supposedly entrenched rights of non-resistance. Impending compulsory military service in these two states, as well as the Russification of their schools in Russia, induced the various Mennonite congregations to send a joint delegation to North America to look for a new area of settlement where their religious beliefs would be tolerated.<sup>99</sup>

The Canadian government, eager to have these proven farmers settle Manitoba, extended every guarantee they sought.<sup>100</sup> On 23 July 1873, the Secretary of Agriculture, John Lowe, presented to the Mennonite representatives a fifteen point "Privilegium." Entrenched in this document were the Canadian Government's guarantees that the Mennonites would have complete exemption from military service, exclusive land blocks reserved for them to settle in closed communities, the right to religious freedom and to educate their children without restriction, and the right to affirm rather than swear allegiance. Furthermore, they were to receive funds and provisions for the journey from Hamburg, Germany to Fort Garry. Much of what the "Privilegium" contained had already been extended to the Mennonites in southern Ontario. The provision for block settlement was new, as was the right to educate their children. On the basis of these

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<sup>99</sup>See *ibid.*, 133-156 and 159-181 for a good synopsis of the discord among and within the various Mennonite communities in both Canada and Russia during the second half of the nineteenth century. Once again, the difficulties which faced those involved in *Deutschtumsarbeit* during the inter-war period are evident. Despite common religious beliefs, each of the various congregations held other beliefs which differentiated one congregation from another. These differences prevented any meaningful cooperation among them which would have helped maintain their religion, language and culture. It would not be until after the Second World War that success in this regard was achieved.

<sup>100</sup>*Ibid.*, 187-193.

guarantees, some 7,000 Mennonites emigrated to Canada in the 1870s.<sup>101</sup>

The right to closed or block settlement was important to the Mennonites. The exclusion of other language and cultural groups from the areas in which the Mennonites were to settle in Manitoba augured well for the preservation of their own language, religion and customs. Their practice of remaining separate from the outside world would thereby be continued. Two such settlements were established in southern Manitoba, not far from the border with the United States of America: the East and West Reserves, so named because of their geographic location on either side of the Red River.<sup>102</sup> Although the village system which the Mennonites brought with them from Russia did not really survive the turn of the century, as the settlers opted increasingly for the North American individualistic homestead model, the two Reserves did become the areas of greatest concentration for the Mennonites in Manitoba.<sup>103</sup>

The other innovation in the Canadian government's guarantee of 1873 to the Mennonites was the right to educate their children as they saw fit. It was innovative because no other immigrant group had ever been offered this provision. Perhaps this was because of its unconstitutionality. Education was a provincial matter and, as such, was

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<sup>101</sup>See *ibid.*, "Table 3: Migrations to Canada and the United States by Years," 200.

<sup>102</sup>For a social, urban and institutional history of the civic and ecclesiastic administrative centre of the West Reserve, see Peter D. Zacharias, *Reinland: An Experience in Community* (Reinland: Reinland Centennial Committee, 1976). This work, which commemorates the one hundredth anniversary of the founding of the village of Reinland, is surprisingly good as far as this sort of literature is concerned. Also surprising, however, is the virtual silence of the community's fate during the inter-war period. Nevertheless, it is a well researched work, which incorporates personal diaries, correspondence and interviews, original town documents, and many archival sources. Noteworthy are the many reproductions of primary source documents, as well as a wide selection of photographs interspersed throughout the work.

<sup>103</sup>Epp, *Mennonites, 1786-1920*, 220-227.

beyond the jurisdiction of the Dominion government. Before the "Privilegium" had been presented to the cabinet for approval, but after the Russian Mennonites had already received it and returned to Russia, the Minister of Agriculture, John Pope, altered it to reflect the reality of Canadian law. This alteration would lead to much controversy in the struggle over Manitoba schools in the next generation.

The Mennonites' use of the German language in their religious services necessitated the retention of this language among their children.<sup>104</sup> They consequently established schools wherever they migrated. This was true in southern Ontario and in western Canada. And yet, even on this most crucial issue, the various Mennonite congregations were divided. The progressive congregations were open to accepting English within their system while the conservatives stood fast against this since they feared the dilution of their beliefs. The Manitoba Public Schools Act of 1890 put an end to bilingual public schools and made English the language of instruction. Allowance was made for continued, but limited, teaching of French and, by extension, German, provided that at least ten students were of that language group. Religious instruction was also curtailed by this Act; it could only be done after the regular school day had finished. By 1907 the fears of the conservative element of the Mennonites seemed to be justified. Under the direction of Manitoba Premier Rodmund P. Roblin, the mandatory raising of the flag at all public schools was instituted in order to inculcate patriotic sentiment among the youth. This manifestation of militarism was anathema to the pacifistic Mennonites. Many Mennonite schools which had opted for the public system reverted to privatization

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<sup>104</sup>For a detailed analysis of the school issue, see *ibid.*, 333-362.

while others, which had been contemplating the switch, now declined to do so.

The coming of WWI intensified public opinion against the Mennonites and their practices; it also struck another blow against German language instruction. As Epp explains, "Public concerns about enemy aliens, pacifism, German culture and private schools comprised a single cause against which British patriotism and Anglo-Saxon culture had to take a firm stand."<sup>105</sup> On 10 March 1916, these sentiments, in effect, became law through the passing of the Manitoba School Attendance Act. English was made the exclusive language of instruction in the public schools; the Act also made attendance compulsory for children between the ages of 7 and 14 if acceptable private schooling was unavailable. The government would decide what was or was not acceptable. Manitoba was not the only province to quash bilingual school instruction; nor was it the first. Ontario had already done so in 1913, Alberta went next in March 1915, and Saskatchewan enacted similar legislation in December 1918.<sup>106</sup>

The war also tested the Canadian government's commitment to respect the Anabaptists' conviction of non-resistance, which necessitated honouring the pledges made to this effect as far back as 1793. Although the Anabaptist groups were not forced to submit to conscription, this was not achieved without a fight or price—they were disenfranchised in 1917. At least some of the problem resulted from the migration to Canada of Anabaptist conscientious objectors from the U.S. Although immigration from

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<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 354.

<sup>106</sup> See Bausenhart, "Ontario German Language Press," 43-44. Mennonites from Ontario, Manitoba, the U.S., Prussia, and Russia began to settle in numbers in both Alberta and Saskatchewan after they became provinces in 1905; see Epp, *Mennonites, 1786-1920*, 303 ff.

Europe had ended in 1914, Mennonites continued to enter from the U.S. Beginning in 1918, another Anabaptist group, the Hutterites, also undertook the northward migration for essentially the same reasons: to escape persecution for their German roots and seemingly unpatriotic non-resistance.<sup>107</sup> As the persecution of conscientious objectors in the U.S. intensified, so too did the Anabaptist migration.<sup>108</sup> In Frank Epp's words, "The presence of these 'draft-dodgers' added fuel to the fires of public opinion, thoroughly aroused by a people insisting not only on military exemption, but also on German culture in their churches and schools. Although the war came to an end, those fires were not quickly quenched."<sup>109</sup>

### The Inter-War Period

In the aftermath of the war, public sentiment led by returning soldiers turned even more against the non-resistors who had "shirked" their duty and thereby been spared the horrors of the trenches.<sup>110</sup> This led to an amendment of immigration laws in the spring of 1919 which prohibited non-resistors and other non-desirable groups (i.e., citizens of

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<sup>107</sup>For the history of the Hutterites in Canada, see Victor Peters, *All Things Common: The Hutterian Way of Life* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1965). The focus of the study is upon the Manitoba Hutterites, but the fact that innovations introduced in one colony invariably find their way into the others necessitates that all Hutterite groups in Canada and the United States be analyzed. Although the historical section of the work (for it is also a sociological study, especially with regard to the post-World War Two period) is based extensively on secondary sources. The fact that these are mostly in the German language makes it especially valuable to unilingual Anglophone readers.

<sup>108</sup>Epp, *Mennonites, 1786-1920*, 318. The best account of the persecution suffered by the Hutterites at the hands of U.S. Army personnel is found in Henry C. Smith, *The Coming of the Russian Mennonites: An Episode in the Settling of the Last Frontier, 1874-1884* (Berne, Indiana: Mennonite Book Concern, 1927), 277-282 and 292-293.

<sup>109</sup>Epp, *Mennonites, 1786-1920*, 385-386.

<sup>110</sup>See *ibid.*, 391-414.



the defeated Triple Alliance) from entering Canada. These and other forms of chauvinism and intolerance on the part of their fellow Canadians induced many Mennonites in Canada to look to Latin America for a new land in which to preserve their traditions and beliefs.<sup>111</sup> Fortunately for Canada, this period also coincided with the need of some 100,000 Russian Mennonites to flee the fledgling Soviet regime.

Epp's second work, *Mennonites in Canada, 1920-1940*, devotes much attention to the Russian Mennonite refugees of the 1920s; especially those who came to Canada. The inability of the Mennonite groups in Canada to work cooperatively is also a central theme. Amid the crises of ever-more restrictive Canadian immigration policies, the Great Depression, and pernicious assimilation, no umbrella organization could be established which could represent the interests of all the congregations. At the beginning of the 1930s there were eighteen different "denominations" in Canada and each felt that it alone had solutions to such problems. The continuing disunity can be judged by the fact that the total number of "denominations" had increased to twenty by the end of the decade.<sup>112</sup> Nevertheless, some Mennonites did try hard to protect the German heritage and language; almost invariably these people belonged to the post-war immigrants, the Russian Mennonites.

Perhaps the greatest value of *The Mennonites in Canada, 1920-1940* is Epp's ability to place into context how members of a pacifistic group could become sympathizers of the Third Reich. In order to understand such a paradox, Epp delves into

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<sup>111</sup>During the 1920s some 7,000 Mennonites emigrated from Canada to Mexico and Paraguay, see Epp, *Mennonites in Canada, 1920-1940*, 48-138.

<sup>112</sup>See *ibid.*, 385, and 395-446.

the history of the southern Russian Mennonites who had not emigrated in the late nineteenth century. The story begins with the hardships they endured during the Great War up to the signing of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, which gave Germany vast tracts of Russian land, including the southern Russian areas of German Mennonite concentration. When the German soldiers moved into this area, many Mennonites welcomed them with open arms. Some even supported the Germans by denouncing Bolshevik sympathizers. As Epp explains:

In retrospect, the enthusiastic support given to the German occupation army was a political mistake, for the effects of this partisanship would follow the Mennonites into World War II and beyond. Seen against the anarchistic backdrop of the preceding years, however, the German-Mennonite alliance made sense. The Mennonites, like the other German colonists, abhorred and were repelled by violent insurrection, disorder, and theft. To them, the German troops appeared as if sent by providence, and in the crises of the moment there could be little reflection on the future implications of such association. All that mattered at the time was that they enjoyed the protection of authorities who spoke their language, who entrusted them with local power, who instilled in them a powerful sense of German cultural identity, and who equipped some of them with weapons useful in self-defence.<sup>113</sup>

Mennonite participation in the *Selbstschutz* (Home Defence) units resulted in their identification by the Soviets as enemies of the State, thus jeopardizing their survival in Russia. In the aftermath of the Revolution, some 20,000 Mennonites managed to gain entry into Canada.<sup>114</sup> The success of this enterprise rested largely with the Canadian Pacific Railway, the Canadian National Railways, and the Mennonites. Their lobbying had been instrumental in having the ban on immigration of their compatriots in the

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<sup>113</sup>*Ibid.*, 145.

<sup>114</sup>See *ibid.*, "Table 18: Cash and Credit Passengers (By Year of Immigration),"

former enemy states lifted in 1923.<sup>115</sup> Although some of the new Russian immigrants settled in southern Ontario, most went on to fulfil the conditions of entry and settled on the land. Many new settlements appeared, from northern Ontario to British Columbia.

By the late 1920s, calls for an end to all immigration echoed across Canada, with "native sons" in the west crying the loudest. Bowing to political and economic considerations, the federal government virtually absolved itself of responsibility in such matters by making immigration conditional upon provincial approval. The result was the announcement of an end to further immigration on 30 October 1929. When news of this reached Russia, panic ensued among the Mennonites who still desired to emigrate, and a rush on Moscow began.<sup>116</sup> The situation soon became desperate as they faced forced return from whence they came, or worse, to Siberia. Only Germany's concern and actions saved the day. Of the approximately 13,000 Mennonites who had gathered in front of the gates of Moscow, some 6,000 found refuge in Germany.<sup>117</sup> Epp explains that,

Germany's energetic intervention on behalf of the desperate refugees contrasted sharply with Canada's indifference and negative verdict. Not surprisingly, the impact of Germany's benevolence on behalf of the refugees was profound. An earlier empathy for things German now turned into enthusiasm and even patriotism. Those receiving German beneficence, while the rest of the world ignored their plight, subsequently demonstrated an indiscriminate appreciation for anything connected with Germany....<sup>118</sup>

Canada's Mennonites were disappointed with their government's intransigence. Through

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<sup>115</sup>See *ibid.*, 152-179.

<sup>116</sup>On the plight of the Moscow refugees, see *ibid.*, 303-336.

<sup>117</sup>*Ibid.*, 549.

<sup>118</sup>*Ibid.*, 319.

their perseverance, however, continued lobbying enabled about 1,344 Moscow refugees to enter Canada by 1932.<sup>119</sup> These people did not forget all that Germany had done to save them. Epp writes:

Their grateful sentiments were expressed in a statement of tribute and thanks directed to the German government shortly before the departure of one of the first groups to Canada. The testimony thanked the country for its good deeds and concluded, "May God bless the German Reich and its leaders for ever and ever." There would be more such prayers before the 1930s were over.<sup>120</sup>

Of all the Mennonites, those who came to Canada during the 1920s were to prove the most responsive to the pan-Germanism of the *Deutschtumsarbeit* of the 1930s. They were already disciples of the *völkisch* movement due to the alienation and dislocation suffered during and immediately after the First World War, a result of which was their cooperation with the Reich agencies involved in *Deutschtumsarbeit*.<sup>121</sup> Although many other Mennonites were ambivalent about the turn of political events in Germany after 1933, enough of the recent arrivals from Russia (as Epp writes) "were for a time at least, enamoured of Adolf Hitler and his new Germany that a brief but intense flirtation with National Socialism cannot be overlooked."<sup>122</sup> But not all did so. By the outbreak of World War II (WWII), the honeymoon had ended and most Mennonites, including those from Russia, had come around to the realization that not all was golden in the Third

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<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 327.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 328.

<sup>121</sup> For a more thorough discussion of the basis and reasons underlying Mennonite adherence to *völkische Ideologie*, see Jonathan F. Wagner, "Transferred Crisis: German Volkish Thought among Russian Mennonite Immigrants to Western Canada," *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism* 1 (1974): 202-220.

<sup>122</sup> Epp, *Mennonites, 1920-1940*, 548. Epp also devotes much space to the other Mennonite congregations which opposed National Socialism throughout the 1930s, see *ibid.*, pages 556-576.

Reich. Many who had earlier expressed support for the New Germany had, by this time, recanted their previous positions.

A more comprehensive and detailed account of the effects of National Socialism upon the entire German element in Canada is provided in Jonathan Wagner's *Brothers Beyond the Sea: National Socialism in Canada*. Two of the most important aspects of this work are his analysis of the numerical strength of those among the Germans in Canada who were strongly pro-National Socialists and his overview of the German language press on the Prairies which disseminated NS propaganda in Canada. Wagner isolates three factors which proved important in the acceptance or rejection of National Socialism by the Germans in Canada. First was the year of entry to Canada: most of the German-Canadians who had come to eastern Canada before the twentieth century had already been assimilated and, as such, were not receptive to the National Socialists' *Weltanschauung*. Secondly, many of those who had come to Canada since the turn of the century had been imbued with the concepts of *völkische Ideologie* which predisposed them to the Nazis' propaganda. The third factor was the regional division of occupations among the Germans. In urban eastern Canada most were involved in trade and industry, whereas agriculturalists predominated in the west. Surprisingly, farmers and workers were the least attracted to the "National Socialist German Workers Party," at least as far as membership was concerned.<sup>123</sup> For Canada, where over sixty per cent of the ethnic

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<sup>123</sup>See Jonathan F. Wagner, "Nazi Party Membership in Canada: A Profile," *Social History* 14, no. 27 (1981): 233-238. According to German archival sources there were 88 Nazis living in Canada between 1933-1939. Wagner demonstrates that the pattern of NS joiners in Canada reflected the trend within the Reich. Most were under the age of 45, were opportunists who joined after 1936 (well after Hitler had come to power), and were from the lower middle class. Wagner contends that more Germans in Canada did not join the Party, as was the case in other countries with large concentrations of Germans, such as Argentina and Romania, primarily because

Germans were involved in farming as of 1931, this was significant.<sup>124</sup> The overwhelming majority of Party members in Canada were the *petite bourgeoisie* of the lower middle class who lived in the major urban centres of Ontario and Quebec and were hardest hit by the depression.<sup>125</sup> The Party was most effective in those cities which had a large base of recently arrived *Reichsdeutsche* and which had direct contact, through consular representation, with the Reich. This was true of Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, and Vancouver.

In 1934, an ostensibly non-partisan organization called the *Deutscher Bund Canada* was created.<sup>126</sup> In actuality it was an NS organization, created by Nazis to

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"Canada's German population reconciled itself to life outside the Reich better than some other German groups" (page 238). Of particular note in this article is Wagner's appraisal of why so little effort has been expended in the past on writing the history of the Canadian Nazi movement. "Part of the reason for this neglect," he explains, "relates to the problem of sources. Most often those Canadian historians who have dabbled in Nazism have stopped their investigations upon exhausting the limited Canadian (mostly English) sources. They have failed to look outside the country to European sources for additional information. What has emerged from this too limited approach is not only an incomplete picture but an inaccurate one as well." The result is a "kind of half-a-loaf history" (page 233). One could extend this condemnation to other periods as well. For instance, rarely is the importance of the Conquest placed into the full context of the Seven Years' War; while the War of 1812 is often presented with little reference to the Napoleonic Wars. Writers of Canadian history would do well to remember the importance of seeing both the trees, and the forest, rather than merely ensuring a Canadian content in their stories.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 236.

<sup>125</sup> See *ibid.*, and Wagner, *Brothers beyond the Sea*, 68-70.

<sup>126</sup> For more information on the *Bund*, see below, page 108. See also Wagner, *Brothers Beyond the Sea*, 64-72; and Jonathan F. Wagner, "The Deutscher Bund Canada, 1934-9," *The Canadian Historical Review* 58, 2 (June 1977): 176-200. An attempt was made, especially after 1935, to maintain the illusion that the *Bund* was a purely Canadian organization, in order not to incur the wrath of the Canadian Government due to perceptions of one nation interfering in the internal affairs of another. As such, its membership was supposed to be limited to *Volksdeutsche*. Nevertheless, some *Reichsdeutsche* remained members right up to 1939. This was the situation for the twenty families who emigrated directly from the Reich in 1929. Although only half of the heads of these families were farmers, they had settled as a group and began homesteading in Loon River, Saskatchewan. Hard hit by the depression, repeated crop failures and faced with increasing indebtedness, they grew discontented with their lot in Canada. All became members of the *Bund* and fell increasingly under the spell of Hitler and his movement. By 1939 they had become so Nazified, and so embittered by their experience in Canada, that all of these

coordinate and propagandize Canada's *Deutschtum*. To camouflage this political bent, it was also very active as a social club. Membership in the *Bund* peaked at about 2,000 by the time of its demise in 1939. Again, membership was basically limited to the urban centres where the most recent ethnic German immigrants were located. The failure of this organization to attract more followers could be attributed to the advanced state of assimilation among most of the Germans in Canada and to the fanaticism of those who did join. The actions of *Bund* members opened themselves to aspersions of disloyalty as war once more approached.

In fact, it was precisely such concerns which forced the Germans who were not Nazi sympathizers to come out openly against the New Germany. They were induced to do so in 1938 by growing anti-Nazi sentiment in the rest of the country. They feared that a general wave of anti-German sentiment reminiscent of the last war might erupt if they did not actively show their loyalty to Canada. In 1934, the German-Canadian League had been formed as a united front to counter National Socialism. However, it was not until 1938 that its membership grew to appreciable numbers. By 1939 the League had a branch in every major city which contained a substantial German element and a total membership of about 1,800 members.<sup>127</sup>

Another important aspect of Wagner's *Brothers Beyond the Sea* is his examination of the seven leading German language newspapers published in the Prairie provinces during the 1930s (for their particulars see Table 5, page 74). Since the German language

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settlers returned to Germany one month before the beginning of WWII. See Jonathan F. Wagner, "Heim Ins Reich: The Story of Loon River's Nazis," *Saskatchewan History* 29 (1976): 41-50.

<sup>127</sup>Wagner, *Brothers Beyond the Sea*, 130.

press in eastern Canada was not revived after WWI, these Prairie papers had significance for all of Canada. Aside from the two Catholic affiliated newspapers, all were at the very least pre-disposed to National Socialism. This is significant since the printed medium was the most effective means by which the NS supporters could convey their message to such a large and geographically dispersed audience. The significance is even more telling with regard to the Mennonites who were otherwise cut off from such propaganda, since they tended to avoid secular clubs and societies.<sup>128</sup>

The papers which presented favourable images of the Third Reich were all influenced or used by agencies involved in *Deutschtumsarbeit*. The German language press was "the single most important means of notifying the faithful and others" of upcoming NS oriented meetings and events such as those held by the *Bund* and the German Days.<sup>129</sup> Coverage of the proceedings would then appear in later issues. Space was also provided for news of the New Germany, much of which came from German agencies such as the NSDAP's Foreign Press Office in Munich and the Propaganda Ministry's *Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro* (German News Agency). Pro-Nazi letters and

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<sup>128</sup>Information for this section on the German language press of western Canada, including Table 2.5, was compiled from Wagner, *Brothers Beyond the Sea*, 102-115. For a detailed study of the Mennonite press in Canada, see Frank Epp, "An Analysis of Germanism and National Socialism in the Immigrant Newspaper of a Canadian Minority Group, The Mennonites, In the 1930s" (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1965). Epp examined "pro-Germanism, in the political context of National Socialism, in the Canadian Mennonite immigrant press of the 1930s" (pages 4-5). He concluded that "...the immigrant newspaper was a fairly representative reflection of the Mennonite immigrant mind, which, in the 1930s was very strong on nurturing and preserving cultural Germanism, as essential to the Mennonite way of life, strong also in its identification with racial Germanism, and though ambivalent on the question by and large also sympathetic to the political Germanism of the Third Reich" (page 291). Although his study centred on *Der Bote*, Epp compared his findings with two other Mennonite weeklies, *Die Mennonitische Rundschau* and *Die Steinbacher Post*. In so doing he demonstrates that among the Mennonites there was "considerable breadth and depth to pro-German and pro-nationalist sympathies" (page 320).

<sup>129</sup>Wagner, *Brothers Beyond the Sea*, 107.



essays written in Germany by friends and relatives of German-Canadians were also printed.

Wagner contends that the Nazi propagandists were successful in their efforts to influence the Canadian German language press. This can be seen in the papers' portrayal of Hitler.<sup>130</sup> Each newspaper reflected or highlighted those aspects of the Hitler myth to which its readership were most pre-disposed. For example, Hitler was presented as a religious man for the Mennonite readership. More to the point, success of Party propaganda appeared in the fact that, aside from the *Deutsche Zeitung für Canada*, none of the German-Canadian newspapers *had* to print such positive images of Hitler. Yet Wagner warns against assuming that all 70,000 readers of the German language press became NS adherents or converts; he also admits that claims that readers were not influenced by the propaganda would also be wrong.

In Wagner's final analysis, all efforts to bring the Germans in Canada solidly into the NS camp came to naught with the outbreak of the Second World War. As for the fate of pro-Nazi Germans in Canada by September 1939, some of the more committed had returned to Germany. Others distanced themselves from the *Bund*, while some went so far as to join the League. The German language newspapers which had demonstrated sympathy towards the New Germany earlier, excluding, of course, the *Deutsche Zeitung für Canada*, now reversed their policies, re-affirmed their loyalty to Canada, and expressed doubts about, and even hostility towards, Hitler's Germany.

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<sup>130</sup>See Wagner, *Brothers Beyond the Sea*, 109-114, for a detailed look at the various newspapers' portrayal of Hitler.

Table 5.--Leading German Language Newspapers in Canada During the Inter-War Period<sup>131</sup>

| Newspaper                              | Place of Publication | Affiliation  | Circulation (circa 1935) |
|--|----------------------|--|--------------------------|
| <i>Der Nordwesten</i>                  | Winnipeg, MB         | secular  | weekly: 13,000           |
| <i>Der Courier</i>                     | Regina, SK           | secular, but with Catholic leanings                                    | weekly: 7,000            |
| <i>St Peters Bote</i>                  | Munster, SK          | Catholic   | weekly: 1,250            |
| <i>Die Mennonitische Rundschau</i>     | Winnipeg, MB         | Mennonite  | weekly: 4,000            |
| <i>Der Bote</i>                        | Rosthern, SK         | Mennonite  | weekly: 1,200            |
| <i>Die Steinbacher Post</i>            | Steinbach, MB        | Mennonite  | weekly: 1,500            |
| <i>Die Deutsche Zeitung für Canada</i> | Winnipeg, MB         | National Socialist; official organ of the <i>Deutscher Bund Canada</i> | weekly: 6,000            |

Another invaluable work, devoted to the study of western Canada's German-language press, is that of Werner Entz.<sup>132</sup> Entz sketches the histories of the seven political German-language newspapers which he considers to have exerted influence on the opinions of their readership. These papers were: from Winnipeg, the *Nordwesten* (1889-1969), the *Germania* (1904-1911), the *West-Canada* (touted as "The Organ of Canada's German Catholics," 1907-1918), and the *Deutsche Zeitung für Canada* (1935-

<sup>131</sup>Heinz Kloss' "Materialien zur Geschichte der deutschkanadischen Presse," *Der Auslandsdeutsche* 11 (1928): 382-384, provides a good benchmark indicating the declining readership of the German language press by reporting the 1928 circulation figures as follows: "Nordwesten," 20,000, "Courier," 9,500, "Mennonitische Rundschau," 6,500; St. Peters Bote, 1,700; and Steinbacher Post, 1,400.

<sup>132</sup>Werner Entz, "Der Einfluß der deutschsprachigen Presse Westkanadas auf die Organisationsbestrebungen des dortigen Deutschtums 1889-1939 [The Influence of Western Canada's German-language Press on the Organizational Efforts of the Germans There, 1889-1939]," *German Canadian Yearbook* 2 (1975): 92-138. [Hereafter cited as "Der Einfluß."]

1939); from Regina, the *[Saskatchewan] Courier* (1907-); from Edmonton, the *Alberta Herald* (1903-1915), and the *Herold* (1928-1931). Of these newspapers, the *Nordwesten* and *Courier* were the most influential, due to the longevity of their publication. As Entz explains, "they became regular German Canadian institutions and influenced the outlook of a large segment of the German speaking peoples."<sup>133</sup>

Of the seven newspapers, all but the *West-Canada* actively worked to mould western Canada's German element into a cohesive cultural group. Entz identifies three ways this goal was pursued. First, they encouraged prospective ethnic German immigrants to Canada to concentrate their settlement in the western provinces and then instill in them the desire to retain the German language and customs.<sup>134</sup> Secondly, they attempted to foster the notion that all ethnic Germans, regardless of place of origin or religious affiliation, were members of the *Volk*. Thirdly, and the focus of Entz's article, the newspapers aimed at organising the ethnic German element into large provincial and national umbrella organizations which would enable them to create a powerful faction of Canada's Germans. Only through these groups would it be possible to ensure that ethnic Germans received the political representation which truly reflected the strength of their numbers in the West.

Although the various newspapers were very much involved in the creation and support of umbrella organizations before and during the inter-war period, their efforts

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<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>134</sup> Interestingly, this goal, as it applied to prospective Reich German immigrants, was echoed by the German consular representatives in Canada in 1927, see Kempff to AA Berlin, journal no. 419, 27 April 1927, PA AA, R77347. For more on this document, see below, chapter 2, page 103.

met with little success. A large part of the problem centred on the wide dispersion of the ethnic German element in Canada and the lack of a coordinated plan to concentrate settlement into one region. Most important, however, were the inherent divisions and differences between the ethnic Germans themselves. Throughout the 1930s expressions of dissatisfaction with this reality were voiced in the western newspapers. For example, on 18 December 1935, the *Courier* printed the following:

Among the German-Canadians divisions and suspicions reign. One group distrusts the other. Bickering and strife make life bitter for many. Does this have to be? Could we not, as ethnic Germans, who in fact belong to one people, who are of one blood, bring ourselves to forget our discord and our petty jealousies?<sup>135</sup>

One year later, conditions had still not improved, for on 30 December 1936, the *Courier* was forced, yet again, to appeal to the ethnic Germans to come together:

The ethnic Germans in Canada are still not a united *Volk* of brothers; we remain divided in small groups, each of which indeed in theory pursues a great common goal, but for the most part, in practice only promotes special interests. [. . . Activity to counter this] concerns itself with the great task of forging our *Deutschtum* into a strong unit for the good of all, for the good of our children, our original homeland, and not least of all, for the good of our adopted homeland (. . .) [*sic*] In this way, a chain will be forged over time which will permit opposition to all opponents and enemies of the *Deutschtum*.<sup>136</sup>

Even the *Deutsche Zeitung für Canada*, on 8 February 1938, recognised the lack of cohesion among Canada's ethnic Germans when it printed a reader's letter which claimed that,

The reality cannot be put aside, that an unbelievably large number of Germans in Canada still do not concern themselves with the *Deutschtum* and with the retention of their language. (. . .) [*sic*] A great many have never once read a

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<sup>135</sup>Cited in Entz, "Der Einfluß," 104.

<sup>136</sup>*Ibid.*, 131-132.

single German newspaper and now consider it entirely superfluous [to do so].<sup>137</sup>

But little time remained to remedy the lack of ethnic cohesion. Further inter-war efforts in this direction were ended with the outbreak of war in September 1939.

Canada declared war on Germany on 10 September 1939. No time was wasted in reacting to the possible threat posed by having potential enemies within the gates of the Dominion. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police had, by the end of August 1939, already compiled lists of persons linked to the Nazi movement in Canada who might pose a security risk as "fifth columnists;" and in the same month, plans for establishing two internment camps were also in place.<sup>138</sup> These precautionary measures were speedily utilized, for the arrests of German nationals and naturalized Canadians of ethnic German origin began on 4 September 1939.<sup>139</sup> The timing is significant, since it was one day after Britain's declaration of war on Germany, but six days before Canada officially entered the fray; a situation which resulted in an ineffectual official protest on behalf of the Reich government being lodged with the Canadian authorities.<sup>140</sup> Topping the list of those singled out to be interned were all National Socialist Party members residing in Canada, as well as the upper echelons of the *Deutscher Bund Canada*. Not surprisingly, among the first to be interned was Bernhard Bott; his *Deutsche Zeitung für Canada* was

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<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>138</sup> Wagner, *Brothers Beyond the Sea*, 132.

<sup>139</sup> See *ibid.*, 132; and two précised articles found in the DAI's files, the first from the "Daily Telegraph" [n.p.] of 7 September 1939, the second from the "Tägliche Omaha Tribune" [n.p.] of 8 September 1939 [USNA T81/502/5264860 and 5264858, respectively]

<sup>140</sup> Précis of a newspaper article published in the "Daily Telegraph" [n.p.], of 7 August 1939, USNA T81/502/5264860.

banned.<sup>141</sup> Before the month of September was over, 265 German citizens and 60 naturalized Canadians had been interned.<sup>142</sup> Once the ringleaders had been rounded up, efforts to intern Canada's ethnic Germans slowed, most likely due to reminiscences of Canadian reactions to the enemy alien question during the First World War. In all, only 840 ethnic Germans, regardless of citizenship, were interned in Canada during the entire Second World War.<sup>143</sup> And of these, only about 100 of the most fanatical pro-Nazis, including Bott, remained incarcerated for the duration.<sup>144</sup> As for the Reich's diplomatic representatives in Canada, they had been handed their passports on 11 September 1939 and ordered to leave the country.<sup>145</sup> The following day, the Canadian Government had decreed that all assets of the German Reich were to be seized and held until war's end.<sup>146</sup> When peace was finally secured in 1945, the Canadian government contemplated deporting to Germany those who had held most strongly to the Nazi ideals.<sup>147</sup> Among these were Bott and Straubinger. However, the escalating cold war and the ruined state of Europe combined to convince the government to drop deportation proceedings against

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<sup>141</sup>DAI memorandum dated 23 October 1939, USNA T81/502/5264861.

<sup>142</sup>Wagner, *Brothers Beyond the Sea*, 134; and a letter from an anonymous woman from British Columbia to the DAI, September 1939, USNA T81/502/5264847. The letter had been smuggled across the U.S. border and mailed from there to Germany.

<sup>143</sup>Wagner, *Brothers Beyond the Sea*, 134. For an example of Canadian treatment of the enemy alien issue in WWI, see Gerald G. Ross, "Fort William's Enemy Alien 'Problem' During the First World War," *The Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society Papers and Records* 22 (1994): 3-22.

<sup>144</sup>Wagner, *Brothers Beyond the Sea*, 142.

<sup>145</sup>Reported in the "Detroitter Abend-Post" [Detroit, U.S.A.], 12 September 1939, USNA T81/502/5264856.

<sup>146</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>147</sup>Wagner, *Brothers Beyond the Sea*, 142.

the former internees and allow them to reintegrate into Canadian society.

The diversity and distribution of Canada's ethnic German population during the inter-war period hindered its acceptance of *völkische Ideologie* and proved an obstacle to the efforts of those involved in *Deutschtumsarbeit*. Further aggravating this state of affairs was an advanced state of assimilation among much of Canada's *Deutschtum*. Nevertheless, hopes continued to be entertained, within both Canada and Germany, that the situation could be altered in favour of bringing them back into the fold of the *Volk*. The rationale behind this aim, and the methods employed to further it, are discussed in the chapter which follows.

## CHAPTER 2

### *DEUTSCHTUMSARBEIT IN GERMANY AND CANADA*

During the inter-war period, the German governments were very much involved in *Deutschtumsarbeit*. Official concerns in this regard were focused more on considerations of state than on the interests of the ethnic Germans *per se*. The precedent for such self-serving motivations stemmed not from the Nazis, but rather from the politicians of the Weimar era. The Nazis merely continued the practice, expanding upon it and ultimately subverting the movement to their own ends. Throughout the inter-war period, the diplomats of the *Auswärtiges Amt* (AA, Foreign Office) were responsible for implementing the policies of the German governments with regard to fostering the retention of the German language, culture and traditions among the ethnic Germans abroad. In addition to the diplomats, Reich-based organizations were also actively working towards these goals. Among these were two of the largest, the *Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland* (VDA, Association for the Ethnic Germans Abroad) and the *Deutsche Auslands-Institut* (DAI, German Foreign Institute). Although the VDA and the DAI began as private and semi-official organizations, respectively, by the end of the 1930s both had been transformed into mere tools of the Nazi Party-State. This chapter will show how governments and organizations within the Reich controlled and manipulated *Deutschtumsarbeit* around the globe. Particular emphasis will be placed



upon events within Canada to demonstrate the politicizing effect this had on the efforts of the ethnic Germans in Canada to maintain and strengthen their ethnic identity.

### **German Governments and *Deutschtumsarbeit***

For the most part, German officials and public opinion between 1870 and 1914 paid scant attention to those Germans abroad who were not Reich citizens.<sup>1</sup> However, Reich consular representatives were available to lend advice and assistance to German citizens, provided they sought it.<sup>2</sup> The onus was also upon these emigrants to retain their citizenship. Up to 1913, if a German citizen resided abroad for ten consecutive years without registering at a German consulate his citizenship was automatically revoked.<sup>3</sup> Then, during WWI, German citizens in enemy or neutral states were told to either declare their loyalty to Germany or sever all ties, an uncomfortable option considering the repressive measures against enemy aliens taken in most belligerent nations.<sup>4</sup> With the loss of the First World War, the German governments' attitudes towards the Germans beyond the borders of the Reich changed radically.

Signs of these changes began even before the terms of peace had been finalized. Although the German delegation to the peace negotiation in March 1919 was instructed not to insist upon the Reich's right to act in the behalf of the German minorities, since

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<sup>1</sup>Karl Loesch, "Die Ziele," in *Volk unter Völkern: Bücher des Deutschtums*, vol. 1, ed. Karl Loesch and A. Hillen Ziegfeld (Breslau: Ferdinand Hirt, 1925), 15.

<sup>2</sup>Edgar Boedicker, "Die Auslandsdeutschen als Faktor der deutschen Außenpolitik," *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte* 2, no. 18 (September 1931): 419.

<sup>3</sup>Ernst Ritter, *Das Deutsche Ausland-Institut in Stuttgart 1917-1945: Ein Beispiel deutscher Volkstumsarbeit zwischen den Weltkriegen* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag G.M.B.H.), 8, footnote 10. [Hereafter cited as DAI.]

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*

it was believed that these groups would gain more through self-representation,<sup>5</sup> the delegation was to secure the minorities' right to preserve German culture through attendance at German schools, churches and the maintenance of a German-language press.<sup>6</sup> Reich diplomatic efforts to protect German minorities temporarily ended with the imposed peace treaties which took none of the German concerns into consideration.<sup>7</sup> In fact, the treaties actually forbade political representation of the Germans abroad, leaving only religious, cultural and charitable avenues of assistance available.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, in May 1919 the Reich government had already given assurances to the Germans in the ceded territories that it would concern itself with their fate.<sup>9</sup> The first indication that these pledges would be honoured came sometime between August and October of 1921, when the government of Joseph Wirth embarked upon *Erfüllungspolitik* (a policy of fulfilment) with regard to the Treaty of Versailles.<sup>10</sup> This policy included "an extensive propaganda campaign for the rights of German minorities in the new states of Eastern Europe."<sup>11</sup> Gustav Stresemann, first in his capacity as chancellor, from August to November 1923, and then as foreign minister until October 1929, continued this policy.

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<sup>5</sup>R. Carey Goodman, "Did Weimar Have a National Ethnic Policy?" *Essays in History* 31 (1988): 58-59. [Hereafter cited as "Weimar."]

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>8</sup>Anthony Komjathy and Rebecca Stockwell *German Minorities and the Third Reich: Ethnic Germans of East Central Europe between the Wars* (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, Inc., 1980), 3. [Hereafter cited as *German Minorities*.]

<sup>9</sup>Goodman, "Weimar," 61.

<sup>10</sup>Carole Fink, "German Revisionspolitik, 1919-1933," *Historical Papers* 1986: 140-145. [Hereafter cited as "German Revisionspolitik."]

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, 140.

During the formative years of the Weimar Republic, official *Volkstumspolitik* took the form of preserving and maintaining the German communities beyond the Reich. This was based upon three primary considerations: foreign trade and diplomacy, revisionism of the Treaty of Versailles, and the state of the domestic economy.<sup>12</sup> First was the consideration that the ethnic Germans abroad might foster closer economic ties between their countries of residence and the Reich, thereby improving the Reich's financial situation.<sup>13</sup> An improvement in the Reich's trading relations with foreign nations could logically be viewed as a means to alleviate the problems which it faced *vis-à-vis* diplomatic isolation in the international arena.<sup>14</sup> That this required good relations between the German communities and their "host" nations did not entirely negate the second consideration for supporting *Deutschtumsarbeit*, which was the awareness that only a strong German element in the disputed areas provided any hope of peaceful

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<sup>12</sup>These three factors are a combination of those pointed out by John Hiden in, "The Weimar Republic and the Problem of the Auslandsdeutsche," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 12 (1977): 280-281 [hereafter cited as "Auslandsdeutsche"], and Goodman ("Weimar," 59).

<sup>13</sup>The government was not alone in this belief. The *Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland* (VDA, Association for Ethnic Germans Abroad) saw the winning over of the Germans abroad for the interests of German industry as their economic task, see Otto Schäfer, *Sinn und Wesen des V.D.A.: Volksbundes für das Deutschtum im Auslande* (Opladen: Müller & Co., 1933), 21. [Hereafter cited as V.D.A.] In F.S. [initials only], "Die Wirtschaftliche Bedeutung des Auslandsdeutschtums," *Der Auslandsdeutsche* 5 (1922): 462-463, the economic significance of the Auslandsdeutschtum was proclaimed by giving international parallels to their situation and potential effectiveness: the Jews maintained economic and linguistic ties despite their widespread dispersal, and the English apparently undertook no foreign business venture unless compatriots were involved.

<sup>14</sup>Hiden ("Auslandsdeutsche," 280-281) uses this argument to show that revisionism could not have held primacy of place in the Reich's relations with the Germans abroad, since to do so would have jeopardised their economic goals. Hiden also claims that concerns about upsetting foreign governments account for the Weimar governments' careful distinction between *Auslandsdeutsche* and *Volksdeutsche*. This is an interesting point, since the Nazis too were very specific about such terminology, but for political considerations.

revisionism.<sup>15</sup> Although the degree to which this consideration influenced official Reich policy remains in dispute,<sup>16</sup> the Weimar governments, by means of the minorities question, began early to politicize the issue. The fate of the Germans who found themselves beyond the western borders of Germany following WWI attests to this.

On 16 October 1925 the Treaty of Locarno was concluded between Germany, France, Belgium, Great Britain and Italy.<sup>17</sup> The purpose of the treaty was to ". . . collectively and severally guarantee . . . the maintenance of the territorial *status quo* resulting from the frontiers between Germany and Belgium and between Germany and France . . . ."<sup>18</sup> The primary consideration which induced Stresemann to renounce the *Grenzdeutsche* in these western border states was the desire to secure the withdrawal of the Allied troops of occupation from the Ruhr.<sup>19</sup> The pact also paved the way for Germany to gain entrance to the League of Nations, thereby ending its virtual international isolation. Furthermore, because it only guaranteed the borders on Germany's western flank, Stresemann had left open the possibility of a negotiated

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<sup>15</sup>Fink ("German Revisionspolitik," 145) stresses the peaceful approach to Weimar revisionism.

<sup>16</sup>Richard Blanke ("The German Minority in Inter-war Poland and German Foreign Policy--Some Reconsiderations," *Journal of Contemporary History* 25, no. 1 (1990): 91) rightly cautions against placing too much emphasis upon the motive of revisionism. Hiden goes even further, questioning the very existence of revisionism as an official Weimar *Deutschtumspolitik* ("Auslandsdeutsche," 279). Ritter (*DAI*, 2) is also of this opinion, seeing the aims of the *Volkstumsarbeit* as being limited and not intended to achieve revisionist or imperialist aims, equating the universalism of the movement with that of Socialism or Catholicism. See also Goodman, ("Weimar," 65-66) for more on the historical debate.

<sup>17</sup>For the full text of the "Treaty of Mutual Guarantee" concluded at Locarno, see *League of Nations Treaty Series: The Publication of treaties and International Engagements Registered with the Secretariat of the League of Nations*, vol. 54 (1926-1927), doc. 1292.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, doc. 1292, 293.

<sup>19</sup>Zygmunt Gasiorowski, "The Russian Overture to Germany of December 1924," *The Journal of Modern History* 30 (June 1958): 106-108.

revision of Versailles in the east.<sup>20</sup> More telling of the revisionist sentiments of the government was the fact that it had not entirely turned its back on those in Alsace. Throughout the latter 1920s, the Reich covertly funded the Alsatian movement for autonomy from France, thereby demonstrating that although Weimar's *Volkstumspolitik* was not necessarily revisionist, it *could* be used for such purposes.<sup>21</sup> Just as the Treaty of Locarno was signed in order to further Germany's foreign policy objectives, so too were the covert funds given in the attempt to set a precedent (in the event of a German minority victory in Alsace) for future revisions of Germany's eastern borders.

The third primary consideration behind the Reich's support of *Deutschtumsarbeit* was that the state was economically unable even to entertain the notion of absorbing the millions of German refugees attempting to flee from the border areas. The *Auswärtiges Amt* took the position that these Germans were of more value to the Reich where they were, and indeed, with few exceptions, required proof that asylum seekers were political (and not merely economic) refugees before they would be permitted to immigrate to the Reich. This stance was taken due to the growing unemployment in Germany and the housing and food shortages experienced in the years following WWI.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Marshall M. Lee and Wolfgang Michalka, *German Foreign Policy, 1917-1933: Continuity or Break?* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), 83-84 and Fink, "German Revisionspolitik," 1986, 144.

<sup>21</sup>Goodman, "Weimar," 66-67.

<sup>22</sup>*Auswärtiges Amt, Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik, 1918-1945, series A, vol. III, (Baden-Baden and Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1985), doc. 258: "Das Auswärtige Amt an die sächsische Gesandtschaft in Berlin," 25 August 1920, 521. These factors were still motives for the continuation of Deutschtumsarbeit during the Nazi period. In the words of a Deutsche Stiftung memorandum of 1936, "the presence of a strong German community may be likened to a political mortgage on [the ceded] territories" (Auswärtiges Amt, Documents on German Foreign Policy, series C, vol. V [London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1966], doc. 365: "The Foreign Ministry [by order Twardowski] to the Minister of Economics" Berlin 11 June 1936, 611-616, enclosure 2; hereafter cited as DGFP). The same document also mentions the*

These three motivating factors which induced the Weimar governments to support *Deutschtumsarbeit* (i.e., foreign trade and diplomacy, revisionism, and the domestic economy) demonstrate above all that such work was intended first and foremost to further the Reich's interests, and only secondarily to meet the minorities' needs.<sup>23</sup> As such, the goals of this support for the different ethnic German communities varied depending upon their particular situation.<sup>24</sup> Although the politicization of *Volkstumsarbeit* began early in the Weimar era, it was not until the coming to power of the National Socialists that such work was unquestionably subverted to State and Party ends.<sup>25</sup> The Nazis attempted to politicize the various German groups abroad, and thereby mobilize them in the name of National Socialism.<sup>26</sup> The key to both of these goals was effective and unrelenting propaganda.

The issue of control over propaganda topped the agenda at a conference of the heads of government and Party departments, held on 24 May 1933.<sup>27</sup> Goebbels and Neurath, as heads of PROMI and the AA, respectively, both desired to have the right to propagandize outside of Germany. According to the minutes of the meeting, Hitler settled the matter thus:

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fact that emigration of Germans from these areas into Germany would greatly tax the Reich's food and housing situation.

<sup>23</sup>See Goodman, "Weimar," 65 and 67.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>25</sup>See Otfried Dankelmann, "Aus der Praxis auswärtiger Kulturpolitik des deutschen Imperialismus 1933-1945," *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 20, no. 6 (1972): 719-736. [Hereafter cited as "Auswärtiger Kulturpolitik".]

<sup>26</sup>Ritter, *DAI*, 3.

<sup>27</sup>*DGFP*, Series C, vol. I, doc. 261, "Minutes of the Conference of Heads of Departments, "Wednesday, May 24, 1933, at 5:00 p.m.," 483-485.

The task of the Press Department of the [AA] is to communicate to world public opinion the definite official political view of the Government; the task of the [PROMI] is to see to it that the knowledge of this official point of view is supported by propaganda among the peoples. Substantial means are needed for this, since experience shows that propaganda abroad is very expensive.<sup>28</sup>

Moreover, Hitler decided that

No amount [of money] was too high for a good working propaganda establishment. In future the Press Department of the [AA] will limit itself to its previous traditional activity. Active propaganda abroad is taken over by the [PROMI] which is setting up a press office of its own.<sup>29</sup>

The outcome of this meeting was apparently finalized in a decree dated 30 June 1933.<sup>30</sup>

PROMI's leader, Goebbels, was given competence over

...all questions connected with the exercise of an intellectual and moral influence upon the nation, propaganda in the interests of the State, of culture and of the national economy, the instruction of public opinion at home and abroad concerning the same, and the administration of all organizations designed to serve these ends.<sup>31</sup>

In order for Goebbels to carry out these duties, several functions were transferred from various Reich organizations to PROMI. Among these were: the "Organization of news and information in foreign countries, art, art exhibitions, organization of films and sport in foreign countries" hitherto controlled by the AA; and the "Institution and celebration of national holidays and State festivals..." as well as the press and radio broadcasting from the Reich Ministry of the Interior.<sup>32</sup> Clearly, Goebbels had won for himself a large

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> "Decree Regarding the Tasks of the Reich Ministry of National Enlightenment and Propaganda, 30 June 1934," reproduced in full in Robert Dell, *Germany Unmasked* (London: Martin Hopkinson Ltd, 1934), 155-159.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 155 and 157.

stake in *Deutschtumsarbeit*; and he set to work shortly thereafter to influence not only the ethnic Germans, but also foreign public opinion, in the Americas.<sup>33</sup> Goebbels' directive of 20 September 1933 recorded the two central aims of Nazi propaganda in the New World, succinctly summarised by Alton Frye as follows:

1. In accord with the racial doctrines of National Socialism, to consolidate, gain control over, and enhance the power position of German elements in the several American states.
2. To win influence over public opinion in the Western Hemisphere in order to improve Germany's international position, and to weaken the power of American governments to provide effective opposition to Nazi policies and actions.<sup>34</sup>

For the purposes of this thesis, the first goal is obviously most relevant. However, it is interesting to note Frye's overall analysis which claims that attempts to achieve the first goal seriously hindered the realization of the second, as American governments became increasingly uneasy with the perception that Germany was meddling in their internal affairs.<sup>35</sup>

Perhaps most important to the study of *Deutschtumsarbeit* in Canada, with regard to Goebbels' decree, were the stated means by which influence was to be secured.

According to Goebbels

The campaign for winning over public opinion in foreign countries will be initiated by the competent Ministry and its confidential agents, in accordance with a comprehensive programme covering all the means of conveying information. Chief among the latter are:  
an extended German wireless news service,

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<sup>33</sup>"General Instructions for German Propaganda Relative to Action in North and South America," reprinted in full in Dell, *Germany Unmasked*, 161-239. [Hereafter cited as "General Instructions."]

<sup>34</sup>Alton Frye, *Nazi Germany and the American Hemisphere, 1933-1941* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1967), 31. [Hereafter cited as *Nazi Germany*.]

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*



the same in a thoroughly neutral guise,  
 a skilful wireless broadcast propaganda, which will also be organized for  
 overseas listeners,  
 direct attempts to influence the foreign Press...,  
 the publication of German propaganda articles in this foreign Press in a  
 form not recognizable as propaganda,  
 the cultivation of personal relations with leading foreign newspaper  
 representatives and newspaper owners, with a view to possible  
 influence by personal favours,  
 a cultural and tourist-travel propaganda which henceforth must also to  
 some extent be skilfully employed for purposes of political  
 propaganda,  
 furthermore, any sort of organization adapted to the influencing of opinion  
 in favour of Germany. Such would include occasional exhibitions,  
 above all in the field of the graphic arts, which would include, in  
 particular, all propagandist works concerning the new [*sic*]  
 Germany.  
 Finally, there is the question of translating these and other German books  
 and writings into the native language of the States in question: that  
 is to say, in the present case, into English, Spanish and  
 Portuguese.<sup>36</sup>

Many of the above-mentioned plans to reach the ethnic Germans in behalf of National Socialism were eventually employed in Canada. Nazi short-wave broadcasts to America had already begun on 1 April 1933, under direct orders from Hitler.<sup>37</sup> In Canada, short-wave listeners were advised by the Canadian German-language press of the upcoming week's schedule of programs.<sup>38</sup> Thus forewarned, they could avail themselves, throughout each week, of German music, essays, which often featured topics concerning ethnic Germans around the world, news from Germany, as well as political speeches by

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<sup>36</sup>"General Instructions," 165.

<sup>37</sup>Fritz H. Reimesch, "Auslanddeutschtum und Deutscher Rundfunk," *Auslanddeutschtum und evangelische Kirche*, 1935 yearbook: 69.

<sup>38</sup>See for example, "Deutscher Kurzwellensender: Programm vom 19-26 Juli 1933," *NW*, 19 July 1933.

National Socialist leaders.<sup>39</sup> Goebbels' instructions also elaborated on the concept of tourist and cultural propaganda which was to be carried on abroad. In many areas of the globe, the offices of the large shipping lines were to be entrusted with the task of its dissemination. The North German Lloyd steamship company had agents in the major urban centres across Canada--agents who distributed National Socialist propaganda films to German-Canadian clubs and organizations free of charge.<sup>40</sup> Since film was the most effective and perhaps even the best propaganda tool of the Nazis,<sup>41</sup> it is hardly surprising that Franz Straubinger expended considerable effort in procuring Nazi film propaganda for Canada.<sup>42</sup> Straubinger, as a representative of the Foreign Films Limited, Canada, attempted, in 1936, to have the major Canadian theatre chains show German films, but was unsuccessful due to the boycott of German goods which was then gaining ground.<sup>43</sup> Straubinger next attempted to rent private theatres to show films to exclusively ethnic German audiences. However, he again met with failure because owners were afraid that they would be blacklisted and therefore no longer eligible to procure English-language

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<sup>39</sup>Especially appreciated were those speeches of Hitler which were broadcast via short-wave; see for example, Stürtz to the Leitung des Partei-Archivs der NSDAP, 7 November 1934, NSDAP Hauptarchiv, Hoover Institution Microfilm Collection, reel no. 34, folder no. 664: "Canada."

<sup>40</sup>Wagner, *Brothers Beyond the Sea*, 61.

<sup>41</sup>Heinrich Volberg, *Auslandsdeutschtum und Drittes Reich: Der Fall Argentinien* (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 1981), 167.

<sup>42</sup>Much correspondence passed between Hoffmann and Straubinger, as the latter attempted to procure films from Germany. See for example Straubinger to Hoffmann, 17 January 1938, USNA T81/31/28265; Straubinger to Hoffmann, 16 February 1938, USNA T81/31/28259; Hoffmann to Straubinger, 23 March 1938, USNA T81/31/28262; Straubinger to Hoffmann, 12 May 1938, USNA T81/31/28257; Hoffmann to Straubinger, 18 May 1938, USNA T81/31/28258.

<sup>43</sup>Straubinger to Hoffmann, 18 October 1936, USNA T81/26/23830-23831.

films.<sup>44</sup> This left him only one avenue to pursue; the procurement of films in the sixteen millimetre format which would enable Nazi propaganda films to be shown in the private meeting halls of the German-Canadian clubs and associations.<sup>45</sup> Straubinger's efforts to show Nazi film propaganda continued into 1939, by which time he could report limited success in this field.<sup>46</sup>

The implementation of Goebbels' propaganda instructions is especially evident with regard to the Canadian German-language press. The most obvious examples are the blatantly pro-Nazi bent of the *Courier* and the *Deutsche Zeitung für Canada* while Party member Bernhard Bott edited them. Other Canadian German-language newspapers were also used as conduits for Nazi propaganda, including the *Mennonitische Rundschau*, the *Nordwesten*, and the *Alberta Herold*. All five of the above-mentioned newspapers printed news service material sent to them by Rolf Hoffmann, head of the Munich based *Auslandspresseabteilung der NSDAP* (Foreign Press Division of the NSDAP).<sup>47</sup> Another agency which supplied Canadian German-language newspapers with news reports was the Propaganda Ministry's *Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro* (German News Agency).<sup>48</sup> Evidence exists that some of the Canadian German-language papers also printed feature articles

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<sup>44</sup>Straubinger to Hoffmann, no date, USNA T81/26/23836-23837.

<sup>45</sup>*Ibid.* and Straubinger to Hoffmann, 17 January 1938, USNA T81/31/28265.

<sup>46</sup>Straubinger to Hoffmann, 12 February 1939, USNA T81/29/25974.

<sup>47</sup>See correspondence between Hoffmann's office and: the *Alberta Herold*, 2 February 1939, USNA T81/25/ 22196, and 10 July 1939, USNA T81/25/22195; the *Mennonitische Rundschau*, 2 February 1939, USNA T81/29/25594, and USNA/T81/29/25593; the *Nordwesten*, 3 February 1939, USNA T81/29/25678, and 10 July 1939, USNA T81/29/25677; the *Courier*, 2 February 1939, USNA T81/25/22479, and 10 July 1939, USNA T81/25/22478; and the *Deutsche Zeitung für Canada*, 20 December 1937, USNA T81/29/26410, 3 February 1939, USNA T81/26/22526, and 10 July 1939, USNA T81/26/22521.

<sup>48</sup>Wagner, *Brothers Beyond the Sea*, 108.

sent to them from Germany.<sup>49</sup> In an attempt to reach English speaking Canadians and counter the "lies" about the New Germany being published in the Canadian English-language press, Bernhard Bott began printing an English-language section in the *Deutsche Zeitung für Canada* in mid-1937.<sup>50</sup> Hoffmann applauded this move,<sup>51</sup> and provided the newspaper with English-language material, including feature articles.<sup>52</sup> Clearly then, Goebbels' decree of 20 September 1933 regarding the dissemination of propaganda in the Americas was applied to Canada.

There remains, however, one other tenet of Goebbels' decree which must be discussed, since it has considerable bearing upon an understanding of the full extent of Reich-based propaganda which was disseminated through the Canadian German-language press. Goebbels explained that efforts to sway public opinion in favour of the National Socialist regime and its ideology, "...must be done with extreme caution, so that neither the sources nor the real aims of such a propaganda may be perceptible."<sup>53</sup> Such a deliberate policy of camouflaging the true origin of Nazi, or pro-Nazi articles renders the findings of any study of *Deutschtumsarbeit*, based upon content analysis of Canadian

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<sup>49</sup>See correspondence from Hoffmann's office to: the *Mennonitische Rundschau*, 4 May 1936, USNA T81/26/23563; and the *Deutsche Zeitung für Canada*, 15 June 1936, USNA T81/26/23206.

<sup>50</sup>Bott to Hoffmann, 10 June 1937, USNA T81/29/26424-26427.

<sup>51</sup>Hoffmann to the *Deutsche Zeitung für Canada*, 9 December 1937, USNA T81/29/26413-26414.

<sup>52</sup>See for example, Hoffmann to the *Deutsche Zeitung für Canada*: 17 June 1937, USNA T81/29/26428; 1 November 1937, USNA T81/29/26418; and 15 December 1937, USNA T81/29/26411; as well as Bott to Hoffmann: 27 April 1937, USNA T81/29/26431-26432; and 16 November 1937, USNA T81/29/26415-26416.

<sup>53</sup>"General Instructions," 163.

German-language press, rather suspect.<sup>54</sup> The problem rests in the fact that one is unable to determine whether the articles emanated from within the Reich or from Canada; whether the authors were citizens of Canada or elsewhere; whether authors with non-German family names were in the employ of the Nazis, or if in fact such names were merely aliases.<sup>55</sup> Unfortunately, the PROMI records relating to its influence over the Canadian German-language press have been lost.<sup>56</sup> Thus, little evidence remains which would enable one to convincingly dispel the above-mentioned concerns as they relate to the attitudes of Canada's *Deutschtum* towards Nazi Germany. Whose attitudes did many of the articles contained within the German-language press truly reflect; the ethnic Germans' in Canada, or the National Socialists' in Germany? One is not even able to assume beyond a reasonable doubt that the editors of the papers (excluding Bott) were convinced proponents of National Socialism. Declining readership of the Canadian German-language press, and the poor economic situation in Canada during the 1930s, could have combined to predispose German-Canadian editors to another stated tactic of Goebbels. This was to supply articles to foreign newspapers, "for the most part...entirely free of cost, and sometimes [these newspapers were] even paid to publish

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<sup>54</sup>An example of a study based on content analysis is Epp's "An Analysis of Germanism and National Socialism in the Immigrant Newspaper of a Canadian Minority Group, The Mennonites, In the 1930s," (see above, chapter 1, page 72, footnote 128).

<sup>55</sup>For instance, Hoffmann's department informed the *Deutsche Zeitung für Canada*, on 14 March 1939, that Philip Spranklin, an Englishman, was prepared to submit reports from Berlin concerning events in Germany (USNA T81/26/22525).

Straubinger at least once signed an "Open Letter" to the citizens of Manitoba with the name "G. Macdonald" (Wagner, *Brothers Beyond the Sea*, 87-88). Granted, this was not a newspaper article, but there is no reason to discount the possibility that other articles, signed with a similarly bogus name, had not been written for the press.

<sup>56</sup>Wagner, *Brothers Beyond the Sea*, page 108, footnote 192.

them...."<sup>57</sup> Thus the appearance of National Socialist propaganda, in the guise of *Deutschtumsarbeit*, in the German-Canadian press could well have stemmed from little more than economic necessity on the part of the papers. Such considerations necessitate a broader study of *Deutschtumsarbeit* in Canada; one which includes an analysis of what the Nazis in Germany had in mind for their ethnic brethren outside of the Reich.

The earliest concern for Germans abroad, as expressed by Hitler, was in the first point of the 1920 Party program. This was in the pan-Germanic mould which sought "the unification of all Germans in the Greater Germany on the basis of self-determination of peoples."<sup>58</sup> Similar sentiments were repeated in Hitler's book, *Mein Kampf*, written in 1924.<sup>59</sup> By 1928, Hitler, while continuing with this view, also clarified that NSDAP policy would include "no Germanizing or Teutonizing" of those not belonging to the Germanic race; he was interested only in converting to National Socialism those "who belong to our people, who are of our blood, and who speak our language" in keeping with "völkisch racial views."<sup>60</sup>

Almost immediately upon assuming office in 1933, Hitler spoke before the

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<sup>57</sup>"General Instructions," 211.

On the decline in readership of the Canadian German-language press, see above, chapter 1, page 74, footnote 131.

<sup>58</sup>English translation of the program found in Perry M. Rogers, ed. *Aspects of Western Civilization: Problems and Sources in History*, vol. II (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1988), 318-320. Interestingly, those in independent Germanic states such as Luxembourg and Switzerland were, according to Heinz Kloss (*Brüder vor den Toren des Reiches: Vom volksdeutschen Schicksal* [Berlin: Propaganda Verlag Paul Hochmuth, 1940], 7 [hereafter cited as *Brüder vor den Toren*]), excluded from such considerations.

<sup>59</sup>See Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Ralph Manheim, trans. N.p.: Verlag Frz. Eher Nachf, G.M.B.H., 1925. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1943. This 15th reprint, 1971), passim.

<sup>60</sup>Cited in McKale, *Swastika Outside Germany*, 9 and 10.

Reichstag on the subject of the German minorities, stating that,

Especially close to our hearts is the fate of the Germans living beyond the borders of the Reich, who are tied to us through language, culture and customs and who fight hard for these things. The national government is determined to represent, with all means at its disposal, the internationally guaranteed rights of the German minorities.<sup>61</sup>

Similar expressions of solidarity were made before the Reichstag in the coming years.<sup>62</sup>

Just as the governments of Weimar Germany had utilised the *Volkstum* issue to further the interests of the Reich, so too did the National Socialists subvert the interests of the German groups abroad to state interests. Already in 1928 Hitler had determined that the fate of some 200,000 Germans in the South Tyrol could not be allowed to jeopardize relations with Italy, Germany's only logical ally against Versailles.<sup>63</sup> This decision was faithfully and consistently adhered to during the years of Nazi rule, culminating in the mass transfer of much of this population to the Reich during the early years of WWII.<sup>64</sup> The Germans in Poland were also made to realize the purely utilitarian role which the minorities issue was to play for the Third Reich, when in 1934, Germany

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<sup>61</sup>Extract of Hitler's 23 March 1933 speech cited in Heinz Manthe, *Schularbeit im Dienste des Auslanddeutschtums* (N.p.: Volksbund für das Deutschtum im Ausland, 1933), 5.

<sup>62</sup>For extracts, see Kloss, *Brüder vor den Toren*, 26.

<sup>63</sup>See Hitler's speech of 13 July 1928, printed in the National Socialist Party organ, the *Völkischer Beobachter* on 18 July 1928 (printed in full in Weinberg's introduction to Adolf Hitler, *Hitlers Zweites Buch: Ein Dokument aus dem Jahr 1928*, ed. Gerhard L. Weinberg, with a preface by Hans Rothfels (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1961), 27-29). Similar sentiments are expressed, almost verbatim, within the text of the Second Book (*ibid.*, 188). Hitler's decision rested largely on the view that the Germans in the South Tyrol could do the most for German foreign policy by bridging the gap between Germany and Italy; a gap which had opened when the two countries found themselves on opposing sides in the Great War (*ibid.*, 29, 205, and 216).

<sup>64</sup>See Alfons Gruber, "Die Option des Jahres 1939 in Südtirol," *Österreich in Geschichte und Literatur* 34, no. 5B-6 (1990): 295-300.

signed a non-aggression pact with Poland.<sup>65</sup> These were the very same Germans over whose fate Hitler decided five years later to wage a war with Poland. The Carpathian Germans also experienced this when Hitler backed the formation of the independent Slovak state in 1939, rather than incorporating this ethnic group into the Reich.<sup>66</sup> And finally, following the collapse of Poland in 1939, Hitler, in fulfilment of his obligations to Stalin *vis-à-vis* the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of August 1939, relocated the German elements residing in what became recognised as the Soviet sphere of influence in Bessarabia and the Baltic states.<sup>67</sup> Hans Steinacher, writing after the war, remarked on this trait of Hitler:

For Hitler the questions concerning the Volk were only tactical opportunities of his policies. He played with them as he needed them. [Dr. Hermann] Ullmann [who was very active in *Deutschtumsarbeit* within Germany] was correct when he stated: "Hitler practised his greatest betrayal in the question concerning the Volk."<sup>68</sup>

The degree to which Hitler so cavalierly betrayed the interests of the *Deutschtum im Ausland* appears somewhat startling in light of the energies and funds expended by the Party to Nazify them and also to coordinate the various groups involved in *Deutschtumsarbeit*. On the other hand, one may perceive these activities as being conducted precisely to gain control of the various German communities which would

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<sup>65</sup>MacAlister Brown, "The Third Reich's Mobilization of the German Fifth Column in Eastern Europe," *Journal of Central European Affairs* 19 (1959): 129, and 146-148. [Henceforth cited as "German Fifth Column in Eastern Europe."]

<sup>66</sup>Valdis O. Lumans, "The Ethnic German Minority of Slovakia and the Third Reich, 1938-45," *Journal of Central European History* 15, no. 3 (1982): 269-271.

<sup>67</sup>Brown, "German Fifth Column in Eastern Europe," 146-148.

<sup>68</sup>Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, ed., *Hans Steinacher, Bundesleiter des VDA 1933-1937: Erinnerungen und Dokumente* (Boppard on the Rhein: Harald Boldt Verlag, 1970), doc. no. 31: "Der 15. Oktober 1934 und seine Folgen," 163. [Hereafter cited as *Steinacher*.]



thereby facilitate their use by Germany as best benefitted Germany.

In order to ensure the success of *Deuschtumsarbeit*, massive amounts of government funds were needed. During the 1920s the German government, through its various ministries, gave financial support to the German minorities abroad. This was in the form of charitable endowments, subsidies and running accounts (*laufende Beiträge*) from various government budgets including the AA and the Reich Ministry of the Interior.<sup>69</sup> The same can be said of the Nazi period, during which tens of millions of Reichsmark must have been spent annually by all of the various ministries, agencies and organisations involved in such work.<sup>70</sup>

Detailed and accurate figures for government funding of the *Deuschtumsarbeit*, both within and without the Reich for the entire inter-war period is almost impossible to determine due to the loss of records and the secrecy surrounding the transactions.<sup>71</sup> However, some sense of the enormity of the undertaking can be gained from a few specific references. In May 1920 some 15 million Marks were set aside by the German cabinet for the purposes of *Deuschtumsarbeit*.<sup>72</sup> On 23 March 1926 Stresemann requested that 30 million Marks be made available for *Deuschtumsarbeit* in the ceded territories "*where the Reich's political interests were directly or indirectly at stake.*"<sup>73</sup> One week later the cabinet made funds available for Stresemann's proposal. By

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<sup>69</sup>*Ibid.*, xli.

<sup>70</sup>Komjathy and Stockwell, *German Minorities*, 14.

<sup>71</sup>*Ibid.*, and Goodman, "Weimar," 63.

<sup>72</sup>Goodman, "Weimar," 62.

<sup>73</sup>*Ibid.*, 63 [Goodman's words and italics].

December 1926 Stresemann was convinced of the need to extend funding for *Deuschtumsarbeit* throughout all of Europe; no longer was it to be primarily directed at the ceded territories. To this end he requested that a further 80 to 100 million Marks be made available.<sup>74</sup> The governments of Weimar Germany continued financial support for *Deuschtumsarbeit* right up to 1933.<sup>75</sup> That there was never an indication of flagging governmental support for such work is signified by the fact that the AA alone contributed 8,059,000 Marks from its 1932 budget.<sup>76</sup>

The NS government perpetuated the financial backing of *Deuschtumsarbeit*, contributing millions of Marks annually.<sup>77</sup> From 1933 on, the Ministry of the Interior alone made over one million Marks a year available for such work.<sup>78</sup> One example of the Finance Ministry's contribution is the 7,708,000 Marks allocated for the single year 1936.<sup>79</sup> Between 1933 and 1938 millions of Marks more were allocated for ethnic German libraries, scientific research, and the various organisations involved in *Deuschtumsarbeit*. Just how all of this official government interest affected *Deuschtumsarbeit* in Canada will be demonstrated through a representative sampling of -the actions of the German Foreign Office personnel in Canada.

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<sup>74</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup>*Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>76</sup>Komjathy and Stockwell, *German Minorities*, 14.

<sup>77</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup>Dankelmann, "Auswärtiger Kulturpolitik," 720-721.

<sup>79</sup>Komjathy and Stockwell, *German Minorities*, 14.

**The Auswärtiges Amt**

During much of the 1920s, the German diplomats in Canada busied themselves largely with normalizing relations with Canada, relations which had ended abruptly with the outbreak of war in 1914. Seeking to resume German immigration to Canada, to improve trade relations, and to end Canada's reparations demands formed the bulk of such efforts. Trade relations between Germany and Canada had, by 1928, resumed to such an extent as to make Germany Canada's third largest trading partner for the fiscal years 1927 and 1928.<sup>80</sup> Presumably on the basis of the strength of trade between the two countries, the Germans approached the Canadian government in both 1927 and 1928 in attempts to secure for themselves the status of most-favoured-nation.<sup>81</sup> According to the Germans, the inability to come to terms over this issue was due in the first instance to the opposition mounted by Canadian farmers who desired the maintenance of a grain tariff, and in the second by a lack of earnestness on the part of the Canadian government. Another indication of the importance of trade to the German diplomats in Canada was revealed when consideration was given to open a consulate in Vancouver in 1928. This was necessary, German General Consul Ludwig Kempff explained, not from any consideration of caring for the *Deutschtum* there, but strictly to improve trade.<sup>82</sup> With regard to ethnic German property seized in Canada during the war, Kempff, in 1923,

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<sup>80</sup>Kempff to AA, [Montreal] journal no. 914, 24 September 1929, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, Bonn, R77315 [hereafter cited as PA AA, followed by the volume number].

<sup>81</sup>Appendix 2: "Aufzeichnung über den bisherigen Verlauf unserer Handelsvertragsverhandlungen mit Kanada," in de Haas' information packet to von Weizsäcker, III E 3538, 4 September 1929, PA AA, R77315.

<sup>82</sup>Kempff to AA, [Montreal] journal no. 11, 6 January 1928, PA AA, R77333.

estimated the total value to be about half a million dollars.<sup>83</sup> This figure was either grossly under-estimated, or was greatly affected by inflation for, by 1929, there remained an estimated ten million dollars worth of confiscated property which had still not been returned despite six years of negotiations between the German and Canadian governments.<sup>84</sup> The AA officials were also much concerned with the welfare of German citizens residing in Canada, and this included attempts to lessen the anti-German sentiment prevailing among much of the non-German population.

The records of the German consulates' communications with the AA shed some light on the extent and duration of Canadian anti-German sentiment stemming from the First World War. Kempff re-opened the German General Consulate in Montreal on 16 March 1921,<sup>85</sup> but was unable to secure office space until mid-April.<sup>86</sup> The General Consul opined that the delay resulted from discrimination at the hands of landlords who did not wish to rent space to the German government. Another show of "patriotism" to which the Canadians subjected Kempff was the smashing of the General Consulate's window during the 1922 New Year's festivities.<sup>87</sup> Continued negative sentiments towards the ethnic German element in Canada induced Kempff to undertake a tour of western Canada in 1923.<sup>88</sup> He was of the opinion that the German government could not sanction

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<sup>83</sup>Kempff to AA, [Montreal] journal no. 1890, 22 May 1923, PA AA, R77314.

<sup>84</sup>Appendix 3: "Aufzeichnung über das deutsche Eigentum," in de Haas' information packet to von Weizsäcker, III E 3538, 4 September 1929, PA AA, R77315.

<sup>85</sup>Kempff to AA, [Montreal] journal no. 46, 16 March 1921, PA AA, R77332.

<sup>86</sup>Kempff to AA, [Montreal] journal no. 376, 19 April 1921, PA AA, R77314.

<sup>87</sup>Kempff to AA, [Montreal] journal no. 43/1922, 5 January 1922, PA AA, R77332.

<sup>88</sup>Kempff to AA, [Montreal] journal no. 1891, 23 May 1923, PA AA, R77314.

a resumption of German immigration to Canada if German citizens were to be subjected to discrimination on the basis of their origin. By 1925, Kempff was able to report that the attitudes of Canada's businessmen and statesmen were warming to normalized relations with Germany.<sup>89</sup> However, he also remarked that the Canadian public was slower to forget the events of 1914-18, and would require much more time to come around to a more tolerant point of view. This assessment was accurate for, in 1927, Kempff commented that anti-German sentiment lingered in Canada longer than in other Anglophone countries, such as the United States or Britain.<sup>90</sup> Years of mistreatment at the hands of their fellow Canadians had left many ethnic Germans in Canada extremely bitter. Despite the vengeful attitude of many ethnic Germans in Canada, who were not inclined to seek a rapprochement with their Canadian neighbours for this very reason, Kempff held that no progress was to be made by not forgetting the past. He was in favour of letting "by-gones be by-gones" since the task of Germany's diplomats was to reconstruct normal conditions abroad, and because one could not talk about a "spirit of Locarno" without actually setting it into motion. For these reasons he accepted an invitation to attend a charity ball staged by the rabidly patriotic Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire, the very same group which, in 1923, had protested against re-opening Canadian immigration to Germans. Finally, by late 1929, Kempff could write of a noticeable improvement in Canadian attitudes towards Germany. This he saw in the

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<sup>89</sup>Unsigned memorandum from the German General Consulate in Montreal to AA, [Montreal] journal no. 821, received in Berlin on 27 November 1925, PA AA, R77314.

<sup>90</sup>Kempff to AA, journal no. 440, 2 May 1927, PA AA, R77347.

fact that he was now being asked to speak before various Canadian social clubs.<sup>91</sup>

Nevertheless, as late as December 1932, Kempff informed the AA that anti-German sentiment continued to linger within Canada:

More than in other Canadian cities, there are still [to be found in Toronto] many, especially among the middle-class, who have remained narrow-minded and who have not yet forgotten the war.<sup>92</sup>

The longevity of hatred within Canada towards Germans following the Great War helps make understandable the rapid condemnation among Canadians of Hitler, his government, and the repressive conditions within Germany which followed his assumption of power. For their part, German diplomatic representatives during the Nazi period used every opportunity to assure the ethnic German community in Canada that the resurgence of anti-German sentiment, especially that found in the English-language press, was nothing more than a revisitation of sentiments engendered by the last war. The German diplomats, as part of *Deutschtumsarbeit*, appealed to the ethnic Germans' memories of persecution, in an attempt to make Nazism understandable, less monstrous and more appealing.<sup>93</sup>

As for *Deutschtumsarbeit* itself, Germany's diplomatic corps in Canada had become directly involved as early as the mid-1920s. Writing to the AA in response to a visit to Canada by Reichsminister Dr. Erich Koch, Kempff stated that he was willing

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<sup>91</sup>Kempff to AA, [Montreal] journal no. 1029, 28 October 1929, PA AA, R77315. See also Kempff to AA, [Montreal] journal no. 914, 24 September 1929, PA AA, R77315.

<sup>92</sup>Kempff to AA, [Montreal] journal no. 1059, 1 December 1932, PA AA, R77315.

<sup>93</sup>See the German Day speeches of Consul Seelheim and General Consul Kempff in "Erfolgreicher Deutscher Tag in Edmonton, Alta.," *Der Nordwesten* [hereafter cited as *NW*], 14 August 1935, and "Nachklänge vom Deutschen Tag Ontarios," *NW*, 18 September 1935, respectively.

to oversee the welfare of the *Deutschtum* in Canada.<sup>94</sup> Kempff added, however, that this task could only succeed if funds were forthcoming from Germany. Presumably, the funds would be expended for what he considered, in 1926, to be the only avenue available to this end: increasing the number of German libraries in order to facilitate the retention of the German language.<sup>95</sup>

While in Canada, Koch had addressed the issue of Canada as a region for German settlement. Koch believed that the German government should guard against the Anglicization of German immigrants in Canada. Kempff agreed with this assessment and felt that the Germans who immigrated to Canada should not passively accept Anglicization.<sup>96</sup> Although they should become "good sons" of their new country of residence, Kempff thought that they should retain an awareness of their ethnicity, as well as love and sympathy for their homeland. Following up on this line of reasoning, Kempff gave to Consul Lorenz, of the newly established consulate in Winnipeg, the job of investigating these issues among the ethnic Germans on the Prairies.

Lorenz lost no time looking into the issue of preserving the *Deutschtum* on the Prairies. After criss-crossing the Prairie Provinces on a fact finding mission, he submitted a lengthy report within about six months of being assigned the task.<sup>97</sup> The report is significant as it demonstrates the AA's interest in not only preserving but also

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<sup>94</sup>Kempff to AA, Journal no. 926, 18 October 1926, PA AA, R77347.

<sup>95</sup>Kempff to Koch, 14 October 1926, appended to Journal no. 926 of 18 October 1926, PA AA, R77347.

<sup>96</sup>Kempff to Koch, 14 October 1926, appended to Journal no. 926 of 18 October 1926, PA AA, R77347.

<sup>97</sup>Appendix to a letter from Kempff to AA, [Montreal] journal no. 419, 27 April 1927, PA AA, R77347; Lorenz to AA, [Winnipeg] journal no. 177, 20 April 1927.

strengthening the political clout within the Canadian system, of the *Deutschtum* in Canada. Lorenz believed that the maintenance of German culture and language among the second and third generations of immigrants to Canada could only be assured if the settlers concentrated themselves in one rural region. The industrialization to be found in Manitoba and Alberta, combined with the high cost of real-estate in these two provinces, led him to discount them as preferred destinations. The predominantly agricultural nature of Saskatchewan, and the fact that it had the highest percentage of German-speaking residents according to the 1921 census (13.3 per cent, as opposed to 6.8 per cent for Alberta and 5.8 per cent for Manitoba) led him to conclude that "It is my opinion [...that] German immigration be concentrated, as much as possible, in the province of Saskatchewan, in order to strengthen the political position of the *Deutschtum* there." Because the *Reichsdeutsche* element in Canada was not large anyway, Lorenz suggested that they be encouraged to disperse among the various existing communities in Saskatchewan in order to assume leading positions in the communities. An added result of such a settlement scheme would be the simultaneous reduction of the influence of the clergy. Settlement patterns based on religious denomination rather than place of origin, combined with a real lack of cultural activities with which to occupy themselves, had led to a situation where the clergy filled a function larger than just religious duties. Lorenz' report continued by emphasizing the need for new immigrants to work for a year or two as farm-hands before taking up land of their own. Only in this way could they become familiar with local conditions without wasting what little money they may have brought to Canada. Although the Canadian government had recently realized the benefits



of ethnic group-settlement, they had not relinquished the goal of eventual assimilation. Consequently, the immigration societies, which from political and technical considerations Lorenz felt had to be German-Canadian, were not to become complacent. The emigration societies within the Reich were to work with the immigration societies in Canada. But the former must not push too strenuously for more German immigration to Canada, as Canada was becoming saturated with immigrants—a situation which was brewing anti-immigration sentiments among Canadian citizens. In conclusion, Lorenz summarized his report by reiterating what he considered to be the five essential points to the preservation of the *Deutschtum* in Canada's West:

1. Emigration of *Reichsdeutsche* to Canada should be restricted to those who appear able to adapt to conditions in Canada and who were willing to work as farm-hands for one to two years.
2. Applicants were to be directed to ethnic German settlements.
3. Representatives of immigration under-takings had to be from German-Canadian organizations.
4. Considerations as to the particular settlement to which emigrants were to be sent must be based on confession, rather than country of origin; especially important is the consideration that *Reichsdeutsche* be dispersed among the various ethnic German communities.
5. New settlements should be founded in large, self-contained blocs, and above all in Saskatchewan.

The degree to which Lorenz' recommendations, entirely endorsed by Kempff, were

followed by the Reich government cannot be gauged, due to the closing of the doors of immigration to Canada by 1930. Nevertheless, these recommendations clearly demonstrate the AA's interest in and desire to influence the *Deutschtum* in Canada, a situation technically beyond the scope of its mandate, since the AA was supposed to relegate its activities to the sphere of the *Reichsdeutsche* only.

The actions of the German diplomatic corps within Canada, with regard to *Deutschtumsarbeit* went beyond mere recommendations. In response to Foreign Office directives, the diplomats contributed directly to *Deutschtumsarbeit* by compiling and forwarding to Germany information on Canada's ethnic Germans.<sup>98</sup> Included in the often lengthy reports were assessments of the number of ethnic Germans in Canada, brief histories of their earliest settlement, and their assimilation into the Anglo-Saxon culture. Furthermore, extensive lists were compiled regarding German-language newspapers, German schools, German churches, German-Canadian (social, charitable, religious, etc.) clubs and organizations, as well as the *raisons d'être* and membership figures of these clubs and organisations. Although the reports were directed to the appropriate AA departments, such as Department VI (Cultural Affairs) and Department III (responsible

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<sup>98</sup>The major reports were initiated by order of the AA. The first request was from *Abteilung VI* (Department VI; cultural affairs) of 16 April 1927, and resulted in: Kempff to AA, [Montreal] journal no. 15/28, 7 January 1928, PA AA, R77347; and Kempff to AA, [Montreal] journal no. 310, 5 May 1928, PA AA, R77347. The second spate of information resulted from an AA circular of 11 November 1933. The results of which were reported in: Kempff to AA, [Montreal] journal no. 1114, 8 January 1934, PA AA, R77333; Martin to AA, [Winnipeg] journal no. 439, 15 March 1934, PA AA, R77333; Kempff to AA, [Montreal] journal no. 1151, [as of 20 November 1934], PA AA, R77333; Consulate Winnipeg to AA, [as of 1 November 1935], PA AA, R77333; Kempff to AA, [Montreal] journal no. 1432, 20 December 1935, PA AA, R77333. Additionally, after the Nazis came to power, the German Consulates in Canada passed on denunciations of ethnic Germans made by other ethnic Germans in Canada. An example of which is a letter denouncing someone as a communist propagandist which made its way from Seelheim in Winnipeg to the AA in Berlin from whence it was forwarded to the Interior Ministry (Seelheim to AA, [Winnipeg] journal no. 512, 20 July 1934, PA AA, R77347).

for Great Britain, her Dominions and colonies; America; and Turkey), Kempff expected and desired that they would be passed on to organizations within the Reich involved in *Deutschtumsarbeit*.<sup>99</sup>

Reich diplomatic representatives also facilitated contact between Reich organisations involved in *Deutschtumsarbeit* with German groups and individuals in Canada. This situation prevailed as early as 1922, when Kempff provided contact names and addresses of ethnic Germans residing in Canada to the obscure (even to himself) Germany-based *Aufklärungsdienst für einen freien deutschen Rhein* (Information Service For a Free German Rhein).<sup>100</sup> More importantly, Kempff requested, in late 1934, that Franz Straubinger, who had been instrumental in the organization of the *Deutsche Arbeitsgemeinschaft Ontario*, be brought into contact with the AA's Cultural Department during his upcoming visit to the Reich.<sup>101</sup> While in Germany, the AA put Straubinger in touch with the VDA, thereby expanding the cooperation in *Deutschtumsarbeit* between Germany and Canada.<sup>102</sup> Also along this line was the fact that by the mid-1930s, the German General Consulate in Montreal was being used as an *entrepôt* for VDA reading materials sent to the *Deutsche Arbeitsgemeinschaft Ontario*.<sup>103</sup> An even more telling incident of service, however, can be traced to Lehmann's remarks in the preface to his

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<sup>99</sup>See for example, Kempff to AA, journal no. 15/28, 7 January 1928, PA AA, R77347.

<sup>100</sup>Kempff to AA, [Montreal] journal no. 3937, 25 November 1922, PA AA, R77348.

<sup>101</sup>Kempff to Dieckhoff, [Montreal] journal no. 1137, 23 November 1934, PA AA, R77347.

<sup>102</sup>Akten-Notiz of 18 February 1935, PA AA, R77347.

<sup>103</sup>Kempff to Dieckhoff, [Montreal] journal no. 253, 11 March 1935, PA AA, R77347.

work on western Canada. Here he singled out German Consul Seelheim as one of the people who deserved extensive praise for helping, "by word and deed in Canada," to facilitate the completion of Lehmann's work.<sup>104</sup> This acknowledgement seems to indicate that the information gathered by the AA's representatives in Canada was made available to Lehmann; the results were quintessential products of *Deutschtumsarbeit*.

The AA was also active in practical *Deutschtumsarbeit* within Canada. Cultural contributions included annual donations of German-language books<sup>105</sup> and financial assistance for clubs.<sup>106</sup> Certain individuals, such as Consul Dr. K. Martin, were especially active in providing personal assistance to the entire Canadian ethnic German community.<sup>107</sup> This man also provides us with an example of how the *Deutschtum im Ausland* could aid their brethren back in Germany. At his farewell party, Martin was applauded for his "untiring zeal" in securing donations from ethnic Germans in Canada for the relief of Germans in the Reich during the winter of 1929-30.<sup>108</sup>

Following the Nazi seizure of power, Germany's Foreign Office representatives in Canada helped Nazify *Deutschtumsarbeit* in their region. General Consul Kempff was

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<sup>104</sup>Lehmann, *German Canadians*, 5.

<sup>105</sup>Appendix (Rodde's 17 February 1938 report concerning condition of *Deutschtum* in western Canada) to Grothe to Fischer, 10 March 1938, PA AA, R27206.

<sup>106</sup>For example, the Winnipeg consulate donated 3,000 Marks towards the building of a club-house of the *Augustana Vereins der Kreuzgemeinde* (Augustana Association of the Congregation of the Cross), ("Bankett des Augustana Vereins der Kreuzgemeinde," *NW*, 27 August 1930).

<sup>107</sup>"Abschieds-Kommers für Konsul Dr. Martin," *NW*, 13 August 1930.

<sup>108</sup>*Ibid.*

intimately involved in establishing the National Socialist *Deutscher Bund Canada*.<sup>109</sup> Kempff, Karl Gerhard (*Landesleiter der NSDAP in Kanada* [*Führer* of the NSDAP in Canada]), and Lothar Pfau (NSDAP representative in Montreal) discussed the possibility of creating either a *Deutscher Bund* or, if conditions in Canada would permit, establishing an *Ortsgruppe* (local Party cell) of the Party on 14 January 1934.<sup>110</sup> Based on the perceptions that establishing a Nazi Party organization in Canada carried with it a risk of contravening Canadian and Québec laws, the decision was made to settle for the creation of an incorporated *Bund* which would be open to all ethnic Germans in Canada. This decision rested upon the advice of a Canadian legal firm, the fee for which was paid by the AA.<sup>111</sup> And yet, despite appearances that the *Bund* was to be an autonomous Canadian organization, its core was from the outset intended to be formed by Party members. The *Bund* was organized on the *Führerprinzip*, and its hierarchical structure based on the *Gau* (district), *Kreis* (region), *Ortsgruppe* (local cell), and *Stützpunkt* (an even smaller local cell when the membership could not support an *Ortsgruppe*). The purpose of the *Bund*, according to its charter was "...the formation of an unpolitical body comprising members of the German race in Canada, with the object of fostering German culture and interests and the cultivation of the ideals of the new Germany." This was a succinct formulation of NS *Deutschtumsarbeit*. Of course what was omitted was the admission that all of this would be conducted within the parameters of the National

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<sup>109</sup>Information concerning Kempff's role in establishing the *Bund* is from Kempff to AA, [Montreal] journal no. 40, 15 January 1934, PA AA, R77347.

<sup>110</sup>For more information on Karl Gerhard, see below, page 139.

<sup>111</sup>See *ibid.* appendix no. 5 (letter from the legal firm of Hackett, Mulvena, Foster, Hackett & Hannen to Kempff, 8 January 1933 [*sic.*: 1934]).

Socialists' *Weltanschauung*.<sup>112</sup> By the end of 1935, the *Bund*, although widely distributed across Canada, was still relatively limited in membership.<sup>113</sup> In Eastern Canada, the *Bund* had approximately 600 members, distributed among the following *Ortsgruppen* and *Stützpunkten*: Montreal, PQ (also the location of its Canadian headquarters), Toronto, ON (also the seat of the *Gau Mitte* [central district] leadership), Kitchener, ON, Ottawa, ON, Paschendaele, NS, and Charlottetown, PE. Western Canada also had about 600 ethnic Germans in the *Bund*, grouped into *Ortsgruppen* and *Stützpunkten* as follows: Winnipeg, MB (also the seat of leadership for both the *Gau* of Western Canada, and the *Kreis* of Manitoba), Edmonton, AB (also the location of the *Kreis* leadership for Alberta), Dapp, AB, Athabasca, AB, Olds, Ab, Northmark, AB, Regina, SK (also the seat of leadership for the *Kreis* of Saskatchewan), St. Walburg, SK, Loon River, SK, Vancouver, BC (also the location of the *Kreis* leadership of British Columbia), Vancouver South, BC, and Kelowna, BC.

Through his assistance in establishing the *Bund*, Kempff, a career diplomat, had demonstrated a willingness to serve his new political masters, the Nazis; but he did not do so unreservedly. In early 1934, Kempff fought to prevent the co-ordination of an older established ethnic German organization, the club "Teutonia." He became active as a mediator between ethnic Germans in Canada when the *Bund* attempted to exert its

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<sup>112</sup>The *Bund* finally surfaced publicly on 5 July 1933 when it was declared that the "Haupt- und Aktionsausschuß" (Central and Action Committee) of the *Bund* was established in Regina ("Neue Deutsch-Canadische Organisation 'Deutscher Bund,'" *NW*, 12 July 1933).

<sup>113</sup>The following information for the locations and membership figures of the *Deutscher Bund Kanada* is from "Ergänzungsbericht zu Runderlass vom 11.11.33 Geschäftszeichen 113-00 10/5," Kempff to AA, [Montreal] journal no. 1432, 20 December 1935, PA AA R77333; and "Ergänzungsbericht zu Runderlass vom 11.11.33 Geschäftszeichen 113-00 10/5," Konsulat Winnipeg to AA, received in Berlin on 10 December 1935, PA AA R77333.

influence and authority over the long-established "Teutonia" club located in Montreal.<sup>114</sup> The conflict arose when Montreal based members of the *Bund*, who also held membership in the "Teutonia," desired to co-ordinate the older institution into the *NS-Weltanschauung*. As was typical, the antagonists were younger members of the club itself, who pitted themselves against older ones who did not desire to introduce a political bent to a club, the statute of which declared that it was to be free of political and religious leanings. The rift, however it might be resolved, threatened to dissolve the club since both sides declared their willingness to resign should their position not carry the day. Kempff intervened in a mediatory manner, in favour of maintaining the autonomy of the "Teutonia" on several grounds. First was his conviction that the *Bund* had been created to build something new, not to destroy established ethnic German enterprises. Second, the activities and services of the "Teutonia" were, in his opinion, good; in fact he claimed that the "Teutonia" was the only ethnic German club in Canada which could compare to those in New York City. This assessment was based on personal experience, for Kempff had, over the preceding three years, attended several of its functions and had enjoyed them very much--so much so that he wrote that he would lose his objectivity towards anyone responsible for the destruction of this club! As his third argument, Kempff pointed to the patriotic stance the club had taken towards Germany, both during and after the Great War, in the form of supporting ethnic Germans interned in Canada during the war and to the fact that its members had sent money to Germany during the

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<sup>114</sup>Information for the conflict between the *Bund* and "Teutonia" is from the exchange of letters and reports found appended to [Montreal] journal no. 197, 26 February 1934, PA AA, R99262; and Kempff to AA, [Montreal] journal no. 236, 9 March 1934, PA AA, R99262.

period of hyper-inflation during the 1920s; both clear examples of *Deutschtumsarbeit*. And whereas Kempff had not objected to the co-ordination of the ethnic German club "Harmonie" because it had had socialist leanings, the same could not be said of "Teutonia." Finally, Kempff argued that since the *Bund* had yet to secure its charter from the Canadian government, the group's members must not instigate anything, such as forcing the dissolution of a long-standing social club, which might impede the granting of the charter. Thus Kempff suggested a solution which would see *Bund* lecturers give speeches in the club's hall, but which would leave the members of "Teutonia" "masters in their own house." In the end, Kempff referred the matter to Party leaders in Germany, who returned a verdict in favour of the *Bund*'s designs. Nevertheless, Kempff's recommendation won out and thus did he prevent the "Teutonia," which had celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 1930, from becoming coordinated.

Consul Wilhelm Rodde was the first National Socialist Party member to be posted to the AA in Canada.<sup>115</sup> Although not an "Old Fighter" in the Nazi movement, Rodde had joined the Party on 1 February 1931, a fact which clearly indicated his deep commitment to the cause. He became an economic advisor to the Party in Munich in October 1932, and from 1934 had served in Hitler's parallel and competing agency to the AA, the *Dienststelle Ribbentrop* (Bureau Ribbentrop).<sup>116</sup> This assignment placed him

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<sup>115</sup>Unless otherwise stated, information concerning Rodde is from Wagner, *Brothers Beyond the Sea*, 41-44.

<sup>116</sup>Joachim von Ribbentrop joined the NSDAP in 1932. Through the creation of the *Dienststelle Ribbentrop*, he became responsible for the disarmament question; Hitler also used him for numerous diplomatic missions, thereby circumventing the traditional Reich agency responsible for such missions, the AA. The 1935 Anglo-German Naval Agreement was Ribbentrop's first diplomatic success. He was German Ambassador to Britain, from August 1936 to January 1938, when he was appointed by Hitler as Germany's Foreign Minister; a position he retained until 1945. His anti-British foreign policy reached its pinnacle with Germany's alignment with Japan, and



in direct contact with many high-ranking Nazis, one outcome of which was his being appointed an *SS Standartenführer* ("Colonel") by Heinrich Himmler. Another outcome of his service with the *Dienststelle* was the formation of a personal friendship with the head of the *Auslands-Organisation der NSDAP*, Bohle. This friendship paid the dividend of having Bohle transfer responsibility to Rodde for all affairs of the Party, as well as all *völkisch* matters, in Canada upon his appointment to the Winnipeg consulate. The fact that Rodde was a Party member, living abroad in Canada, automatically made him a member of the AO.<sup>117</sup> By the spring of 1938 Rodde had become the national *Führer* of the Party in Canada, thus unifying the functions of Party and State in the hands of one man. Rodde saw it as his chief task in Canada "to bring the local *Volksgenossen* closer to the Third Reich, to awaken the love for the old homeland, and to acclaim again and again to [the German community]: Be proud of your old homeland!"<sup>118</sup> But, in order not to be perceived as overstepping the bounds of the AO's mandate, he also explained that it was not his role to involve himself with the internal workings of German-Canadian organizations. Rather, his duty was "to further, at all times, the cultural and ethnic German efforts in so far as it lies within [his] power." In keeping with these stated goals, and also in accordance with official AO policy,<sup>119</sup> Rodde was often on hand to

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the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939. Ribbentrop was sentenced to death by the Allies in 1946.

<sup>117</sup>Clear proof of the existence of the AO's presence in Canada is to be found in a letter written by Rodde in Winnipeg on letterhead which bears the masthead: *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei, Auslands-Organisation, Kanada* (Rodde to Hoffmann, 11 November 1938, USNA T81/31/28157).

<sup>118</sup>"Deutsche Vereinigung von Winnipeg," *NW*, 13 April 1938.

<sup>119</sup>Ehrlich, "AO der NSDAP," 315-316.

speak before the audiences assembled in Winnipeg to partake in the Nazi-designated days of national celebration, such as the "Day of the National Revolution" (January 30; i.e. the day on which, in 1933, the Nazis assumed power), Hitler's birthday (April 20), and May Day (1 May).<sup>120</sup> Among other areas concerning *Deutschtumsarbeit*, including being featured as the keynote speaker at several German Days on the Prairies, Rodde lent much assistance to the pro-Nazi *Deutsche Zeitung für Canada* by securing funding from the AO to maintain the paper's viability.<sup>121</sup>

As significant as all of the above-mentioned AA involvement in *Deutschtumsarbeit* within Canada was, there remains to be reviewed what amounts to perhaps the most important role it played in Canada. And that is the AA's connection to the German Days. In mid-1934, the General Consul was instrumental in founding Ontario's German Days.<sup>122</sup> Kempff, by verifying Straubinger's credentials, and then putting him into contact with Gerhard, helped to establish a working relationship between Straubinger's fledgling umbrella organization, the *Deutsch-kanadisches Zentralkomitee Toronto* (German-Canadian Central Committee of Toronto, the forerunner to the *Deutsche Arbeitsgemeinschaft Ontario*) and the *Deutscher Bund* led by Gerhard. This introduction greatly facilitated the staging of the first German Day celebration in Ontario, held on the

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<sup>120</sup>See, for example, "Feier des Tages der nationalen Erhebung," *NW*, 2 February 1938; "Hitler-Geburtstagsfeier in Winnipeg," *NW*, 27 April 1938; "Die deutsche Nationalfeier in Winnipeg," *NW*, 4 May 1938; and "Die Feier des Tages der nationalen Erhebung," *NW* 1 February 1939.

<sup>121</sup>See the following documents, all found in PA AA, R27206: Peetz (of the *Winter-Hilfswerk des Deutschen Volkes* [Winter-Relief of the German Volk]) to head of the AO [Bohle], 17 March 1939; Thie (head of the *Winter-Hilfswerk des Deutschen Volkes*) to Fischer (legation councillor), 21 March 1939; Fischer to Consul Hellenthal (AA Department P), 22 March 1939; Windels' telegram No. 17 of 14 April 1939; Fischer to head of the AO [Bohle], 1 June 1939.

<sup>122</sup>Kempff to AA, [Montreal] journal no. 541, 29 May 1934, PA AA, R77347.

Canadian Labour Day weekend of 1934. More significant than this assistance, however, was the fact that members of the German diplomatic corps were usually on hand at the various German Days across the country. Highlighted as keynote speakers, their speeches over the years were infused with *völkische Ideologie*. In the face of mounting negative Canadian press against Germany after 1933, these speeches assumed the additional roles of defending National Socialism and praising its accomplishments. Through such speeches the members of the AA stationed in Canada had perhaps their greatest influence on *Deutschtumsarbeit*. Because the keynote addresses, given by the German diplomats at the German Days, were covered and often reproduced in full by Canada's German language press, many more thousands who read the newspapers were exposed to the official line on the *Deutschtum* than merely those who attended these festivities.

From these keynote addresses by German diplomatic personnel at the German Days throughout the inter-war period, a definite pattern in the content of the message emerges. This pattern represented the German Governments' attitudes towards the *Deutschtum* and *Deutschtumsarbeit* in Canada. Before 1933 the gatherings were utilized to give to the ethnic Germans renewed pride in their heritage. Calls for the retention of the German language and customs were implicitly and explicitly stated in these messages. The need for such moral support stemmed from the inferiority complex experienced by the Germans in Canada as a result of WWI and its aftermath. Fostering a spirit of community among all ethnic Germans, regardless of denomination or place of origin was intimately associated with both of the aforementioned points. Another important aspect

of the message was the role ethnic Germans were to play in their new adoptive land. While being loyal to Canada, it was their duty to build bridges between Canada and Germany, in order to strengthen relations between the two countries. After 1933, all of these aspects remained, but with one obvious difference. The speeches were increasingly dominated by both defence of and support for National Socialism. In short, the speeches made by some German diplomats to the audiences assembled at the various German Days in Canada stressed not only the cultural and racial aspirations of *Deutschtumsarbeit* but also advanced a political dimension which gradually assumed prominence.

In 1929, Dr. K. Martin, in his capacity as both German Consul and honorary president of the second annual German Day in Winnipeg, spoke on the unity of the German element in Canada.<sup>123</sup> He stated that those in attendance, regardless of place of origin or religious affiliation, had assembled not in opposition to being Canadian, but rather to demonstrate the important role the German element had played in shaping Canada. He asserted that the time had come, some ten years after the end of the Great War, for the ethnic Germans in Canada to once more be proud of their heritage and culture. "Thus, festivities such as today's should serve to strengthen the national self-confidence and a feeling of belonging among us Germans and once more bring into the open the importance of our *Volkstum*." Dr. Martin closed his speech with a call for closer unity among the ethnic Germans based on their common language and love of the homeland. He stressed, however, that by the latter he did not mean unity based on political conceptions of the Reich, but rather on the apolitical romantic elements of the

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<sup>123</sup>"Der 'Deutsche Tag' in Winnipeg großer Erfolg," *NW*, 14 August 1929.

geography of Germany. This speech of Dr. Martin proved to encompass most of the major themes which were to be repeated and expanded upon over the course of the next decade.

Consul Dr. H. Seelheim, in his numerous speeches before the German Days across the Prairies during the 1930s, also stressed the need for unity among the *Deutschtum* in Canada. At the fourth German Day of Manitoba, in August of 1931, he proclaimed to his audience of between seven and ten thousand, that they were to be loyal to their adoptive land.<sup>124</sup> But he challenged that with such loyalty came certain rights. In this case, the right to retain one's language and culture. Consequently, he encouraged his listeners to work to retain their *Deutschtum*, in cooperation with the other ethnic groups in Canada in order to strengthen Canada. Five months after the National Socialists came to power in Germany, Dr. Seelheim, at Manitoba's sixth German Day, again spoke on the need for unity among the ethnic German element in Canada.<sup>125</sup> He stressed, however, that the concept of unifying the *Deutschtum* in Canada had nothing whatsoever to do with bringing European political problems to Canada. As he explained, it had everything to do with race:

It is the voice of blood, which summons us together--often subconsciously--and which does not allow the sense of belonging [felt] over borders, countries and seas to die away but which rallies us again to new strength and consciousness of [our] community of fate and unity when parts of the *Volk*--when brothers--are in need.

The following year, Seelheim's greetings, which were read in his absence at the German

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<sup>124</sup>"Glänzender Verlauf des Deutschen Tags," *NW*, 19 August 1931.

<sup>125</sup>"Großer deutscher Erfolg," *NW*, 5 July 1933.

Days in Winnipeg and Edmonton, repeated earlier calls for unity among the ethnic Germans in Canada and for fidelity to their adopted country. "Some among you were and still are citizens of foreign countries; but you all belong to one origin, to one race, to one *Volk*: [you belong] to the German [people] whose members who live abroad live in the various regions of the world as loyal citizens of various states."<sup>126</sup> However, Germany was not to be forgotten: "With the homeland in our hearts, remaining true to the ancestral *Volkstum*, to embrace the new sphere of influence, the new country, to struggle honourably and vigorously in peaceful competition for the old as well as for the new [Germany]--this is our goal!"<sup>127</sup> One can infer that the remark concerning "peaceful competition" contained significance beyond its literal meaning, for also on hand at this German Day celebration was the Polish consul, who spoke of the recently concluded rapprochement between Germany and Poland. The German-Polish Non-Aggression Pact had been signed on 26 January 1934. The effect of this action was to give the appearance that Hitler's Germany had sworn off aspirations to revise its eastern boundary at the expense of Versailles-created Poland. It seems obvious that the presence of the Polish consul was intended to present to Canadians, and sceptical members of the German-Canadian community, the image of the New Germany as a peaceful, and peace loving, regime.

By the summer of 1935, Seelheim's language was becoming stronger and more assertive; almost matching the growing self-confidence of the National Socialist regime

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<sup>126</sup>"Nachklänge zum 7. Deutschen Tag in Edmonton," *NW*, 15 August 1934.

<sup>127</sup>"Deushtag war großer Erfolg," *NW*, 4 July 1934.

over its successful actions within Europe. The year 1935 marked the end of Nazi pre-occupations with solidifying internal control over Germany and a shift to an emphasis upon gaining unequivocal equality for Germany in the community of nations. Much of this involved unilaterally laying to rest the last remaining militarily restrictive clauses of the Treaty of Versailles. On 10 March, Hitler announced the existence of a German Air Force. One week later, on 16 March, Hitler proclaimed the re-introduction of universal military service and a planned enlargement of the army. An expansion of the German navy, also in defiance of Versailles, was made possible through the conclusion of the Anglo-German Naval Agreement of 18 June. The effect of these actions, which promised to regain for Germany its position as a world power, must surely have done wonders to rekindle pride and self-confidence for ethnic German nationalists the world over. Consequently, for Dr. Seelheim, ethnic retention was no longer all that was to be striven for; now claims of equality were also made: "Because we are proud of our *Volkstum* and its uniqueness, we also recognize the rights of other ethnic groups: 'We do not desire to be more [equal] than the others, but neither do we want to be less [equal]!' We want to work on an equal footing with others, and that includes here in Canada...."<sup>128</sup> And at the following year's pre-celebrations of the German Day in Winnipeg, Dr. Seelheim, taking his cue from French-Canadian nationalists, explained that the *Deutschtum* in Canada should seek not minority rights but equality rights.<sup>129</sup>

Aside from witnessing calls for a more assertive form of self-awareness for the

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<sup>128</sup>"Die Feier des Deutschen Tages in Winnipeg," *NW*, 4 September 1935.

<sup>129</sup>"Vorfeier zum Deutschen Tag," *NW*, 1 July 1936.

*Deutschtum* in Canada, the various celebrations held in 1935 also brought to light a more determined attempt to explain and justify the National Socialist regime's actions within Germany. Much of this centred on the so-called propagandistic lies becoming more prevalent in the Canadian English-language press; lies which, in the eyes of the German diplomatic corps, were clearly a return to war-time anti-German propaganda.<sup>130</sup> The diplomats attempted to set straight the record as to the true nature of the New Germany. They dismissed alleged Nazi human rights abuses as anti-German propaganda and instead highlighted the accomplishments so far attained by Hitler's government. This pattern repeated itself the next year, but with an added explanation of the truly peaceful intentions of Hitler's rearmament designs.<sup>131</sup> By 1937, the pattern of the diplomats' messages had been firmly established. The speech of Chancellor of the German consulate, Otto Janssen, before a crowd of about 5,000 at Manitoba's tenth German Day aptly demonstrates this.<sup>132</sup> Beginning with an exhortation to the ethnic Germans on hand to press for equal rights within Canada, Janssen proclaimed:

You have given your all, [including] your capacity to work, to this country. You have, therefore, the undeniable right as equal members of the population to claim all of the advantages of your citizenship. Today, you publicly acknowledge that you are closely tied to your *Deutschtum*, to your homeland through the bonds of

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<sup>130</sup>"Die Feier des Deutschen Tages in Winnipeg," *NW*, 4 September 1935, and "Nachklänge vom Deutschen Tag Ontarios," *NW*, 18 September 1935. By 1937 participants of the German Days were encouraged to protest against both the anti-German stance of the press and against the boycott of German goods then being organized. The boycott itself presented a twist on the old theme of encouraging ethnic Germans abroad to buy goods made in Germany, for now such counter-boycott actions could be interpreted as being more patriotic than ever (see "Nachklänge vom Deutschen Tag, *NW*, 11 August 1937; for more on the economic potential of the ethnic Germans abroad, see below, page 135, footnote 182).

<sup>131</sup>"Rede des deutschen Konsuls zum Deutschen Tag in Winnipeg," *NW*, 8 July 1936, and "Festrede des Generalkonsuls Herrn L. Kempff auf dem 3. Deutschen Tag Ontarios, Toronto 6. Sept.," *NW*, 16 September 1936.

<sup>132</sup>"Die Feier des zehnten Deutschen Tages von Manitoba," *NW*, 30 June 1937.



blood and mother tongue. A people's comrade who denies [*verleugnet*] his homeland, denies himself. It would be a great mistake to believe that he would thereby be a better citizen [of his new country of residence]; *au contraire*, he would not be respected by anyone because he did not respect himself.

Stressing Hitler's genius for returning prosperity to Germany, Janssen concluded:

The Germans are a people of work, and a people of work are a people of peace. Germany works for peace.

The *Auslandsdeutschen* can once more look to their homeland with pride, because a strong homeland also gives to the *Auslandsdeutschtum* a sense of security.

Hitler has plucked the German *Volk* from the chaos, danger and misery of the post-war period, and saved them from ruin. He has given back to the German *Volk* self-confidence and new optimism!

Hitler is the saviour of Germany!

With pride we feel ourselves tied to him and the German *Volk*; today, our greetings and promise of loyalty (*Treuegelöbnis*) are intended for both, through the cry:

To the German *Volk* and its beloved *Führer*, a triple *Sieg Heil!*

The last German Day celebrations held in Canada before WWII began, took place in Manitoba on 25 June 1939. Approximately 3,000 people attended.<sup>133</sup> Otto Janssen, again the keynote speaker, was thereby (and unwittingly) given the final opportunity to publicize the official Party line concerning the *Deutschtum* in Canada. As a matter of course, he praised the German Days for the opportunity they afforded to further the protection and spread of German heritage, language and culture. Also *de rigueur* by this time, was his condemnation of the anti-German orientation of the Canadian English-language press. However, he did introduce a new spin to this theme by stressing that there was no differentiation between Nazis and Germans:

...today in Germany, National Socialism encompasses the entire German *Volk*. Precisely on this never before achieved unity and wholeness of the German *Volk* is our present strength based. We still vividly remember a time when anti-

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<sup>133</sup>"Zwölfter Deutscher Tag von Manitoba," *NW*, 28 June 1939.

German propaganda during the World War tried untiringly to suggest to the masses that war was being waged only against the German Kaiser and Prussian militarism and in no way was it directed against the poor German people, who desired to be freed of their masters. Although a republican-democratic government came to power in Germany in 1918, the German people were not spared. Rather they were plundered and drained of their last drop of blood. With the same trick, today's propaganda attempts once more to...construct a difference between "Nazis" and Germans. However, it cannot be expected that thinking people will fall for the same trick twice.

Whether or not Janssen actually swayed any of his listeners by his reasoning is a moot point, for only a few short months later Germany and Canada were once more at war--a situation which arose despite the concluding remarks to this speech, assuring his audience that Germany and its leader, Adolf Hitler, stood for peace.

### ***The Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland***

One of the oldest and most important private organisations devoted to *Deutschtumsarbeit* was the *Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland*. Tracing its roots back to the 1870s, the organization which would become the VDA was originally intended as a means to fight the Magyarization of Germans who lived in the Slavic parts of the newly constituted Austro-Hungarian Empire. However, the Austrian organization did not limit its activities to this sphere, for this forerunner of the VDA strove above all else to support through practical means the German settlements abroad.<sup>134</sup> *Ortsgruppen* (local branches) were also established in the Reich, eventually leading to the founding of the *Allgemeine Deutsche Schulverein zur Erhaltung des Deutschtums im Ausland* (General German School Association for the Preservation of the Deutschtum Abroad), in Berlin

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<sup>134</sup>Ritter, *DAI*, 19.

on 15 August 1881. As the name implies, emphasis was placed upon education through German schools, an emphasis which was to remain throughout its existence. Although it initially worked closely with its parent organization in Austria, there came a parting of the ways as the Germans in the Reich began to develop stronger nationalist conceptions of their own state. In 1908 the name was changed to the *Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland*.<sup>135</sup>

During the Weimar Republic, the VDA was given extensive government support due to its size,<sup>136</sup> autonomous nature, and an agenda which was culturally, as opposed to politically, based.<sup>137</sup> That it was a powerful factor in the shaping of public opinion must also have inclined the government to favour it.<sup>138</sup> Despite its large size, the goal of the VDA was quite simple. In the words of Hans Steinacher the goal of the VDA was "the maintenance of the *Volkstum* beyond the borders [of the Reich]."<sup>139</sup>

The means by which this goal was pursued were numerous.<sup>140</sup> Within the Reich, the VDA busied itself with explaining to the *Reichsdeutsche* the significance of the

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<sup>135</sup>After the Nazis came to power, the name was changed to the *Volksbund für das Deutschtum im Ausland* (People's League for the Germans Abroad), however, the abbreviation remained unaltered.

<sup>136</sup>In 1913 there were some 50,000 members in the VDA; by 1933 membership had jumped to about two million (Schäfer, *V.D.A.*, 27 and 29, respectively). However, by 1938 its membership had declined to just less than one million (Jacobsen, Steinacher, doc. no. 152: "Mitgliederstand des VDA 1938," 491).

<sup>137</sup>This support came primarily in the form of massive infusions of cash (Barbara Vogel, "Der Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland (VDA) an der Hamburger Universität in der Weimarer Republik," *Zeitgeschichte* 16, no. 1 (1988): 19 [hereafter cited as "VDA"]).

<sup>138</sup>*Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>139</sup>Jacobsen, Steinacher, doc. no. 13: "Grundlagen und Ziele der Volkstumsarbeit," 1933, by Steinacher, 84.

<sup>140</sup>See Ritter, *DAI*, 20.

*Deutschtum im Ausland*, and with working co-operatively with other organizations involved in the cultural sphere of *Deutschtumsarbeit*.<sup>141</sup> It published a number of journals including the *Volksdeutsche*, *Frauendienst* (Women's Service), and *Deutsche Arbeit* (German Work) in order to propagate worldwide its views and activities. Funding and material assistance, in the form of donations of German language books and textbooks, were extended to the *Deutschtum im Ausland* to support schools, kindergartens, and libraries. The VDA conducted exchange programs for both teachers and students, while scholarships were also available to the latter to study in Germany and abroad.<sup>142</sup> Other activities included: an organized "pen-pal" system (*Lesepatenschaft*) which provided ethnic Germans abroad with German-language reading material, complete with a personalized letter from the sender, an inhabitant of the Reich; and the distribution of symbolic reminders of German culture and the bonds which existed between Germany and the Germans abroad, such as yearly calendars and blue candles at Christmas.<sup>143</sup> The VDA also worked cooperatively with the Reich government in bringing music, essays and even school lessons to the *Volksdeutsche* via radio broadcasts.<sup>144</sup>

Because most of the VDA's records were lost during WWII, the exact extent of

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<sup>141</sup>AA circular, sent as "IG. 95", 15 March 1922, PA AA, R70161.

<sup>142</sup>For example, Heinz Lehmann came to Canada on a VDA research scholarship (Lehmann, "Preface to the Original Edition of *Das Deutschtum in Westkanada*," in *German Canadians*, 5).

<sup>143</sup>Frye, *Nazi Germany*, 16-17; and Vogel, "VDA," 15. For a more detailed accounting of the VDA's activities, see Steinacher's overview for the year 1933 in Jacobsen, Steinacher, doc. no. 27: "Jahresbericht des [VDA], ausgegeben in Mainz auf der Saarbrücker Tagung an Rhein und Mosel Pfingsten 1934," 114-147. *Lesepatenschaft* is discussed in greater detail below, see pages 148-151.

<sup>144</sup>F.H. Reimesch, "[Volksdeutsche Arbeit im Reich:] Volksdeutsche Rundfunksendungen im Jahre 1935," *Der Auslandsdeutsche* 19 (1936): 297-298.

its work in Canada is uncertain.<sup>145</sup> Nevertheless, it is possible to piece together sufficient details to suggest that the VDA's Canadian activities resembled in scope, if not in magnitude, its efforts in Europe. This was clearly so with regard to book donations to ethnic German libraries. As one worker in the VDA's Section for Foreign Libraries explained, "the VDA, very busy as it is in the areas of Europe severed [from the Reich and Austro-Hungary after WWI], is unable to devote as much attention as it would like to this important area of *Deutschtum's* cultivation [i.e., Canada]."<sup>146</sup> And yet large numbers of books were sent. For example, the Central Mennonite Immigration Committee (CMIC), representing Mennonite congregations across the Prairies, availed itself of the VDA's book donations for ethnic German libraries.<sup>147</sup> Ethnic German clubs also took advantage of the VDA's generosity, for in 1932 four newly created libraries in Canada received a total of 384 books worth 1,894 Reichsmark.<sup>148</sup> The VDA continued to donate books to German-Canadian libraries, as well as textbooks for ethnic German pupils and teachers, throughout the 1930s.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>145</sup>Wagner, *Brothers Beyond the Sea*, 52, footnote 148.

<sup>146</sup>Hagl to Eid, 23 February 1933, United States National Archives [USNA], microcopy no. T81, roll 615, frame 5407769-770.

<sup>147</sup>"Kanada," *Der Auslanddeutsche* 12 (1929): 727. The VDA displayed sensitivity towards the recipients of its generosity, at least before 1933. After receiving a shipment of books in 1927, the CMIC complained that the contents did not sufficiently reflect a strict Christian position. Consequently, in 1928, the VDA allowed Mennonites in Germany to screen the 760 books slated for delivery to the CMIC that year. See also, Hagl to Eid, 23 February 1933, USNA T81/615/5407769-768, for an indication that the CMIC had continued to request books from the VDA.

<sup>148</sup>Hagl to Eid, 23 February 1933, USNA T81//615/5407769-770. The books were sent to the *Deutsch-Evangelische Gemeindebücherei* in Ayton, ON; the *Deutsch-Canadischer Verein* in Windsor, ON; the *Lesezirkel Mussestunde* in Winnipeg, MB; and the *Deutsche Gemeinde* in Fairview, AB.

<sup>149</sup>Wagner, *Brothers beyond the Sea*, 52-53.

Bernhard Bott was appointed the VDA's representative in Canada in late 1934.<sup>150</sup>

As far as the German consul to Winnipeg, Dr. Seelheim, was concerned, Bott did an "outstanding" job in this capacity.<sup>151</sup> As editor of first the *Courier* (1923-1934) and then the *Deutsche Zeitung für Canada* (1935-1939), Bott's fervent *völkisch* orientation was provided a valuable medium through which he influenced the Canadian *Deuschtum*.<sup>152</sup> Bott became involved in Reich-based *Deuschtumsarbeit* as early as 1929, when he agreed to work in Canada on behalf of the *Deutsche Akademie* (German Academy).<sup>153</sup> The extent of his involvement in *Deuschtumsarbeit*, as well as the VDA's activities in Canada, are revealed in a memorandum he wrote on 25 August 1934 concerning the condition of the ethnic Germans and *Deuschtumsarbeit* in Canada.<sup>154</sup> This memorandum was presumably written during or for Bott's visit to Germany in the late summer of 1934. The numerous references to the VDA contained therein leads to the conclusion that it was probably intended for this audience. Despite the lack of any mention of the DAI in this

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<sup>150</sup>*Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>151</sup>Seelheim to Dracher, 30 September 1935, USNA T81/396/5137697-698.

<sup>152</sup>A clear indication of Bott's *völkisch* leanings is provided in the pages of the DAI's journal, *Der Auslanddeutsche*. An examination of this journal during Bott's tenure as editor of the *Courier*, a position which afforded him virtual control over its content and tone, reveals that the *Courier* was one of, if not the most cited sources of information on the *Deuschtum* and *Deuschtumsarbeit* in Canada. In fact, Bott's zeal, which increasingly revealed a pro-Nazi bent, resulted in his dismissal from the *Courier* in 1934 (Wagner, *Brothers Beyond the Sea*, 77, footnote 59). This in itself is somewhat ironic, for in 1927, at the "German Catholic Day" in Tramping Lake, Alberta, Bott railed against the Ku-Klux-Klan, an organisation which was against Catholics, Jews and persons of colour, but most importantly for Bott, was against the use of any language save English. According to Bott, "[The German language] is a natural, and therefore God-given right, which no government or organisation can infringe upon" ("Tramping Lake [Saskatchewan, Kanada]," *Der Auslanddeutsche* 10 [1927]: 695).

<sup>153</sup>Bott to Eid, 16 November 1929, USNA T81/615/5407898.

<sup>154</sup>"Denkschrift zur Lage des Deuschtums in Kanada und zu der dort zu leistenden Volkstumsarbeit," USNA T81/412/5157345-352.

memorandum, Bott presented the same or a similar report in Stuttgart to the leaders of this agency, including Dr. Richard Csaki, in early September 1934.<sup>155</sup> That it was probably the same report is implied by the fact that a memorandum bearing the same title and date was submitted to the DAI's Archive of Reports (*Berichtsarchiv*) on 30 November 1933.<sup>156</sup>

According to his memorandum, Bott had worked with the various organisations in and around Regina from his first arrival in that city, and had since become a driving force in the club life of the ethnic Germans across all of Canada. He founded the *Deutsch-Kanadische Zentralkomitee* (German-Canadian Central Committee) in Regina as an umbrella association for the various ethnic German clubs, and was instrumental in the organization of the German Days of Saskatchewan. By 1934 Bott was consulting with the leading ethnic German circles across Canada over the challenges of *Deutschtumsarbeit*, with the intention of eventually establishing a truly national umbrella organization to coordinate their efforts better. He desired to continue his work in the "closest connection with the VDA," entirely in line with its practices and thinking (*Sinne*) in the spheres of private German language instruction, libraries, radio, film and newspapers, etc. Furthermore, Bott stood firmly behind the VDA's student exchange programs, and only wished that he could encourage "still more" ethnic German youth from Canada to avail themselves of this opportunity. Such programs, according to Bott, instilled the youth with the German language and customs, thereby preparing them to

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<sup>155</sup>DAI to Seelheim, 8 September 1934, USNA T81/396/5137725. For more information on Csaki, see below, page 138.

<sup>156</sup>"Berichtsarchiv, 1921-," USNA, T81/624/5420380.

assume leading positions in the Canadian *Deutschtumsarbeit* of the future. Since the groundwork in the above-mentioned fields had already been laid, Bott felt that only an intensification of these activities was needed to create an independent German educational system in Canada--the ultimate goal of these combined efforts. Bott also hinted at the VDA's influence in his plans to found the pro-Nazi newspaper, the *Deutsche Zeitung für Canada*, when he stated that,

An important factor in all of [these endeavours], and in keeping with the concepts of the VDA would be [the creation] of an entirely German[-Canadian] run newspaper, which must be free of any confessional or Canadian political control or influence.<sup>157</sup>

Although he identified a real willingness on the part of the ethnic German element in Canada to further *Deutschtumsarbeit* in Canada, Bott explained that the economic hardships engendered by massive unemployment and successive crop failures in recent years foreshadowed little further progress without material support from Germany, especially from the VDA. No evidence has been found as to what might have been the immediate tangible results of Bott's courtship of the VDA in late 1934. However, events within Germany soon proved that he had directed his appeal for support of Canadian *Deutschtumsarbeit* to the most appropriate agency.

When the Nazis came to power, the VDA welcomed the intensification of the

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<sup>157</sup>The German-language newspapers on the Prairies had historically aligned themselves with either the Liberal or Conservative Parties (Entz, "Der Einfluß," 97). As Entz explained, there existed an understandable symbiotic relationship between the German language press and the two political parties: the former needed the capital extended to them by the latter, which realised that the only way to reach many of the new immigrants, very few of whom understood English, was through the German language. Most papers sought the support of the Liberal Party, which was not only in power federally after 1896, but also generally formed the governments in Western Canada; only in Manitoba did the Conservatives, under Sir Rodmond Roblin, form the government from 1900-1915.



national revival of *Deutschtum* which the new regime propounded and fostered.<sup>158</sup> For a time, much of the VDA's autonomy was maintained since the Nazis had hoped to benefit from the perception that the services which this organization, not officially affiliated to Party or State, could provide abroad.<sup>159</sup> However, it was reorganised along the lines of the NS *Führerprinzip* (leadership principle).<sup>160</sup> Furthermore, the relatively unknown ethnic German, Dr. Hans Steinacher, replaced Otto Gessler, Germany's former defence minister (1920-1928), as leader of the VDA in late April 1933.<sup>161</sup> But this change in leadership did not herald an immediate change in mandate, as the VDA was to continue representing the cultural interests of the Germans abroad, regardless of citizenship.<sup>162</sup> As time wore on, however, the Party attempted to alter this state of affairs and desired that the VDA introduce an element of politicization into its work. Steinacher, in direct opposition to the wishes of many in the Nazi hierarchy, continued to limit the VDA to cultural and social work.<sup>163</sup> The conflict which ensued was based upon the Nazis' desire to bring the world's ethnic Germans into the NS-*Weltanschauung*,

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<sup>158</sup>Sander A. Diamond, *The Nazi Movement in the United States, 1924-1941*, (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1974), 49. [Hereafter cited as *The Nazi Movement*.]

<sup>159</sup>For the text of the relevant section of Hess' declaration to this effect, made public at the VDA's Pfingsttagung on 6 June 1933, see Ritter, *DAI*, 21.

<sup>160</sup>Frye, *Nazi Germany*, 17. The leadership of the NSDAP was based on the hierarchical principle that all decisions came from above and were implemented by those below. That is, Hitler had the ultimate say on all issues, while his subordinates ensured that his will be done. Within this framework, the subordinates in leadership roles had wide-ranging powers since their orders (which in theory were actually the orders of Hitler) were to be faithfully carried out by those below them.

<sup>161</sup>Gessler's democratic leanings had proven to be his downfall in the new totalitarian state (Ritter, *DAI*, 20).

<sup>162</sup>AA circular, sent as "VI A 1835," 31 May 1934, PA AA, R70161.

<sup>163</sup>Jacobsen, *Steinacher*, liv-lv.

while the VDA was only concerned with the *Volkstum* itself, not its politicization.<sup>164</sup>

In the fall of 1934, the NSDAP began a concerted effort to coordinate and integrate the VDA. This was undertaken under direct orders from Rudolf Hess. Henceforth the VDA was to concern itself exclusively with the *Volksdeutsche*, while the *Auslands-Organisation der NSDAP* would have competence over the *Reichsdeutsche*.<sup>165</sup> As Hitler broke into the foreign policy field in 1935, a *Volkstumspolitik* independent from German foreign policy grew less feasible by the month.<sup>166</sup> The overwhelming support for the return of the Saarland to Germany by those who voted in the 13 January 1935 plebescite was the first indication of what a foreign policy propped up by State controlled and influenced concern over ethnic brethren abroad could achieve. The future annexations of Austria and the Sudetenland would prove this point beyond the shadow of a doubt.

By 1937, leaders of various Party organizations with stakes in monopolizing *Deutschtumsarbeit* had brought sufficient pressure to bear upon what they regarded as the "reactionary" VDA and secured the dismissal of Steinacher on 19 October 1937.<sup>167</sup> Steinacher's reluctance to follow Hitler's plans to renounce German claims to South

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<sup>164</sup>*Ibid.*, li-liii.

<sup>165</sup>See Jacobsen, *Steinacher*, doc. no. 31: "Der 15. Oktober 1934 uns seine Folgen," 164, and doc. no. 62: "Kompetenzkonflikte mit der AO," letter from Steinacher to General Haushofer, 25 January 1935, 265.

<sup>166</sup>*Ibid.*, xlvi.

<sup>167</sup>*Ibid.*, xxvi, and doc. no. 28: "Erste Konflikte mit NS-Organisationen," 149-152. For the NS perspective on the need to replace Steinacher, see Hess to VDA, 19 October 1937, PA AA, R100908; Twardowski to Secretary of State, 22 October 1937, PA AA, R100908; and VDA to AA, 28 October 1937, PA AA, R100908. Steinacher was not the only leading member of the VDA under attack, for many others were forced from the organization due to Party interference (see, Jacobsen, *Steinacher*, li).

Tyrol greatly facilitated his opponents' machinations to secure his dismissal and thereby gain control of the organization.<sup>168</sup> Party control of the VDA was assured by the choice of Steinacher's replacement, Dr. Luig, of the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* (VOMI, Ethnic German Coordinating Office). VOMI had been created by Rudolf Hess, early in 1936, as an official Party liaison office for all groups and organizations concerned with the ethnic German question. From the very beginning, its leadership was dominated by SS-men and eventually VOMI was placed completely under the authority of Himmler.<sup>169</sup>

The timing of the demise of VDA autonomy coincided with the Nazi's complete synchronization of all fields of German public life, especially with regard to foreign

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<sup>168</sup>Jacobsen, *Steinacher*, xxvi. In late September 1937, Mussolini travelled to Germany to meet with Hitler. This was the meeting at which the so-called "Rome-Berlin Axis" was formed (and Hitler's long-held view of Italy as Germany's natural ally against Versailles finally fulfilled) (on the visit and the speeches made by the two leaders, see NW, 29 September and 6 October, 1937). During the visit, Hitler had assured Mussolini of German disinterest in the South Tyrol, but Steinacher felt that this would weaken Germany's claims on the Sudetenland (Gerhard L. Weinberg, *The Foreign Policy of Hitler's Germany, Vol. II: Starting World War II, 1937-1939* [Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1980], 35). That Steinacher was dismissed one month later is hardly surprising since Göring had been told by Mussolini that the removal of Steinacher would be welcomed (Jacobsen, *Steinacher*, xxvi).

Steinacher had many enemies within the Party because they either felt pressured by the VDA or they distrusted its political orientation (Jacobsen, *Steinacher*, doc. no. 28: "Erste Konflikte mit NS-Organisationen," 149-152). Two such opponents, as identified by this document, were Wilhelm Bohle and Baldur von Schirach. Bohle, as head of the AO, was in competition with the VDA because of his desire that the AO be the exclusive representative of all Germans abroad, regardless of citizenship. Von Schirach, as mogul of the Third Reich's youth movements, including the *Hitler Jugend* (HJ, Hitler Youth), was an opponent of Steinacher because of efforts to usurp the VDA's youth movement. Ironically, Steinacher could have avoided much of the in-fighting had he accepted Heinrich Himmler's offer, made in 1933, of a commission within the SS. Had he done so, his troubles would have been over since he would have gained the protection of this increasingly powerful man. However, Steinacher declined the offer, based on the consideration that even men as highly placed within the Party as Ernst Röhm were not safe from murderous Party designs (i.e., the Night of the Long Knives, 30 June 1934) and the fact that membership in the most radical Party organization would have jeopardized his freedom of action. His refusal secured the undying wrath of Heinrich Himmler, his SS, and its organ which would eventually gain hegemony in ethnic German affairs, the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* (Jacobsen, *Steinacher*, doc. no. 102: "Die Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle," 385-390).

<sup>169</sup>Valdis O. Lumans, *Himmler's Auxiliaries: The Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle and the German National Minorities of Europe, 1933-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 45; and Norton, "Haushofer and His Influence on Nazi Ideology," 138-139.

affairs and the military.<sup>170</sup> The organizations involved with *Deutschtumsarbeit* were reined in, in order both to further Hitler's aggressive foreign policy and to ensure that their actions did not upset it.

Other changes with respect to the VDA and *Deutschtumsarbeit* were also implemented about the time of Steinacher's dismissal. At a meeting of the DAI's department heads on 23 November 1937 the extent of these changes was revealed.<sup>171</sup>

Henceforth, the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* was to control funding and the general

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<sup>170</sup>The timing of the National Socialist take-over of *Volksdeutsche* affairs is significant, for it coincided with the onset of Hitler's aggressive foreign policy. It occurred days before the infamous "Hossbach Memorandum" was written, and only a few months before the coordination of the Reich's military and Foreign Office. On 5 November 1937 Hitler outlined to his top aids (while Colonel Hossbach took notes) the course German foreign policy was to take. Germany would no longer strive to secure British cooperation in its machinations to regain its position as a world power. Henceforth, England would be treated with ambivalence and increasing hostility as Germany set out to gain *Lebensraum* in the East; even if the price was an eventual war with the West (Klaus Hildebrand, *Deutsche Außenpolitik, 1933-1945. Kalkül oder Dogma?*, 5th ed. [Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1990], 55-57 [hereafter cited as *Deutsche Außenpolitik*]). The first step in clearing the way for German moves eastward was secured the next day, when Italy joined the Anti-Comintern Pact. Mussolini, at the ceremonies marking the occasion, gave his expressed consent for the annexation of Austria by Germany (see William Shirer, *Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* [New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960], 302). But before any concrete actions could be taken, Hitler had to first clean house within Germany. For five years, Hitler had continued to employ the old diplomatic corps as the representatives of Nazi foreign policy in order to give to the Nazi regime a respectability which would have been hard to duplicate with Party members (Paul Seabury, "Ribbentrop and the German Foreign Office," *Political Science Quarterly* 66, no. 4 [December 1951], 535). Hitler had also allowed the military to retain much of its autonomy during this time. However, by early 1938, a rift between the attitudes of Hitler and both the Foreign Office and the Armed Forces had become unbridgeable. The divergence of opinion lay not in kind but in degree: the diplomats and soldiers feared that Hitler was pursuing the mutually desired foreign policy objectives too quickly, and with too much risk (Hildebrand, *Deutsche Außenpolitik*, 63). Hitler solved this potentially harmful problem on 4 February 1938: by dismissing Colonel General von Fritsch as Commander in Chief of the Army and placing in his stead the more compliant Field Marshal von Brauchitsch; by replacing Field Marshal von Blomberg, who had been Reich War Minister and Commander in Chief of the *Wehrmacht*, with Field marshal Keitel who became the Chief of the newly created High Command of the Armed Forces (*Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*); and by replacing Reich Foreign Minister von Neurath with the trusted Party member Joachim von Ribbentrop. These replacements signified the completion of Germany's Nazification. By brushing aside the last vestiges of Germany's conservative elite, Hitler was now firmly in control of every aspect of Germany's foreign and domestic policies, and was free to pursue his expansionist goals.

<sup>171</sup>"Abteilungsleitersitzung [of the DAI] am 23.11.1937," USNA T81/417/5163018-019.

direction of work among the *Volksdeutsche*. The record of the November meeting also shows that *Deutschtumsarbeit* had been restructured in order to reduce duplication of efforts. Work among ethnic Germans was to be divided into practical and scientific fields (e.g., book donations, etc., and collection and storage of data, etc., respectively); the VDA was to limit its activities to the former, while the DAI had competence over the latter.<sup>172</sup> With regard to any analysis of *Deutschtumsarbeit* in Canada, this was very significant. However, any efforts to conclusively determine the extent of the practical *Deutschtumsarbeit* done in Canada is hampered by a dearth of extant documentation; this applies to the VDA's activities prior to 1937 and to much of the practical *Deutschtumsarbeit* conducted between late 1937 and the outbreak of WWII.

The process of coordinating the VDA into the Nazi *Weltanschauung* was virtually completed on 3 February 1939. On this date Hess officially subordinated the VDA to the SS controlled VOMI.<sup>173</sup>

### **The *Deutsche Auslands-Institut***

The *Deutsche Auslands-Institut* was the other leading organization involved in *Deutschtumsarbeit* during the inter-war period. It was founded in 1917, and according to its statute, was to fulfil two goals: to promote the interests of the *Deutschtum im Ausland* and strengthen the ties between them and the Reich, and to further the scientific aspects (*Auslandskunde*) of *Volkstumsarbeit*.<sup>174</sup> Unlike the VDA, the DAI was not

<sup>172</sup>The VDA was forced to turn over its institutionally based departments, such as its library, collection of slide photographs, and scientific research to the DAI.

<sup>173</sup>Jacobsen, *Steinacher*, doc. no. 154: "Die Gleichschaltung des VDA," by Hess, 03 February 1939, 504-505, and Ritter, *DAI*, 21.

intended to be a mass organization, but rather a centralized archival and research centre for questions concerning all ethnic Germans abroad.<sup>175</sup> Its membership was never very large, but it was very distinguished.<sup>176</sup>

From its very inception, the DAI worked in close cooperation with the German governments. In fact, because it had been incorporated, it was subordinated to the Württemberg Cultural Ministry, and as such, was a semi-official agency.<sup>177</sup> The Institute was heavily supported by all levels of government, which accounted for between two-thirds and three-quarters of the organization's budget.<sup>178</sup> The remaining one third to one quarter of the funding came from business and private individuals.<sup>179</sup> Despite this heavy reliance upon government funding, the DAI had virtually nothing to do with political

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<sup>174</sup>Ritter, *DAI*, 33-34. These original guiding principles were, by and large, adhered to throughout the inter-war period, despite the eventual Nazification of the DAI.

<sup>175</sup>See "Deutsche Ausland-Institut," [unsigned, undated (although contents reveal that it was written around 1939) synopsis of DAI's history and undertakings] USNA T81/490/5251442-443; and "Neue Aufgaben des Deutschen Ausland-Instituts," [23 October 1934], USNA T81/346/5073604.

<sup>176</sup>The DAI's more influential members included Matthias Erzberger, Grand Admiral von Koester and Constantin von Neurath. Furthermore, academics such as Max-Hildebert Boeh, Hermann Ullmann, Wilhelm Stapel, Hans Grimm, Werner Sombart, and Karl Haushofer were affiliated with the DAI in advisory capacities (Diamond, *The Nazi Movement*, 43, footnote 6, and 47, footnote 12). Furthermore, the members of the DAI's three councils (economic, cultural, and scientific) during the latter 1930s almost invariably held doctorates and university professorships (see "Deutsches Ausland-Institut. Wissenschaftlicher Rat," 12 October 1937 [updated until late 1941] USNA T81/417/5162885-895; "Deutsches Ausland-Institut. Wirtschaftsrat," 7 October 1937 [updated to mid-1942], USNA T81/417/5162919-926; "Kulturrat," 20 October 1937 [updated to end 1942], USNA T81/417/5162936-946). As for representatives (*Vertrauensleute*) of the DAI abroad, according to the "Vorstands Rundschreiben Nr. 21," compiled for September 1934, there were only 2,108 (USNA T81/378/5115111).

<sup>177</sup>Ritter, *DAI*, 34.

<sup>178</sup>*Ibid.*, 34-35. The DAI was supported federally by the Ministry of the Interior and the Foreign Office. It was also supported by the component states of Germany (especially Württemberg), and the city of Stuttgart.

<sup>179</sup>Financial support for the DAI came from such businesses as Krupp, I.G. Farben, and the Hamburg-America Shipping Line (Diamond, *The Nazi Movement*, 43).

activities abroad during the Weimar era.<sup>180</sup> Dr. Fritz Wertheimer, president of the DAI during this period, was wary of provoking the animosity of foreign nations in which the DAI operated, and as such, concentrated the DAI's efforts upon cultural *Deutschtumsarbeit*.<sup>181</sup> Moreover, the DAI was far more concerned with the economic potential of the Germans abroad than with their politicization.<sup>182</sup>

The DAI was also much involved in helping and advising Reich Germans who desired to emigrate after WWI.<sup>183</sup> Work in this area included matching prospective emigrants with suitable countries of destination, and then helping them get established in their new countries of residence. Of course, implicit in all of this was the attempt to have the emigrants retain ties with Germany once they had left.<sup>184</sup>

The major activities of the DAI during the inter-war period were founded upon Wertheimer's re-organization of the Institute in 1922.<sup>185</sup> These activities amounted to the amassing of information concerning Germans abroad. Three separate sections were created within the DAI to this end. The first was to collect foreign newspaper articles,

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<sup>180</sup>See Ritter, *DAI*, 41-42.

<sup>181</sup>Diamond, *The Nazi Movement*, 45 and 48.

<sup>182</sup>Ritter, *DAI*, 42-43. The hope was to create an internal market among the *Deutschtum* which would simultaneously strengthen the economy of the Reich and guarantee the autonomy of the various German groups abroad. Emphasis was placed upon central Europe, where foodstuffs grown by ethnic Germans in this area would be traded for industrial goods manufactured in Germany. These efforts on the part of the DAI, like those of the VDA, met with little success. This was due not only to the barriers erected by foreign countries against the importation of German wares, but was also due to the fact that the ethnic Germans had grown accustomed to utilising foreign goods.

<sup>183</sup>See *ibid.*, 43-48.

<sup>184</sup>Frye, *Nazi Germany*, 17.

<sup>185</sup>Diamond, *The Nazi Movement*, 42-45.

the contents of which dealt with Germany and Germans abroad. The second was the establishment of a Central Card Index (*Zentralkartei*) which contained information about individual Germans around the world who had emigrated since the 1850s.<sup>186</sup> Thirdly, provisions were made whereby Germans abroad could submit reports of how they and their communities were fairing.<sup>187</sup>

By the mid-1930s, the DAI had become the Reich's major repository of *Deutschtum* information. In September 1934 alone, it received from the Reich and abroad, 1,547 newspapers and journals, and 105,976 separate newspaper clippings. The DAI's library contained 59,537 volumes concerning German emigration and the history of the overseas German communities. It had on file the names of 42,346 German organisations, and 4,604 German schools, world-wide. And there were 43,737 pictures and 10,905 maps in its Map and Picture Section. All were to be found in the DAI's *Haus des Deutschtums* (House of Ethnic Germans) in Stuttgart.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>186</sup>The Central Card Index was arranged both alphabetically by family name and by the current country of residence. The information contained on the colour coded cards was to include the person's name, place of birth, occupation, marital status and address. Separate cards were also kept for all adult offspring of these emigrants. Every German homeland (e.g., Swabia) eventually had its own research branch (*Forschungsstellen*) which was to concern itself with the collection of this material. This explains why Karl Götz, as head of the Swabian research branch, was primarily concerned with collecting the names of Swabians in Canada (see below, page 145). Details concerning the card index are from USNA T81/400/5142116-118. See also USNA, T81/583/5365766-769.

<sup>187</sup>Much of this information found its way into the pages of the DAI's journal, *Der Auslanddeutsche*.

<sup>188</sup>"Vorstands-rundschreiben Nr. 21, Monatsstatistik September 1934," USNA T81/378/5115111-115. These figures show a marked increase in its holdings since the late 1920s when the DAI was receiving about 140 foreign newspapers and had a library of some 40,000 volumes (Diamond, *The Nazi Movement*, 45). Unfortunately, the statistics for September 1934 did not include figures for the DAI's card index, however, by the late 1920s it already contained about 28,000 names (*ibid.*). The *Haus des Deutschtums* was officially opened in Stuttgart in 1925, amid much fanfare--even Gustav Stresemann was on hand. This building continues to house the holdings of the former DAI, now called the *Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen*.



The DAI's collection activities assured it a predominant position in genealogical research when the Nazis came to power, due to the Party's preoccupation with racial purity.<sup>189</sup> An example of this concern is to be found in the first sentences of the application form for membership in the *Deutscher Bund Canada*, which reads: "I herewith declare my entry into the *Deutscher Bund*. I am of German-Aryan stock, am free of Jewish or coloured racial influence [*Rasseeinschlag*], and belong to no secret society."<sup>190</sup> The Nazis' requirement of proof of Aryan origin for membership in its organisations, and the German community itself, necessitated a means of verifying such claims. Thus, in 1934 the *Hauptstelle für Auslandsdeutsche Sippenkunde* (Head Office for Ethnic German Genealogy) was created within the DAI. As with so many other aspects of German life and undertakings, the Nazis subverted to their own ends much that had gone before. In this case, the DAI's genealogical research came to serve a political function in Hitler's Germany. The above-mentioned Central Card Index also proved advantageous to the Nazis as it provided a means by which those abroad who were unsympathetic or antagonistic to the New Germany could be monitored.<sup>191</sup> More telling of Nazi intentions to absorb the DAI and its activities into their orbit was the reorganization which they implemented shortly after they came to power.

Reorganization of the DAI began almost immediately upon the assumption of

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<sup>189</sup>Unless otherwise stated, information concerning the DAI's genealogical research is from Ritter, *DAI*, 84-85.

<sup>190</sup>"Anlage 2 zu J. Nr. 40: Bericht aus Montreal vom 15. Januar 1934," PA AA, R77347.

<sup>191</sup>Information concerning opponents of the New Germany was entered into the Central Card Index on yellow cards, see USNA T81/400/5142118.

power of the Nazis.<sup>192</sup> Wertheimer was dismissed from the leadership of the DAI on 8 March 1933, due to his Jewish origins.<sup>193</sup> The position of president of the DAI fell to Nazi Party member and *Oberbürgermeister* of Stuttgart (Lord Mayor of Stuttgart; appointed 1 July 1933), Dr. Karl Strölin. This decision, facilitated by the fact that Dr. Strölin himself desired the post, ensured the DAI of political and financial support in the coming years. However, due to Dr. Strölin's lack of expertise in the field of *Deutschtumsarbeit*, he remained largely the figurehead of the Institute. The actual leadership of the DAI fell to Dr. Richard Csaki, an ethnic German from Transylvania, who had long been involved in *Deutschtumsarbeit* in Rumania and was well known within Germany. The executive committee of the DAI was also affected by the Nazi's coordination. Henceforth, it was to be comprised of seven people, four of whom were Party members.<sup>194</sup> Despite this clear indication that the DAI had been coordinated by the Nazis, those agencies and individuals responsible for the reorganization agreed that the

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<sup>192</sup>Unless otherwise stated, information concerning the restructuring of the DAI's leadership is from Ritter, *DAI*, 54-57.

<sup>193</sup>Jacobsen, Steinacher, Wertheimer to Roediger, 30 March 1933, appended to doc. no. 16: "Reorganisation des DAI 15. Juni 1933," 99.

<sup>194</sup>*Ibid.*, doc. no. 16: "Reorganisation des DAI 15. Juni 1933," by Roediger, 95-98. For the purposes of selecting a new leader of the DAI, a special committee had been established. An indication of the growing coordination of the work of the DAI and the VDA, as well as a sign of the VDA's importance in *Deutschtumsarbeit*, can be seen in the composition of this committee: Steinacher, head of the VDA; R. Ernst, chairman of the *Schutzbund*; and Krehl, state chair of the Württemberg VDA (Ritter, *DAI*, 56). Cooperation continued throughout the Nazi era as the Nazis attempted to end the duplication of work between the two organisations (see *ibid.*, 127). However, jealousies between the DAI and the VDA were evident, and accounted for the DAI's position as one of the VDA's leading enemies. This was due to the political weight which the VDA carried in the early years of Nazi rule. This is especially so with respect to the leading role which the VDA played in the *Volksdeutscher Rat* (Ethnic German Council), an important umbrella organization which included no DAI representation (*ibid.*, 127).

DAI should continue to function as a seemingly independent body.<sup>195</sup> But this is not to say that the DAI was not to tow the Party line.

After Csaki had assumed his duties on 20 September 1933,<sup>196</sup> his leadership (based on the *Führerprinzip*) and voluntary acceptance of Bohle as his *de facto* chief, meant the complete conversion of the DAI into a Nazi tool.<sup>197</sup> And so, it is hardly surprising that the DAI could assure the long-time Nazi Party member (from about the mid-1920s), Karl Gerhard, that there would be no political repercussions for working for the Institute, should he so choose.<sup>198</sup> Gerhard, a journalist, had emigrated to Canada from Germany in early 1930, had studied and worked in the German language department of the University of Western Ontario in London, Ontario, where he was instrumental in establishing and leading (1934 to late 1935) the *Deutscher Bund Canada*. He was also an agent (*Vertrauensmann*) of the AO and *Führer* of the Nazi Party in Canada until 1936, when he was forced to resign this office by Party leaders in Germany for reasons not entirely known. In any case, a DAI correspondent had informed Gerhard, in late 1934, that

We are working together with the Auslands-Organization of the Party in the closest collaboration and were expressedly recognised only a short time ago in a

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<sup>195</sup>Those responsible for the reorganisation were: the AA, RMI, the Württemberg government, Steinacher, Ernst, and Göring (a professor and Prorektor of the Technischen Hochschule in Stuttgart) (Jacobsen, Steinacher, doc. no. 16: "Reorganisation des DAI 15. Juni 1933," by Roediger, 96-97).

<sup>196</sup>Csaki retained this position until 1 July 1943.

<sup>197</sup>For the extent of cooperation expected of the DAI with the various Nazi organizations and ministries involved in Deutschtumsarbeit, see "Neue Aufgaben des Deutschen Ausland-Instituts," [23 October 1934], USNA T81/346/5073602. See also Ritter, *DAI*, 61; and Diamond, *The Nazi Movement*, 53-54.

<sup>198</sup>Seelheim to AA, [Winnipeg] journal no. 484, 15 June 1934, PA AA, R99263. Information concerning the biography of Gerhard is from Wagner, *Brothers Beyond the Sea*, 79-82, unless otherwise stated.

Party circular as an organization, whose scientific and cultural tasks, especially with regard to [its] foreign branches, deserves the fullest support. Not a day passes by, when we do not exchange numerous letters about the most varied issues with the *Auslands-Organisation*.<sup>199</sup>

This assurance was enough to secure the services of Gerhard, who promised to send to the DAI monthly reports concerning his work and the development of the *Deutschtum* in Canada.<sup>200</sup> The DAI also cooperated with such Reich organizations as the AA, RMI, PROMI and the *Aussenpolitischen Amt der NSDAP* (APA, Foreign Political Office of the NSDAP).<sup>201</sup> Of the contacts which the DAI had with the Reich's armed forces, the most intensive appears to have been with the Navy.<sup>202</sup>

The resumption in 1924 of Navy training cruisers sailing into foreign ports of call brought with it a return to the Navy's interest in the *Deutschtum im Ausland*.<sup>203</sup> Two cruisers paid calls to Canadian ports during the inter-war period: the cruiser "Karlsruhe" was in Vancouver from 15 to 21 March 1935, and the cruiser "Emden" visited Montreal from 12 to 18 May 1936.<sup>204</sup> These visits had great propagandistic value. The ships

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<sup>199</sup>DAI to K. Gerhard, 19 December 1934, USNA T81/394/5134922.

<sup>200</sup>Gerhard to DAI, 6 February 1935, USNA T81/394/5134921.

<sup>201</sup>Ritter, DAI, 107-108. The DAI's working relationship with the AA and RMI dated back to the Weimar era, and was based upon government funding and guidance (*ibid.*, 103).

<sup>202</sup>*Ibid.*, 108. Information for the details of the DAI's relationship with the Navy is from *ibid.*, 37-38, unless otherwise stated.

<sup>203</sup>For the planning and itinerary of these trips, the Navy relied heavily upon the recommendations of the DAI. This close cooperation accounts for the fact that representatives of the Navy sat on the DAI's board of directors and were present at the DAI's yearly rallies. For example, captain of the cruiser "Karlsruhe," Seemens was on hand at the DAI annual convention on 19 August 1936 (Karl Viererbl, "Auslandsdeutsche Rundschau," *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte* 7, no. 79, 939).

<sup>204</sup>The first "German Days" in Quebec were held in conjunction with the "Emden" visit to Montreal. As the *Nordwesten* reported, this opportunity for Quebec's *Deutschtum* to celebrate the festivities with Germans, fresh from the homeland, made the occasion especially great ("Kreuzerbesuch und Deutscher Tag," *NW*, 20 May 1936).

brought to the ethnic Germans overseas the "*Gruß der Heimat*" (greetings from the homeland). The official act of presence of the German Reich afforded by the ships in foreign ports also served as a means of strengthening the confidence of the Germans abroad and provided a means of tangibly demonstrating the continued existence of ties with the old homeland.<sup>205</sup> In short, the ceremonies at which the ships' crews and ethnic Germans intermingled, provided great opportunities for expounding *völkische Ideologie*. In a speech given in German at a "German evening" in Vancouver to commemorate the visit of the *Karlsruhe*, Consul Seelheim spoke at length about *Volkstum*.<sup>206</sup> He reminded his mixed audience of German and Canadian citizens, of their duty to both their adopted country and to their country of ethnic origin. But he then continued in a vein which indicated the emerging thrust of the Nazi definition of *Deutschtum*: the emphasis was now upon race as opposed to the more benign concepts of culture and language. Dr. Seelheim explained how Germany did not desire to make Germans out of any of its neighbouring peoples, but rather only desired to maintain ties with its *Volk*, united as they were through heredity and blood:

Here [lie] the reason[s] for the connectedness of all ethnic Germans around the world. We, or our fathers, may have come here from Russia or from the Balkans, from the United States or from Austria, from Hungary or from Germany: we are members of *one* race, branches and twigs of *one* great tree, the roots of which are sunk in the holy soil of the homeland, from which [the tree] derives its strength.

States may come and states may go, but *Volkstum* is *eternal*.<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>205</sup>"Kreuzerbesuch und Deutscher Tag," *NW*, 20 May 1936.

<sup>206</sup>Seelheim to AA Berlin, journal no. 81, appendix no. 1: "Ansprache auf dem Deutschen Abend in Vancouver am 15.3.35," Winnipeg, 11 May 1935, PA AA, R77347.

<sup>207</sup>*Ibid.*

Seelheim then proceeded to explain to his audience the New Germany of Adolf Hitler, its new found strength, will of purpose, and concentration upon the spiritual needs of all Germans everywhere. By extolling the virtues of the Nazi concept of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, Seelheim also revealed the true political possibilities of *Deutschtumsarbeit*:

...the main aim of German National Socialism is one [which comes from] within. To lead the German people back to the original source of its being, to develop its core to a moral strength, to educate it to the same great interpretation of its duties with regard to its brothers in blood and thereby to the *community of the Volk*.

Through German Socialism—which has nothing to do with Marxist fallacies—we will reach this goal. Millions of misdirected comrades of the *Volk* have already found their way back to the community of the *Volk* by this path. And one of the best examples of this, how members of our people follow the calling of their blood and how you would inwardly (intellectually and morally) overcome Marxism, was given to us by our brothers in the Saarland. . . .

The Saarland showed us that we are on the right path. We will continue on this path with proud knowledge in our pure conscience and aspirations; the path to the *Volksgemeinschaft*, which reaches across countries and seas.<sup>208</sup>

In conclusion, Consul Seelheim reiterated the important role the *Karlsruhe* and other such cruiser visits play in achieving the *Volksgemeinschaft*.

Another, more effective method which both the VDA and the DAI utilized to reach the Germans abroad was to send prominent contributors of *Deutschtumsarbeit* on lecture tours of the various German enclaves around the world. They were more effective because the DAI and VDA had direct control over the agents they dispatched and, moreover, the message was heard by a much wider audience since the speakers were not restricted to port-cities. These trips had the dual purpose of bolstering ethnic awareness in these communities and in identifying how better to care for these

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<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*

communities from within the Reich. Father Manfred Grisebach, who worked with the DAI from its inception, rising in 1919 to become head of the DAI's Emigration Advisory Department (*Auswanderungsberatung*),<sup>209</sup> then leader of the Head Office for Ethnic German Genealogy (*Hauptstelle für auslandsdeutsche Sippenkunde*) shortly after its creation on 22 March 1934,<sup>210</sup> was also the DAI's *Referent* (official expert) for Canada from at least May 1937.<sup>211</sup> And it was Father Grisebach who had undertaken one of the first tours of Canada in 1929. Grisebach's information collecting trip to western Canada had brought him to various areas of ethnic German settlement, including Saskatoon, Battleford and Loon River. He was also on hand at the 1929 German Day in Edmonton, where he implored those in attendance to remain German and retain their cohesiveness.<sup>212</sup> Dr. Kloster, on assignment with the VDA and the DAI (i.e., the *Forschungsstelle Westfalen im Ausland*), also travelled through Canada, probably in 1936.<sup>213</sup> Another, more extensively documented trip was made by the teacher, author, poet, and City Councillor of Stuttgart, Karl Götz.<sup>214</sup>

Götz, too, worked with both the VDA and the DAI, where he was head of the *Forschungsstelle Schwaben im Ausland*. His 1936-37 lecture tour of the Americas saw

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<sup>209</sup>Ritter, *DAI*, 45.

<sup>210</sup>*Ibid.*, 84.

<sup>211</sup>"*Deutsches Ausland-Institut, Verteilung der Länderreferate (Mai 1937)*," USNA T81/417/5162811.

<sup>212</sup>"Winnipeg: Auf Studienreise," *NW*, 28 August 1929.

<sup>213</sup>Unfortunately only one reference of this trip was found, see Götz to Strölin, 5 October 1936, USNA T81/583/5366231.

<sup>214</sup>"Der Dichter Karl Götz in Winnipeg," *NW*, 9 September 1936.

him visit virtually every German community in North, Central and South America.<sup>215</sup> His time in Canada, however, was spent entirely in the west, between Winnipeg and Vancouver. Although much of his visit concentrated on the larger towns and cities, he also ventured into the sparsely populated regions to visit individuals, such as those homesteading in the north of Canada's Prairies.<sup>216</sup> The purpose of his trip was, ostensibly, to bring greetings from the homeland to all Germans, but especially those from Swabia, the ancestral district in which Stuttgart, the "City of the Germans Abroad,"<sup>217</sup> was located.<sup>218</sup> Nevertheless, Götz met with as many ethnic Germans in Canada as possible, regardless of denomination or country of origin. His ability to do so was greatly facilitated by two of the DAI's agents in Canada who participated in arranging his itinerary. These agents were Bernhard Bott and Paul Abele, both of whom

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<sup>215</sup>Ritter, *DAI*, 83. In order to visit as many Germans as possible, Götz' itinerary was hectic, to say the least. For example, while in Winnipeg he gave lectures on five consecutive evenings, and met with leading ethnic Germans there during the days (Götz [writing from Winnipeg] to Oberbürgermeister [Strölin], 1 September 1936, USNA T81/583/5366111-112). For the itinerary of his entire trip, see "Verlauf der Reise von K. Goetz durch Nord-, Mittel- und Suedamerika (1936/37)," USNA T81/394/5365951. For a narrative account of his entire tour, see Karl Götz, *Brüder über dem Meer: Schicksale und Begegnungen* (Stuttgart: J. Engelhorn, 1938). It is interesting to note that Wagner adopted the English translation of this work for the title of his quintessential study of National Socialism in Canada: *Brothers Beyond the Sea*.

<sup>216</sup>See for example Götz [writing from North Battleford, SK] to Strölin, 30 September 1936, USNA T81/583/5366207-208; and Götz [writing from Dapp, AB] to Strölin, 6 October 1936, USNA T81/583/5366236. Götz held great admiration for the homesteaders, writing to Dr. Strölin that they were "Upstanding guys, the best Germans, better than so many [of those] beer swilling buffoons of the [ethnic German] clubs; but so unspeakably poor. And the people are so happy when someone from the homeland comes to [visit] them" (5 October 1936, USNA T81/583/5366232).

<sup>217</sup>The RMI bestowed this title upon Stuttgart on 11 September 1936 (Ritter, *DAI*, 111-112). Interestingly, the DAI used this title as part of its defence against changing the meaning of the term "Auslanddeutsche" from all Germans abroad to only the *Reichsdeutsche* abroad (see above, page 2). It argued that the designation of Stuttgart as the "City of Reich Germans Abroad," as the title would now have to be interpreted, would be superfluous; Reich Germans abroad presumably stemmed from a town within the Reich, whereas this was not necessarily so with the *Volksdeutsche* who therefore needed a place within the Reich to call home, as it were ("Oberbürgermeister," 20 November 1937, T81/417/5163345).

<sup>218</sup>Ritter, *DAI*, 82.



were very active in *Deutschtumsarbeit* in Canada.<sup>219</sup> Paul Abele was a pro-Nazi druggist in Edmonton. He was the first president of Alberta's *Deutsch-Canadischer National-Verband* (German-Canadian National Association), formerly the *Deutsch-Canadische Zentral-Stelle* (German-Canadian Central Office).<sup>220</sup> Abele was a member of the *Deutscher Bund Canada*, and had controlled, for a time, both the planning committee of Alberta's German Days and Alberta's *Arbeitsgemeinschaft*. He was also one of the DAI's regular contributors in that province.<sup>221</sup> Thus both Bott and Abele were well disposed to arrange for Götz to meet many ethnic Germans while on his tour. This was fortunate, since part of Götz' mission to the Americas was to compile the names and addresses of ethnic Germans, especially the Swabians, in order to re-establish ties between these people and Germany. Often, ethnic Germans would voluntarily forward to Götz their names, addresses, and sometimes their biographies for his collection if they had not met with him personally, but had read of his activities in newspapers such as the *Courier* or the *Nordwesten*.<sup>222</sup> Once a name and address of an ethnic German had been forwarded to the DAI, the latter would quickly enter into a correspondence with that person. The aim was not only to maintain the link forged by Götz, but also to expand upon it as a means by which to disseminate among ethnic Germans in Canada

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<sup>219</sup>See Seelheim to Moshack [of the DAI], 6 May 1936, USNA T81/396/5137671; and Abele to Goetz, 16 September 1936, USNA T81/394/5366183.

<sup>220</sup>The name change had occurred on 9 June 1933 ("Deutsch-Canadischer National-Verband," *NW*, 5 July 1933).

<sup>221</sup>See Götz to Strölin, 5 October 1936, USNA T81/583/5366226-228; and Wagner, *Brothers Beyond the Sea*, 100.

<sup>222</sup>See for example, Robert Reinhardt [Busby, AB] to Abele, 28 September 1936, USNA T81/583/5366198; R. Blank u. Schärr [Wildwood, AB] to Abele, 28 September 1936, USNA T81/583/5366203; and Ambrose Sitzenberger [Bruderheim, AB] to Abele, 30 September 1936, USNA T81/583/5366209.

propaganda-infused material such as the DAI's journal "Der Auslandsdeutsche," pictorial calendars featuring images of various ethnic German communities world-wide, collections of poetry, etc.<sup>223</sup> The DAI also looked upon Götz' trip as a means to expand its network of regular contributors to its work.<sup>224</sup>

Götz' lectures usually began with a slide-projection show of the German homeland, concentrating upon the regions from which his audience stemmed. Although he generally practised discretion with regard to expressing political opinions, he invariably included at least a little of this at every meeting.<sup>225</sup> Of course, that his task also included instilling the German communities with *völkische Ideologie* necessarily implied a politicization of at least part of his message. This is clearly evident in the *Nordwesten* article describing his lecture before a Winnipeg audience of some two hundred people.<sup>226</sup> Götz explained (incorrectly) to his listeners how, before the Nazis had come to power, all German emigrants were regarded in Germany as foreigners. Since 1933, however, they were considered members of the community of all Germans in the world. As far as the National Socialists were concerned, Götz continued, a person was defined not by his citizenship papers, but rather through heredity and blood. In this way was he indivisibly tied to his *Volk*. He could be a citizen of another country but

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<sup>223</sup>See for example: DAI to H. Reimer [Steinbach, MB], 17 December 1936, USNA T81/583/5366147; DAI to Paul Abele [Edmonton], 1 February 1937, USNA T81/583/5366185; Strölin to Hugo Schilling [Loon River, SK], 4 February 1937, USNA T81/583/5366196; DAI to Karl Schlecker [Stony Plain, AB], 10 February 1937, USNA T81/583/5366223.

<sup>224</sup>Götz [writing from Edmonton] to Strölin, 5 October 1936, USNA T81/583/5366231-232.

<sup>225</sup>Ritter, *DAI*, 83.

<sup>226</sup>"Der Dichter Karl Götz in Winnipeg," *NW*, 9 September 1936.

nevertheless remained a member of his people by virtue of his blood. It was this reasoning, stated Götz, which the New Germany employed to create a community of the *Volk* which extended beyond the borders of the Reich, to the very ends of the earth. Under the leadership of Adolf Hitler, Götz explained, Germans were coming to realize their mission in the world and were working to build a better future. The ethnic Germans around the world had to realize this in order to acknowledge with pride and joy their heritage, blood, and language.

Another aspect of Götz' trip comprised working covertly for the Nazis' *Auslands-Organisation*. Although the exact nature of this activity can no longer be determined, it is clear that it included reporting on the contributing representatives of various organizations, such as the VDA's Bernhard Bott, on the leadership of Nazi organisations in the Americas, and on identifying ethnic German opponents of the NS regime.<sup>227</sup> Götz' forwarding of denunciations of ethnic Germans in Canada to the DAI reveal that this organization was active in such unsavoury political activities.<sup>228</sup> In fact, the DAI willingly placed its services and world-wide contacts at the disposal of the Württemberg

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<sup>227</sup>Ritter, *DAI*, 82, 123-125, and Wagner, *Brothers Beyond the Sea*, 50.

<sup>228</sup>On stationery from Paul Abele's pharmacy, Götz warned the DAI that many members of the German departments in American universities are against the New Germany. He reminded the DAI to use caution with respect to them (Götz [Edmonton] to Strölin, 5 October 1936, USNA T81/583/5366226-227). Although no names are specifically mentioned in this last document, Götz does refer the reader to another note for more details. No such note was found with the original letter. However, an undated, unsigned note, written in Edmonton and intended for the DAI was found which concerned three enemies of Germany (one of whom, Owen, was a university professor in Edmonton) (USNA T81/583/5366186-187). The handwriting points to the likelihood that Abele himself was the author and, therefore, source of Götz' information.

Political State Police for the purposes of locating enemies of the state abroad.<sup>229</sup>

Another means by which the DAI attempted to maintain ties with the *Deutschtum im Ausland* was the implementation of the *Lesepatenschaft* ("pen-pal" system).<sup>230</sup> The DAI was a relative latecomer to this method of reaching ethnic Germans abroad. Whereas the pen-pal system began about the time of World War One, the DAI did not become involved to any great extent until the mid-1930s. By this time, the original concept had changed. During the 1920s, reading material was mailed from Germany to clubs and organizations abroad and was then distributed to their members. However, by the mid-1930s the concept had taken root of forming closer, more personalized ties between *Reichsdeutsche* and the *Deutschtum im Ausland* who shared similar interests and who came from the same districts. Thus, organizations such as the DAI became intermediaries in the process of matching "pen-pals." In this way German language material, such as newspapers, journals, and books, was sent by individuals within the Reich to individuals abroad. A few lines penned by the sender were also included to

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<sup>229</sup>See DAI to Württembergisches Politisches Landespolizeiamt, 19 September 1934, USNA T81/408/5152951. The extension of this offer came as a result of a police enquiry as to the whereabouts, and activities antagonistic to the interests of the German people and state, of Dr. Cäsar Hirsch, who was reported to be in Canada (Württembergisches Politisches Landespolizeiamt to DAI, 11 September 1934, USNA T81/408/5152951). The political police accepted the offer on at least one occasion, for they desired to be apprised of any information concerning journalist Coralie van Paassen who wrote pro-communist, pro-Semitic, and anti-German newspaper articles. The articles were published abroad, particularly in the *Toronto Daily Star* (Württembergisches Politisches Landespolizeiamt to DAI, 3 June 1936, USNA T81/408/5152715). From this, one may assume that the DAI would also have extended such services to the Reich's political police, the *Geheime Staatspolizei* (Gestapo, Secret State Police).

<sup>230</sup>Details of the *Lesepatenschaft*, unless otherwise stated, are from Ritter, DAI, 76-78, and two DAI memoranda, both dated 5 January 1938: "Zur Frage der Zusammenfassung des Lesepatenwerks im Dritten Reich," and "Lesestoffversand und Lesepatenwerk," USNA T81/490/5251208-209 and USNA T81/490/5251210-214, respectively. These memoranda, clearly based upon National Socialist Party directives, applied not only to the DAI, but also to the other groups involved in this activity, including the VDA and many denominational organizations.

personalize the exchange. Such a vehicle to provide the ethnic Germans abroad with free material which would enable them to maintain their language, while simultaneously forging personal ties to residents within the Reich seems innocuous enough. However, the Nazis coordinated the system and used it as a means to disseminate their propaganda world-wide. The fact that the *Lesepatenschaft* was conducted between private citizens was particularly useful to the National Socialists. The lack of any indication that the parcel originated from a Reich agency helped circumvent the strict censorship of German materials entering certain countries, including Canada.<sup>231</sup>

The National Socialists controlled the network of *Lesepatenschaft*, thereby ensuring that only literature which reflected their *Weltanschauung*, especially with regard to the unification of all ethnic Germans into the *Volksgemeinschaft*, was forwarded to individuals. Once contact had been established, material was to be sent on a continuing basis. The various Reich and Party offices with concerns in *Volksdeutsche* and *Auslandsdeutsche* affairs were to be apprised of any pertinent information which resulted from the correspondence. These agencies included the AA, AO, PROMI, RMI, VOMI, and HJ, among others. Moreover, the various intermediary bodies, such as the DAI and the VDA, were to coordinate their work by forwarding requests to, and exchanging information with each other as befitted their areas of competence. However, not just anyone was to receive this service. In order to prevent the propaganda from falling into

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<sup>231</sup>See "[DAI] Rundschreiben Nr. 25," 3 April 1939, USNA T81/501/5263902. This measure was not always sufficient. Otto Schoenfeldt (Regina) complained that German-language books, newspapers, etc. simply disappeared before they were delivered to the addressee. And this included material sent by pen-pals. He claimed the situation actually went beyond censorship, and was in fact nothing short of confiscation (Schoenfeldt to Hoffmann, 15 June 1939, USNA T81/29/25891-892).

the wrong hands, that is ethnic German opponents of the Third Reich, the political reliability of the recipient was to be assured by the agency which coordinated the exchange before any material was sent.

A series of correspondence between the DAI and the *Verband der Deutschen aus Rußland* (Union of Germans from Russia) reveals not only that the latter body was also involved in the *Lesepatenschaft*, but also that the DAI sought information concerning the political reliability of prospective ethnic German recipients as early as the end of 1935. When the DAI received a request for reading material from Wilhelm W. Redekop of Winnipegosis, MB, who had identified himself as a recent Russian German immigrant to Canada, the DAI contacted the Union of Germans from Russia.<sup>232</sup> The DAI desired to ascertain if Redekop was known to be politically reliable and if the Union would find a pen-pal for him. If the Union so desired, the DAI would also contribute reading material to be forwarded to him. The Union of Germans from Russia replied that it was prepared to match Redekop, "who is known to us to be trustworthy," with a pen-pal.<sup>233</sup> The Union also stated that yet another organization had been contacted in this regard which might concern itself with sending newspapers to Redekop.

The DAI's letter confirming receipt of the news that the Union would concern itself with Redekop, included a further request.<sup>234</sup> Jacob P. Born of McCreary, MB, who had written to the Institute on behalf of twenty Russian German families residing there,

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<sup>232</sup>DAI to the *Verband der Russlanddeutschen*, 30 December 1935, USNA T81/408/5151980.

<sup>233</sup>*Verband der Deutschen aus Rußland* to DAI, 2 January 1936, USNA T81/408/5151979.

<sup>234</sup>DAI to *Verband der Deutschen aus Russland*, 11 January 1936, USNA T81/408/5151982.

requested school books and Christian-oriented reading material. The DAI thought that the Union might also be able to secure pen-pals for these twenty families. No response to this request was found among the DAI's records. This in itself points to the probability that there existed a more extensive DAI-mediated *Lesepatenschaft* with ethnic Germans in Canada than the available records would indicate.

This assumption is confirmed to a large extent by a DAI letter to Karl Gerhard, dated 29 January 1936.<sup>235</sup> Included with the letter is a list of forty-one names of ethnic German people and organisations within Canada,

who have requested reading material from us [i.e., the DAI], and for whom we want gradually to provide pen-pals [from] within the homeland. Should any of the addressees already be familiar to you, we would be very thankful for a short character sketch of [them]. Also [include] an indication of the type of reading material which would be especially useful to the respective individuals.

The listed names and addresses are truly representative of the Canadian *Deutschtum*, as they span the country from Nova Scotia to British Columbia.

Although the DAI had become entirely politicized after Hitler came to power, its mandate remained much the same for four years thereafter. However, in early 1937 the DAI's area of competence was redefined by the Party.<sup>236</sup> It was allowed to continue to concern itself with the *Reichsdeutsche* abroad, but this would only be within the confines of working closely with the AO, which now had complete authority in this area.<sup>237</sup> The

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<sup>235</sup>DAI to Gerhard, 29 January 1936, USNA T81/394/5134911-912 (the second page being the list of names referred to in the first).

<sup>236</sup>"Abteilungsleitersitzung [of the DAI] am 27. 4. 1937," USNA T81/417/5163028.

<sup>237</sup>By January 1939, the AO had restricted the DAI's right to correspond to *Reichsdeutsche* abroad; any *Auslandsdeutsche* inquiries directed to the DAI were to be re-directed to the AO (see DAI circular of 21 January 1939, USNA T81/501/5263922-923).

main emphasis of the DAI's work became the *Volksdeutsche*, but again it was subordinated to the commands of a Party organ--the VOMI. And yet pretences of autonomy were maintained. Whereas the VDA had been entirely subordinated to the Party in 1939, it was not until 1943 that the illusion of DAI autonomy was dropped and the Institute placed under the direct control of VOMI.<sup>238</sup>

*Deutschtumsarbeit* during the inter-war period was alive and growing in Canada. Backed by the various governments throughout the Weimar Republic and then coordinated by the National Socialists, *Deutschtumsarbeit*, although politicized shortly after WWI, gradually assumed an increasingly political bent. What had originated as a means to foster ethnic German identity through the retention of language and culture became a medium by which the Nazis attempted to inculcate its racist ideology upon the ethnic Germans around the globe; including those residing in Canada. Numerous Reich-based organizations were involved in *Deutschtumsarbeit*. Among the most important were the AA, the VDA and the DAI, representing the official, private and semi-official spheres of this work, respectively. In Canada, all three of these bodies actively attempted to strengthen the bonds between the ethnic Germans and their ancestral language, customs and traditions. Moreover, they all tried to forge closer ties between Canada's ethnic Germans and the homeland. Many methods were employed to these ends, including diplomatic meddling in the internal affairs of Canada, monetary and material support, itinerate lecturers, naval visits, manipulation of the media, and a "pen-

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<sup>238</sup>Ritter, *DAI*, 102 and 136.



pal" system. Important elements for all of this were the agents within Canada, including Bott and Straubinger, who facilitated such work through their untiring zeal, commitment to the enterprise, and loyalty to their masters in Germany. On the whole, however, despite high hopes and expectations from proponents and practitioners, in both Germany and Canada, *Deutschtumsarbeit* in Canada met with only limited success. Despite the attempt of *völkische Ideologie* to forge bonds of loyalty between ethnic Germans and their *Volk* which would equal, if not surpass, those of citizenship, few in Canada were prepared to make the commitment or sacrifice. By the end of the 1930s, advanced assimilation, memories of their treatment during and immediately following the last war, as well as the increasingly evident brutality of the New Germany, combined to persuade most ethnic Germans not to become irrevocably lost in the romanticised rhetoric of the movement. The fact that the Canadian government interned so few ethnic Germans during WWII attests to the limited effectiveness of the Nazification of two decades of work.

## CONCLUSION

There were approximately 450,000 ethnic Germans in Canada at the end of the inter-war period. They were not, however, a homogeneous group. They had come to this country at different times, from different places, for different reasons, spoke different dialects, had different customs, and belonged to several different faiths. In the long run, such diversity proved to be an insurmountable obstacle to any serious attempt to unify them under the banner of the *Volk*. But there was something which was more problematic in this regard--assimilation. The lack of secular and ecclesiastic leadership among the Germans, noticeable throughout the long history of their immigration, proved the nemesis of aspirations to language and cultural maintenance. By the turn of this century, the descendants of the first ethnic German immigrants to the Maritime Provinces had been totally assimilated. The same fate awaited those in the Central Provinces. Even those on the newly-opened Prairies showed a rapid transition to the English language in the second or third generation. The reasons for this were elementary. Outnumbered by the Anglo-Saxon majority to begin with, they were forced to conform to their new environment to survive economically. Even the various churches were forced to abandon the German language from the lack of German speaking clergy and the desire to maintain their congregations. This was especially harmful to the cause of language and cultural retention due to the traditional symbiotic relationship between the

churches and the ethnic groups. By the end of the nineteenth century, growing Canadian nationalism and Anglicization efforts also began to have an effect upon the desires of Germans to retain their language. The actual death blow to the distinctiveness of the Germans in eastern Canada came as a result of the First World War. A combination of racism and legislation ensured that those who were not yet assimilated would shortly become so. Conditions were not much better on the Prairies, but the isolation in that region slowed the process, especially for those who had settled in closed German blocs. But, even here, those who were most determined to retain their identity chose to emigrate, rather than fight what they saw to be inevitable.

The concerted efforts of *Deutschtumsarbeit* during the inter-war period would undoubtedly have drawn some of the assimilated, or soon to be assimilated, German-Canadians back to the *Volk*. However, it is unlikely that the response would have been noteworthy had it not been for the immigration of about 70,000 German speaking people from Europe between 1923 and 1930. These most recent arrivals had long been exposed to *völkische Ideologie* in their European homelands. They had experienced the community of the trenches, and many from Eastern Europe had experienced first hand the ravages of the Russian Revolution. They were also destined to be the hardest hit by the depression, due to their late arrival in Canada, which deprived them of the time needed to become established. All of these factors reinforced their separateness from Canadian society and made many susceptible, at least in the first few years of the existence of the Third Reich, to soothing propaganda which promised them brotherhood and respectability. But the Nazis were not the first German government to appeal to

ethnic Germans abroad.

The inter-war governments of Germany all actively participated in the proliferation of *völkische Ideologie*. In the interests of German foreign policy, the German governments funnelled support, both material and spiritual, to the German enclaves around the globe. This was especially so for those groups on the peripheries of the Reich's borders. Three primary considerations were at work here: revision of Versailles, foreign trade and the domestic economy. The politicization of a *Deutschtumsarbeit*, which had begun as efforts to foster and protect German culture in the private sphere, began immediately following WWI. But it was not until the National Socialist revolution that *Deutschtumsarbeit* was entirely subverted to interests of the Party State, as the Nazis attempted to bring all ethnic Germans into their *Weltanschauung*.

Through the Nazification of groups traditionally involved with *Deutschtumsarbeit*, actions formerly benign in nature suddenly assumed a most sinister bent. Bodies such as the AA, the VDA and the DAI, all active in Canada, were used to transform efforts to maintain the German language and culture into fostering and propagating National Socialist ideology. Canada's distance from the centre of German foreign policy, all too fresh memories of anti-German hysteria and advanced assimilation worked to mitigate this ideological onslaught among Canada's ethnic Germans. Their brethren in Europe were not so fortunate.

Nationalism, and the goal of ethnic retention are both potentially explosive concepts. In Canada today, such ideas are bandied about freely and as a matter of course under the banner of "multiculturalism." In a misguided effort to compensate for decades,

if not centuries, of Anglo-majority intolerance of minority elements in this country, Canada's diverse population is encouraged to seek out, strengthen and revel in their ethnic distinctness. In so doing, we highlight our differences at the expense of finding commonalities. Such an atmosphere bodes ill for the future stability of this nation. Chauvinism and racism are omnipresent in nationalism, ever lurking below the surface. One can only speculate how far *völkische Ideologie* (backed by *Deutschtumsarbeit* funded and directed from within National Socialist Germany) would have gone in such an atmosphere as exists today.

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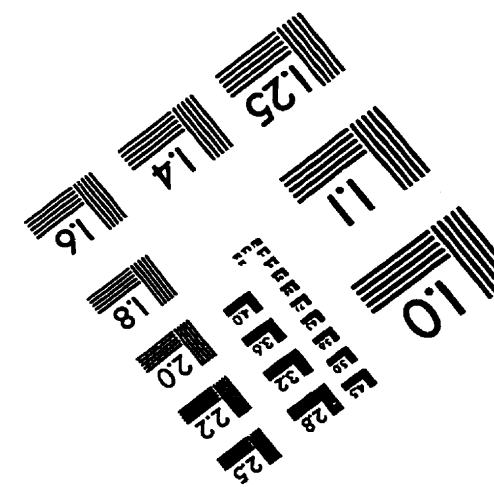
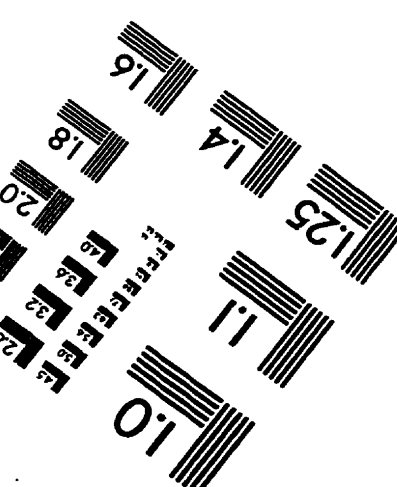
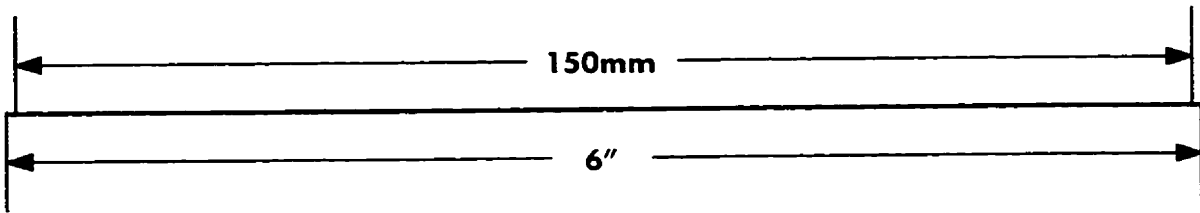
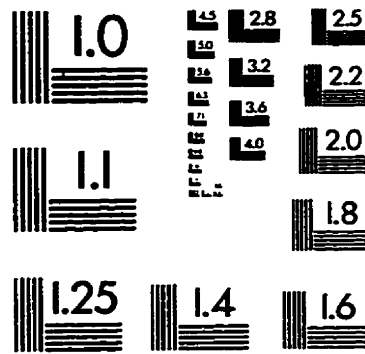
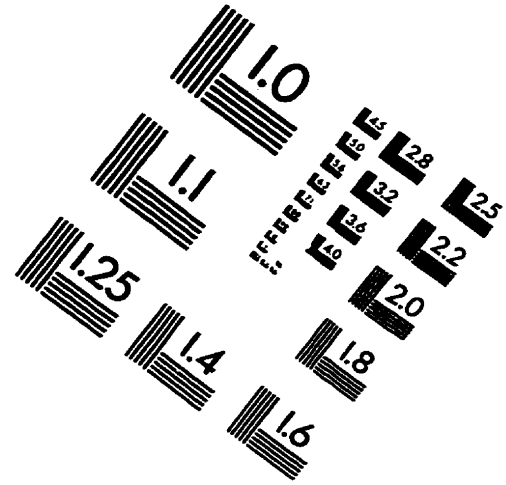
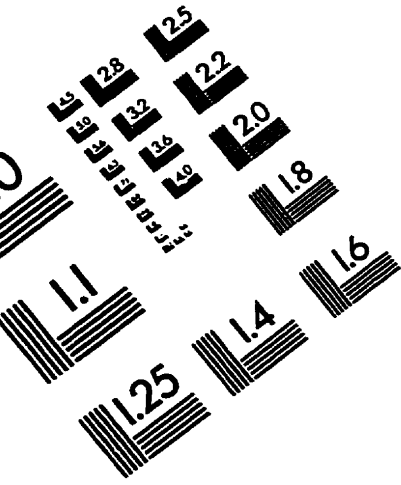
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