THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT'S OPEN-DOOR *AUSSIEDLER* POLICY 1988 - 1992

by

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ABSTRACT

The political reform process that gathered momentum in eastern and south-eastern Europe during 1987 and 1988 was accompanied by a growing exodus of ethnic and cultural Germans (*Aussiedler*) who sought resettlement in West Germany. The *Aussiedler* were welcomed enthusiastically by Chancellor Kohl as fellow German compatriots who would be a benefit to the economy. The opposition SPD voiced its concerns over the government's motives for maintaining the open-door *Aussiedler* immigration policy and over the likely integration difficulties. The government sought to respond to public concerns in 1988 by reassessing its *Aussiedler* policy. It decided firstly to continue the open-door *Aussiedler* policy (as a constitutional right), secondly to implement an *Aussiedler* integration assistance programme and thirdly to seek to persuade potential *Aussiedler* not to emigrate to West Germany.

The thesis adopts a multi-disciplinary approach to analysing the government's open-door *Aussiedler* policy during the period 1988 to 1992, formulating the political and public concerns over the *Aussiedler* policy into three main research questions. These questions analyse:

1. Whether the government's declared motives for maintaining the open-door *Aussiedler* policy were justified.

2. Whether the government's optimism over the ability of *Aussiedler* to successfully integrate into the employment market was justified.

3. Whether the government's policy of seeking to persuade potential Soviet *Aussiedler* to remain in their country, by negotiating on the re-creation of an autonomous German Volga republic, was viable.

The findings for these three main questions allow for an assessment of government *Aussiedler* policy for the period 1988 - 1992. The thesis argues that there was evidence during the period of study to support the argument that the *Aussiedler* group was to a degree instrumentalised by the government to serve its own political, economic and nationalistic purposes. Government confidence concerning *Aussiedler* employment integration proved to be too optimistic, as *Aussiedler* had specific causes of unemployment. Furthermore, the attempt to negotiate the re-creation of an autonomous German republic in Russia was unsuccessful. The exodus has continued.

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER TWO
THE TRADITIONAL OPEN-DOOR *AUSSIEDLER* POLICY AND THE DEBATE IN 1988 ON RISING *AUSSIEDLER* IMMIGRATION 36

CHAPTER FOUR
AUSSIEDLER AS MEMBERS OF A *SCHICKSALSGEMEINSCHAFT*

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

In this thesis, the following abbreviations are used:

AAG	*Aussiedleraufnahmegesetz / Aussiedler* Resettlement Law
AD	*Anno Domini* / in the year of our Lord
AFG	*Arbeitsförderungsgesetz* / Labour Promotion Act
ASSR	*Autonome Sozialistische Sowjetrepublik* / Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic
BfA	*Bundesanstalt für Arbeit* / Federal Institute of Labour
BVA	*Bundesverwaltungsamt* / Federal Administration Office
BVFG	*Bundesvertriebenen- und Flüchtlingsgesetz* / Federal Law on Expellees and Refugees
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CDU	*Christlich-Demokratische Union* / Christian Democratic Union
CSU	*Christlich-Soziale Union* / Christian Social Union
DM	*Deutsche Mark* / German Mark
DWEKD	*Diakonisches Werk der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland* / Social Work Unit of the Protestant Church in Germany
EEC	European Economic Community
e.g.	*exempli gratia* / for example
et al	and others
EU	European Union
FAZ	*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*
FIPR	*Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung* / Federal Institute for Population Research
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
GNP	Gross National Product
i.e.	*id est* / that is
IW	*Institut der deutschen Wirtschaft* / Institute of the German Economy
KfbG	*Kriegsfolgenbereinigungsgesetz* / Law Governing the Resolution of the Consequences of War
KGB	*Komitet Gossudarrstvennoi Bezopastnosti* / Committee of State Security (Soviet Secret Police)
km	kilometre
LAG	*Lastenausgleichsgesetz* / Law Concerning the Equalisation of Burdens
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
no.	number
NSDAP	*Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* / National Socialist Workers' Party of Germany
NSDR	*Nationale Selbsthilfebewegung der Deutschen in Rumänien* / National Self-help Movement of the Romanian Germans

p.a.	*per annum* / yearly
SDI	Strategic Defence Initiative
Sept.	September
SPD	*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* / Social Democratic Party
sq.km	square kilometre
SS	*Schutzstaffel* / protection unit
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
US	United States (of America)
USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Socialist Soviet Republics
US$	United States Dollar
vol.	volume

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

> *"It is a question of the moral stature of the Federal Republic of Germany, the free state of Germans, that we meet this challenge [...] . Our new fellow citizens from the Aussiedler areas are a benefit to our country and society."*

Appeal made by Chancellor Kohl on 31 August 1988 at a press conference in Bonn for the public to show solidarity towards the increasing numbers of ethnic and cultural Germans (*Aussiedler*) arriving from eastern and south-eastern Europe.

1. Introduction

1.1 Implementation by governments of increasingly restrictive immigration policies in post-war Europe

The formulation of political responses by governments to the phenomena of human cross-border migration has become a controversial issue in European politics, as such migration has demographic, social and political implications for both the receiving and sending countries. These implications present governments with the requirement to make policy decisions on how to respond to such international population movements. Individual governments may respond by amending the nationality and migration legislation covering their sovereign territory [1]. Since the economic recession of the mid-1970s, the common response by western European governments to increased immigration has been the implementation of restrictive immigration policies, thereby closing the door of entry.

Immigrants seeking to enter western European countries have traditionally been divided into the following two broad categories:

1. Those considered to be economic migrants, such as from the economically depressed areas of southern Europe and the African continent, who emigrate in search of a higher standard of living. Such migration may result from the initiative taken by individuals in search of new opportunities, as well as in response to a government co-ordinated campaign aimed at encouraging immigration by foreign guest workers to take up employment.

[1] This sovereignty can be restricted where a government signs international treaties which cover the issue of migration. European Union (EU) citizens have the right under EU legislation (Maastricht treaty 1991) to seek and commence employment in another EU country.

Prior to 1970, immigration into Europe by economic migrants was largely initiated and controlled by the government of the host country as they sought to fill vacancies in their expanding economies. Since the onset of a recessionary period in Europe during the early 1970s, and the subsequent end of government recruitment of guest workers, such economic migration has essentially been initiated by the migrants themselves.

2. Those migrants seeking asylum as political refugees, who either have, or claim to have a political motive for their migration. These migrants have invariably emigrated in order to escape discrimination and persecution, possibly to safeguard their own lives. This form of emigration is initiated by the migrants in search of a country which is prepared to offer them political asylum.

   Cross-border migration by political refugees has increased considerably in volume since the mid-1970s. The sheer magnitude of the world refugee problem is illustrated by comparing the estimated total migration flows recorded by the United Nations (UN) between 1976 and 1988. During that period, the size of the world refugee movement increased from 4 million in 1976 to 16 million in 1988 (Schliephack 1994: 3) [2]. Western Europe and the United States of America were two major destinations of those refugees.

In addition to the above two categories of migrants, a third category has become increasingly significant within the pattern of European migration since the mid-1980s, following the implementation of political reforms in eastern and south-eastern Europe. The liberalisation of international travel regulations has resulted in an increased east-west migration by members of particular ethnic, cultural and religious groups who have opted to leave for political, personal and/or economic reasons. This includes the exodus of ethnic and so-called cultural Germans (collectively known as *Aussiedler*) from eastern and south-eastern Europe to the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), which has maintained an open-door *Aussiedler* policy since the end of the Second World War [3].

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[2] The UN estimated in 1993 that one out of every 115 people in the world were refugees. They were either displaced within their own country through conflict (26 million) or sought refuge abroad (23 million) (Wernicke 1994: 3).

[3] They are referred to here as so-called cultural Germans to highlight that this group of *Aussiedler*

The rises recorded since 1987 in the numbers migrating from eastern and south-eastern Europe have put additional pressure on western European governments to formulate political (possibly also discriminatory) responses to the potential mass influx by migrants. The mounting ethnic conflict in eastern and south-eastern Europe exacerbated the refugee problem in western Europe during the late 1980s, as refugees sought a safe haven in neighbouring countries, particularly in the FRG. The combination of a liberalisation of international travel regulations together with ethnic conflict in eastern and south-eastern Europe has led to an increase in east to west migration, bringing a new dimension to the demographic pattern of population movement in post-war Europe.

1.2 Migration theory on the decision-making process

Before focusing on West Germany's post-war immigration policy, and particularly its response to increased immigration by *Aussiedler* since 1987, it is relevant to consider the explanations put forward in migration theory on the decision-making process involving the individual migrant. Although there is no comprehensive theory of migration (i.e. universal laws) which manages to explain the decision-making process, individual theories have been put forward which together form a consensus of views identifying the core relevant factors.

The word migration derives from the Latin word *migratio*, meaning to change one's place of residence (*Langenscheidts* 1977: 473). Migration can be defined as a permanent or semi-permanent change of residence, with no restriction being placed upon the distance of the move. The UN defines the term migration as the relocation of persons to a new place of residence for a duration of one year or more (Linzell 1983: 239). The movement of people across international borders is not always an act of choice. It may for example be a consequence of population transfers in accordance with international agreements, or enforced deportations.

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are a controversial group, with the term cultural German being open to broad interpretation. The term cultural German is defined in section 1.5.2 .

Migration theory initially focused on internal migration. Based on findings made in Britain, Ravenstein put forward his so-called `laws of migration´ during the late nineteenth century, which pointed to the significance played by population density, distance and economic factors in influencing and determining migration patterns between rural areas and the urban centres of commerce and industry (Jones 1990: 189) [4]. These `laws´ have been modified by subsequent research seeking to explain patterns of migration (including international migration) and the decision-making process involved, by presenting a series of theoretical approaches. While Ravenstein had adopted a macroscopic approach in interpreting aggregate human migration behaviour, subsequent theorists have focused on the micro-analytical perspective in examining individual migrant behaviour, including the decision-making process.

Stouffer put forward his `intervening opportunities´ hypothesis in 1940, stating that migration was determined by opportunities at the place of origin and destination, and by intervening obstacles between them (i.e. distance, the cost of moving, lack of transport, limited information about the place of destination and family constraints). According to Stouffer, the greater the net attraction of a place, the more likely migrants were to overcome possible intervening obstacles and migrate. Thus migrants were attracted by a set of positive factors attributed to the place of destination while being repulsed by negative factors in their place of origin (Findley 1982: 346). This socio-cultural approach helped to explain why migrants did not necessarily conform to the expectations of theorists who focused on the economic determinants of migration.

Wolpert put forward his considerations of migration as a behavioural process in 1965, basing his model of migration on behavioural theory. He conceptualised the migration process not as a single event, but instead as a two-step process which depended on the following three basic variables (Findley 1982: 348):

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[4] The so-called `laws´ included the following (Kammeyer 1971: 58):
1. That migration occurs in wave-like motions i.e. in successive waves migrating towards its eventual destination.
2. That economic factors are the main cause of migration.

1. The costs and benefits (degree of satisfaction) at the place of origin.
2. Changes in the degree of satisfaction during the life-cycle developing a desire to leave, ultimately resulting in the decision to leave (step one).
3. The identification of alternative destinations with a higher perceived degree of satisfaction (step two).

The two-step process is set into motion by the individual experiencing growing dissatisfaction with their circumstances in the place of origin, resulting in the decision to leave (step one). Having made that decision, alternative destinations are considered where they can improve their circumstances (step two). The awareness of alternative destinations is critical in the choice of the eventual destination. Knowledge of potential destinations allows for both a clearer understanding of the migration process and for predicting migration responses (Findley 1982: 348).

Lee subsequently put forward a general theoretical framework in 1966 to explain population migration. According to Lee, the following four important elements influence the individual's decision whether or not to move to another destination (Kammeyer 1971: 59-60):

1. Factors associated with their place (country) of origin.
2. Factors associated with the migrant's place of destination.
3. The possible existence of intervening obstacles between the places of origin and destination which need to be overcome.
4. Personal factors.

Lee put forward the push-pull hypothesis to explain the decision-making process on the basis of so-called push factors and pull factors, two sets of reciprocal forces (Kammeyer 1971: 59-60). The hypothesis assumes that there are both factors promoting and discouraging migration, with the balance of those factors determining the volume of migration. The push-pull factors and intervening obstacles in Lee's migration hypothesis are shown topographically in Appendix 1. While the plus symbols shown in the map in Appendix 1 represent the positive factors at both the place of origin and destination, the minus symbols represent the

negative factors in both places. The zeros represent neutral factors that are of no consequence to the potential migrant. The intervening obstacles are represented by both river and mountains. The constellation of positive and negative factors is different for each potential migrant. The higher the number of plus symbols at the place of destination, compared to the place of origin, the greater the net attraction is for the migrant to move to that destination, despite possible intervening obstacles.

The push factors operate at the place of departure, elements of dissatisfaction experienced by the individual in their own community or country, encouraging the migrant to leave. The following are examples of push factors in the decision-making process (Bogue 1969: 753-4):

1. Decline in natural resources, such as minerals, timber or the quality of agricultural land.
2. Loss of employment.
3. Limited opportunities for personal development.

The pull factors operate at the place of destination, encouraging the person to emigrate. They represent the perceived attractions offered by the destination. These attractions may for example involve economic or political factors, yet can also involve a combination of those factors. The following are examples of pull factors in the decision-making process (Bogue 1969: 754):

1. Opportunities to find employment or to earn a higher income.
2. Preferable living conditions (e.g. an attractive climate).
3. Dependency on relatives (e.g. a move in order to join breadwinners).

According to Lee, the existence of intervening obstacles or perceived risks may limit the migration response. Such obstacles may be topographical (i.e. barriers such as mountainous ranges and oceans) or man-made (i.e. physical barriers such as the former Berlin Wall). Since the 1970s, a comparatively new form of intervening obstacle to migration has become increasingly evident. This is the construction of

artificial barriers in the form of government legislation aiming to restrict immigration by foreigners.

Where a migration flow develops into a broad stream, thereby establishing a pattern, one can speak of mass migration or chain migration (Petersen 1968: 290). As Kammeyer points out, the chain can be set into motion by a family member moving, to be followed by other family members until all or nearly all remaining family members have also relocated (1971: 66). An example is the chain migration that took place from Italy to the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

The influencing factors in migration (including international migration) thus largely revolve around both economic and social considerations. While some may emigrate in search of better economic opportunities, others may emigrate in order to join family members at the place of destination. Yet the existence of intervening obstacles (both physical and artificial) prevents a higher degree of mobility from taking place in international migration. Findley points out that the actual migration pattern reflects the complex interplay of geographical and individual socio-economic factors (1982: 350).

The concept of push and pull factors has been accepted as a means to explain the international migration process. When applying Lee's theory to the two traditional groups of migrants entering western Europe during the late 1980s and early 1990s (as identified in section 1.1), the push factors reflected the difficult economic and political conditions that prevailed in their country of origin. In contrast, the pull factors represented the apparent attractions presented either by western Europe itself or by certain European countries. One of the major post-war destinations for economic migrants and those claiming political asylum has continued to be the FRG, appearing to promise immigrants both improved living conditions and employment opportunities.

In the case of migrants moving in the east-west direction since the late 1980s, the main pull factors would appear to include firstly the attraction of being able to join

ethnic, cultural, religious and/or family members, and secondly, the economic motive of seeking a higher standard of living in western Europe. The relevant push factors appear to relate to personal restrictions (i.e. ethnic, cultural and/or religious discrimination) and the economic difficulties being experienced in their own country as it undergoes an economic restructuring process. The issue of the relevant push and pull factors applicable to *Aussiedler* arriving in the FRG from the former Soviet Union is considered in chapter nine.

1.3 Developments in post-war West German migration policy

In an attempt to recruit workers for its expanding industrial economy during the 1950s and 1960s, successive West German governments encouraged immigration by economic migrants. Representatives of the *Bundesanstalt für Arbeit* (BfA - Federal Institute of Labour) travelled abroad in order to encourage guest workers (*Gastarbeiter*) to emigrate to the FRG [5]. West German employers welcomed the guest workers as they both increased the supply of labour and invariably accepted low wages and minimum employment protection as terms of their employment (Thränhardt 1988: 4). This additional pool of labour helped employers to maintain low production costs and thereby remain competitive in international trade [6]. Yet following the onset of a period of economic recession in Europe during the early 1970s, which was accompanied by rising levels of unemployment in the FRG, the issue of guest worker immigration became an increasingly controversial issue in domestic West German politics.

The recession that followed the oil crisis of 1973 resulted in significant changes in government attitude and policy towards immigration by guest workers. By

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[5] Guest worker agreements were signed by the BfA with the following governments:

1955 - Italy	1960 - Spain and Greece	1961 - Turkey	
1963 - Morocco	1964 - Portugal	1965 - Tunisia	1968 - Yugoslavia

The legal basis for these agreements was Article 2 of the *Arbeitsförderungsgesetz* (AFG - Labour Promotion Act 1969) which gave the BfA the responsibility to ensure that sufficient labour was made available to the West German economy (Herrmann 1992: 5).

[6] These guest workers largely took up unskilled employment in the steel, manufacturing and automobile industries, types of jobs which West Germans were increasingly reluctant to accept. In 1984 some 25% of those employed in West German foundries and 14% of miners were foreigners (Schroeder 1985: 18).

September 1973, the number of guest workers registered in the FRG had reached some 2.6 million, comprising 12% of the working population (Herrmann 1992: 5) [7]. The SPD government announced an end to guest worker recruitment (*Anwerbestop*) in November 1973, as it sought to restrict immigration to a minimum because of the expected economic downturn in the West German economy (Herrmann 1992: 5) [8]. This fear was confirmed by the subsequent recession experienced in 1975, with companies being forced to cut back on the level of production and lay off employees (Thränhardt 1988: 4-5).

The period of recession experienced in the FRG during the 1970s was accompanied by a parallel tightening up of immigration legislation towards economic migrants. There were close links between the FRG's economic and immigration policies, with guest worker immigration having been used as an instrument in West German employment policy. In times of high utilisation of capacity in West German industry and labour shortages, guest workers were recruited in order to maintain the supply of (cheap) labour. Meanwhile the recruitment door was quickly closed in response to the economic downturn.

1.3.1 The pattern of West German immigration 1987 - 1988

West German government immigration policy came under increasing public and political scrutiny during the period 1987 - 1988, as the immigration pattern displayed significant changes in both composition and flow volumes, particularly from eastern and south-eastern Europe. The migration pattern included a significantly rising number of ethnic and cultural German immigrants (*Aussiedler*) from those European regions. Migration into the FRG during 1987 and 1988 consisted of the following four main groups:

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[7] This figure of 12% is based on a West German working population of some 21.8 million in 1973.

[8] The recruitment ban did not affect the entry of foreign spouses and children (under 16 years of age) into West Germany for the purpose of family reunions (Schroeder 1985: 5).

1. Ethnic and cultural Germans from eastern and south-eastern Europe arriving for resettlement (*Aussiedler*). The three main countries of origin were the Soviet Union, Poland and Romania. They were exempt from immigration restrictions under the government's open-door *Aussiedler* policy. *Aussiedler* constituted the largest of the four groups of immigrants, rising from 78,500 in 1987 to 202,700 persons during 1988 (*Statistisches Jahrbuch* 1989: 73).

2. Family members joining guest workers (*Gastarbeiter*) resident in the FRG. They either came to join their parents, spouses and children already living in West Germany, or for the purpose of marriage. Although the government had ended guest worker recruitment in 1973, it has since 1986 encouraged those guest workers still resident in West Germany to return to their country of origin. It was however still possible in 1987 and 1988 for parents, spouses and children (under 16 years) to be brought to West Germany for resettlement (*Bonner Almanach* 1989: 90-1). For example, the numbers of Turkish citizens entering the FRG in 1987 and 1988 for the purpose of such family reunions was 66,200 and 78,400 respectively (*Statistisches Jahrbuch* 1989: 72; *Statistisches Jahrbuch* 1990: 73).

3. Those applying for political asylum (*Asylanten*) under Article 16 of the *Grundgesetz* (Basic Law). The number of applications for political asylum rose sharply from some 57,000 in 1987 to 103,000 in 1988 (*Asylbewerberzahlen* 1991: 8). Some 70% of asylum seekers entering the FRG during 1988 had arrived from eastern Europe (Layton-Henry 1992: 19).

4. East German refugees resettling in the FRG (*Übersiedler*). They had either been given permission to resettle in West Germany by the East German government or had fled from East Germany. The number of *Übersiedler* rose from some 19,000 in 1987 to nearly 39,800 in 1988 (*Statistisches Jahrbuch* 1989: 73).

Since coming into office during 1982, Chancellor Kohl's government has maintained the recruitment ban on guest workers and sought a reduction in immigration by both guest worker family members and asylum seekers (*Jahresbericht der Bundesregierung* 1983: 626). In contrast, the government continued to operate an

open-door immigration policy towards the *Übersiedler* and *Aussiedler* groups, accepting them for resettlement on the grounds that they are Germans [9]. By 1988, *Aussiedler* had replaced guest workers as the largest single immigrant group entering the FRG.

The continued acceptance of this *Aussiedler* group under the open-door policy gave the FRG its own characteristic pattern of migration in western Europe. Bade points out that prior to German unification in 1990, approximately one quarter of the FRG's total population were themselves either former *Aussiedler* or *Übersiedler*, or had family members who had entered the country with such status (1992: 267) [10]. If one further takes into account that there were an additional 4.1 million foreigners resident in the FRG in 1989, one in three citizens had entered the FRG as immigrants [11]. Despite the high number of immigrants resident in West Germany by the late 1980s, the CDU-led government maintained that West Germany was not an immigrant country (*Bonner Almanach* 1989: 90) [12].

1.4 Definition of the term *Aussiedler*

The term *Aussiedler* is translated in dictionaries as meaning either emigrant, evacuee, refugee or resettled person (*Langenscheidts* 1974: 198; von Eichborn 1974: 122). These diverse translations highlight the difficulty that exists in translating the term *Aussiedler* accurately. The term emigrant is too broad as a definition, while the terms evacuee and refugee apply to emigration caused by pressure to leave the country in order to escape conflict. The term resettled person

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[9] The government's motives for maintaining the open-door *Aussiedler* policy are outlined in section 1.9.

[10] Of the 19.2 million Germans living in eastern Europe at the end of the Second World War, some 12 million Germans fled to East and West Germany in the aftermath of the German defeat (Lehmann 1991: 7). An estimated 2 million are believed to have perished during the exodus (Beck 1986: 1004). It has been estimated that in 1954, some 17% (8.5 million) of the West German population had previously entered the country as ethnic or cultural German refugees since the end of the Second World War (Landsberg 1979: 163).

[11] The national population census of 25 May 1987 registered 4.1 million foreigners living in the FRG (6.8% of the total population).

[12] The government statement that the FRG was not an immigrant country was based on the view that the majority of foreigners would eventually return voluntarily to their home countries. (Blotevogel ...*et al* 1993: 96).

is the most accurate translation, as the *Aussiedler* arriving in the FRG were indeed seeking resettlement in West Germany under an administrative application process. Kemper refers to *Aussiedler* as "resettlers" (1993: 258).

1.4.1 Legal definition of the term *Aussiedler*

It is important to point out at this stage that as the period of study for this thesis ended on 31 December 1992, the legal definitions and legislation concerning *Aussiedler* referred to in this thesis are those applied by the (West) German law until that date unless otherwise stated.

The term *Aussiedler* has been applied by the West German authorities since 1950 to refer to those ethnic and cultural Germans who have left their homes in eastern and south-eastern Europe to resettle in the FRG. The legal definition of the term *Aussiedler* (as it applied until 31 December 1992) is contained in the *Bundesvertriebenen- und Flüchtlingsgesetz* (BVFG - Federal Law on Expellees and Refugees) implemented in 1953 [13]. This law transferred the responsibility for *Aussiedler* integration (and related expenditure) from the *Länder* (federal states) governments to central government, thereby preventing *Länder* such as Lower Saxony (with the large resettlement centre in Friedland) facing disproportionately high expenditure compared to other *Länder* who merely accepted an annual quota of *Aussiedler* [14].

The BVFG legislation under Paragraph One (Section 1) defines expellees (*Vertriebene*) as those German citizens and cultural Germans previously resident in either the areas of the former Eastern Territories (under German administration), or in areas outside the borders of the German *Reich* of 31 December 1937, who lost

[13] The BVFG legislation gave a legal and uniform (national) basis to the *Aussiedler* status. It thereby ensured equal treatment for *Aussiedler* arriving for resettlement, irrespective of the *Land* (federal state) in which they chose to resettle or to whom they were allocated.

[14] The town of Friedland (near Göttingen) with its resettlement centre is close to the former East German border. It became the focal point for *Aussiedler* arriving in the FRG from the East.

their homes in eastern and south-eastern Europe following their expulsion (Liesner 1988: 59) [15]. Under BVFG Paragraph One (Section 2, sub-section 3), *Aussiedler* are defined as a sub-category of this expellee (*Vertriebene*) group who had left their homes in the geographically defined areas on or after 1 January 1950 for the purpose of resettlement in the FRG (Liesner 1988: 59) [16].

1.5 Entitlement of *Aussiedler* to resettle in West Germany under Article 116 of the Basic Law

The legal definition of who has the right to enter and resettle in West Germany is contained in Article 116 of the Basic Law (23 May 1949). Article 116 (Section 1) states that those holding German citizenship are recognised as Germans under the constitution, and thus entitled to enter West Germany without restrictions. It furthermore states that German expellees without German citizenship (*Vertriebener deutscher Volkszugehörigkeit* : cultural Germans) can also be recognised as Germans. This is under the condition that they qualify for cultural German status and have resettled within the borders of the former German *Reich* as of 31 December 1937. Although *Aussiedler* are not specifically named in Article 116 (Section 1), they are recognised as a sub-category of the expellee group by way of the BVFG legislation and are therefore also covered by the Article. The West German law therefore broadened the term German in the legal sense, recognising Germans both with and without German citizenship (Weidelener/ Hemberger 1993: 14).

[15] The BVFG in 1988 listed the following countries in which the Germans could apply for *Aussiedler* status: Poland, Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Albania and China. The Eastern Territories included East Prussia and Silesia.

[16] Following the implementation of the *Kriegsfolgenbereinigungsgesetz* (Law Governing the Resolution of the Consequences of War) on 1 January 1993, those *Aussiedler* who arrive on or after that date are officially called *Spätaussiedler* (late resettlers).

1.5.1 Qualifying for *Aussiedler* status through holding German citizenship

Entitlement to *Aussiedler* status by way of holding German citizenship is covered in the *Gesetz zur Regelung von Fragen der Staatsangehörigkeit* (Law to Regulate Questions of Citizenship) of 22 February 1955 [17]. This law states that German citizenship is held by those persons who were resident within the borders of the former German *Reich* (as of 31 December 1937) and also born before 9 May 1945. In addition, their children born after 8 May 1945 also qualify for automatic German citizenship. This legislation recognises the validity of German citizenship awarded to groups of cultural Germans collectively (*Sammeleinbürgerung*) by the German National Socialist regime during the Second World War. This for example included those cultural Germans living in East Prussia, Danzig and the Ukraine, who had been entered into official Aryan population lists and granted German citizenship collectively (Liesner 1988: 39) [18].

Where an application was made for *Aussiedler* status on the basis of entitlement to German citizenship, the *Aussiedler* applicant had to provide appropriate evidence in support of his/her application. This could be done by presenting the West German authorities with relevant documents which they considered to be acceptable proof. Documents providing verification of German citizenship included the following (Liesner 1988: 67):

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[17] This law formed an addition to the *Reichs- und Staatsangehörigkeitsgesetz* (Imperial Citizenship Law) of 22 July 1913 which forms the legal basis for deciding on entitlement and loss of German citizenship. Under this law of 1913, citizenship is automatically granted provided one of the parents is German or where the mother is German in the case of an illegitimate child. The legislation of 1955 was considered necessary to cater for those Germans in eastern Europe effected by war, deportation and expulsion who were not covered by the law of 1913.

[18] The German military authorities compiled population lists in those areas annexed or occupied in eastern and south-eastern Europe which served as a basis for granting German citizenship by way of naturalisation (*Einbürgerung*). Those persons registered in List 1 and 2 were considered to have proved their allegiance to the German nation as cultural Germans and granted German citizenship. Those entered in List 3 were considered to have potential to become Germans (*eindeutschfähig, schwebendes Volkstum*). Those registered in List 1,2 and 3 were granted German citizenship collectively. Those registered in List 4 were not entitled to German citizenship (Schnurr 1983: 161-4).

1. Birth certificate showing German citizenship.
2. Certificate of German naturalisation.
3. German civil identity card.
4. Military documents verifying German citizenship.

The above listed documentation was considered by the federal authorities to have been issued by competent German authorities, who would have conducted their own investigations before issuing such documents to the persons concerned. Substantial amounts of documentation collated by German authorities prior to 1945, such as birth, death and marriage registers, were available to the federal authorities for consultation. Furthermore, the personal files of former members of the armed forces were also available for consultation (Herrmann-Pfandt 1989: 2). Statements made by applicants could therefore be checked more thoroughly. The problem of false documents being presented by *Aussiedler* applicants did exist, yet was not considered to occur on a large scale [19].

According to the West German government, at least 50% of those *Aussiedler* arriving in 1987 had been automatically awarded *Aussiedler* status on the basis of them proving entitlement to German citizenship (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.5 1989: 2). *Aussiedler* arriving from Poland, such as from the former German areas of East Prussia, Pomerania, Upper Silesia and Danzig contained the highest proportion of applicants holding German citizenship. With the exception of the northern half of East Prussia (which came under Soviet control in 1945), these regions had passed into Polish control after the Second World War still containing extensive German communities.

[19] Sporadic articles appeared in the West German press during 1988 and 1989 containing reports of applications having been made for *Aussiedler* status using forged documents. These were reported to have included alterations having been made to German military documents (purchased at Polish flea markets) to show apparent German descent or military service by parents and/or grandparents (*Der Spiegel* no.14 1988: 109).

1.5.2 Application for *Aussiedler* status by cultural Germans

The second group entitled to *Aussiedler* status are those accepted by the West German authorities as so-called cultural Germans (*Volksdeutsche*) [20]. Those successful in their application to be recognised as a cultural German under the BVFG legislation are automatically recognised as being German under Article 116 (Section 1) of the Basic Law, but without actually being granted German citizenship. They can apply for formal German citizenship by way of naturalisation (*Einbürgerung*) upon resettlement.

The term cultural German is defined in BVFG (Paragraph Six) as someone who has demonstrated an allegiance to German culture, confirmed through characteristic bonds such as ancestry, upbringing and language. Proof of such allegiance can be established by providing documents to the West German authorities containing a statement (*Erklärung*) confirming their German cultural background. These include (Liesner 1988: 80):

1. Statements made in population census recordings.
2. Statements made in applications for personal identity documents.
3. Statements made when registering children for school (e.g. Romanian school exam certificates included information on the child's cultural background).
4. Documents relating to military service containing statements as to the holder's cultural background.

Alternatively, they can provide evidence of their active role (*Bekenntnis*) as members of the German community, such as through (Liesner 1988: 81-2):

1. Use of the German language in public.
2. Membership of former or existing German cultural clubs and societies.

[20] The term *Volksdeutsche* was used by the German National Socialist regime when referring to cultural Germans living in eastern and south-eastern Europe whom they considered to constitute an integral part of the German nation.

The concept of the cultural German continues to have legal recognition through both the Basic Law and BVFG legislation. This recognition is based on the view that the German nation cannot alone be defined with reference to present-day political borders in Europe. This interpretation was also accepted by the Allies during the period 1945 - 1949 prior to the founding of the FRG. The Allies had ordered that the ethnic and cultural German refugees and expellees arriving from eastern Europe should be handled as if they had German citizenship and thus allowed to enter without restrictions. The status of the German without German citizenship was created to give those cultural Germans who had been expelled a form of legal protection (Weidelener/Hemberger 1993: 14). The first West German government incorporated this temporary but practical solution to the German refugee problem into Article 116 of the Basic Law. The West German constitution thus recognised that the German nation, linked by the bonds of common language, culture and history, was geographically widely dispersed throughout eastern and south-eastern Europe (Kroner 1982: 39).

1.6 Significance in the award of *Aussiedler* status

Those persons who are awarded *Aussiedler* status acquire the same legal rights as other West German citizens. These include the right to enter the country for resettlement, the right to vote in local, state and general elections, freedom of movement within West Germany and entitlement to claim benefits under the state welfare system.

In addition to such rights, those awarded *Aussiedler* status can also apply for specific welfare benefits. The provisions for such financial assistance are contained in the *Lastenausgleichsgesetz* (LAG - Law Concerning the Equalisation of Burdens) passed in 1952. Under this legislation, those West Germans who had been able to preserve all or most of their property during the Second World War were obliged to make a financial contribution (through specific taxation levies such as on capital gains) in order to compensate those Germans arriving in West Germany who had lost their possessions (Hillgruber 1987: 291-2). These benefits were seen by

successive West German governments as a means of compensating refugees (arriving prior to 1950) and *Aussiedler* (arriving since 1950) both for losses incurred during the Second World War, such as loss of property, and those losses resulting from their move to West Germany (i.e. having had to give up house and farmland in their former homes) [21].

Once in West Germany, *Aussiedler* have been able to apply for a broad range of benefits to help them in the integration process. They are given help in purchasing homes and furniture through interest subsidised home mortgages and furniture loans. Under the AFG legislation, unemployed *Aussiedler* are able to attend free German language and employment training courses. Furthermore, the non-German spouse and children of those granted *Aussiedler* status also qualified for *Aussiedler* status under Paragraph One (Section 3) of the BVFG legislation (Liesner 1988: 72).

1.7 Estimated size in 1988 of the remaining potential *Aussiedler* population

Between 1950 - 1987, some 1.4 million *Aussiedler* arrived in West Germany for resettlement (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler, Sonderausgabe* August 1990: 3-6). The number of remaining potential *Aussiedler* was significant under an open-door policy as this represented the figure of the maximum intake. Although reliable statistics were not available for an accurate assessment of the overall number of potential *Aussiedler* living in eastern and south-eastern Europe in 1988, the West German government estimated their total to be approximately 3.5 million (*Sonderprogramm zur Eingliederung der Aussiedler* 1988a: 5) [22]. The Soviet Germans were the largest individual *Aussiedler* group, estimated at around two million. The figure for the German minority in Poland and Romania was believed by the government to be around 1 million and 200,000 respectively.

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[21] Under the LAG, a total of DM 133 billion was paid out as compensation between 1 January 1952 and 31 December 1987 (*Die Leistungen des Bundes* 1988: 21).

[22] An unknown number of mixed marriages made it difficult to give accurate estimates for the sizes of the different German groups.

The government estimates were backed by figures released by the *Diakonisches Werk der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland* (DWEKD - Social Work Unit of the Protestant Church in Germany), which had estimated the remaining potential *Aussiedler* population in 1988 to be between 3.6 - 3.8 million. The breakdown of their figure for the individual countries is shown in the Table below:

Table 1.1

Estimated sizes of the remaining potential *Aussiedler* groups in 1988

Country	Estimated size
Soviet Union	2 million
Poland	1.1 - 1.3 million
Romania	210,000 - 220,000
Hungary	220,000
Czechoslovakia	90,000 - 100,000
Yugoslavia	8,000

Source: Aussiedler / Übersiedler 1989: 16

The estimated totals contained in Table 1.1 for the individual countries show that over half of the potential *Aussiedler* (2 million) were to be found in the Soviet Union. This was nearly double the size of the remaining Polish *Aussiedler* community and nearly ten times higher than that for the remaining Romanian *Aussiedler* community. The figures quoted by both the West German government and the DWEKD were arguably realistic, even if conservative estimates, being largely based on population census material and government documentation [23].

Some German critics claimed that the actual figures were even higher, arguing firstly that a significant number failed to declare their German nationality in official census recordings for fear of discrimination, and secondly that those in mixed marriages were not always taken into consideration. Kemper claims that the figure of 2 million Soviet Germans was a conservative estimate, arguing that the figure of potential

[23] The 1979 Soviet population census recorded the size of the Soviet German group at 1.9 million (Eisfeld 1989: 17). The final Soviet census in 1989 recorded their total as 2 million (Eisfeld 1991: 17).

Soviet *Aussiedler* was as high as 8 million if the mixed marriages with children were taken into consideration (1993: 271). Eisfeld also argues that the size of the Soviet German population is higher than 2 million as there were a considerable number who had not declared their German nationality, claiming that their total was actually some 4-5 million (Olt 1991: 10). Yet there is no statistical evidence presently available to support such high estimates.

1.8 Government reassessment of *Aussiedler* policy in 1988

In order for the open-door *Aussiedler* policy to function without problems, the rising number of *Aussiedler* entering West Germany for resettlement during 1987 (78,500) and the first half of 1988 (65,000) had to be accommodated, found employment and integrated (*Gegenüberstellung* 1990: *Bundesverwaltungsamt*). Against the background of growing concern over the rise in the number of *Aussiedler* registering for resettlement, Chancellor Kohl's government reassessed the *Aussiedler* policy during the summer of 1988 in search of an appropriate response to the problem [24]. The government concluded its reassessment (detailed account of measures given in chapter two) by announcing the following main decisions on 31 August 1988 (Kohl 1988a: 1-3) [25]:

1. It would maintain the open-door *Aussiedler* policy.

2. It would introduce its own *Aussiedler* assistance programme to help their integration into West German society, including the search for employment.

3. It would encourage potential *Aussiedler* to refrain from emigrating to West Germany and instead seek new opportunities in their own country. It claimed that the reform process underway in eastern Europe made this possible.

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[24] The West German government cabinet received a report from the Interior Ministry on the subject of *Aussiedler* integration on 8 June 1988. An inter-ministerial working group was constituted on 14 July 1988 with the brief to plan and prepare an *Aussiedler* assistance programme.

[25] A government programme of assistance for *Aussiedler* had been in force since 1976. Yet the programme (devised originally for only some 40,000 *Aussiedler* per annum) was not geared to cater for an annual influx of some 200,000 *Aussiedler*.

In maintaining the open-door *Aussiedler* policy, the government rejected the calls by the opposition SPD for the implementation of an annual immigration quota and a tightening-up of the *Aussiedler* status (to be discussed in chapter two). Chancellor Kohl stated that the acceptance and integration of the arriving *Aussiedler* was a moral obligation and national task. The Chancellor called upon the German population to show solidarity towards the fellow German *Aussiedler*, declaring that it would indeed be an embarrassment for the German nation if these *Aussiedler*, who had continually confirmed their allegiance to the German nation, were to be greeted with disinterest or even rejection (Kohl 1988a: 1-2). Kohl stated that their arrival in increasing numbers should be regarded positively and represented a reward for the government's hard work on behalf of *Aussiedler* (1988a: 1).

1.9 Government declared motives for maintaining the open-door *Aussiedler* policy

Rather than opting for annual *Aussiedler* quotas, thereby taking account of the improved emigration possibilities open to ethnic and cultural Germans in eastern and south-eastern Europe, the government maintained the status quo. The open-door immigration policy was kept as an integral part of government *Aussiedler* policy. The government's declared motives for maintaining the open-door *Aussiedler* policy can be summarised as follows:

1. It claimed that it was merely continuing the traditional open-door *Aussiedler* policy as implemented by successive post-war governments. This is considered in detail in chapter two.

2. It pointed out that the *Aussiedler* being accepted for resettlement were either cultural or ethnic Germans, descendants of German colonists who had emigrated abroad during previous centuries. This is considered in detail in chapter three.

3. It continued to regard *Aussiedler* as victims, forming part of a community that had experienced a collective misfortune (*Schicksalsgemeinschaft*) during the Second World War, victimised because of their links with the German nation. This is considered in detail in chapter four.

4. The government claimed that West Germany continued to have a moral obligation to accept these *Aussiedler* for resettlement and to assist them in the integration process. This is considered in detail in chapter five.

1.10 Formulation of the three main research questions

The government's reassessed *Aussiedler* policy of August 1988 was accompanied by both political and economic concerns. The following sections 1.10.1 - 1.10.3.1 summarise the relevant concerns relating to the government's revised *Aussiedler* policy and formulates those concerns into three main research questions to be researched in this thesis. Although the questions address different aspects of government *Aussiedler* policy, they have in common that they analyse elements of the reassessed policy. This allows for an overall assessment of government *Aussiedler* policy for the period 1988 - 1992.

1.10.1 Concern over the government's declared motives for maintaining the open-door *Aussiedler* policy

The continued operation of an open-door *Aussiedler* policy by the CDU-led government (based on the motives as stated in section 1.9) became the focus for political debate and controversy during 1988. The intensity of this political debate increased in line with the successive rises in monthly *Aussiedler* immigration figures during 1988, while Chancellor Kohl continued to publicly declare that West Germany was not an immigrant country (*Der Spiegel* no.7 1989: 29). The criticisms made by the opposition SPD members of parliament (to be further discussed in chapter two) focused on the following issues:

1. They questioned the government's declared motives for maintaining the open-door policy, claiming to recognise nationalistic undertones in such an *Aussiedler* policy. The SPD politician Oskar Lafontaine accused Chancellor Kohl of being guilty of meddling with German nationality and of using the *Aussiedler* group to further the government's own political and nationalistic policies (*Der Spiegel* no.47 1988: 25). The concept of the cultural German appeared to be imprecise and thereby left the legislation open to broad interpretation and ultimately to possible misuse.

2. They criticised the government's continued use of the open-door *Aussiedler* policy while at the same time being unprepared for the rising influx of *Aussiedler* registered during 1988. This made the process of social integration increasingly difficult (Hofmann 1988: 3).

3. They questioned whether there was indeed still a continued justification for maintaining an open-door *Aussiedler* policy, following the implementation of reforms in eastern Europe, while seeking to curtail the legal rights of those seeking political asylum in West Germany (*Der Spiegel* no.47 1988: 25).

In the light of the reform process underway in eastern Europe and the liberalisation of travel regulations, there was a suspicion among opposition members of parliament, such as Lafontaine, that the publicised motives for justifying the continued operation of the open-door policy were merely superficial. This in turn raised the question of what the real motives were. The government appeared to be giving preference to cultural German *Aussiedler* who did not necessarily have a command of the German language (to be discussed in chapter six and chapter seven), while seeking to restrict the rights of foreigners resident in the FRG. Such criticisms raised the overall question of whether the government's continued use of the open-door *Aussiedler* policy was indeed, as Lafontaine had suggested, evidence that the government was instrumentalising the *Aussiedler* group for its own nationalistic and political purposes. The justifications and motives put forward by the government for continuing its liberal open-door *Aussiedler* policy in 1988, and

the criticisms made, require close consideration in order to assess whether such criticisms were valid.

1.10.1.1 Statement of the first main research question on the government's declared motives for maintaining the open-door *Aussiedler* policy

The main concerns raised by the critics regarding the government's declared motives for maintaining the open-door *Aussiedler* policy have been formulated into the following main research question:

Does the evidence available support the government's argument that its decision taken in August 1988 to maintain the open-door *Aussiedler* policy was justified on the grounds that:

1. **The government was maintaining a traditional post-war policy of *Aussiedler* acceptance and assistance,**

2. ***Aussiedler* are Germans (the descendants of former German colonists),**

3. ***Aussiedler* have suffered during the Second World War as a result of being Germans,**

4. **The government had a moral obligation to accept *Aussiedler* for resettlement,**

and what evidence was there to support the criticism that the government maintained the open-door policy for its own nationalistic, political and economic motives?

This first main research question is divided into four parts. The four motives as stated above for maintaining the open-door policy are considered separately in chapters two to five.

Chapter two reviews the government's claim that it was merely continuing the traditional post-war open-door *Aussiedler* policy. It looks at *Aussiedler* immigration statistics between 1950 and 1988, and then focuses on the role that the policy has had in Chancellor Kohl's government policy since 1982. It further outlines the main elements of the government's Special *Aussiedler* Assistance Programme and *Aussiedler* House-building Programme implemented in 1988 as the government's response to the growing *Aussiedler* influx. It finally analyses the basis of the criticism levelled at the government's open-door *Aussiedler* policy in 1988 by politicians both at national and state (*Länder*) level.

Chapter three reviews the historical evidence as to whether *Aussiedler* are Germans. It was pointed out in section 1.5.2 that cultural Germans could also be granted *Aussiedler* status. In view of the controversy surrounding this category of *Aussiedler*, chapter three focuses on the historical background to two specific cultural German groups. It considers the evidence available on the founding of the Volga German (Soviet Union) and Siebenbürger Saxon (Romania) communities, seeking to identify the location of their ancestor's former homes in Germany and the circumstances surrounding the colonisation by these two groups.

Chapter four considers the evidence available to justify the government's statement that *Aussiedler* suffered discrimination and deportation during the Second World War because of their German origins. The government's stated moral obligation towards *Aussiedler* is directly linked to the *Aussiedler* experience of such misfortune as a consequence of being Germans. It considers the historical evidence supporting this claim by focusing on the Soviet Germans and Romanian Germans.

Chapter five finally considers the government's declaration that the open-door policy was an expression of a moral obligation towards *Aussiedler*. It considers whether this claim of moral obligation amounted to nationalistic and political rhetoric covering undisclosed motives. The chapter focuses on the role of morality in political theory, considering the argument that governments may seek to cover their self-interest and ideological motives in a cloak of morality. It critically analyses the government's claim to have been acting in response to a moral obligation towards the *Aussiedler* group.

1.10.2 Concern over the government's reliance on its assistance programme to prevent rising *Aussiedler* unemployment

The rising number of *Aussiedler* arriving for resettlement in 1988 presented the West German economy with a series of challenges with regard to their integration, particularly the need to prevent *Aussiedler* becoming a problem group within the unemployment statistics. It was questionable whether it was prudent for the government to reject any form of *Aussiedler* immigration quota, instead relying on the ability of the employment market to absorb the newcomers. The West German economy faced future annual levels of *Aussiedler* immigration likely to exceed 200,000 well into the 1990s.

The government supported the argument that *Aussiedler*, particularly those in the craft trades, would find employment quickly, pointing to the demand for skilled labour in the West German economy (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.7 1989: 6). Government assistance programmes inevitably have financial limitations placed on them by budgetary constraints. Whether the budgetary provisions made for 1989 and 1990 would be sufficient to cover the costs incurred, particularly in view of the uncertainty about the size of the future influx, was open to question. The BfA had forecast that alone the cost of language tuition and employment training for *Aussiedler* in 1989 would amount to some DM 1.5 billion (Jaenecke 1989: 220).

The operation of an open-door policy required an adequate framework of government assistance to help their employment integration. It was questionable whether government reliance on firstly its Special *Aussiedler* Assistance Programme, and secondly the ability of the employment market to absorb the rising number of *Aussiedler* was realistic. The *Aussiedler* not only faced language difficulties, but also those associated with the transition from a centrally planned economy into a market economy. The government appeared to underestimate the extent of the potential problem. It was uncertain whether the employers would respond to the Chancellor's appeal to show solidarity with the *Aussiedler*, given the passage of time since the Second World War and the specific difficulties faced by *Aussiedler* in achieving the transition into the market economy.

1.10.2.1 Statement of the second main research question on the problem of *Aussiedler* unemployment

The concerns regarding the future difficulty of integrating *Aussiedler* into the West German employment market have been formulated into the following main research question:

Was there evidence to justify concern over the ability of the employment market to successfully absorb the rising number of *Aussiedler* arriving in West Germany under the government's open-door policy?

This is with particular reference to the problem of *Aussiedler* unemployment at the national level under the following three aspects:

1. **Developments and trends in the level of *Aussiedler* unemployment both prior to, and during the period 1988 - 1992.**

2. **Consideration of a possible link between the level of *Aussiedler* immigration and the subsequent level of *Aussiedler* unemployment both prior to, and during the period 1988 - 1992.**

3. The identification of specific causes of *Aussiedler* unemployment, comparing those causes identified both at the beginning and during the period of study 1988 - 1992.

This second main research question is considered in chapter six (for the period 1985 - 1988) and chapter seven (for the period 1988 - 1992).

Chapter six analyses the issue of *Aussiedler* unemployment and considers whether there was evidence that *Aussiedler* were already experiencing rising levels of unemployment immediately prior to the implementation of the Special *Aussiedler* Assistance Programme in September 1988. It outlines the trends recorded for *Aussiedler* unemployment between September 1985 and September 1988, and considers whether there was evidence of a possible correlation or parallel development between the levels of *Aussiedler* immigration and *Aussiedler* unemployment. Against the background of government optimism over *Aussiedler* integration, an estimate is made for the level of unemployment within the *Aussiedler* community in September 1988. Furthermore, it considers the relevance of structural changes taking place in the West German economy during the late 1980s.

Chapter seven looks at the problem of *Aussiedler* unemployment during the period September 1988 - September 1992, outlining the trends in *Aussiedler* unemployment. It considers whether there was evidence of a possible parallel development between *Aussiedler* immigration and the level of *Aussiedler* unemployment during that period. In addition, the level of unemployment within the *Aussiedler* community is estimated for September 1992, allowing for a comparison to be made with the findings for September 1988 in chapter six. It further seeks to identify the specific causes of *Aussiedler* unemployment as stated by the BfA in their official reports. It compares the specific causes of *Aussiedler* unemployment recorded in 1988 with those identified during the course of the period of study, seeking to discover if the government assistance programme had indeed been able to tackle those specific problems.

1.10.3 Concern over the government's reliance on its policy of seeking to persuade potential *Aussiedler* to delay their resettlement

The government announced that parallel to maintaining the open-door policy, it would seek to dissuade potential *Aussiedler* from emigrating to West Germany for resettlement. It sought to achieve this by directing government financial aid to the *Aussiedler* areas, particularly in the Soviet Union, while still maintaining the open-door policy. Yet it was questionable whether this was a realistic policy aim and the basis for a long-term solution to the problems created by rising *Aussiedler* immigration levels.

In the case of the Soviet Germans, the government concentrated its negotiations on campaigning for the re-creation of an autonomous German Volga republic, similar to the autonomous German Volga republic abolished by Stalin in 1941. The West German government regarded this republic as having a major symbolic value for the future of the Soviet Germans. In view of the high number of potential *Aussiedler* still living in the Soviet Union, a subsequent failure to achieve the objective of re-creating a Volga republic for the German minority could have the reverse effect of increasing the numbers seeking to resettle in West Germany, as their confidence in the future declined, and exert additional pressure on the government to amend or even end the open-door policy.

1.10.3.1 Statement of the third main research question on the viability of the German government's campaign for the formation of an autonomous German Volga republic

The main concerns regarding the government's reliance on the success of a policy of persuasion, thereby seeking to reduce future *Aussiedler* immigration levels without having to introduce annual *Aussiedler* quotas, is formulated into the following main research question:

Was there evidence to support the German government's argument that its policy of seeking to persuade potential Soviet German *Aussiedler* not to emigrate to the FRG - by granting financial assistance for establishing an autonomous German Volga republic (1988 - 1992) - constituted a viable element to its *Aussiedler* policy ?

This is with particular reference to the following aspects:

1. **The German government negotiations on the re-creation of an autonomous Volga republic as part of an attempt to persuade the Soviet Germans not to emigrate to the FRG.**

2. (a) **The attitudes of the Soviet Germans themselves to the government's policy of seeking to discourage them from emigrating, being promised success in negotiations on re-creating an autonomous Volga republic.**

2. (b) **A comparison of the apparent emigration motives of the Soviet Germans (as stated by the German government) with those motives given by the Soviet Germans themselves.**

This third main research question is considered in chapter eight (for the period 1988 to 1991) and chapter nine (for the final year 1992).

Chapter eight traces the formulation of a revised approach by the government during 1989 in negotiations with the Soviet Union on the *Aussiedler* issue and considers the basis of the government's optimism over the envisaged success of its campaign for re-creating an autonomous German Volga republic. It further considers the viability of the German government's policy of support for the Volga republic between 1988 and 1991 (the year in which the Soviet Union broke up), questioning whether the government policy of persuasion could hope to succeed while it merely provided the financial backing for the proposed autonomous republic, yet had no direct political influence over the necessary

decision-making involved in this process. The emigration figures between 1988 and 1991 for Soviet Germans are discussed as an indicator of success or failure of German government policy in this respect. It finally considers the findings of a study conducted on the views of the Soviet Germans regarding the significance that a future Volga republic would have in influencing their decision over whether or not to emigrate.

Chapter nine reviews the continued negotiations conducted on the proposed Volga republic with the government of a newly independent Russia (headed by President Yeltsin) during 1992, year one in the post-Soviet era. It seeks to establish whether the German government policy of supporting the re-creation of such an autonomous republic could be regarded as a possible viable long-term *Aussiedler* policy (in contrast to resettlement in Germany under either an open-door policy or a quota system), or whether this policy was too optimistic. The chapter further compares the findings on research conducted on the emigration motives for a sample group of Soviet Germans who had emigrated to Germany with the supposed emigration motives as stated by the German government.

Finally **chapter ten**, entitled **summary and conclusions,** draws together the findings of the research conducted in answering the three main research questions, states the conclusions arrived at and makes an overall assessment of government *Aussiedler* policy for the period of study. It considers whether it is possible to identify a chain of evidence running through the government's *Aussiedler* policy (1988 - 1992) to support the argument that the German government may have instrumentalised the *Aussiedler* group during this period for its own nationalistic, economic and political purposes.

In view of the multi-disciplinary nature of this thesis, covering geographical, historical, economic, political and ethnic issues, the decision was made not to compile a separate chapter or section containing a literature review. Instead, the relevant literature is reviewed throughout the course of the thesis as the appropriate issues are addressed.

1.11 The contribution made to the *Aussiedler* debate

In addition to carrying out research and documenting the West German government's decision in 1988 to maintain its open-door *Aussiedler* policy, the thesis seeks to contribute to the *Aussiedler* discussion on the following three levels:

1. It takes the *Aussiedler* discussion a step further by analysing the justifications put forward and the likely motives behind that decision. The question of whether there was justification in 1988 for maintaining the open-door *Aussiedler* policy, and the motives involved, also raised questions over whether the West German government took this decision in the interest of party policy (i.e. presenting itself to the electorate as the champion of the *Aussiedler* cause), rather than particular concern over the fate of the individual *Aussiedler* themselves. While the government saw itself as fulfilling a statutory obligation, critics saw the open-door policy as evidence of meddling with German nationality. The issue of links between the government's open-door *Aussiedler* policy and possible undisclosed motives is both controversial and under-researched in German studies and therefore deserves close scrutiny. The thesis challenges the government's explanation that it was merely fulfilling such a legal obligation. The identification of such specific links in this thesis is seen as giving both new insights and a further dimension to the *Aussiedler* debate. The thesis seeks to separate political and nationalistic rhetoric from possible hidden agendas.

2. The thesis takes the issue of *Aussiedler* unemployment a step further by considering the problem from another perspective. It considers whether there was a possible parallel development between the level of *Aussiedler* immigration and the level of *Aussiedler* unemployment during the period of study 1988 - 1992. Furthermore, it identifies the specific causes of their unemployment and estimates the level of unemployment within the *Aussiedler* community both in 1988 and 1992. It explains why the government's optimism over the ability to integrate the arriving *Aussiedler* was too optimistic, comparing the specific causes of *Aussiedler* unemployment with the measures contained in the government *Aussiedler* assistance programme.

3. The thesis looks at the process of negotiations (1989 - 1992) between the FRG and both the Soviet Union and Russia on the establishment of an autonomous republic for the Soviet Germans, an under-researched topic. It considers whether, as the German government assumed, the granting of financial support for such a republic was the key to successful negotiations. It identifies the reasons for the subsequent failure to establish an autonomous Volga republic during the period of study. The thesis furthermore compares the emigration motives of the Soviet Germans with those motives publically stated by the German government, highlighting the differences and explaining the reasons for their continued exodus to the FRG

Through its inter-disciplinary approach, the thesis arguably adopts a new approach in analysing Chancellor Kohl's open-door *Aussiedler* policy, by integrating the issues of German history, economics and foreign policy into the overall *Aussiedler* issue.

1.12 The period of study covered in this thesis

The active period of study between January 1988 and December 1992 covers a period of five years. This period is considered long enough to answer the three main research questions and to make an overall assessment of government *Aussiedler* policy for that period. References made to statistics and historical events prior to 1988 or after 1992 serve to give the appropriate historical background and relevant information in answering the three main research questions.

During September 1992 (the final year of study), the government announced that the *Kriegsfolgenbereinigungsgesetz* (KfbG - Law Governing the Resolution of the Consequences of War) legislation would come into force on 1 January 1993. That legislation sought to take belated account of the changes that had occurred since the end of the Second World War, amending a total of 27 separate laws including the BVFG *Aussiedler* legislation, yet officially maintaining the open-door *Aussiedler* policy.

The decision taken in 1989 (at the commencement of the research) to end the period of study on 31 December 1992 thus coincided with the introduction of that legislation, which marked a new phase in government *Aussiedler* policy. The KfbG legislation falls outside the period of study and the scope of this thesis.

CHAPTER TWO

THE TRADITIONAL OPEN-DOOR *AUSSIEDLER* POLICY AND THE DEBATE IN 1988 ON RISING *AUSSIEDLER* IMMIGRATION

2. The traditional open-door *Aussiedler* policy and the debate in 1988 on rising *Aussiedler* immigration

2.1 Definition of the term open-door *Aussiedler* policy

The term open-door *Aussiedler* policy used in this thesis describes the government policy of accepting *Aussiedler* for resettlement in West Germany without implementing either annual quotas or other forms of administrative controls. A major problem accompanying the operation of an open-door policy is that the government is not able to predict (and therefore plan for) the numbers of *Aussiedler* who will exercise their option to resettle in West Germany. Those applying for *Aussiedler* status in 1988 invariably only submitted their application once they arrived at one of the designated regional resettlement centres [1].

2.2 Considering the ethics of German citizenship legislation which enable the open-door *Aussiedler* policy to be maintained

The role played by German citizenship legislation in allowing for an open-door *Aussiedler* policy was outlined in the introductory chapter. It is relevant at this stage to also discuss the ethics of German citizenship legislation within the context of the discussion on the government's support for the open-door *Aussiedler* policy.

The term citizenship can be defined as the legal relationship between an individual and a state, under which duties and rights are defined (The New Encyclopaedia Britannica 1981: 950). These rights can include entering the country without being

[1] The level of influx (under the open-door policy) had traditionally been dependent on the attitude of the governments in eastern and south-eastern Europe, which in turn was influenced by the overall state of East-West political relations. This is discussed in section 2.3.1 .

subjected to immigration controls. States follow two legal rules in determining citizenship by birth. The two principle grounds for acquiring a particular citizenship are firstly descent from one or both parents (*jus sanguinis* - the law of blood), and secondly birth within a defined territory (*jus soli* - the law of soil) (Plano/Olton 1969: 260).

There is a long tradition in German law to define German citizenship on the grounds of blood ties (*jus sanguinis*). The origins of German citizenship legislation dates back to the eighteenth century, having been introduced by individual German states. The southern German states took their inspiration for their citizenship legislation from the French constitution dating from 3 September 1791. On the basis of the Bavarian constitution dated 26 May 1818 and the Bavarian Edict of the same date, citizenship was not granted on the basis of residence or the place of birth, but upon proof of German blood ties. Other German states adopting this criterion included Württemberg (1819) and Hessen (1820) (Weidelener/Hemberger 1993: 1). While German unification in 1871 included the introduction of a common German citizenship (awarded by the individual states), the legislators adopted the principle of citizenship based on German blood ties. The German National Socialist regime later amended the citizenship legislation on 5 February 1934, removing the right of individual states to grant such citizenship and simultaneously introducing the concept of one single German citizenship based on blood ties, namely a *Reich* (imperial) citizenship (Weidelener/Hemberger 1993: 3), but at the same time limiting the applicability of *jus sanguinis* to a category of racial purity, excluding so-called non-Aryan Germans from being awarded German citizenship [2].

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[2] Under the Nuremberg Laws passed by the NSDAP on 15 September 1935 as part of its party programme, the following discriminatory laws were sanctioned:

1. Under the *Reich* Citizen Law (*Reichsbürgergesetz*), full political rights would only be granted to German citizens and those of German blood. It stated: " *Reich* citizen is a citizen of German or related blood, who proves through his/her actions, that they are willing and suitable to serve the German people and *Reich* with loyalty [...] . The *Reich* citizen is the only holder of full political rights in accordance with the laws."
2. The Law for the Protection of the German Blood and German Honour sought to protect the Aryan race by forbidding intimate relations between Germans and Jews. It stated: "Marriage between Jews and German citizens / of German blood is forbidden. [...] Extra-marital relations between Jews and German citizens / of German blood is forbidden."

The Nuremberg Laws provided the legal basis for the anti-Semitic programme of the NSDAP (*Brockhaus Enzyklopädie* 1991: 48; Aleff 1970: 81).

This principle of one single German citizenship based on blood ties has been maintained until the present day. German citizenship granted under the Imperial Citizenship Law (22 July 1913) primarily rests on the concept of *jus sanguinis*. It was interpreted in post-war West Germany to include those Germans resident in East Germany, even though the East German government had introduced an East German citizenship in 1967 (*Meyers Enzyklopädisches Lexikon* 1978: 391). Furthermore, Article 116 (Section 1) of the Basic Law broadened the definition of a German to include specifically named German minorities in eastern and south-eastern Europe (the *Aussiedler* areas) as Germans who either already held German citizenship or were regarded as cultural Germans. The cultural Germans are granted a special right to naturalisation under citizenship legislation introduced in 1955 [3]. The Basic Law recognises the continued existence of the German nation whose citizens live beyond West Germany's own political borders. It is a German citizenship based on the nation and not a federal German citizenship based on territory.

In contrast to the FRG, France adopted a so-called `open´ model of citizenship based on territorial links (*jus soli),* a political concept of the nation rather than one based on ethnic bonds (Silverman 1995: 255). According to Silverman, the French `open´ model focuses on the integration of the individual as opposed to the recognition of specific ethnic or cultural communities, as is the case in the FRG (1995: 258). The German `closed´ model of citizenship is less liberal and comparatively inflexible. A non-German (and non-EU citizen) immigrant worker who may have been living in Germany for twenty years, and has command of the German language, is not entitled to vote in a German general election. However, *Aussiedler* arriving with little or even no command of the German language are given the right to vote in such an election [4].

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[3] This right was contained in the Law to Regulate Questions of Citizenship (22 February 1955) (see chapter one, section 1.5.1).

[4] Oskar Lafontaine was one of those politicians who were critical of German citizenship based on the principle of *jus sanguinis.* He instead regarded the nation as a community based on territorial ties (*Geburtsgemeinschaft*) rather than on ethnic blood ties. Furthermore, Lafontaine considered that a German nation based on ethnic links belonged to history, arguing that such a nation is not able to solve the economic problems of the FRG. He saw the future in a united states of Europe (*Der Spiegel* no.50 1993: 36-8).

2.3 The traditional open-door *Aussiedler* policy

It was pointed out in chapter one that the western Allies allowed the continued immigration into Germany by ethnic and cultural German expellees during the initial post-war period of 1945 - 1949. The Allies acknowledged the legitimacy of their expulsion from the Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, recognising these expellees as Germans [5]. Since 1950, successive post-war (West) German governments have continued to maintain this open-door policy in order to enable *Aussiedler* to enter Germany for the purpose of resettlement. The constitutional right of *Aussiedler* to enter Germany without immigration restrictions is guaranteed under Article 116 (Section 1) of the Basic Law.

2.3.1 Outline of statistical data on *Aussiedler* immigration for the period 1950 - 1982

The statistical recording of *Aussiedler* immigration by the West German authorities began in 1950, the year in which the enforced expulsion measures carried out by eastern European governments against the resident ethnic and cultural Germans ended. The FRG has maintained an open-door *Aussiedler* policy since then. Between 1950 and 1982, the number of *Aussiedler* entering West Germany under the open-door policy exceeded 1 million (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler, Sonderausgabe* August 1990: 3-6). The annual immigration levels varied considerably during that period, with the size of the *Aussiedler* influx reflecting the state of political relations between West Germany and the respective eastern European governments whose countries contained German minorities.

The annual average number of *Aussiedler* arriving for resettlement in West Germany during the period 1950 - 1982 was some 34,300 (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler Sonderausgabe,* August 1990: 3-6). The lowest number of *Aussiedler* recorded in any one year (4,050) was in 1952, as the Polish and Soviet governments restricted

[5] The Allies sanctioned the expulsion of the German communities at the Potsdam Conference held in 1945 (*dtv-Atlas* 1991: 499 & 527).

Aussiedler emigration to a minimum in the immediate post-war period (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler, Sonderausgabe* August 1990: 3). In contrast, the highest recorded total was in 1958, when some 129,660 *Aussiedler* arrived in West Germany for resettlement (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler, Sonderausgabe* August 1990: 3). This peak followed the establishment of diplomatic relations between West Germany and the Soviet Union in 1955, and was evidence of a relaxation in the emigration policies adopted by the Soviet Union and Poland. This was in response to petitioning by the International Red Cross for increased German emigration as part of their humanitarian programmes of East-West family reunions. In the case of Poland, an agreement concluded between the West German and Polish Red Cross organisations enabled the emigration of nearly 250,000 Polish *Aussiedler* between 1950 and 1959 (Haberland 1979: 16).

The Moscow Non-Aggression Treaty signed between West Germany and the Soviet Union in 1970 was followed by a rise in the level of *Aussiedler* immigration from the Soviet Union up until 1977 [6]. This rise could be interpreted as a gesture of goodwill by the Soviet government towards Chancellor Brandt. The signing of the Warsaw Treaty between West Germany and Poland in 1970 also led to a rise in Polish *Aussiedler* figures (although only temporary) in 1971, during which the total reached over 25,000 . Yet the total fell again after 1971 in consecutive years until 1975 as the Polish government reinstated its former restrictive *Aussiedler* emigration policy. The Polish government's attempt to improve relations with West Germany in 1975 for economic reasons included an exchange of official letters between the Polish and West German governments (9 October 1975), whereby the Polish government agreed to allow some 120,000 - 125,000 *Aussiedler* to resettle in West Germany over the following four years (Haberland 1979: 17) [7].

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[6] The Soviet *Aussiedler* figures for the respective years were as follows:

1970:	342	1974:	6,541
1971:	1,145	1975:	5,985
1972:	3,420	1976:	9,704
1973:	4,493	1977:	9,274

(*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler, Sonderausgabe* August 1990: 5).

[7] The subsequent emigration figures for Polish *Aussiedler* were as follows:

1976: 29,364 1977: 32,857 1978: 36,102 1979: 36,272
(Total 1976 - 1979: 134,595)

(*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler, Sonderausgabe* August 1990: 5).

The number of *Aussiedler* able to emigrate from the individual eastern European countries varied considerably during the period 1950 - 1982. While nearly 713,500 *Aussiedler* left Poland between 1950 and 1982, the total for the Soviet Union only reached 91,500 (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler, Sonderausgabe* August 1990: 3-6). These totals did not bear any relation to the size of the German groups in those countries, but merely reflected the state of political and economic relations between West Germany and the respective east European governments during the period 1950 - 1982.

During 1982 (the year in which Helmut Kohl became Chancellor [8]), the *Aussiedler* statistics once again revealed a large fall in comparison to the previous year. Their total fell from some 69,000 in 1981 to only 48,000 during 1982 (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler, Sonderausgabe* August 1990: 6). This decline followed tensions in relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, as well as between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, as mutual suspicion arose following the election of Ronald Reagan as President of the United States during 1981 [9].

On the basis of the figures and trends registered in *Aussiedler* immigration between 1950 and 1982, it is possible to identify links between the level of *Aussiedler* immigration and the state of international politics. Such links were firstly between the level of *Aussiedler* emigration and the overall state of East-West relations, and secondly, the specific state of relations between West Germany and the respective east European governments. The improvements and deteriorations in their state of relations was broadly paralleled by respective rises and falls in *Aussiedler* numbers registered by the West German authorities.

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[8] Kohl became Chancellor on 1 October 1982 following a constructive vote of no confidence against the SPD government of Chancellor Schmidt. Kohl called a general election in March 1983 (Derbyshire 1991: 54-6).

[9] Chancellor Kohl was supportive of the anti-Communist stance adopted by President Reagan in foreign policy, thereby moving away from the policy adopted by the former SPD government of peaceful coexistence. This support was documented in the Chancellor's Policy Statement of 4 May 1983, in which Kohl stated that the alliance with the United States had been weakened by the previous SPD government (*Jahresbericht der Bundesregierung* 1983: 611-2).

2.4 Chancellor Kohl's support for the open-door *Aussiedler* policy during his first full term in office 1983 - 1987

Following Helmut Kohl's election as Chancellor on 29 March 1983, the government declared its continued support for the legal rights of *Aussiedler* to enter West Germany under the open-door policy, thereby continuing the traditional post-war *Aussiedler* policy. This support had been confirmed in a government statement (18 March 1983) on its *Aussiedler* policy. The policy statement can be summarised as follows (*Aussiedler / Übersiedler* 1989: 11):

1. The government claimed not to be motivated in its *Aussiedler* policy by a pursuit of nationalistic policies. It stated that it was not calling upon the German minorities still resident in eastern and south-eastern Europe to emigrate to West Germany, yet confirmed that it did not insist on these Germans having to remain abroad.

2. The government considered the *Aussiedler* decision over whether they should remain or emigrate as a highly personal decision. Should they decide to emigrate, the government would respect their decision and not hinder them in their aims. It reiterated its support for the human rights of the ethnic and cultural Germans.

3. The government stated that it would do all possible to help integrate those *Aussiedler* who chose to resettle in West Germany, despite the economic difficulties being experienced in West Germany at that time and the financial limitations placed upon it through budgetary constraints. It would also co-operate with the *Länder* and those organisations involved in the integration of the *Aussiedler*.

The government thereby confirmed its full support for a continuation of the open-door *Aussiedler* policy. It not only acknowledged this open-door policy, but reiterated that the government would do all within its powers to enable the ethnic and cultural Germans to resettle in West Germany [10]. The question of whether this

[10] Chancellor Kohl pointed out in his Policy Statement on 4 May 1983 that the humanitarian

government denial of any nationalist dimension to its *Aussiedler* policy was in fact disingenuous (given the subsequent consistent use of nationalism by government members to justify its policies), will be considered in detail in chapter five.

2.4.1 *Aussiedler* immigration levels between 1982 and 1986

The annual *Aussiedler* figures continued to fall between 1982 and 1984. After the total number of *Aussiedler* in 1982 reached some 48,000 , the total fell in the following year by some 20% to only 37,800 , and further in 1984 to some 36,400 (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler, Sonderausgabe* August 1990: 6). The *Aussiedler* total for 1985 then saw a renewed rise to some 38,900 , constituting the first rise since 1981 (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler, Sonderausgabe* August 1990: 6). After the total rose again in 1986 to 42,730 , at a time when a reform process was underway in parts of eastern Europe (such as in Poland), further rises in *Aussiedler* immigration levels seemed likely as the relaxation in East-West relations continued. A contrasting breakdown of the *Aussiedler* immigration totals arriving from the three main countries of exodus in 1983 and 1986 is shown in the following Table:

Table 2.1

Composition of the annual *Aussiedler* figures for the three main countries of exodus in 1983 and 1986

Country of exodus	1983	1986
Poland	19,121	27,188
Soviet Union	1,447	753
Romania	15,501	13,130

Source: Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler, Sonderausgabe August 1990: 6

The above Table 2.1 shows that an increasing number of Polish *Aussiedler* were able to resettle in the FRG during 1986 (27,188) compared to 1983 (19,121). This

question was significant for West German - Soviet relations, and that the West German government would push for concessions to enable more Soviet Germans to emigrate (*Jahresbericht der Bundesregierung* 1983: 630).

rise in the Polish *Aussiedler* total was particularly significant as the Polish authorities had traditionally maintained a restrictive policy in the question of *Aussiedler* emigration. The Polish government had in 1983 claimed that there was no longer a German minority in Poland. It linked German government calls for increased *Aussiedler* emigration to latent territorial claims (in Poland) harboured by Chancellor Kohl's government (Rautenberg 1988: 14-5). Yet the economic difficulties experienced in Poland at the time, such as rising unemployment, made the Polish government increasingly willing to allow members of the German minority to leave the country by the tourist visa route. They travelled abroad as Polish citizens with tourist entry visas for West Germany, applying for resettlement as *Aussiedler* upon arrival in the FRG [11]. It is estimated that some 80% of Polish *Aussiedler* applicants arriving during 1984 came via the tourist route (Malchow ...*et al* 1990: 202).

In contrast, the Soviet authorities continued to restrict Soviet *Aussiedler* emigration prior to 1987. As can be seen in Table 2.1, the figure for the Soviet *Aussiedler* in 1986 of a mere 753 was indeed lower than the total of 1,447 in 1983. This restrictive Soviet emigration policy was a reflection on the continued tensions that existed between the Soviet Union and the United States during this period, which had a knock-on effect for West German - Soviet relations [12].

The figure for Romanian *Aussiedler* emigration remained comparatively stable between 1983 and 1986, despite a fall registered from 15,501 to 13,130 . The Romanian government had in 1978 agreed to allow an annual quota of around 14,000 *Aussiedler* to emigrate to West Germany in accordance with an agreement reached between Chancellor Schmidt and President Ceauscescu during 1978 (Wagner 1989: 43).

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[11] These so-called tourist *Aussiedler* from Poland were mainly single persons who aimed to achieve a reunion with family members left behind in Poland once they had resettled in West Germany. Such reunions had in the past taken up to 5 years (*Aussiedler / Übersiedler* 1989: 12).

[12] President Reagan's support for the military SDI (Strategic Defence Initiative) programme during the mid-1980s and the US administration's anti-Soviet stance contributed to a deterioration in relations between the Soviet and US governments. The SDI programme involved developing laser technology to defend the United States against a ballistic missile attack. The Soviet Union opposed the programme on the grounds that it destabilised the nuclear balance of power and contravened treaty commitments on nuclear weapons (Cassell Dictionary of Modern Politics 1994: 279).

The West German government initially welcomed the overall upward trend in *Aussiedler* figures. In the government's official report for 1988, it stated that it regarded this rise as a reward for its continued efforts made in representing the interests of *Aussiedler* in foreign policy negotiations (*Jahresbericht der Bundesregierung* 1988: 63). Pulzer points out that the maintaining of the *jus sanguinis* principle has enabled post-war West Germany to admit millions of German refugees, expellees and *Aussiedler* from eastern and central Europe, resulting in "a huge ingathering of the German Diaspora" (1994: 12).

2.4.2 Government *Aussiedler* policy upon re-election in 1987

Upon being re-elected into office on 11 March 1987, the government under Chancellor Kohl opted to continue operating the open-door *Aussiedler* policy. In a subsequent government policy statement (18 March 1987), the government declared its continued support for those *Aussiedler* wishing to resettle in West Germany. This statement contained the following passage with regards to its future *Aussiedler* policy (Kohl 1987: 37):

"It is our duty to stand up for those Germans still living in central, eastern and south-eastern Europe. We strongly support their basic concerns, including the right to preserve their cultural and linguistic identity. We shall continue our efforts so that they can leave those countries unimpeded and shall carry on providing assistance to those of our fellow countrymen who want to settle in the Federal Republic of Germany."

This statement formed the cornerstone of the government's *Aussiedler* policy for the forthcoming period in office. Although the government had previously (in 1983) denied that its *Aussiedler* policy was motivated by nationalistic aims, this statement arguably contains evidence of nationalistic rhetoric intended to appeal to a conservative section of the West German electorate. This was at a time when various small right-wing political groups were on the ascendancy in West German politics, seeking to offer the right-wing voter a political home (to be discussed

further in chapter five). The rhetoric contained in the above statement becomes clearer upon closer analysis of the following sections of text:

1. The statement refers to "our duty."
   This was a reference to the government's self-imposed duty to assist *Aussiedler*. Duty is a powerful concept in the ideology of nationalism. It can mean the duty to serve a country or nation. It can also be extended to include an obligation to maintain the open-door *Aussiedler* policy. This use of the words "our duty" could also be interpreted as the duty of the German population to accept increased *Aussiedler* immigration and to assist in their integration, thereby putting moral pressure on the population to show solidarity towards the arriving *Aussiedler*.

2. The statement refers to the right to preserve their cultural identity.
   Having a common culture is recognised as one of the powerful bonds that can bind a nation (Bader 1976: 4). By referring to the preservation of cultural identity in connection with the *Aussiedler*, the Chancellor arguably sought to convey the impression that *Aussiedler* indeed shared the same cultural background as the Germans in both East and West Germany.

3. The statement refers to the right to preserve their linguistic identity.
   Language is recognised as being another strong bond which gives a nation a high degree of cohesiveness (Bader 1976: 4). The eighteenth century German writer Johann Herder (1744 - 1803), the so-called father of the German intellectual national movement, believed that the character of a people (*Volksgeist*) was expressed in language and literature (Carr 1991a: 18). Yet the French writer Ernst Renan (1823 - 1892) pointed out that a common language invites union, without, however, compelling such union (Skidmore 1993: 256). In view of the scattered nature of the German nation in Europe, a common language can act as a binding link and overcome geographical distances between the various constituent groups.

By using the word "preserve", the statement conveyed the impression that those *Aussiedler* arriving for resettlement in West Germany in 1988 had indeed

maintained their German language within their former communities. It also gave the impression that the language bond existing between these newcomers and the resident German population would enable them to successfully integrate into West German society. Yet the government was aware of the growing problem of *Aussiedler* arriving for resettlement with either only limited or no German language skills. This was verified in an internal government report compiled in the Spring of 1988 on the issue of *Aussiedler* integration (*Bestandsaufnahme* 1988: 49-53) [13]. The language problem (to be discussed in detail in chapter six and chapter seven) had been singled out by the BfA in 1988 as one of the contributory causes of *Aussiedler* unemployment (*Arbeitsmarktanalyse* 1989: 646) [14].

4. The statement refers to "our fellow countrymen."
   The term "our fellow countrymen" (*unsere Landsleute*) was the same terminology as used by the government when referring to the East Germans, whom the West German constitution (Basic Law) recognised as part of the German nation (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.7 1989: 3; Klönne 1990: 138). It was arguably an attempt to foster a similar (if not even the same) feeling of emotive solidarity towards the *Aussiedler* as in the case of the fellow East Germans.

The above analysis of the statement on *Aussiedler* policy shows the wealth of rhetoric used by the Chancellor when referring to the *Aussiedler* group, attempting to foster public solidarity and promote a feeling of national allegiance towards the *Aussiedler*. While the government had previously denied that its *Aussiedler* policy was linked to nationalistic motives (as stated in the policy statement of 18 March 1983), the above statement contained evidence of nationalist rhetoric by linking *Aussiedler* immigration to the concepts of the German nation, duty, allegiance and culture.

[13] The findings of the report will be discussed in chapter seven.
[14] The issue of contributory causes will be discussed in chapter seven.

2.5 The traditional open-door *Aussiedler* policy comes under growing pressure during 1988

During the first seven months of 1988, the *Aussiedler* immigration total (82,800) had already exceeded the 1987 total of some 78,500 (*Gegenüberstellung* 1990: *Bundesverwaltungsamt*). An analysis of the composition of those *Aussiedler* registered in the first seven months of 1988 revealed that the figures for the Soviet *Aussiedler* (20,900) and Polish *Aussiedler* (53,900) continued to show an underlying upward trend. Following the implementation in the Soviet Union of a decree (1 January 1987) allowing increased foreign travel and emigration by Soviet citizens for the purpose of joining first degree relatives (Dietz/Hilkes 1992: 112), the level of emigration by the Soviet Germans in 1988 rose proportionately quicker than the figure for Polish and Romanian *Aussiedler* [15]. The Soviet *Aussiedler* posed the largest potential contingent with an estimated total of some 2 million persons. The possibility of a mass exodus by Soviet *Aussiedler* was not an exaggeration in view of the economic difficulties and political uncertainty being experienced in the Soviet Union during the period of economic restructuring.

While Chancellor Kohl had initially greeted the relaxation on travel restrictions for the Soviet Germans with enthusiasm, there was a growing uncertainty in government circles during 1988 as to what extent future *Aussiedler* figures would continue to rise. By July 1988 there was a need for the government to reassess its *Aussiedler* policy. The Chancellor had previously given public assurances (policy statement of 18 March 1987: section 2.4.2) that it would do all it could to support *Aussiedler* in their aim to resettle in West Germany (Kohl 1987: 37). Bringing an end to the open-door policy and introducing quotas would have harmed its political credibility. Yet under the open-door policy, the government could do very little to control the exodus once it gathered pace. The government expected the annual

[15] First degree relatives are parents and children of the applicant.

The number of *Aussiedler* between 1986 and 1987 rose as follows:

	1986	1987	% Difference
Soviet *Aussiedler*	753	14,488	(+ 1,924)
Polish *Aussiedler*	27,200	48,420	(+ 78)
Romanian *Aussiedler*	13,130	14,000	(+ 7)

(*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler, Sonderausgabe* August 1990: 6)

level of *Aussiedler* immigration to exceed 200,000 in future years, based on the observed upward trend in their numbers and the changing political situation in eastern and south-eastern Europe (*Sonderprogramm zur Eingliederung der Aussiedler* 1988a: 6).

The government reacted to such public and political concerns by reassessing its *Aussiedler* policy during the summer of 1988. The response announced in August 1988 included the following three decisions (Kohl 1988a: 1-3):

1. To maintain the open-door policy and thereby reject the calls by the SPD opposition party for the implementation of annual *Aussiedler* quotas.

2. To rely on an *Aussiedler* assistance programme to help their integration. This formed the government's central response to increased *Aussiedler* immigration.

3. To encourage potential *Aussiedler* to delay their emigration to West Germany and await the outcome of the continuing reform process underway in eastern Europe.

2.6 The main aims and provisions of the Special *Aussiedler* Assistance Programme announced in August 1988

Having recognised that the existing framework of central government assistance for *Aussiedler* was no longer sufficient to integrate the increasing numbers of *Aussiedler*, Chancellor Kohl announced the government's own Special *Aussiedler* Assistance Programme on 31 August 1988 (1988a: 1-3). The government relied on this assistance programme as a framework to achieve their integration. The government assistance programme laid down the legal framework for future government assistance by both central and state governments. The following provisions contained in the programme sought to help *Aussiedler* find employment and suitable accommodation (*Aussiedler / Übersiedler* 1988: 132-5):

1. An adequate provision of temporary accommodation was to be made available in the federal states, to assist in the rehousing of *Aussiedler* once they left the regional resettlement centres [16].

2. The government would later that year implement a house-building programme to provide affordable accommodation for *Aussiedler*. Details of the programme were to be announced in October 1988.

3. *Aussiedler* would be given the opportunity to prepare themselves for integration into the West German employment market through appropriate retraining courses arranged by the local employment office (*Arbeitsamt*) [17].

4. *Aussiedler* were to be given wider access to free German language courses (arranged by the local employment office) so as to speed up the integration process [18]. The government had noted that an increasing number of *Aussiedler* arriving in West Germany were unable to read or write German. The duration of the courses had been increased on 1 January 1988 from 8 months to 10 months.

5. The process of translating *Aussiedler* employment qualifications was to be improved by updating the information system for equating the different types of qualifications.

6. Independent charities involved in advising and assisting *Aussiedler* in their integration would be granted additional financial assistance.

The government planned to increase the number of staff processing *Aussiedler* application forms (Kohl 1988a: 1-3) [19]. In addition to the existing *Aussiedler*

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[16] The local authorities were able to obtain subsidised loans from the *Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau* (government development bank) to finance the assistance. In addition, the government would allow the local authorities to use (rent free) empty schools and government buildings to provide temporary housing for *Aussiedler* (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.7 1989: 4).

[17] Government expenditure for *Aussiedler* accommodation between 1953 and 1984 amounted to DM 9 billion (*Bestandsaufnahme* 1988: 6).

[18] Government expenditure for language courses between 1976 and 1987 amounted to DM 3.4 billion (*Bestandsaufnahme* 1988: 6).

[19] The *Bundesverwaltungsamt* (BVA - Federal Administration Office) had taken over responsibility for processing *Aussiedler* applications on 1 January 1988. The number of staff

resettlement centres located at Friedland (Lower Saxony), Nuremberg (Bavaria) and Unna-Massen (North-Rhine-Westphalia), the government considered opening a fourth centre if future annual *Aussiedler* immigration exceeded the 200,000 level (*Jahresbericht der Bundesregierung* 1988: 106) [20]. The cost of this accommodation is shared between central and state governments in accordance with Article 120 of the Basic Law (*Sonderprogramm zur Eingliederung der Aussiedler* 1988a: 22). Of the 202,700 *Aussiedler* arriving in 1988, some 119,200 (1987: 60,400) alone arrived at the Friedland resettlement centre in Lower Saxony (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 3 January 1989: 4).

On the surface, this assistance programme appears to have been a reasonable government response to increased *Aussiedler* immigration, yet in essence the programme merely extended the forms of help already available to a larger number of *Aussiedler* recipients. The government declared that the financial aid available had been adjusted to cater for the higher number of *Aussiedler* that would have to be integrated in the future (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.7 1989: 3). It was thus no more than an upgrading of help made available to *Aussiedler* since the SPD introduced its own *Aussiedler* assistance programme in 1976 [21].

The provision of German language courses for *Aussiedler* raised a paradox in relation to the concept of the cultural German. Their necessity confirmed that the *Aussiedler* had problems with the German language. This raised the question to

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processing the applications was increased from 21 to 51 (*Sonderprogramm zur Eingliederung der Aussiedler* 1988a: 22-4).

[20] The capacities registered at the *Aussiedler* resettlement centres in March 1988 were as follows: Friedland: 1,300 Nuremberg: 700.
The reception centre at Unna-Massen had a capacity in August 1988 of 3,800.
Further temporary accommodation was available in West Berlin (688 places) and Giessen (576 places), although these were not exclusively for *Aussiedler* but could also be used for other immigrants (*Bestandsaufnahme* 1988: 19-20; *Sonderprogramm zur Eingliederung der Aussiedler* 1988a: 27).

The government in 1989 decided that additional centres would be opened at Hamm, Bramsche, Osnabrück and Emfingen, with some DM 80 million being set aside to help the *Länder* to finance the cost of the centres. The total national capacity was to be increased to 10,000 places through both increasing capacities at the existing centres and by opening the new ones (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.7 1989: 3).

[21] The programme was implemented in May 1976, following the announcement by the Polish government in 1975 (in accordance with the protocol of 9 October 1975) that some 120,000-125,000 Polish *Aussiedler* would be allowed to resettle in the FRG during the following four years (Haberland 1979: 17).

what extent it was possible to talk of *Aussiedler* being cultural Germans when increasing numbers of *Aussiedler* arriving in West Germany were not able to communicate in the German language. This paradox (and contradiction) led to public criticism that the only cultural tie of many *Aussiedler* was their German name.

In an emotive appeal, Chancellor Kohl called upon the public to show solidarity towards the *Aussiedler* and to recognise their integration as both a national task and moral obligation (1988a: 1-3). Chancellor Kohl further called upon the *Länder* to liaise with central government to achieve a successful integration of the *Aussiedler* allocated to them under the national *Aussiedler* distribution system (1988a: 1-3). Under this system, each federal state was legally obliged to accept and integrate a percentage quota of the annual number of *Aussiedler* arriving for resettlement under a distribution key (Marshall 1992: 132). The individual percentages are reviewed periodically.

2.6.1 Role of the new government post responsible for *Aussiedler* matters

In an effort to co-ordinate the central government assistance for *Aussiedler*, Chancellor Kohl also announced the creation of a new government post within the Interior Ministry to be responsible for *Aussiedler* matters. The new post was headed by Parliamentary State Secretary Horst Waffenschmidt, who took up the position on 28 September 1988. The post covered the following four areas of responsibility (*Bonner Almanach* 1989: 106):

1. To oversee the co-ordination of government *Aussiedler* policy, including the implementation of the announced Special *Aussiedler* Assistance Programme.

2. To develop a common strategy on *Aussiedler* integration issues with the *Länder*.

3. To establish a public information service to answer questions on *Aussiedler* matters. The purpose was to increase public awareness of the historical background to the *Aussiedler* communities in order to increase the degree of acceptance towards them.

4. To ensure adequate provision of temporary accommodation for *Aussiedler* arriving at the resettlement centres.

2.6.2 Aims of the *Aussiedler* House-building Programme announced in October 1988

In addition to the provision of temporary accommodation, the government announced on 12 October 1988 that DM 750 million was available for the construction of some 30,000 homes under the *Aussiedler* House-building Programme (*Für ein neues Zuhause* 1988: 1; *Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.1 1988: 19). Under this programme, the governments of the *Länder* were called upon to collectively contribute the sum of DM 750 million, thus matching the funds made available by central government. This amounted to a total subsidy of DM 50,000 per home (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.1 1988: 19).

The Chancellor called upon the individual *Länder* to implement their own *Aussiedler* house-building programmes. In the event of this money being used to build subsidised rented accommodation (*Sozialwohnungen*), the *Länder* were responsible for negotiating favourable tenancy agreements with landlords. The aim was for *Aussiedler* tenants to contractually be guaranteed the housing tenancy at a low rent for at least seven years, after which the tenancy could be let at market rent levels (*Für ein neues Zuhause* 1988: 2).

2.7 Lafontaine's criticism of the government's open-door *Aussiedler* policy

The refusal of the government in 1988 to amend its open-door *Aussiedler* policy and instead rely on a government assistance programme to achieve their integration, led to a heated political debate in West German politics. This debate focused firstly on the question of whether the open-door policy was politically justified in view of the difficulties likely to be encountered by both *Aussiedler* and the FRG itself in integrating the newcomers, and secondly whether the government was instrumentalising the *Aussiedler* group for its own political and nationalistic purposes. An important question was whether the government's continued liberal interpretation of the *Aussiedler* status and the maintaining of the open-door policy was evidence that the government was using the *Aussiedler* group as a means of proving its nationalist credentials, portraying itself as the party which safeguarded German interests. Loose parallels were drawn by critics to the German National Socialist Party's wartime policy of bringing ethnic and cultural Germans back into the German *Reich*, the so-called *heim ins Reich* policy (Jaenecke 1989: 220). Furthermore, the critics argued that the open-door policy took no account of the ability of the economy and society to absorb rising numbers of *Aussiedler*.

Research carried out by the *Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach* (Institute for Opinion Research Allensbach) in November 1988 confirmed that the general public was sceptical about the rising *Aussiedler* influx. The Institute carried out an opinion poll (2,000 persons) for the Federal Interior Ministry in order to gauge public opinion on the *Aussiedler* issue. Asked whether they thought that the influx was a good thing, some 66% of those questioned answered with no. Merely 17% answered with yes (*Allensbach-Umfrage* 1988: 18). Some 43% agreed with the statement that West Germany already had enough unemployed, while 31% rejected this statement (*Allensbach-Umfrage* 1988: 52). Asked about the accommodation situation, some 76% agreed that there was insufficient accommodation available to accommodate the arriving *Aussiedler*. Only 9% disagreed with that view (*Allensbach-Umfrage* 1988: 52). Asked if they regarded *Aussiedler* as Germans or foreigners, some 38% regarded them as Germans and 36% as foreigners

(*Allensbach-Umfrage* 1988: 10). Commenting on the published results of the opinion poll, a spokesman for the Interior Ministry (Wighard Härdtl) explained this scepticism on the grounds of the public not having sufficient information on the *Aussiedler* issue, which he pointed out would have to be countered (*Peiner Allgemeine Zeitung* 30 December 1988) [22].

The dispute between government and opposition politicians came to a head following the remarks made by Oskar Lafontaine, deputy chairman of the SPD, on the *Aussiedler* issue during November 1988. Lafontaine criticised the open-door *Aussiedler* policy, as on the one hand, the government claimed there was no more room for foreigners (e.g. asylum seekers) in West Germany, whilst on the other hand, stating that the door was open for *Aussiedler* (*Cellesche Zeitung* 29 November 1988). He declared that if Chancellor Kohl indeed felt the urge to bring home millions of Germans from eastern Europe, he should also ensure that they were sufficiently catered for (Hofmann 1988: 3). Lafontaine protested against what he regarded as "*Deutschtümelei*", meaning an exaggerated obsession and meddling with German nationality (Hofmann 1988: 3). He argued that those in the CDU party who supported the open-door policy, yet rejected asylum seekers, were guilty of such "*Deutschtümelei*" (Hofmann 1988: 3). Lafontaine considered the needs of the individual to be more important than a person's ancestry, questioning whether it was significant if someone had German speaking ancestors, regardless of whether they came from eastern Europe or from Africa (Darnstädt 1988: 123). Lafontaine justified his criticism of government policy by declaring that his feelings of humanity and solidarity could not be channelled into nationalistic categories (Hofmann 1988: 3).

Lafontaine also called for a reduction in the level of financial assistance given to *Aussiedler* upon arrival, regarding such help as forming an incentive for *Aussiedler* to seek resettlement in West Germany (Malchow ...*et al* 1990: 76). Lafontaine's demands were rejected by the government on the basis that the position of the Germans in eastern Europe remained problematic and that nothing had changed to justify such reductions (Malchow ...*et al* 1990: 76). Lafontaine's criticism that the

[22] *Stern Magazine* reported in 1989 that the *Aussiedler* immigration issue had become the number one topic among the general public (Jaenecke 1989: 220).

government was guilty of "*Deutschtümelei*" not only caused resentment among CDU politicians, but also led to a disagreement with SPD Chairman Hans-Joachim Vogel. The chairman distanced himself from Lafontaine's public statements and sought to contain the debate within his party by declaring that one cannot bypass the constitution (Darnstädt 1988: 126) [23]. In his own defence, Lafontaine pointed out that he had merely sought to make a political point, and not a legal point on the constitution (Hofmann 1988: 3).

Despite the rift that his remarks on "*Deutschtümelei*" had caused within the SPD, Lafontaine stood by his comments. In a statement made in Passau during November 1988, Lafontaine declared (*Cellesche Zeitung* 29 November 1988):

"I continue to stand by the remark. If we accept people in the Federal Republic, we have to ask ourselves, what our criteria are."

Vogel's lack of support for Lafontaine's stance reflected the chairman's foremost respect for the constitution, and his unwillingness to place asylum seekers on the same legal level as *Aussiedler*.

2.7.1 Criticism of the open-door *Aussiedler* policy by the *Länder*

Parallel to the criticism voiced by Lafontaine at the national level, politicians at the *Länder* level also voiced their concern over the continued open-door *Aussiedler* policy. The *Länder* faced increasing pressure on their resources (finance and housing) as the *Aussiedler* levels continued to rise during 1988 and were forecasted to continue rising in future years. Gerhard Schröder, the prime minister of the SPD-led government in Lower Saxony, declared his support for an annual quota system stating (*Cellesche Zeitung* 17 March 1989: 15):

"That means, we will have to decide how many Aussiedler per year and from which countries they can be accepted."

[23] This was a reference to the constitutional right under Article 116 (Section 1) of the Basic Law for *Aussiedler* to resettle in the FRG.

His support for such a quota system was based on the grounds that quotas could prevent problems being experienced in *Aussiedler* integration, by controlling immigration at a manageable level. In the absence of such a quota system, the *Länder* would be faced with growing integration, accommodation and financial problems. This situation led to increased tensions between central government and individual SPD governed *Länder*.

Heinrich Jürgens (SPD), Minister for Federal and European Matters in Lower Saxony, also voiced his concern over the government delegating responsibility for *Aussiedler* integration to the *Länder*. Jürgens stated that while his government was aware of its responsibilities, and was indeed doing all it could to achieve a successful integration of *Aussiedler*, it was facing increasing difficulties (1989: 4). These difficulties were caused by the limited financial means available [24]. Jürgens stated (1989: 4):

"I do not wish to hide my disappointment over the lack of solidarity shown by the government and other Bundesländer. Until now, we have been largely left alone in fulfilling this national obligation."

Further criticism was levelled at the government by Herbert Schmalstieg, the SPD Mayor of Hanover, on the uncontrolled influx of *Aussiedler* under the open-door policy. He declared (Jaenecke 1989: 220):

"It is no longer five to, but ten minutes past twelve."

Schmalstieg argued that if Chancellor Kohl welcomed all *Aussiedler* with open arms, he must then also ensure that they find sufficient employment and housing once they arrive (Jaenecke 1989: 220). He was thus repeating similar criticism previously voiced by Oskar Lafontaine (Hofmann 1988: 3).

The criticism that the local authorities (*Kommunen*) were being left alone with the task of integrating the rising number of *Aussiedler* was also voiced by Stuttgart's

[24] The *Aussiedler* resettlement centre at Friedland lies within the jurisdiction and responsibility of the federal state of Lower Saxony.

CDU mayor Manfred Rommel. He went so far as to call for a formalised government immigration programme (quotas), so that it would be possible for the local authorities and cities to plan for the number of *Aussiedler* they would be required to accept and integrate each year (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 9 November 1988: 1). Yet Parliamentary State Secretary Horst Waffenschmidt rejected Rommel's suggestion, stating that any limitation of *Aussiedler* numbers would not only be unconstitutional, but also inhumane. He declared (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 9 November 1988: 1):

> *"If these German people do decide to come to us, we have the legal and moral obligation to accept them."*

Waffenschmidt took this issue a step further by declaring that West German demands for improved human rights in the world would in future also be judged by how West Germany dealt with its *Aussiedler* (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 9 November 1988: 1). The government included the sum of DM 1.9 billion in its 1989 budget specifically for *Aussiedler* integration measures and repeated its appeal to the German public to show solidarity towards the arriving *Aussiedler* (*Cellesche Zeitung* 4 January 1989: 2).

2.8 Summary

The government's decision to reject any form of administrative control over the number of *Aussiedler* being admitted raised concerns, firstly over the prudence of their decision, and secondly on their actual motives for doing so. The rising trend in *Aussiedler* immigration identified during 1988, and the prospect of their numbers still rising, brought with it the need for effective integration measures to be implemented by the government. This was necessary to ensure a speedy and efficient integration of the *Aussiedler* arriving for resettlement. Failure to achieve this smooth integration, particularly with regard to employment, would ultimately call into question the prudence of continuing to operate the traditional open-door policy. While the policy had indeed been used to show solidarity towards *Aussiedler* during

the Cold War period, the period of the late 1980s was characterised by political and social reforms, as well as a new sense of openness in eastern Europe. That being so, it was arguably no longer necessary to maintain such a policy at a time when relations between the East and West were steadily improving.

CHAPTER THREE

GERMAN ORIGINS OF THE *AUSSIEDLER* ARRIVING FROM THE SOVIET UNION AND ROMANIA

3. German origins of the *Aussiedler* arriving from the Soviet Union and Romania

3.1 Two group studies reviewing the claim that *Aussiedler* are descendants of former German colonists

It was pointed out in chapter one that in order to qualify for *Aussiedler* status, it was necessary either to prove entitlement to German citizenship or to prove cultural German status. As entitlement to *Aussiedler* status as a cultural German is the more controversial of the two ways to qualify for such status, this concept requires closer attention. In addressing the second part of the first main research question, this chapter considers the government's argument that *Aussiedler* are German compatriots, which in the case of the cultural Germans was based on *Aussiedler* being descendants of former German colonists. It was argued that their descendants had left their German homes in previous centuries, thereby having both ancestral and cultural bonds with the German nation.

While the majority of *Aussiedler* from Poland and former Czechoslovakia are awarded *Aussiedler* status automatically on the basis of their entitlement to German citizenship, those arriving from the former Soviet Union and Romania predominantly comprise cultural Germans who have to provide the German authorities with appropriate evidence of such status. Historians have identified at least twenty individual cultural German community groups in eastern and south-eastern Europe, concentrated in pockets predominantly in the former Soviet Union, Romania and Poland (see map in Appendix 2).

It would be beyond the scope and purpose of this thesis to review the evidence for each of these groups. This chapter therefore focuses on two of those communities, firstly the Volga Germans in Russia, and secondly the Siebenbürger Saxons in

Romania (shown as positions 17 and 12 respectively in Appendix 2), in order to identify evidence in support of the claim that they form part of the German nation spread beyond the political borders of Germany. The research in this chapter focuses on the historical background relating to the founding of these two German communities, including the circumstances that led to the exodus from their German homes. It further considers whether there were parallels between the founding of the two communities, which in turn may be considered representative of the circumstances that led to the formation of the different cultural German communities in eastern and south-eastern Europe.

3.2 Definition of the term Soviet Germans

The English term Soviet Germans applies to those members of the German minority (ethnic and cultural Germans) resident within the former Soviet Union. The Soviet Germans were recognised by the Soviet authorities as a separate nationality and member of the Soviet peoples, constituting the fourteenth largest national group in the 1979 Soviet census (Richter-Eberl 1989: 56) with a total of 1.9 million persons (Eisfeld 1989: 17).

While the term Soviet Germans has become the accepted English name for this group of cultural and ethnic Germans, they continue to be called *Russlanddeutsche* (Russian Germans) in the relevant German literature and in German government reports. The origins of the name *Russlanddeutsche* can be explained by the historical background to German colonisation in czarist Russia. The name Soviet Germans encompasses different German groups such as the Volga, Black Sea and Bessarabian Germans (shown in Appendix 2). Even after the formation of the Soviet Union in 1922 and the settlement by Germans in other republics (outside of Russia), German historians have continued to use the term *Russlanddeutsche* when referring to the Soviet Germans. Similarly after the break-up of the Soviet Union in December 1991, and the formation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the term continued to be applied.

3.2.1 Use of the term Volga Germans

The use of the term Volga Germans in this thesis refers to those who had been (or still are) resident in the area of the former German Volga republic (which included the founding Volga German colonies) located in Russia [1]. Lenin gave political recognition to this German minority group in 1924 by awarding them autonomous ASSR (Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic) status. It kept this status until 1941, when the republic was abolished by Stalin and its German community forcefully resettled in Siberia and Kazakhstan [2].

3.2.2 Colonisation of the Volga region under Catherine the Great

The history of German colonial migration to the middle and lower parts of the river Volga is linked to the accession by Catherine the Great (1762 - 1796) to the throne as Empress of Russia in 1762. Catherine was born as a minor German princess (Eisfeld 1989: 10) [3]. She inherited an expanding Russian empire following the accumulation of lands under former czars, which included the annexation by Czar Ivan IV (the Terrible 1533 - 1584) during the sixteenth century of territory along the middle and lower Volga from the Tatar tribes in southern Russia (Richter-Eberl 1989: 16-7).

Catherine from the outset turned her attention to giving economic assistance to such outward regions of her kingdom. She sought to achieve this by inviting European settlers, particularly Germans, to colonise the empty territories alongside the river Volga [4]. Catherine's own German background helps explain the reason why she

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[1] The term founding Volga German colonies applies to those colonies established during the initial influx of immigrants to the Saratov area in the eighteenth century.

[2] Details concerning the abolition of the German Volga republic are given in chapter four. The geographical location of the former Volga republic is shown in the map in Appendix 9.

[3] Catherine II (Catherine the Great) was born as Sophie Auguste von Anhalt-Zerbst in 1729.

[4] German craftsmen, academics, administrators and military officers had already been brought into the Russian kingdom by Ivan IV and Peter the Great (1689 - 1725) to help modernise the administration and military units (Stumpp 1980: 6). The Germans arriving in Moscow, along with other foreigners, were allowed by those two czars to live in the so-called German Quarter (Massie 1981: 110-1). Peter the Great had appealed for foreign settlers by publishing a manifesto on 16 April 1702, which was translated into German in the same year (Richter-Eberl 1989: 23). He placed the foreigners in the kingdom under his protection and

called upon German settlers to migrate to Russia. According to Sievers, Catherine had a particular interest in attracting Germans as settlers to her kingdom, being well aware of the economic problems and instability that prevailed in the German states at the time (1980: 196-7). The Seven Years War (1756 - 1763) caused considerable destruction throughout the German states, particularly in central and south-western Germany (Alexander 1989: 80).

3.2.2.1 First manifesto issued by Catherine the Great in 1762

Catherine publicised her wish to attract foreign settlers to Russia in her first manifesto (decree) dated 4 December 1762 (Kahn 1984: 49). This called upon European settlers to populate the empty lands of her kingdom. Yet despite circulation of this manifesto in Europe through handbills (leaflets), the subsequent response was disappointing. The expected migration by European colonists failed to materialise (Stumpp 1980: 9). A possible explanation for the lack of response can be attributed to the Seven Years War. The prolonged war hindered the spread of relevant information contained in the manifesto, and also prevented the establishment of necessary collection points and safe travel routes. Catherine recognised that the manifesto was not comprehensive enough to encourage potential migrants to respond (Vernadsky ...*et al* 1972: 450).

3.2.2.2 Catherine's second manifesto issued in 1763

Following the failure of the first manifesto, a revised second manifesto was announced on 22 July 1763. This was circulated throughout Germany and other European countries (Alexander 1989: 80). The second manifesto sought to encourage a positive response by setting out the privileges that would be granted to those colonists who responded to Catherine's call (Vernadsky ...*et al* 1972: 450-1). It offered settlers exemption from Russian military service and from paying taxes. It

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allowed them religious freedom in Russia in accordance with his manifesto (Massie 1981: 391).

further stated that colonial settlements would be granted local self-government and religious freedom. Colonists were also promised the availability of agricultural land.

While Catherine's invitation extended to all foreigners, it was the Germans who were the dominant group among the foreigners who responded to her call (Fleischhauer 1986: 17). German settlers were no strangers in Russia. They had already established German communities in the Russian cities of Moscow (20,000 Germans), Saint Petersburg (40,000) and in Odessa (10,000) by the mid-eighteenth century (Sievers 1980: 196).

3.2.2.3 Catherine's motives for inviting foreign settlers to Russia

The following five main motives can be identified for Catherine's decision to invite foreign settlers to Russia:

1. Catherine supported the idea that economic gains could be achieved by increasing the size of a country's population, as formulated in the population theory prevalent in eighteenth century Europe (Alexander 1989: 80). This theory linked the long-term economic prosperity of the state not alone to the ownership of extensive territory, but also to increasing the size of the population.

2. Catherine was unable to achieve the desired populating of the Volga region by relying alone on the co-operation of the Russian nobility and landlords. They hindered Catherine in her aim of populating these largely barren lands through continuing to operate the traditional system of feudal serfdom. This bound the Russian peasant population and agricultural work force to the local landlord and nobility through its system of service and protection (Sievers 1980: 209).

   The reluctance of her nobility and the Russian landlords to release peasants from their obligations forced Catherine to look beyond her own kingdom for the necessary work force and families. Frankel makes the point that the Germans came as free peasants to a country of serfs and that the traditionally hard working

Germans were to serve as an example to the Russian population. These foreign settlers could help populate underdeveloped regions of the kingdom, opening them up for future productive agricultural settlements (Frankel 1986: 3). Immigrants posed no obvious threat to the serfdom system in Russia as these settlers were recognised as foreigners (Alexander 1989: 80).

3. The arrival of foreign settlers was also accompanied by an important military motive for Catherine. As well as giving an economic stimulus to the unpopulated areas, the settlers could assist in the protection of the Russian kingdom in the south (Stumpp 1980: 9). Such protection was required because of attacks carried out by nomadic Asiatic tribes as they made probing inroads into the Volga region.

4. A religious motive has also been attributed to Catherine's call for foreign settlers. The colonists could serve to create a buffer zone between her Christian kingdom and the non-Christian tribes bordering the southern Asiatic part of her kingdom (Frankel 1986: 3).

5. New settlers represented additional future (long-term) taxpayers, who could help finance the protection and economic growth of the Russian kingdom.

3.2.2.4 Response by German colonists to the second manifesto

The German colonists responded to the second manifesto during the period 1764 - 1767. Eisfeld states that an estimated 23,000-29,000 Germans migrated to Russia during that first phase of the colonisation period, mainly to the Saratov region (1989: 10). This comprised an estimated 8,000 families (*Die Russland-deutschen* 1980: 2). Central meeting (and departure) points in Germany were established by those recruiting potential colonists for the journey eastwards. One such meeting point was the port of Lübeck on the Baltic coastline, from which boats took the settlers as far as St. Petersburg. From there they travelled across land and along the river network southwards to the Saratov region (see map in

Appendix 3) [5]. A second identified meeting point was the village of Büdingen near Frankfurt am Main. The village church records show that there was a spate of quickly arranged marriages, as those arriving in Russia as families qualified for maximum help. Some 300 marriages were recorded by the Büdingen village church alone during 1766 (Richter-Eberl 1989: 44). In a further documented example for that period, the whole village population of Hermhag (near Büdingen) emigrated to Russia (Stumpp 1980: 12).

A total of 104 founding colonies were established by German settlers in the Saratov area during the period from 1764 to 1767 (Eisfeld 1989: 10). Although different settlement locations were chosen by the settlers, suggesting a free choice of location, Catherine is thought to have consciously directed the treks to the Saratov region [6]. Those who responded were primarily from German agricultural communities, but also included craftsmen who could be of assistance in building the individual settlements. Some 489,000 hectares of land[7] were distributed during the first inward migration phase, fulfilling the offer of land made in Catherine's second manifesto (Fleischhauer 1986: 19). In accordance with the terms laid down in that manifesto, the communities were able to establish their own self-governing local administration.

3.2.3 Relevant push and pull factors for the Volga German colonisation

The range of factors relevant in the decision-making process of the German colonists can be divided into traditional push and pull factors as outlined in chapter one. The push factors reflect the socio-economic circumstances and problems faced by the settlers in Germany, while the pull factors relate to the opportunities and privileges offered to the settlers as stated in the second manifesto. The main push

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[5] Saratov was founded in 1590 as a Russian fortress to protect the empire from intrusions by nomadic tribes from the south (Keil 1984: 143).

[6] The resulting German settlement pattern spread along the river Volga for a distance of 100 km to the north and 150 km southwards of Saratov (Schleuning 1967: 284).

[7] 1 hectare = 10,000 square metres.

and pull factors identifiable in the case of the Volga Germans are placed opposite each other in the following Table:

Table 3.1

Relevant push and pull factors influencing the emigration from Germany to Russia

Push factors in Germany	Pull factors in Russia (Volga area)
1. Military conflicts	1. Exemption from military service
2. Religious intolerance	2. Religious freedom
3. Fragmented and uneconomic agricultural holdings	3. Extensive plots of land available
4. Burden of taxation and tithes	4. Tax exemption for 30 years after arrival
5. Political suppression in Germany	5. Self-government for the German communities

Source (based on): Stumpp 1980: 12

The major push and pull factors outlined in Table 3.1 are now considered separately:

1. Consideration of the military factors

The German states had experienced widespread destruction during the Seven Years War (1756 - 1763), with extensive rural areas and towns in Germany suffering hardship, famine and instability as a result of this prolonged conflict (Harmsen 1976: 21) [8]. The towns of Kassel and Marburg were particularly hard hit by the war, suffering partial destruction (Stumpp 1961: 26). In addition to widespread conscription, there were cases of whole regiments being sold by their commanding nobility to fight abroad. In one such recorded case, some 17,000 German conscripts from Hessen (Frankfurt am Main region) were sold to fight in

[8] The Seven Years War saw central German states becoming the battleground on which the conflicting interests of the British, French, Swedish, Prussian, Austrian and Russian armies were carried out between 1756 and 1763.

northern America under the English flag against France in the colonial war during the period 1755 - 1763 (Stumpp 1961: 26; Kahn 1984: 49). The Russian promise of being exempt from conscription represented an obvious attraction.

2. Consideration of the religious factors

Since the Reformation during the sixteenth century, religious intolerance had become prevalent towards members of the opposite (Catholic or Lutheran) faith, as experienced by the Protestants in predominantly south-western Germany (Kahn 1984: 49). The second manifesto guaranteed the unhindered freedom of worship in accordance with their own church rules. The offer of religious freedom in Russia represented an opportunity for those suffering religious discrimination to practice their faith without hindrance. It also gave an opportunity for religious communities, such as Mennonites, to establish homogenous communities.

3. Consideration of the agricultural factors

The German inheritance laws had over time led to a division of agricultural holdings, which resulted in increasing numbers of small and uneconomic holdings. The overcrowding led to poor returns on the lands. Furthermore, high feudal rents were charged for farming the land while crop yields were frequently poor (Stumpp 1961: 27). The offer to new settlers of land in Russia, with the right to pass these on through inheritance, gave them the chance of a secure economic basis [9]. In addition, the second manifesto promised material assistance in constructing the new colonies and farms.

4. Consideration of the economic and taxation factors

The costs incurred in waging wars and the taxation demands exerted by landlords and nobility on the peasant farming communities in Germany further added to their difficulties (Stumpp 1980: 12). The feudal overlords had the power to impose extra levies on the local population at their own will, without taking into consideration the ability to pay. The peasants were subjected to an arbitrary impositions of taxes (*Die Russlanddeutschen* 1980: 2). On occasions, the incomes of the peasants were not sufficient to cover the taxes and rents demanded from

[9] Each colonist family was allocated some 30 hectares of land upon arrival (Eisfeld 1989: 10).

them (Stumpp 1961: 27). The prospect of 30 years exemption from taxes represented a powerful incentive to emigrate [10].

5. Consideration of the political factors

The political control and decision-making in the German states during the eighteenth century lay outside the influence of ordinary peasant farming communities, and in the hands of the local nobility. This allowed discrimination and suppression to take place largely without outside controls. The prospect of evading such arbitrary political control, and the promise of self-government and jurisdiction over internal affairs represented a potent and attractive pull factor (Stumpp 1980: 12).

The identified push and pull factors were clearly related, with Catherine framing the inducements (privileges) offered in the second manifesto to have the appropriate effect, contrasting directly with the difficult living conditions that prevailed in the German states at the time. The decision taken by individual settlers, and in some cases whole communities, to migrate to the Volga region is likely to have been influenced by the above five discussed factors to differing degrees. Those who answered Catherine's call became members of a privileged group who enjoyed her protection. The continued implementation of the gruelling feudal system of serfdom for the ethnic Russian population illustrated the radicalism of her inducements.

3.2.4 Possible former home locations of the Volga Germans

Research on the question of the origins of the Volga Germans and their former homes has resulted in specific regions of Germany being identified as the places of exodus during the period 1763 - 1767. Historians have pointed to a broad geographic range of possible places from which the initial German treks left for the journey to Russia. Frankel states that they left the areas of Württemberg, Baden, the Palatinate, West Prussia and Danzig (1986: 2). Stumpp identifies the main places of

[10] The duration of the tax concessions for settlers in Russia depended on whether the settlers moved to a city (5 years tax free), a town (10 years) or a rural area (30 years) (Vernadsky ...*et al* 1972: 451).

exodus as Hessen, the Rhineland and the Pfalz (1980: 13). The locations of their former German homes have been identified on the basis of documents and books found in the Soviet German communities. Further sources were church and administrative documents kept in Germany itself, containing information on those who had emigrated. Dialects spoken by the Volga Germans and their descendants have also been used to identify their German origins. These dialects were passed on down through the generations, and are believed to have been largely preserved through the insular communities in which they were spoken.

It is known that agents of Catherine II, based in Frankfurt am Main, Stuttgart, Regensburg and Lübeck toured Germany and distributed paper handbills in an effort to persuade sufficient numbers of colonists to move to Russia (Richter-Eberl 1989: 44; Stumpp 1980: 11) [11]. The different geographical German origins of the settlers resulted in the Volga area becoming a form of melting pot of different German regional and religious groups.

3.3 Successful colonisation by the Volga Germans

The 104 founding settlements established in the Volga region between 1764 and 1767 created the foundations of the German rural settlements in Russia [12]. It provided the basis from which later settlements were established in the period after 1767 through internal migration, thereby further strengthening the foundations of the German rural communities in Russia. The initial settlers along the river Volga were followed by later waves of German immigrants arriving in Russia during the nineteenth century under Czar Alexander I, establishing homes in the Black Sea (Crimea) area, Bessarabia, Caucasus and Volhynia (Frankel 1986: 3) [13]. During the

[11] A document from the period stated that those emigrating to Russia were " disgraced officers, artists, students and even prisoner who had escaped the courts, least of all reliable peasants" (Hertel 1992: 23). Various attempts made by German local city leaders and nobility to prevent emigration through legal means (*Auswanderungsverbote*) did not prevent them leaving their homes for a new life in Russia (Hertel 1992: 23).

[12] The first Volga German village is believed to have been Dobrinka founded on 29 June 1764 (Warkentin 1992: 15).
Catherine II committed substantial resources to the resettlement programme and established a Chancery of Guardianship for Foreigners to oversee the resettlement process (Alexander 1989: 80-1).

[13] Czar Alexander I published a manifesto in 1804 to encourage German settlers to emigrate to

period 1763 - 1862, an estimated 3,000 German colonies were established in the Russian kingdom (Dietz/Hilkes 1988: 3).

On the basis of the historical evidence outlined in the preceding sections, there is sufficient evidence to support the argument that German colonists (Volga Germans) established rural communities in the Volga area during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. German culture was preserved in the Volga area through the continued use of the German language, customs, family names and place-names (Sievers 1980: 198) [14]. The Volga Germans became a privileged group with a limited degree of self-government [15]. By 1861, the number of Volga Germans had risen to some 200,000 (Fleischhauer 1987: 39), rising further to some 390,000 in 1897 (Kappeler 1987: 11) [16]. The total number of Volga Germans rose in 1914 to some 600,000 thereby forming one of the two largest German communities in Russia [17]. The autonomous district of the Volga Germans was elevated in status to that of an autonomous ASSR republic by Lenin in 1924, thereby recognising them as an independent national group within the Soviet Union (Eisfeld 1989: 14).

This concludes the findings on evidence that the Volga Germans are the descendants of former German colonists. The following sections 3.4 - 3.6 review the evidence on the Siebenbürger Saxons also being the descendants of former German colonists. A summary of the parallels between these two groups is given in section 3.7.

Russia, which was followed by a series of migration waves. They settled the following main areas (Stumpp 1980: 13):

1. Black Sea:	1804 - 1810	2. Bessarabia:	1814 - 1842
3. Caucasus:	1817 - 1818	4. Volhynia:	1816 - 1861

(Their locations are shown in Appendix 2).

[14] Some villages founded by the Germans had optimistic place-names (e.g. Schönchen - nice place), while others adopted the names of their former German homes (e.g. Heidelberg) (Stumpp 1961: 84; Sievers 1980: 198). These names are today merely historic names, having been changed into Russian names in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth century.

[15] This privilege came to an end in 1871 following the ending of autonomous local administration, removing their right to provide German language schooling (Stumpp 1980: 27). Furthermore, the right of the Germans (and other foreigners) to refuse military service in the imperial army was ended by Czar Alexander II in 1874 with the introduction of universal conscription (Bosch 1988: 12-3).

[16] The Russian population census of 1897 registered 1.8 million Germans (Fleischhauer 1986: 13-4).

[17] The Russian population census of 1914 registered 2.4 million Germans. The second equally large group (also 600,000) were the Black Sea (Crimean) Germans (Harmsen 1976: 21).

3.4 Consideration of the evidence for the Romanian Germans

There follows a review of the historical evidence over the claim that the *Aussiedler* arriving from Romania are also descendants of former German colonists. The second group to be considered in this review of the government's claim that *Aussiedler* are German, the Siebenbürger Saxons in Romania, will be discussed under the same aspects as in the case of the Volga Germans. Consideration is finally given to the question of whether parallels can be identified between the Siebenbürger Saxons and the Volga Germans relating to the establishing of these two German minorities despite the gap of some six hundred years that lay between their respective periods of migration from Germany to Romania and Russia.

3.4.1 Use of the term Romanian Germans

The term Romanian Germans refers to the ethnic and cultural Germans in Romania who constitute the German minority. They are recognised as a national minority in Romania (Wagner 1981: 430). The term encompasses the different German communities who together make up the Romanian German group, such as the Siebenbürger Saxons and the Banat Swabians (as shown in Appendix 2 under locations 12 and 8 respectively). The size of the Romanian German minority was recorded by the Romanian authorities in 1966 at 382,600 and in 1977 at 358,700 (Wagner 1981: 430). Their number has continued to fall since 1977 as a result of the continued emigration of Romanian Germans at the average rate of some 13,500 p.a. between 1977 and 1988 (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler, Sonderausgabe* August 1990: 4).

3.4.2 Use of the term Siebenbürger Saxons

The use of the term Siebenbürger Saxons in this thesis covers those Germans in the area of Romania known as Transylvania (formerly Hungarian). This area is regarded as the original centre of German colonist settlements in Romania, although small

groups of Germans had previously settled in the Sathmar area (shown in Appendix 2 in location 9) at the end of the eleventh century (Eisenburger/Kroner 1976: 24). The size of the Siebenbürger Saxon population was estimated in 1977 to be approximately 173,000 (Wagner 1981: 430). They represented the largest individual German group in Romania at the time of the 1977 census, comprising approximately half of all Germans registered in Romania. They remain the oldest surviving contained German community in Romania.

3.4.3 Colonisation of Siebenbürgen during the twelfth century

The Hungarian King Stephen the Holy (997 - 1038) in AD 1000 adopted the Christian faith as the official religion [18]. By marrying the daughter of a Bavarian duke in 995, the future King Stephen established links with the German aristocracy [19]. According to Wagner, King Stephen subsequently founded a bishopric at Alba Julia (in Transylvania) between 1002 and 1008 in order to consolidate his control over the sparsely populated area (1982: 14) [20].

King Stephen proceeded to gain control over the Transylvanian area during the early eleventh century (Barcan/Millitz 1977: 9). Laszlo of the House Arpad became Prince of Transylvania in 1064, a title which successive Hungarian crown princes carried until the fourteenth century, defeating attempts by the Cuman tribes to gain control of the Transylvanian area (Sanborn/de Czege 1979: 26) [21]. In an attempt to secure help in defending the Siebenbürgen area and further strengthen the Hungarian kingdom, the Hungarian kings looked to Christian western Europe for the necessary assistance. It needed to hold onto newly acquired territories and to push the frontiers eastwards against their non-Christian neighbours. It was against this background that the Hungarian King Geza II (1141 - 1162) called upon foreign

[18] King Stephen accepted the Apolistic Crown from Pope Sylvester II in AD 1000 (Seton-Watson 1963: 9).

[19] King Stephen married the daughter (Gisela) of Duke Heinrich des Zänkers (Wagner 1982: 14).

[20] Transylvania was previously a Roman province known as Dacia, founded in AD 106 and held by the Romans until AD 271, after which it was settled by nomadic tribes. The Hungarians took control over the area between the ninth and eleventh century (Wagner 1982: 14).

[21] Transylvania became a province of the Hungarian kingdom during the eleventh century (Seton-Watson 1963: 19).

settlers to populate the Siebenbürgen region of his kingdom (Zillich 1957: 15). The acceptance of the Christian faith made the arrival of foreign settlers an acceptable form of foreign assistance for the Hungarian king.

3.4.4 Motives of King Geza II in calling for foreign settlers

The possible motives that have been put forward by historians to explain why King Geza II called on settlers to colonise the Siebenbürgen region can be divided into the following three broad categories:

1. Military motives.
2. Economic motives.
3. Religious motives.

Although these motives are listed separately, it is likely that all three played a part in persuading King Geza to invite the foreign settlers to his kingdom. These motives are now considered separately:

1. Examination of the military motives

The annexed Siebenbürgen region had strategic importance for the Hungarian kingdom, as it was situated alongside the Carpathian mountain ranges which surround much of Siebenbürgen [22]. The tops of the Carpathian mountain ranges also formed the southern borders of the Hungarian kingdom during the twelfth century (Schenk 1984: 11). The Carpathian mountain passes required guarding and protection from intruding nomadic tribes.

Schröcke supports the view that the military motive in calling for foreigners was a defensive motive rather than part of an expansionist policy. He points to the geographical importance played by Siebenbürgen and the Carpathian mountain ranges in the protection of the Hungarian kingdom from attacks by Tatars and

[22] The area was not only mountainous but also contained areas of dense forest. The Latin term *terra ultrasilvana* (the land beyond the forest) was used in documents of the thirteenth century when referring to Transylvania (Seton-Watson 1963: 19).

Mongols (Schröcke 1987: 11). Barcan and Millitz go so far as to refer to this military defence motive as the prime motive of King Geza in calling for European settlers, using the settlers to form a protective barrier against the influx of migratory people (1977: 9). The settlers responding to the king's call helped in the protection of the crown. Schreiber points out that the king's call could be interpreted as a call to save his own crown (1965: 169). The significance of the Latin words *ad retinendam coronam* (to the protection of the crown) is referred to by Zillich, who points out that these words were found on the oldest seals and banners of the German settlers (1957: 15).

2. Examination of the agricultural / economic motive

The lands acquired by the Hungarian kings through annexation during the eleventh and twelfth century, such as Siebenbürgen, needed protection and its fields required cultivation. King Geza was not able to achieve his aims alone through the resettlement of Hungarian peasants in Siebenbürgen. The king required free peasants, thus those who were not bound to land or landlords by the feudal system prevalent in the Hungarian kingdom. The need for agricultural workers to farm the land represented a further motive for King Geza to invite foreign settlers to Siebenbürgen. Zillich points out that the German peasants sought to escape the confines of serfdom at home, with Siebenbürgen offering them new opportunities (1957: 15).

German historians regard the Siebenbürgen area as having been largely unpopulated prior to the arrival by German settlers. Bergel declares that the German settlers arrived in a desert-like region, referring to the words *in desertam* contained in the earliest period Latin documents relating to the arrival of German colonists during the twelfth century (1969: 86). This described the terrain characterised by forests and marshes, which the German settlers were required to turn into agricultural land. Wagner points out that the landscape required cultivation in order to transform it into a productive region (1982: 15). This was a function which European settlers could help to perform. The German farmers brought with them knowledge of the progressive three-field system (Schenk 1984: 13) [23]. This method enabled the

[23] This method of agricultural organisation was introduced in Europe during the Middle Ages. While half of the land was left fallow each season under the old two-field system, the three-field

cultivation of poorer hill farmland (Schröcke 1987: 11). The arrival of tradesmen and craftsmen in Siebenbürgen further helped in establishing the rural settlements, while also representing additional future tax payers (Barcan/Millitz 1977: 10).

3. Consideration of the religious motive

The acceptance of Christianity in AD 1000 by King Stephen the Holy brought with it a motivation for pushing the frontiers of the Hungarian kingdom further eastwards, thereby pushing back the non-Christian neighbouring peoples in a form of religious crusade [24]. Foreign settlers arriving in Siebenbürgen were required to help the Hungarian king to retain and consolidate the Christian areas of his kingdom. Schröcke regards the protection of Christian Europe to have been one of the motives for inviting foreigners (1987: 8).

3.4.5 Privileges accorded to the German settlers

The original rights accorded to the German settlers in Siebenbürgen are believed to have been those outlined in the Golden Freedom Letter of 1224 by King Andreas II (1204 - 1235). The privileges accorded had the purpose of securing loyalty towards the Hungarian crown (Barcan/Millitz 1977: 10). These privileges included the following (Gabanyi 1988: 29):

1. Those who settled on the so-called King's Territory (*Königsboden*) in Siebenbürgen only had an obligation to the king (and not to any landlord).
2. The right to choose their own legal system and judiciary under a system of self-government.
3. Freedom in the choice of their clergy.
4. The right to hold their own markets.

Encyclopaedia Britannica 1988: 736).

[24] Pope Urban II in 1095 called for a crusade to restore Asia Minor to Byzantium and to regain the Holy Land from the Turks. Some 10 crusades took place between 1095 and 1291 (The World Almanac 1994: 516).

In return, the settlers were required to help protect the borders of Siebenbürgen and to pay an annual tax to the king. Thus both king and settlers benefited from the migration by colonists to Siebenbürgen. The settlers living on the so-called King's Territory thereby became a privileged group in the Hungarian kingdom.

3.4.5.1 The initial response by German settlers

While the call went out to all foreigners, it was largely the Germans who responded to the invitation circulated by King Geza II. Due to an absence of documentary proof from that period, the exact dates of their arrival in Siebenbürgen during the twelfth century are not known (Wagner 1989: 37) [25]. Yet based on the contents of the Golden Freedom Letter of 1224, the period 1141 - 1162 has been identified as the first phase in which the German colonists migrated to Siebenbürgen (Eisenburger/Kroner 1976: 24). Schröcke suggests that there was an initial influx of some 3,000 settlers, largely comprising farmers, tradesmen and members of the lower nobility (1987: 11) [26]. These settlers in turn formed the basis for future German colonial settlements in Siebenbürgen and other Romanian areas.

Wessner points out that previous German claims concerning the size of this initial influx of German colonists included highly exaggerated figures. He rejects the idea that these German settlers arrived collectively in a single trek during the twelfth century and puts such claims down to the romantic notions held by some German historians (Wessner 1974: 26) [27]. Wessner points out that the settlement of Siebenbürgen took place over a period of some three centuries following King Geza's invitation. Wagner likewise rejects claims that some 300,000 German settlers

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[25] Seton-Watson puts this lack of documentary evidence down to two main reasons:
1. Lack of an orderly life in the region at the time.
2. The destruction of documents caused by the Mongol invasion of Siebenbürgen in 1241 (1963: 11).

[26] According to Bergel, some settlers were led by two German knights named Anselm von Braz and Hazelo von Merkstein (1969: 86).
Wagner points out that Karl Kurt Klein has estimated the initial influx of German settlers to have comprised some 500 families, some 2,000-2,500 settlers (Wagner 1982: 15).

[27] One saga (folklore) told by the Siebenbürger Saxons was that their origins were associated with the Pied Piper of Hamelin, who was supposed to have brought the children of Hamelin to Siebenbürgen (*Der Rattenfänger von Hameln* 1986: 12).

emigrated to Siebenbürgen in a single trek (1981: 3), linking such exaggerated claims to the romantic notions associated with the settlement of Siebenbürgen.

3.4.6 Possible original homes of the Siebenbürger Saxons

Research into the question of where in Germany the settlers actually came from has made use of surviving documentation, information on farming techniques and dialects spoken by the Siebenbürger Saxons (Gabanyi 1988: 29). The name Siebenbürgen may have been a reference to the seven (*sieben*) administration centres of the German settlers established in this area of Transylvania[28] . The term Saxon is not itself regarded as providing the answer to the question of origin. It is seen by historians as misleading. Gabanyi explains that the name Saxon *(Sachsen)* was derived from a Latin term used by the Hungarian administrators when referring to those in the kingdom of Germanic origin (1988: 29). The Golden Freedom Letter of 1224 refers to these settlers with the Latin words *theutonici* and *saxones*. Wessner points out that the name Saxon became the established name in the fourteenth century for the German settlers in Hungary, including those living outside of Siebenbürgen (1974: 27).

Historians who have considered the possible origins of the German settlers suggest a variety of different locations. While the initial settlers arriving in the twelfth century may have come from the left bank of the river Rhine, the origins of those arriving in the thirteenth century are believed to have centred on central and southern Germany (Barcan/Millitz 1977: 10). These geographic locations are partly agreed upon by Schenk, who lists their possible homes as Cologne, Trier, Luxembourg, central Germany and Bavaria (1984: 12). Schenk bases her suggested locations on both historical evidence and the dialect of the Siebenbürger Saxons still living in Siebenbürgen (1984: 12). Zillich suggests that the river Mosel area in south-western Germany was a further place of origin (1957: 15).

[28] The Province of Hermannstadt became the centre of the seven German seats of local administration (Wagner 1982: 16).

Documents of the period have likewise been consulted in order to ascertain their original homes in Germany. Twelfth century Latin papal documents also referred to the settlers as *flandrenses* (Gabanyi 1988: 29). The term *flandrenses* leads Gabanyi to suggest that they indeed came from both the Flanders area of Europe (Belgium) and the adjacent German area along the left bank of the river Rhine (1988: 29). Although the German colonists comprised the majority of the original settlers to Siebenbürgen, members of neighbouring national groups are also known to have responded to King Geza's invitation.

Place-names have also been considered in the search for clues to their origins. Although the place-names of the German settlements themselves did not provide clear answers, the prefix *Deutsch* (German) formed part of several place-names of the Siebenbürger Saxons. These included places such as Deutschzepling, Deutschweisskirch and Deutschtekes (Bergel 1980: 119). Wessner makes the point that the Siebenbürger Saxons included elements of different regional groups, together forming a German melting pot and synthesis of German groups (1974: 26).

The route to Siebenbürgen (as shown in Appendix 4) possibly took the settlers along two main routes. One route was across land via the Magdeburg area, while a second was along both land and waterways, travelling part of the way in boats along the river network of the Danube and Mures. This second route enabled them to avoid the Carpathian mountain ranges and forested terrain in Siebenbürgen.

3.5 Relevant push and pull factors involved in the settlement by Siebenbürger Saxons

The relevant push and pull factors for the Siebenbürger Saxons, explaining the circumstances surrounding their migration to Siebenbürgen, are shown in the following Table:

Table 3.2

Relevant push and pull factors influencing the German migration to Siebenbürgen

Push factors in Germany	Pull factors in Siebenbürgen
1. Peasants tied to the land	1. Offer to become free peasants
2. Declining size of their agricultural holding	2. Offer of extensive land for farming
3. Political suppression by landlord and nobility	3. Freedom to establish their own political framework
4. Religious intolerance	4. Religious freedom

The individual factors identified in the above Table 3.2 are discussed in the following sections:

1. Consideration of the serfdom factor

The mass of the population in twelfth century Germany consisted of peasant farmers and labourers tied to land and nobility through the serfdom system (Barcan/Millitz 1977: 10). The nobility and the church made excessive demands on the peasants for dues and taxes to be paid, while collecting them with little consideration of the ability to pay (Kaufmes 1986: 306). The Siebenbürger Saxons had left the German Hohenstaufen kingdom during the twelfth and thirteenth century in order to gain personal freedom, and to escape the powerful bonds of feudalism (Bergel 1969: 88; Eisenburger/Kroner 1976: 25).

The settlers in Siebenbürgen were granted the right to hold their own markets and exempted from the serfdom system of control (Schröcke 1987: 11). They were further entitled to own their land and thus establish an economic basis for their future [29]. These settlers were also granted the free use of the forests and the lakes. In contrast to the indigenous population who remained peasants tied by the serfdom system, the German settlers became a privileged group who enjoyed a higher social position and also the protection of the Hungarian kings.

[29] The land allocated to the settlers, the so-called King's Territory, was initially centred on Hermannstadt. It was later extended to include the surrounding German settlements in the Kronstadt area (shown in the map in Appendix 4) (Coulin 1980: 10).

2. Consideration of the agricultural factor

The use of the Roman Law in German family inheritance rules, whereby the farmland in medieval times was divided up among the sons of the owner, eventually led to increasing numbers of uneconomic smallholdings (Kaufmes 1986: 306). That in turn resulted in population pressure on the land. Schröcke states that this was particularly the case after the year 1100 in the western parts of the German speaking kingdom, in the vicinity of the Rhineland and (modern) Luxembourg (1987: 11). Wessner makes the point that emigration by the German peasants was a form of protest over their economic situation (1974: 27). Those leaving sought to escape the increasingly difficult social and economic circumstances in Germany at the time. Those settling in Siebenbürgen had the prospect of arriving on unpopulated land, the chance to farm more extensive tracts of land than would have been possible at home. In accordance with the privileges accorded to the original settlers, the forests and meadows were classified as common land. Furthermore, each settler was to receive some 30 hectares of farmland (Kaufmes 1986: 306).

3. Consideration of the political factor

The German speaking states of the twelfth century found themselves in a political vacuum. This was marked by a lack of leadership, leaving the local nobility to dictate the terms in many areas of their lives. In contrast, those resident on the so-called King's Territory in Siebenbürgen were granted freedom from feudal aristocratic controls (Coulin 1980: 9). The privilege of self-government (a powerful pull factor) for the German colonists was confirmed in the Golden Freedom Letter of 1224. Furthermore, members of the nobility arriving in Siebenbürgen as colonists were not able to implement the serfdom system, as the settlers only owed an allegiance to the Hungarian king (Schenk 1984: 13).

4. Consideration of the religious factor

A further push factor for the German peasants in twelfth century Germany was their inability to choose their own clergy members. The church played a decisive part in allowing feudalism to continue to tie the peasants to the land. The Siebenbürger Saxon settlers were in contrast promised a free choice of their clergy, as confirmed by the Golden Freedom Letter of 1224.

3.6 Successful colonisation by the Siebenbürger Saxons

The Siebenbürger Saxon communities, initially centred on the towns of Hermannstadt, Leschkirch and Weissenburg, had by the year 1200 spread as far east as Draas and as far west as the settlement of Broos (locations shown in Appendix 4) (Eisenburger/Kroner 1976: 24). The growth in the number of settlements had been achieved through further internal migration emanating from former founding colonies (Gabanyi 1988: 29). The Kronstadt area was settled during the thirteenth century by German Teutonic Knights who set up their fortified castles in the area. Although these Knights were later expelled by Hungarian King Andreas II, the settlements that grew up around the fortifications remained and became additional pockets of German colonisation in Siebenbürgen [30].

Siebenbürgen become part of the Hungarian empire in 1867 and later part of Romania in 1918 following the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian empire (Gabanyi 1988: 30). The size of the overall Siebenbürger Saxon community was registered in 1930 as 238,000 (Eisenburger/Kroner 1977: 157) [31]. The town of Hermannstadt in 1930 (total population: 49,300) contained 21,600 Germans, representing 44% of the population (Bergel/Myss 1986: 395).

3.7 Review of findings relating to the historical basis of a German presence in the Soviet Union and Romania

In reviewing the circumstances surrounding the initial arrival of the Volga Germans and Siebenbürger Saxons as outlined in this chapter, the following parallels can be identified:

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[30] King Andreas II invited the Teutonic Knights to settle in the Burzenland (around Kronstadt). during 1211 to help protect his empire from Cuman invasions. Yet they only remained 14 years before being expelled again by the same king in 1225 (Zillich 1986: 60-1). The knights constructed 5 stone fortifications around Kronstadt and ultimately posed a threat to the Hungarian king through their search for greater independence.

[31] The number of Siebenbürger Saxons registered in the Romanian census of 1966 was 186,200 (Wagner 1981: 430). Their number fell in the 1977 national census to 173,000 (Wagner 1981: 430). This reduction reflected the increased emigration by Siebenbürger Saxons to Germany that had taken place since the late 1960s.

1. Both groups of founding colonists responded to the call by foreign rulers to settle in their territories.

2. Both Catherine II and King Stephen the Holy had connections with the German ruling families, making Germans more acceptable as settlers.

3. The push and pull factors outlined for both German groups showed that the colonists left their original homes in Germany in search of both a more secure and prosperous future. They left behind them social and political discord, a disequilibrium. These settlers found a new form of equilibrium in their adopted homes, helped by the privileges accorded to them upon arrival.

4. Both groups of German colonists established self-contained German communities with a degree of local autonomy.

5. Both groups of German colonists became privileged citizens, enjoying a higher position in the social hierarchy than the indigenous population. This enabled them to protect their German culture and language, enjoy land ownership, freedom of religion and a high degree of cultural independence. Settlement areas around the river Volga and in Siebenbürgen effectively became German islands of independence in a sea of servitude.

6. Neither group was a homogeneous group but a synthesis of colonists from different German locations, yet with common bonds such as German language and culture.

The historical evidence on the foundation of German settlements in the former Soviet Union and Romania confirms that German colonists did establish settlements in the Volga and Siebenbürgen areas respectively, with today's *Aussiedler* including descendants of former German colonists who had settled in those areas. The Volga region remained a centre of German cultural life in the Soviet Union until the abolition of the autonomous Volga republic by Stalin in 1941, while Siebenbürgen continues to be an important centre for Romanian Germans in present-day Romania.

CHAPTER FOUR

AUSSIEDLER AS MEMBERS OF A *SCHICKSALSGEMEINSCHAFT*

4. *Aussiedler* as members of a *Schicksalsgemeinschaft*

4.1 Definition of the term *Schicksalsgemeinschaft*

The term *Schicksalsgemeinschaft* can be translated as meaning a community sharing a common destiny or fate (Collins 1991: 573; The Oxford Duden 1990: 628). This thesis uses the term *Schicksalsgemeinschaft* to describe those German communities in eastern and south-eastern Europe who shared the common fate of discrimination, persecution and deportation during the Second World War because of their German ethnic and cultural background.

4.2 Government use of the term *Schicksalsgemeinschaft*

One of the specific arguments put forward by the West German government in 1988 for maintaining the open-door *Aussiedler* policy, was that the ethnic and cultural Germans had suffered during the period of the Second World War because of their cultural and historical links with the German nation, making them members of a *Schicksalsgemeinschaft*. The government pointed to their common experiences of deportation, loss of property and the violation of their basic human rights, having become scapegoats for German military action and atrocities during the Second World War. Chancellor Kohl summed up the government's stance in a press statement issued on 21 July 1988, stating (1988b: 1):

"One should never forget that Aussiedler are Germans, who more than any other Germans, have had to suffer the consequences of the Second World War."

It is necessary to consider the validity of the argument that *Aussiedler* constituted a *Schicksalsgemeinschaft* as this argument formed the basis of the government's subsequent claim (considered in chapter five) that West Germany had a moral obligation to accept and integrate them. Although the term *Schicksalsgemeinschaft* was used by the West German government to refer to the *Aussiedler* community collectively, it has to be remembered that each of the individual German communities had their own experiences during the Second World War. Thus in order to consider the historical evidence in support of the government's claims, it is necessary to consider the evidence relating to specific groups.

This chapter considers the historical evidence relating firstly to the Romanian Germans and secondly the Soviet Germans in reviewing the evidence that *Aussiedler* constituted a *Schicksalsgemeinschaft*. It considers to what extent these two groups were firstly instrumentalised by the German National Socialists, and secondly the extent to which they were victimised by the Romanian and Soviet governments during the Second World War (i.e. through deportation) because of their German background.

4.3 Instrumentalisation of the Romanian Germans by the German National Socialist regime

The political turmoil that accompanied the rise of the German National Socialist Workers' Party (NSDAP) to power in Germany during the 1930s was to have significant consequences for the Romanian German minority, despite the geographical distance from Berlin. It is possible to identify specific examples of how the Romanian Germans were misused by the NSDAP regime between 1933 and 1945. These included the following:

1. Political interference in the affairs of the Romanian Germans in an attempt to gain ideological support.

2. The use of Romanian Germans in resettlement agreements to realise Hitler's *heim ins Reich* policy of bringing the splinters of the German nation back home to the German *Reich* (empire).

3. Recruitment of Romanian Germans into the German military units.

Details of the above listed examples are given in the following sections 4.3.1 - 4.3.3.

4.3.1 Ideological influence exerted by the German National Socialists on the Romanian German minority

Political links between the Romanian Germans and the National Socialist movement in Germany can be traced back to the year 1933. The victory of the NSDAP in Germany in 1933 was met with approval in certain sections of the Romanian German community, regarding their political victory as a success for the supporters of German nationalism and German culture (*Das Schicksal der Deutschen* 1984: 31). Hitler's calls for the protection of the German nation broadly fitted into the ideals championed by individual political leaders of the German community as they sought to maintain the cohesiveness of the Romanian Germans far from their German origins. The *Nationale Selbsthilfebewegung der Deutschen in Rumänien* (NSDR - National Self-help Movement of the Romanian Germans) became the dominant political party in Siebenbürgen following their victory at elections held in Hermannstadt on 1 October 1933, defeating the former ruling liberal leadership (*Das Schicksal der Deutschen* 1984: 32) [1]. The victors considered themselves to be part of a so-called renewal movement (*Erneuerungsbewegung*) in the Romanian German community. Yet following a rift between the radical and liberal wings in the NSDR movement during 1935, the NSDAP in Germany intervened directly in an attempt to solve the dispute by calling for a united front.

[1] The NSDR Party gained 62% of the vote at the Fifth Saxon Election (*Sachsentag*) in Siebenbürgen (*Das Schicksal der Deutschen* 1984: 31).

Wagner points out that the direct interference by the NSDAP in Berlin, seeking to act as arbitrator in the internal affairs of the Romanian Germans, represented a dangerous development in the political situation within the Romanian German community (1982: 77). The NSDAP sought to impose its ideological principles on all strata of Romanian German society, including their cultural societies and youth organisations (*Das Schicksal der Deutschen* 1984: 33). The political, cultural and economic organisation of the Romanian German community was effectively modelled upon the German system (Wagner 1982: 79). The NSDAP established offices in Hermannstadt during 1938, enabling it to maintain closer contacts with the German minority. Although the youth movement was put into uniforms, as in the case of the *Hitler-Jugend* (Hitler Youth) organisation in Germany, the majority of Romanian Germans (including the Siebenbürger Saxons) had divided loyalties towards Romania and Germany (*Das Schicksal der Deutschen* 1984: 33) [2].

Andreas Schmidt became the leader of the Romanian German National Socialists in 1940, establishing links between Berlin and the German communities in Siebenbürgen and the Banat [3]. Wagner points out that Schmidt was appointed by the NSDAP officials in Berlin in order to exert ideological influence over the affairs of the German minority (1989: 40). Schröcke states that Schmidt sought to direct all activities of the German minority so as to conform to the guidelines set out by the NSDAP (1987: 21). Schmidt declared in February 1941 that the Romanian German community was nothing more than a part of greater Germany (*Das Schicksal der Deutschen* 1984: 37). He further declared in May 1941 that no sacrifice was too big for the Romanian Germans in contributing to the implementation of Germany's foreign policy (*Das Schicksal der Deutschen* 1984: 39). Zillich points out that it was the NSDAP in Berlin who increasingly controlled the political affairs of the German minority, whose political leadership became dependent on the government in Berlin for political guidance (1957: 95-6).

While not all the Romanian German political leaders shared the military aims of the National Socialists in Germany, there was a broad basis of ideological support for

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[2] The Saxon equivalent of the *Hitler-Jugend* was the *Deutsche Jugend* comprising some 12,000 young persons (Brettmann 1991: 7).

[3] Schmidt was a member of the Siebenbürger Saxon community (*Das Schicksal der Deutschen* 1984: 36-7).

Hitler's regime (Eisenburger/Kroner 1976: 161). The lack of any concerted open resistance by the Romanian Germans to the National Socialist policies can in part be explained by a feeling of solidarity with Germany which was at war (*Das Schicksal der Deutschen* 1984: 39). The apparent receptiveness of the Romanian Germans towards National Socialist ideology can to a degree be linked to their German national consciousness, as well as their bitterness over the assimilation policies implemented by the Romanian government against national minority groups during the 1930s. Furthermore, the economic difficulties experienced by the Siebenbürger Saxons during the 1930s made them increasingly receptive to such ideology (*Das Schicksal der Deutschen* 1984: 31) [4]. Wagner argues that the economic difficulties accelerated this radicalisation process (1982: 77). Sundhaussen suggests that the limited religious and cultural autonomy given to the German minority by the Romanian state were contributory factors (1992: 50) [5]. There was a feeling that a strong German *Reich* would force the Romanian government to protect the rights of the German minority.

The political alliance formed between Germany and Romania in 1939 initially brought benefits for the Romanian German minority. The influence exerted by the German National Socialist regime at the outbreak of the Second World War on the Romanian government can be linked to the economic dependence of Romania on Germany. The German-Romanian Commercial Treaty signed on 23 March 1939 made Romania increasingly dependent on Germany for economic support (Cadzow *et al...* 1983: 30-1). Germany used its economic power to exert pressure on the Romanian government to give concessions to the German minority. As a result, the German minority was granted cultural and political autonomy by a Romanian government decree passed on 20 November 1940 which recognised them as a legal entity (Wagner 1982: 78). This decree gave the minority the right to make their own decisions in matters concerning their political structures and cultural institutions.

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[4] The decline experienced by the German minority had two main causes. Firstly the world recession that afflicted Europe during the 1930s, and secondly the Romanian policy of assimilation used against the national minorities. For example, the Romanian authorities removed non-Romanians from the higher positions in the Romanian civil service, a move which particularly hit the incomes and social standing of the Siebenbürger Saxons (Maurer 1986: 335).

[5] The Romanian constitution passed in 1923 failed to incorporate former guarantees given to the national minorities in 1918 of greater cultural autonomy. While the German members of the Romanian parliament refused to endorse the new constitution, they could not prevent its implementation (Wagner 1986: 78).

While the German minority received the guarantees on political and cultural independence it had previously been denied, it also placed it in a precarious position. The duration of such guarantees depended on the continued alliance between Germany and Romania.

4.3.2 Population resettlement agreements concluded by Germany covering Romanian Germans

Hitler's *heim ins Reich* policy sought to draw the splinters of the German nation back to within the German administrative borders through a process of repatriation. In an address to the *Reichstag* (parliament) on 6 October 1939, Hitler stated that after the completion of the military attack on Poland, he considered the next most important aim to be the arrangement of a new ethnic order in Europe. He further stated that the aim of creating the necessary ethnic divisions in Europe could only be achieved through the resettlement of national minority groups, including the German minorities (de Zayas 1980: 129; *Das Schicksal der Deutschen* 1984: 41).

The forwarding of an ultimatum by the Soviet Union to the Romanian government on 26 June 1940 for the return of the disputed (Romanian) territories of Bessarabia and northern Bukovina raised questions for the German government over the fate of the German minority population resident in those areas (Wagner 1989: 40). These disputed territories contained pockets of Bessarabian and Bukovina Germans who had established self-contained communities.

Following the annexation of these areas by the Soviet forces, a series of resettlement agreements were concluded between the Soviet and German governments to allow those Romanian Germans affected by the transfer of political control to resettle in German controlled areas. In accordance with an agreement reached between Germany and the Soviet Union on 5 September 1940, a total of 137,000 Romanian Germans were resettled in German territory. Siegert states that this total comprised some 93,000 Bessarabian Germans and a further 44,000 northern Bukovina Germans (1966: 147). Under a further resettlement agreement concluded between

Germany and Romania in 1940, some 52,000 Germans from southern Bukovina and an additional 14,000 Germans from the Dobrudja were repatriated to Germany (Siegert 1966: 147) [6].

The Siebenbürger Saxons were also affected by territory changes during the Second World War. In accordance with the Second Vienna Accord of 1940, Siebenbürgen was partitioned between Romania and Hungary. As a result, two-fifths of Siebenbürgen in the north around Sathmar (now known as Satu-Mare) were ceded to Hungary, while the remaining southern part remained under Romanian control [7]. An estimated 70,000 Germans became Hungarian citizens on 30 August 1940 following this partition (Wagner 1989: 40). In an attempt to safeguard the position of the resident German minority in northern Siebenbürgen, Germany concluded a resettlement agreement with the Hungarian government to forestall their assimilation. Under this agreement, some 70,000 Germans were given permission by the Hungarian government to leave Siebenbürgen and resettle in German administered territory [8].

Wagner estimates that a total of some 215,000 Romanian Germans were repatriated to the German *Reich* under resettlement agreements between 1940 and 1944 (1989: 40). Those resettled were used by Hitler as a means to help `Germanise´ the territories previously annexed in Poland (Eisenburger/Kroner 1977: 162). An example was the resettlement of Germans in the Warthegau area of Poland, where Germans were used to displace the Polish citizens. The Romanian Germans unaffected by the territorial changes in southern Siebenbürgen and eastern Banat showed little enthusiasm to leave their established communities to give support to the *heim ins Reich* policy (Eisenburger/Kroner 1977: 162). As for the Germans included in the resettlement agreements, it was likely to have been a sense of resignation that persuaded them to leave their historic German settlements for a new life in the German controlled territories.

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[6] The Romanian Germans moved from Bukovina, Bessarabia and Dobrudja to German territory were granted collective German citizenship (*Sammeleinbürgerung*) (Liesner 1988: 40).

[7] Northern Siebenbürgen was restored to Romania in accordance with the Paris Peace Treaty of 1947 (Sundhaussen 1992: 52).

[8] According to Wagner, their resettlement was not carried out (1982: 79).

4.3.3 Recruitment of Romanian Germans in the German military units

The question of the degree of involvement by the Romanian Germans in the German military remains a controversial issue. Romania joined Germany in the war against the Soviet Union in 1941. In accordance with an agreement concluded between Romania and Germany in May 1943, Romanian Germans were to be drafted into the German army (Wagner 1981: 305) [9]. The recruits were in turn granted German citizenship without losing their Romanian citizenship (Eisenburger/Kroner 1977: 162). Those recruited included some 30,000 Siebenbürger Saxons who were initially drafted into the ranks of the *Waffen SS* (Wagner 1981: 305) [10]. Some 54,000 Romanian Germans were recruited into this unit by the end of 1943, while a further 15,000 were employed in the German armaments industry (Barcan/Millitz 1977: 37). An estimated 10,000 Romanian Germans were killed in action during the Second World War (Barcan/Millitz 1977: 37).

This level of involvement suggests that there was a high degree of support among sections of the Romanian German community for the National Socialist cause, as expressed in their willingness to take up arms to support the German military campaign. Although recruitment was voluntary, a combination of psychological and moral pressure was exerted by Romanian German supporters of the NSDAP on those members of the German minority who did not volunteer to join (Eisenburger/Kroner 1977: 162). Their receptiveness to the propaganda and directives given by the German headquarters in Berlin was to have far reaching consequences for the Romanian Germans after the Romanian government switched alliances in 1944 to join the Allies.

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[9] A similar agreement was concluded between Germany and Hungary on 24 February 1942, whereby the Hungarian Germans were to serve in the German army (Schröcke 1987: 22). Although such service was voluntary, significant pressure was put on the individual Hungarian German males to serve in the German army (Wagner 1982: 80).

[10] The *Waffen SS* was a paramilitary unit of the NSDAP founded in 1925 as Hitler's personal bodyguard. The unit fought at the front during the Second World War.

4.4 Increased isolation of the German minority following Romania's decision to join the Allies in 1944

The position of the Romanian Germans took a significant about-turn following Romania's decision on 23 August 1944 to abandon the alliance with Germany and instead join the Allies. As a result, the Romanian German group found itself in a precarious position. They lost the rights and privileges previously accorded to the Romanian Germans by the pro-German administration during 1940. Hartl refers to the date of 23 August 1944 as a catastrophic date in the history of the Siebenbürger Saxons, as Germany had taken no preventive steps to evacuate the German minority, leaving them to face an uncertain future (1986: 88).

The Romanian government sought to calm fears within the German communities over their future in Romania. Those Germans still resident in Siebenbürgen and the Banat were called upon by their political leaders to remain in Romania (Wagner 1982: 82) [11]. Yet the former support given to the German regime by sections of the Romanian German minority led to their increased isolation within Romania (Barcan/Millitz 1977: 37). This for example found expression in the subsequent internment of their political leaders following the switch in alliance by Romania (Barcan/Millitz 1977: 37). Furthermore, sections of the German communities were deported to the Soviet Union.

4.4.1 Deportation of Romanian Germans to the Soviet Union

Following Romania's switch of allegiance in August 1944, an agreement was concluded between Romania and the Soviet Union on 14 September 1944 which had far reaching consequences for the Romanian German minority. Under this agreement, Romania agreed to provide 100,000 workers to the Soviet Union in order to assist in the rebuilding of the Soviet economy following the destruction caused during the Second World War (Zikeli 1983: 45). Romania complied with its

[11] Their leaders pointed to reassurances given by Maniu, the Romanian leader of the National Farmers Party, who stated (Hartl 1986: 89):
"We are prepared to draw a line under the past and to start again."

obligation under this agreement by deporting Romanian Germans to the Soviet Union. According to Wagner, they were deported during the period 9 -12 January 1945, during which males aged 17 to 45 and females aged 18 to 35 (except young mothers) were deported to work camps in the Soviet Union (1982: 83).

The total number of Romanian Germans deported to the Soviet Union to comply with the terms of the agreement is believed to have been between 70,000 and 100,000 (Pisky 1957: 38). The direction of the deportation routes from Romania to the Soviet Union are shown in the map in Appendix 5. According to Zikeli, those deported included 30,000 from Siebenbürgen, some 35,000 from the Banat and an additional 12,000 from the Sathmar area (1983: 45). They were mainly deported to work camps in the Donets Basin (Ukraine), one of the principle coal and metallurgical regions of the Soviet Union, while smaller groups being deported further east towards the northern Urals region (Wagner 1982: 83; Zikeli 1983: 45). Wagner estimates that between 25,000-30,000 Siebenbürger Saxons died during the years in exile (1977: 73).

4.5 The position of the Romanian German minority at the end of the Second World War

The first Romanian Germans released from the labour camps by the Soviet authorities in 1946 were considered to be too ill to continue working. The last deportees were not released until the Autumn of 1952 (Wagner 1982: 83). Those Romanian Germans who had fought for Germany in the military units were refused permission to join their families in Romania and lost their Romanian citizenship (Wagner 1977: 73). The majority opted to resettle in West Germany in the hope that their families could join them at a later stage. Yet these hopes were not to be realised as the Romanian authorities implemented a restrictive emigration policy for its German minority, with only a small annual number being able to leave Romania after the war (Zikeli 1983: 45). Some families were separated for a period of 10 years or longer.

The Germans remaining in Romania were largely left without those rights accorded to other Romanian citizens. They were forced to work as labourers on land that had previously belonged to them before the implementation of the Second Land Reform of 23 March 1945 (Schröcke 1987: 22). In the case of Siebenbürgen, some 60,000 German farmers effectively lost the economic basis of their livelihood, losing their land and being forced to find work as labourers (Wagner 1982: 83). In accordance with the Paris Peace Treaty of 1947, German assets in Romania, such as factory machines, were transferred to the Soviet Union as a form of reparation payment for German damage caused in the Soviet Union (Bossy 1957: 273). Hartl has pointed out that the Romanian Germans in post-war Romania were effectively a group in liquidation (1986: 86).

This concludes the findings on evidence on the Romanian Germans constituting a *Schicksalsgemeinschaft*. The following sections 4.6 - 4.10 review the evidence for the Soviet Germans as to what extent they were a *Schicksalsgemeinschaft*.
A summary of the parallels between these two groups is given in section 4.11 .

4.6 Instrumentalisation of the Soviet Germans by the German National Socialist regime

The evidence suggests that the Soviet Germans were not instrumentalised by the National Socialist regime to the same extent as the Romanian Germans, in that they did not give particular support to either the ideological or the military campaign waged by Hitler. Yet they were instrumentalised by Hitler for his nationalistic *heim ins Reich* policy, conducted between 1939 and 1941, bringing the splinters of the German nation back home to the German *Reich*. Such instrumentalisation and the later deportation under Stalin's orders formed the basis for them being identified as members of a *Schicksalsgemeinschaft*.

4.6.1 Resettlement agreements concluded by Germany covering the Soviet Germans

A series of population resettlements were carried out following the concluding of the Hiltler-Stalin Non-Aggression Pact in 1939. Rogall estimates that some 389,000 Germans were resettled under resettlement agreements between 1939 and 1941 (1989: 1). According to Rhode, the numbers of Germans resettled under the *heim ins Reich* policy from Soviet controlled territory to German administered areas between November 1939 and March 1941 included the following main groups (1967: 298) [12]:

1. 80,000 from Estonia and Lithuania.
2. 129,500 from Volhynia and eastern Galicia.
3. 92,500 from Bessarabia.
4. 37,000 from northern Bukovina.

The Baltic Germans were the first to be included in such resettlement agreements by means of an additional protocol attached to the Hitler-Stalin Non-Aggression Pact on 23 August 1939 (de Zayas 1980: 129). The German government signed agreements with the republics of Estonia (15 October 1939) and Latvia (30 October 1939) on the resettlement of their German minorities. The Baltic Germans in Lithuania were resettled later on the basis of a German-Soviet agreement (10 January 1941).

The actual resettlements that took place between the Soviet Union and Germany (and German controlled territory) were carried out in an orderly process. As in the case of the Romanian Germans resettled under such agreements, they did not necessarily go voluntarily, but were largely resigned to the fact that they would have to conform to the agreements in order not to be left stranded under Soviet political control. The majority of Soviet Germans were not resettled in Germany itself, but in newly annexed German territories such as the Warthegau area in Poland and West

[12] The figures quoted on the numbers deported differ among sources consulted. Siegert for example claims that the number of Bessarabian Germans and northern Bukovina Germans was 93,000 and 44,000 respectively (1966: 147).

Prussia, with the new settlers taking over existing farms and homes from the expelled Polish population (de Zayas 1980: 129). The resettlement agreements resulted in the near elimination of the German communities in the Baltic republics of Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia.

4.7 Consequences for the Soviet Germans of the German attack on the Soviet Union

The attack by German forces against the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941 brought an immediate end to any further resettlement of ethnic and cultural Germans back to the German *Reich*, and also put the future of those remaining Germans in the Soviet Union into question. The reaction by Stalin was swift, ordering the large scale deportation of German communities to isolated regions of the Soviet Union. Their enforced exile, loss of property and violation of human rights as Soviet citizens was evidence of the Soviet Germans being victimised because of their German links, justifying them being described as members of a *Schicksalsgemeinschaft.*

4.7.1 The deportation of the Soviet Germans

The deportation of the Soviet Germans commenced soon after the German attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941 and took place in three main phases (the main deportation routes eastwards are shown in the map in Appendix 6). The first phase took place between July 1941 and October 1941 and resulted in the deportation of some 640,000 Germans (as shown in the following Table 4.1). During the second phase of deportation (1942 - 1944), an additional 50,000 Germans were deported from Leningrad and areas in the vicinity of the eastern front to Siberia and the Asiatic republics (Eisfeld 1992: 123). The third phase took place in 1944 following the arrival of the Soviet Red Army in the Warthegau area.

Table 4.1

Details of the Soviet German groups deported between July 1941 and October 1941

German group	Number deported
Volga Germans	400,000
Ukrainian Germans	100,000
Various German communities in Russia	80,000
Black Sea (Crimean) Germans	35,000
South Caucasus Germans (Georgia and Azerbaijan)	25,000
Total	640,000

Source: Pinkus 1982: 13-4

Following the German attack in June 1941, the Soviet government sought to prevent possible collaboration by the German minority with the advancing German forces. The Ukrainian Germans were the first German minority to be deported. The deportation of an estimated 100,000 Ukrainian Germans to Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan (see Appendix 6) commenced on 10 July 1941 (Eisfeld 1989: 15-6). They were followed by some 35,000 Black Sea (Crimean) Germans deported from their homes in August 1941 via truck, rail and water to their places of exile in the central Asiatic republics and Siberia (see Appendix 6). Both groups were deported under the Soviet pretext that they were being brought into the Soviet hinterland for their own safety to avoid the military conflict (Eisfeld 1989: 15).

4.7.1.1 Deportation of the Volga Germans

In the case of the 400,000 Germans living in the German Volga republic (ASSR), the Soviet reaction to the German attack was just as harsh. A decree passed by the Supreme Soviet on 28 August 1941, and publicised on 30 August 1941, accused the Volga Germans of collaboration with the German enemy and spying for Germany (Eisfeld 1989: 16). The accusation was levelled against the Volga Germans

collectively. The Soviet authorities claimed that their resettlement was necessary in order to prevent possible bloodshed taking place (Eisfeld 1989: 16). They became internal enemies of the Soviet state and had to leave their homes within days for the journey into exile. The decree announced their destinations to be the Siberian areas of Novosibirsk and Omsk, and the Altai region (Alma Ata) of Kazakhstan (shown in Appendix 6). Families were separated in the process of deportation (Bohmann 1970: 72). Population lists compiled by the Soviet authorities containing the names of the known Soviet Germans formed the basis for the deportations (Eisfeld 1989: 15).

The deportation of the Volga Germans to Siberia and the Asiatic republic of Kazakhstan took place between 13-15 September 1941, being transported by train to their place of exile (Pinkus 1982: 13). Eisfeld estimates that some 400,000 Volga Germans were deported as a result of the decree, losing their property and personal possessions in the process (1989: 16). Those deported had to rebuild their lives in exile under harsh conditions, including internment in work camps. In a further move against the Volga Germans, the Volga republic was abolished by a decree dated 7 September 1941 [13]. The territory of the republic was divided up between the Saratov and Stalingrad administrative regions. This abolition was justified by the Soviet authorities on the grounds of the earlier decree passed on 28 August 1941 containing the charge that the Volga Germans were guilty of collaborating and spying for Germany (Eisfeld 1987: 63).

4.7.2 Evacuation of German communities by retreating German army

The deportation of those Soviet Germans living west of the river Dnieper in the Ukraine had been prevented by the invading German troops. Yet following the defeat of the German army at Stalingrad during the winter of 1942 - 1943, the German army retreated towards Germany and in the process called on the German

[13] Eisfeld points out that the abolition was unconstitutional both with regard to the Russian constitution as well as the constitution of the German Volga republic (ASSR). By changing Article 22 of the Russian constitution on 25 February 1947, the German Volga republic was officially excluded as an entity from the Soviet political system (Eisfeld 1992: 119).

communities to retreat with them for their own safety (Bohmann 1970: 75). Responding to this call, a series of treks commenced in January 1943 joining the retreating German army (Dietz/Hilkes 1988: 5). Some 341,000 Soviet Germans were resettled in the process to the western Polish Warthegau area, as well as to Upper and Lower Silesia rather than to Germany itself (Bohmann 1970: 75). Those resettled were granted German citizenship on a collective basis (*Sammeleinbürgerung*), further evidence of their instrumentalisation by the National Socialists in their planned German colonisation of former Polish territory. Those called upon to retreat with the German army are thought to have had little choice in accepting resettlement. Resistance could have been interpreted as resistance to the German regime (Robel 1990: 18). Robel points out that only a mere 7,500 German settlers were willing to enter service in the German SS paramilitary security service, evidence that the Soviet Germans as a whole rejected the attempts by the German National Socialists to enlist their support for their ideological and military campaigns (1990: 18).

4.8 Enforced repatriation of Soviet Germans by the Soviet military forces

A third deportation phase commenced following the arrival of the Soviet Red Army in the Warthegau area during 1944. The Warthegau contained evacuated Ukrainian Germans whom the Soviet authorities had not previously been able to deport following the rapid incursion by the German army in 1941. The Ukrainian Germans had been relocated in the Warthegau area as part of the German policy of 'Germanising' this former Polish territory (Eisfeld 1992: 124). The Red Army forcefully repatriated some 200,000 Soviet Germans previously resettled in the Warthegau and eastern Germany back to the Soviet Union (Eisfeld 1992: 124). Yet they were not repatriated to the Volga area and the Black Sea as promised, but to Siberia and the mid-Asiatic region. They joined other German groups, such as the Volga Germans, previously deported to those destinations. The Soviet government regarded these Germans being deported from the Warthegau to be Soviet citizens.

Those repatriated back to the Soviet Union lost their recently acquired German citizenship granted to them upon arrival in the Warthegau.

Following the defeat of the German forces in 1945, an agreement was reached between the Soviet Union and the Allies under which all Soviet citizens in Soviet occupied territory would be repatriated back to the Soviet Union. According to Schleuning, the Allies sanctioned the return of some 45,000 Soviet Germans from eastern Germany (1967: 289). Eisfeld claims that half of the 150,000 Soviet Germans resident in the West German territory (the zones occupied by the western Allies) were also repatriated to the Soviet Union (1992: 124-5).

4.9 Estimates of Soviet German human losses

The number estimated to have died during deportation and under the harsh conditions in the work camps remains a matter of some dispute. Bohmann claims that between 30,000 - 40,000 Volga Germans died during deportation (1970: 73). Dietz and Hilkes point out that the question of how many Soviet Germans died in total (through deportation, in detention and work camps) has not been clarified. They dismiss the total given by the Soviet Union of 45,000 as being too small, pointing to the eye-witness accounts and documentation which suggest a considerably higher total (Dietz/Hilkes 1992: 26). Eisfeld suggests that 15-30% (40,000 - 80,000) of those forcefully repatriated by the Soviet Red Army during the final phase of deportation may have died either during arrest or transportation (1992: 125). Pinkus suggests that some 30% (300,000) out of 970,000 deported Soviet Germans could have perished during the Second World War as a result of their deportation (1982: 16-7). Accurate figures have not been released by the Soviet authorities, so that estimates are invariably based on eye-witness accounts.

4.10 The position of the Soviet German minority at the end of the Second World War

The situation in which the Soviet Germans found themselves in 1945, was one marked by pessimism with regards to their future in the Soviet Union. Their land, property and economic security had largely been taken from them and traditional German settlement locations erased from the Soviet ethnic map. These included those of the Volga, Baltic and the Black Sea Germans. The estimates made on the total number of Soviet Germans deported between 1941 and 1945 vary between 900,000 and 1 million. (Bohmann 1970: 71; Pinkus 1982: 17).

New communities emerged during and after the war in the Asiatic republic of Kazakhstan and in western Siberia, as the German population was directed to new locations by the Soviet authorities. The ties with their historic settlements were forceably cut. Rogall states that the Germans who remained in the Soviet Union faced a backlash even though they had not supported the policies of the German National Socialist regime, further evidence that they were members of a *Schicksalsgemeinschaft* (1989: 1). He points out that this lawlessness towards the remaining Germans, marked by confiscation of property, deportation and repression, lasted until 1950 (Rogall 1989: 1). Although a partial amnesty was granted to the Soviet Germans on 17 September 1955, releasing them from internal exile, the Volga Germans were forbidden to return to their former homes (Schleuning 1967: 289). Stalin's accusations that the Soviet Germans had collaborated with Hitler's forces were in 1964 accepted by the Soviet government to have been made without basis (Eisfeld 1987: 63), yet they were prohibited from returning to their former homes (Frankel 1986: 11) [14]. This prohibition was only lifted in 1972 (Frankel 1986: 11). It thus took some three decades for the restrictions and conditions of exile to be lifted.

[14] The Crimean Tatars rehabilitated on 28 April 1967 also failed to secure the restitution of their former ASSR republic (Révész 1979: 194).

4.11 Summary of findings on the Romanian and Soviet Germans being members of a *Schicksalsgemeinschaft*

On the basis of the research outlined in this chapter, it is possible to identify a series of common experiences for both the Siebenbürger Saxons and the Volga Germans which support the argument that they were members of a *Schicksalsgemeinschaft*. These are as follows:

1. Both groups were instrumentalised by the National Socialist regime in Germany as it sought to realise Hitler's *heim ins Reich* policy under the resettlement agreements concluded by Germany.

2. During the course of the Second World War, both groups were subjected to deportation measures (though to differing degrees) and interned into Soviet labour camps.

3. Both groups found themselves largely isolated at the end of the Second World War, with families separated as a result of Soviet and Romanian government policies of indifference to German family reunions.

4. Both groups lost land and property as a result of either land reform (in Romania) or as a consequence of government policy (in the Soviet Union), thereby removing their economic basis and security. The Volga Germans were in danger of being liquidated as a community following the abolition of their republic in 1941. The two groups only gradually recovered their constitutional rights in the post-war period.

The Siebenbürger Saxons and the Volga Germans were thus examples of German communities instrumentalised by the German regime and used as scapegoats by the Romanian and Soviet governments seeking retribution for German actions during the Second World War.

CHAPTER FIVE

MORAL OBLIGATION AS A JUSTIFICATION FOR MAINTAINING THE OPEN-DOOR *AUSSIEDLER* POLICY

5. Moral obligation as a justification for maintaining the open-door *Aussiedler* policy

5.1 Government use of the term moral obligation in relation to *Aussiedler*

A fourth major justification put forward by the government in 1988 for continuing to operate an open-door *Aussiedler* policy was its claim of having a moral obligation towards *Aussiedler*. The government argued that their common experiences of discrimination and deportation during the Second World War distinguished *Aussiedler* from other German communities living outside the borders of Germany prior to 1945. While other ethnic and cultural Germans abroad (those not entitled to *Aussiedler* status) may have also suffered a similar fate to that experienced by *Aussiedler*, the suffering of *Aussiedler* was considered by the government to have been greater and more traumatic. In its annual report for 1988, the government stated (*Jahresbericht der Bundesregierung* 1988: 7):

"The society of the Federal Republic of Germany will be in a position to integrate the numerous compatriots who have arrived here from the neighbouring eastern countries. Many of them have until today had to suffer particular hardship from the consequences of the Second World War. Not least because of this, it is our duty to help them."

A review of the terminology used in government appeals for the German public to show solidarity towards the arriving *Aussiedler* shows repeated references being made to such a moral obligation being owed to this group. When announcing the government's Special *Aussiedler* Assistance Programme in August 1988, Chancellor Kohl declared that it would be an embarrassment for the German nation if these

Aussiedler were to be greeted with disinterest or even rejection (1988a: 1). The integration of *Aussiedler* was declared to be a national task of high priority (*Jahresbericht der Bundesregierung* 1988: 106). The government embarked on a public information campaign to increase the level of public acceptance towards these newcomers, pointing to the hardships they had endured as members of a *Schicksalsgemeinschaft* (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.5 1989: 2).

It is necessary to assess critically the plausibility of this declared justification of having a moral obligation to accept *Aussiedler* under the open-door policy, giving consideration to the criticism that this moral stance may have been largely government rhetoric aimed at the electorate. Before doing so, it is relevant to look at the concept of morality and its use in politics to justify policies.

5.2 Consideration of the concept of morality

The term morality is subject to varied interpretation. It can be defined as a body of principles that govern how members of a society act in situations where there are consequences for others (Musgrave 1983: 250). Yet the principles of society's morals are not necessarily identical with personal morals. This body of principles is a collective code of conduct without binding obligation i.e. to show respect and compassion towards others. It can be seen as having a civilising influence within society.

Morality has been institutionalised in religion, having its own organisational structures and psychological sanctions [1]. These sanctions include supernatural rewards and punishments (Kallen 1963: 647). Kallen has made the point that every

[1] Moral theology discusses the principles which govern the behaviour of a Christian person, and the application to particular circumstances. Its sources are the Christian scriptures. It judges whether particular actions conform to the laws laid down by the scriptures (Mortimer 1967: 218). Such morality has to be differentiated from ethics, which relates to social conduct. Smith has pointed out that once social conduct rises to the point of becoming an ideal, it becomes ethical. He further states that ethics is a secular and critical manner of taking account of the rationalising process in human conduct. It is non-mystical and its orientation is social rather than theological (Smith 1963: 602).

moral code depends on coercion, often unconsciously by way of emotional and verbal persuasion (1963: 647). Thus religion can be defined as codified morality.

In contrast to the Law, state sanctions do not necessarily exist to enforce morals [2]. That the Law does not necessarily reflect a society's morality, is shown by the fact that debates on moral issues of today do not necessarily result in legislation or legal reform. An important difference between the two concepts is that the adoption of a moral code of values involves subjective decisions being made, which in turn reflect one's values, or in the case of politicians, may reflect their own ideology. Thus while the law adopted by a democratic state lays down a legal framework (such as a written constitution), the law does not necessarily seek to codify society's morals . Significantly, while a convergence between law and morality is possible, leading to legislation, there is no necessary or precise link between the two concepts.

Moral views change over time, so that there is a constant political re-evaluation of moral standards. Such a re-evaluation of morals can be seen in the case of West Germany's post-war stance on the issue of compensating the victims of National Socialist crimes during the Second World War. The initial acceptance by post-war West German governments of having a moral obligation towards such victims, such as the provision of adequate compensation to those forced to work in German industry during the Second World War, had by the late 1980s become a comparatively minor issue. In contrast, the decision made by the government in 1988 to maintain the open-door policy for ethnic and cultural Germans can be interpreted as an example of the government implementing its own selective code of morality. While the initial support for compensating victims of the war faded over time, Chancellor Kohl's government appeared to give increased emphasis to the moral obligation towards *Aussiedler*.

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[2] In jurisprudence, the law is a body of principles which aim to ensure the attainment of justice, and significantly, can be enforced by sanctions (punishments) under the administration of justice (Sim/Scott 1984: 4).

5.2.1 The role of morality in political theory

The Realistic school of thought in international relations (whose members included Niebuhr, Kennan and Morgenthau) addressed the issue of what motivates governments in their actions and policies, the motivations of human conscience in the political arena. The Realists rejected the liberal and optimistic stance adopted by the Idealist school of thought (Calamaros 1974: 23). The Idealists regarded policies based on moral principles to be more effective as they would promote unity and co-operation rather than conflict (Plano/Olton 1969: 105-6). The Idealists had put their faith into the ability of supranational organisations (such as a world government in the form of the UN organisation with the UN Charter) to prevent or solve future conflicts (Frei 1977: 75). In the wake of the First World War, Idealists such as US President Woodrow Wilson rejected balance of power politics and instead supported the concept of binding nations together through international organisations (Calamaros 1974: 23). In contrast, the Realists merely saw such world organisations as being a means for the major powers (i.e. United States and Russia) to maintain the status quo in the pursuit of their national interest (Calamaros 1974: 23-4).

The Protestant theologian Reinhold Niebuhr (1892 - 1971) saw the root cause of conflict in the nature of man himself (Calamaros 1974: 24). He considered man to be tainted by Original Sin and politicians to be motivated by egoistic motives (Aron 1962: 684; Dougherty/Pfaltzgraff 1981: 94) [3]. Niebuhr sought to create an awareness of the will-to-power motive among politicians. He pointed out that nations must use their power with the purpose of making it an instrument of justice and a servant of interests broader than their own (Dougherty/Pfaltzgraff 1981: 95).

George F. Kennan points out that governments do not necessarily express the opinion of its people, speaking only for a portion of the nation, for one political faction or a coalition of factions [4]. He states that a government is an agent and not a

[3] In the wake of the Second World War, Niebuhr warned Americans against believing that they were innocent of the quest for power that has motivated other people of the world, which despite its democratic traditions, engaged in its own imperialistic ventures (Dougherty/Pfaltzgraff 1981: 96).

[4] Kennan based his findings on historical events and politics in eighteenth and nineteenth century

principal, and that no more than any other agent may it attempt to be the conscience of its principal. (Dougherty/Pfaltzgraff 1981: 105). Kennan further claims that the introduction of moralistic principles in politics leads governments to pursue unlimited national objectives (Dougherty/Pfaltzgraff 1981: 105).

Hans J. Morgenthau (1904 - 1980) called for a more realistic approach to analysing the actions of politicians in pursuing the national interest, declaring that international politics is like all politics, a fight for power (Morgenthau 1963: 69-80; Morgenthau 1977: 78) [5]. He gave consideration to the role of self-interest and morality in political theory. According to Morgenthau, morals adopted by politicians not only reflect their personal values, but significantly may also reflect political self-interest [6]. These interests can be party interests on the domestic level, or the national interests in foreign policy [7]. Morgenthau pointed out that there can be no political morality without consideration of the political consequences of their seemingly moral action (Couloumbis/Wolfe 1978: 81; Morgenthau 1963: 56).

Morgenthau identified political self-interest as one of his six stated principles of political realism under which political decisions and policy are formulated [8]. He rejected the notion that personal morals can be equated with political morals (Dougherty/Pfaltzgraff 1981: 99). He argued that governments (as representatives of the state) will seek to cover their own political self-interest and motives by putting on a cloak of morality. Morgenthau states (1963: 203-4):

America (Dougherty/Pfaltzgraff 1981: 103).

[5] The political scientist Morgenthau was a leading analyst on the role of power in international relations. Morgenthau based his theory on historical developments (empirical evidence) in both Europe and the United States (Dougherty/Pfaltzgraff 1981: 103; Chen ...*et al* 1975: 37).

[6] Albrecht has pointed out that it is a fiction to claim that the national interest of the Federal Republic of Germany, or any other country, represents the sum of the interests of its population (1986: 43). Political power provides the tools to push through national self-interest (Albrecht 1986: 33).

[7] Morgenthau criticised US President Johnson's claim to have based US foreign policy on a universal morality, arguing that merely the national interest counted in his foreign policy, pointing out that the government had sought to suppress Communism and Liberalism in accordance with its political principles (Brucan 1973: 161).

[8] Morgenthau based his six principles of political realism on empirical evidence in international politics. For details of the six principles put forward by Morgenthau see Dougherty/Pfaltzgraff 1981: 98-100.

"Since statesmen and diplomats tend to justify their actions and aims, independent from their actual motives, in moral terms, it would be similarly misleading to identify their claims of selflessness and peaceful motives, humanitarian purposes and international ideals with their values."

The Realists argued that politicians should do more for the collective interest, bringing the nationalist egoism out into the open (Aron 1962: 685-6). Morgenthau considered the role that nationalism played in shaping a state's adopted morality. A second of his six principles of political realism concerned nationalism, claiming that morality can be used to cover a state's nationalistic ambitions. (Morgenthau 1963: 49-60). Morgenthau points out that the adoption of nationalism can result in a nation evolving its own national moral principles, which in turn replace the universal principles of morality (1963: 226).

Morgenthau's ideas on government self-interest and hidden motives can arguably be applied in the 1980s to the West German government decision to maintain the open-door *Aussiedler* policy for supposedly moral reasons. Consideration is given to the argument that such a policy was a further example of a government justifying a policy on grounds of morality to cover its own political or nationalistic ambitions and self-interest. The identification of possible undisclosed motives behind the decision to maintain the open-door policy would give support to the criticism that the government's stated motives were partly rhetoric aimed at the electorate. The following sections will consider the evidence available to support this argument and seek to identify plausible motives which were not publicly acknowledged. It will firstly consider the role played by the ideology of promoting German nationalism (sections 5.3 - 5.3.1.3), and secondly puts forward three examples of self-interest (i.e. concerning demographic, fiscal and supply-side economic issues) that could have influenced the government's decision to maintain the open-door *Aussiedler* policy in 1988.

5.3 The role of nationalism as a motive for maintaining the open-door *Aussiedler* policy

Helmut Kohl's election as Chancellor during 1982 was followed by two significant political trends. This was firstly the shift registered in West German politics towards the right of the political spectrum, and secondly an increased emphasis being placed by the government on support for German nationalism. The government's long-term objective of uniting the German nation was a central theme in its political agenda. Chancellor Kohl stated that the issue of German unification was one of his seven declared principles that would guide future government policy. Kohl stated (*Jahresbericht der Bundesregierung* 1983, 612):

"The German nation continues to exist. We support the right of self-determination for all peoples and for an end to the division of Europe. We will do all to work towards German unification in peace and in freedom and to fulfil it."

In addition to being a reference to an envisaged German unification, the statement also emphasised the point that the German nation continued to exist. By definition, this also encompassed those ethnic and cultural Germans (potential *Aussiedler*) living in eastern and south-eastern Europe whom the government considered to constitute part of the broader German nation. Kohl called for a new consciousness of German history, particularly by the younger generations (*Jahresbericht der Bundesregierung* 1983: 637). This was at a period in time when the western European states (including the FRG) were experiencing slower rates of economic growth. Promoting the German identity was one important way for the CDU party to differentiate itself from the opposition SPD party during the period of recession. As if to give substance to the policy of promoting German nationalism based on German history, Chancellor Kohl in 1983 announced the building of a German history museum in Berlin. In a statement on its future *Aussiedler* policy (18 March 1983), the government denied that it was pursuing nationalistic aims, although it confirmed that it would do all it could to enable those *Aussiedler* to resettle in West Germany who wished to do so (*Aussiedler / Übersiedler* 1989: 11).

5.3.1 Nationalism and political legitimacy

The so-called *Wende* (turning-point and new orientation) implemented in West German politics following Chancellor Kohl's election victory in 1983, was accompanied by a new phase of conservative German patriotism in search for a new German national identity, one in which *Aussiedler* played a public role. This patriotism was not based on German constitutional values (*Verfassungspatriotismus*), one seeking to uphold the written constitution, but on German history and nationalism dating back beyond 1945 [9]. The new mood of nationalism was marked by an attempt by both government politicians and right-wing academics to foster support for a new German identity and thereby revive German nationalism and national values (Röhrich 1988: 161). The CDU politicians gave increased attention to the fostering of such an identity, with nationalism becoming a powerful tool of legitimisation in West German politics under the new government of Chancellor Kohl. Alfred Dregger, the chairman of the parliamentary CDU/CSU group, paved the way for promoting this new identity by declaring in the *Bundestag* (parliament) on 23 June 1983 (Röhrich 1988: 162):

"The turning-point, which we have achieved politically and want to push through, will not least have to pass the test to re-create our national identity within the identity of our values."

Dregger was critical of the way in which the German people had appeared to abandon their pride in the German nation. Franz Josef Strauss (CSU) also gave his backing to this search for a new German identity, declaring that it was now time for Germany to emerge from the shadows of Hitler and thereby become a normal nation again (Carr 1991b: 386) [10].

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[9] The concept of a constitutional patriotism was formerly put forward as a point for debate in post-war West Germany by the liberal political theorist Dolf Sternberger (Pulzer 1994: 9). Sternberger suggested that one should talk of constitutional patriotism rather than nationalism (Mertes 1994: 18). The concept of a constitutional patriotism was supported by former West German President Richard von Weizsäcker (Gebhardt 1993: 29).

[10] During a visit to Israel in January 1984, Chancellor Kohl (born in 1930) referred to the "*Gnade der späten Geburt*" (mercy of the late birth), arguably seeking to absolve those of his generation of (moral) responsibility for the actions of the German National Socialist regime (Röhrich 1988: 165).

Evidence of the political shift towards promoting this new German identity is found in two particular examples. This was firstly the disputed joint visit by Chancellor Kohl and President Reagan to the German war cemetery at Bitburg in 1985 (covered in section 5.3.1.1), and secondly the so-called Historian's Dispute (*Historikerstreit)* in 1986 over the actions of the German National Socialists during the Second World War (covered in section 5.3.1.2).

5.3.1.1 The symbolic handshake at Bitburg cemetery

The joint visit by President Reagan and Chancellor Kohl to the Bitburg war cemetery during May 1985 became a controversial issue in West German politics. The purpose of their joint visit had been a reconciliatory meeting between the two heads of state to mark the fortieth anniversary of the German surrender in May 1945. West German and US army generals symbolically shook hands at the graves of German *SS* soldiers (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 6 May 1985: 3). Claussen sees this visit (arranged by Chancellor Kohl) as an attempt by Kohl to revise the public view of German history by presenting the *SS* soldiers in the cemetery as victims of a normal war, thereby seeking to rid German history of one of its darkest elements (1991: 235). Röhrich states that the Bitburg visit led to public suspicion that Chancellor Kohl wished to present the Second World War like any other war in history, without given specific recognition to the victims of the holocaust (1988: 165) [11].

The prearranged handshake can be interpreted as a symbolic attempt by Chancellor Kohl to foster the new German identity. This handshake also had symbolic value at another level. President Reagan referred to the *SS* graves as containing victims of Nazism (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 6 May 1985: 3). Claussen recognises in those words and the symbolic handshake renewed US government support for its West German NATO partner (1991: 235). Röhrich regards the symbolic

[11] The subsequent visit by both leaders to the Bergen Belsen concentration camp only took place after public protest in the USA over the Bitburg visit and the omission of a visit to a German concentration camp during Reagan's visit (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 6 May 1985: 3).

handshake as US government recognition that West Germany was turning its back on the instability of the past, as well as confirming the military (anti-Communist) alliance with its NATO partner West Germany (1988: 165).

5.3.1.2 The Historian's Dispute and the attempt to revise German public opinion over German history

The government's search for a new German national identity was given additional support by a small group of right-wing German academics during 1986, whose views over the role of the German National Socialist regime during the Second World War became the focus for a media debate. The ensuing argument between left and right-wing academics became known as the *Historikerstreit* (Historian's Dispute) (Röhrich 1988: 168). This dispute, carried out primarily in the pages of the press between June 1986 and July 1986, was marked by a series of published articles on German wartime policies and military actions, primarily between Nolte, Stürmer and Hillgruber on the right of the political spectrum and the critic Habermas on the left.

The dispute was over the issue of how to interpret the National Socialist era in the context of German history. Two important elements in this dispute were firstly the question of whether the Nazi concentration camps were unique or just another example of inhumanity to other fellow human beings, and secondly whether it was possible to foster a German national identity whose roots go back in history to the period prior to 1945, as opposed to a German identity based upon post-war constitutional patriotism.

The public argument followed the publication of an article in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) on 6 June 1986 by Ernst Nolte on the subject of interpreting the holocaust and the Second World War (Nolte 1986: 25). Nolte's statements included the following two controversial points:

1. He placed the event of the holocaust atrocity into the context of twentieth century European history, seeking to draw parallels to atrocities committed in the Soviet Union under Stalin. Nolte asked if the Soviet Gulag labour camp was not indeed older than the Auschwitz concentration camp (Röhrich 1988: 171).

2. He claimed that Hitler felt threatened by the Bolsheviks in the Soviet Union. Nolte interpreted the German attack on the Soviet Union during May 1940 as a pre-emptive strike against Stalinist terror (Röhrich 1988: 169).

Nolte interprets the holocaust to have been an over-reaction by the National Socialists while acting in self-defence (Röhrich 1988: 169). He claimed that Hitler felt threatened by the Jewish people, pointing to the declaration of war on Hitler by Chaim Weizmann at the Jewish World Congress in September 1939 (Lenk 1989: 249-50). This, Nolte argued, gave Hitler the right to treat German Jews as prisoners of war and to deport them (Habermas 1988: 537). Nolte thereby arguably sought to remove the uniqueness of the Nazi holocaust, simultaneously seeking to revise public interpretation of that event in German history (Röhrich 1988: 171).

Nolte was only one of a series of right-wing academics who called into question the way that the Allies and their historians had interpreted the actions of the Germans during the Second World War, yet it was his article in the FAZ that brought the Historian's Dispute to public attention. The reaction from the opposing left-wing academic Jürgen Habermas was formulated in an article published in *Die Zeit* on 11 July 1986, as he sought to expose what he regarded as a scandalous attempt to decontaminate German history (Habermas 1986: 40). He regarded Nolte's article as an attempt to relativise and minimise the Nazi crimes and the holocaust itself.

For Habermas, the holocaust represented a break in German history. It was an atrocity which could not be lessened by comparing it with other atrocities in European history. For Habermas, the German national identity in the 1980s could not be based on a German history dating prior to 1945, as that period contained serious flaws. Habermas instead supported the notion of a constitutional patriotism (*Verfassungspatriotismus*), a modern German patriotism based on the values as laid

down in the constitution of May 1949 (1988: 540-1). He regards the universal principles of constitutional patriotism as an alternative basis for such a new German identity.

Habermas did not imply that there was collusion between right-wing historians and the government in seeking to revise German history, but did recognise an attempt by both to reinforce each other in the process of supporting German nationalism (Leaman 1988a: 525). Leaman points out that right-wing historians such as Nolte based their arguments on tenuous evidence and what he calls a highly selective logic (1988a: 521). For Habermas, both the Bitburg controversy and the Historian's Dispute were symptomatic of the overall shift to the right in West German government politics during the 1980s. Paul states that Habermas had diagnosed the shift in the political climate and responded to it (1990: 12).

Leaman points out that the views of right-wing historians such as Nolte were reflected in government calls for a new national pride among Germans, while seeking to redefine the past (1988a: 524). He sees this as evidence of a hidden agenda to shift the ideological consensus towards a new form of German nationalism. Evidence of this could be seen in the statement made by Alfred Dregger to the West German *Bundestag* on the issue of German patriotism during September 1986. According to Dregger, it was necessary to draw a line under Germany's past, stating that Germans had a right to be patriots in order to give the German people a sense of perspective (Lenk 1989: 251). Dregger became embroiled in the dispute when in a speech made by him in Bonn on 16 November 1986, he stated that the Weimar republic failed (opening the door for Hitler) because of the imposition on Germany of the Versaille Treaty (1919) following its defeat in 1918 and the demand for reparation payments from Germany (Röhrich 1988: 169) [12].

A similar form of revision of German history had already been undertaken by the right-wing Republican party (*Republikaner*) in seeking to promote German nationalism. Its chairman Schönhuber had declared [13] (Malzahn/Gast 1991: 46):

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[12] This was part of the argument claiming that the humiliation caused by the implementation of the terms of the Versaille Treaty on Germany paved the way for the later success of the National Socialists in 1933 who rejected its terms.

[13] This was a reference to the journey of penitence undertaken by Holy Roman Emperor

"We herewith declare the re-education of the Germans as completed and the ticket office to Canossa as closed."

Chancellor Kohl's continued public support for German nationalism as part of government policy represented an attempt to embrace the right-wing voters, including those who had defected from the CDU and CSU to join the Republican party. The period after 1987 saw a renewed shift by the government to the right as it sought to retain the electoral support of the nationalist voters, particularly those who were in danger of defecting to the right-wing parties [14].

5.3.1.3 The Chancellor displays the badge of German nationalism

Upon being re-elected into office in 1987, Chancellor Kohl repeated his government's continued support for the German nation and the *Aussiedler* as fellow compatriots (Kohl 1987: 37). This support for *Aussiedler* came in a period in which the right-wing splinter parties were achieving relative success in local elections. The government sought to present itself to the electorate, including the supporters of such right-wing splinter groups, as the party which would best represent the interests of the ethnic and cultural Germans living in eastern and south-eastern Europe. Kohl presented himself as the true holder of the badge of German honour. Maintaining the open-door *Aussiedler* policy and championing the *Aussiedler* cause in West German politics arguably gave Chancellor Kohl the opportunity to present his own nationalistic credentials to the German electorate.

The various ethnic and cultural German organisations (*Landsmannschaften*) representing the different expelled and resettled German groups (e.g. Siebenbürger Saxons) in West Germany were a political factor [15]. Such groups together form a

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Henry IV in 1077 to Canossa in Italy following his excommunication by Pope Gregory VII (*Fremdwörterlexikon* 1974: 291).

[14] Between 1978 and 1988, the number of West German right-wing organisations increased by some 60%. The highest rises were registered in the periods 1979 - 1980 and 1986 - 1987 (14% increase in both periods). The year 1988 saw a further 12% increase, bringing the number of such organisations to some 71 with around 28,300 members (Paul 1990: 13-4).

[15] A total of 21 *Landsmannschaften* and 11 *Landesverbände* (regional associations) are linked

cultural and political network with links to government politicians, shown publicly by the speeches held by government ministers at various annual meetings of such groups [16]. Speeches of support given by the Chancellor and ministers at such meetings can be interpreted as evidence of an ideological commitment and an attempt to retain the support of this section of the electorate. Such a commitment reflects the historic links between the CDU and the former *Bund der Heimatvertriebenen und Entrechteten / Gesamtdeutscher Block* political parties who represented the interests of the *Aussiedler* in the initial post-war years. The *Gesamtdeutscher Block* (who succeeded the *Bund der Heimatvertriebenen und Entrechteten* in 1952) achieved a degree of success in the 1953 West German general election, receiving 5.9% of the votes (*Meyers Enzyklopädisches Lexikon* 1972: 351).

Although the party subsequently failed to achieve the minimum 5% of votes in the 1957 general election required to ensure representation in parliament, falling into relative insignificance thereafter, the *Bund der Vertriebenen* has continued to operate as a pressure group seeking to exert political influence on government policy (*Meyers Enzyklopädisches Lexikon* 1972: 352). Critics of the *Landsmannschaften* organisations point to the tendency of such groups towards a more reactionary form of nationalism, including calls for the restoration of the German borders of 1937.

The government support for *Aussiedler* corresponded to the shift detected to the right in West German politics. *Aussiedler* were seen as an integral part of both the German nation and German history. The decision to maintain the open-door *Aussiedler* policy fitted into its ideology of supporting German nationalism while also seeking to gain electoral support from members of the various ethnic and cultural German pressure groups.

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together by the *Bund der Vertriebenen* (Union for Expellees). It was established in 1957 following a merger between the *Bund der Vertriebenen Deutschen*, founded in 1949, and the *Verband der Landsmannschaften* founded in 1950 (*Brockhaus Enzyklopädie* 1987: 136).

[16] For example see the speech given by Horst Waffenschmidt to the Siebenbürger Saxon *Landsmannschaft* on government *Aussiedler* policy on 9 April 1990 (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.15: 4-11).

5.4 Consideration of the possible self-interest motives

Having discussed the ideological motive of nationalism as a factor in the government's decision to maintain the open-door *Aussiedler* policy in 1988, the following sections consider the argument that the government may have used the justification of moral obligation in order to cover up their self-interest in such an influx continuing. Leaman has pointed out that it is essential to distinguish between the radical populism of *Wende* rhetoric and the central agenda of West German conservative politics in the period of economic readjustment during the 1980s (1993: 125).

It is contended that the elements of self-interest influencing the government decision in 1988 to continue the open-door *Aussiedler* policy included the following:

1. Young *Aussiedler* families helped to rejuvenate the West German population structure which had statistically been in decline since 1971. The inability of the population to rejuvenate itself would in the long-term make immigration a necessity.

2. *Aussiedler* helped to safeguard the national state retirement pension scheme. *Aussiedler* immigration increased the size of the working population who in turn would pay increased national insurance contributions. The ageing of the West German population threatened the survival of the existing state retirement pension system which is largely financed through such insurance contributions.

3. The arrival of *Aussiedler* could help the government's economic policy of supply-sidism aimed at making the employment market more flexible. It welcomed the influx of a labour force willing to work for low wages, seeing their arrival as an opportunity to achieve greater flexibility in the employment market and thereby achieve lower costs of production.

5.4.1 Using *Aussiedler* to help reverse the negative West German population trends

The rising levels of *Aussiedler* immigration recorded in West Germany during 1987 and 1988 coincided with the period in which negative population trends were being forecasted by the Federal Statistics Office (Wiesbaden), showing that the West German population was undergoing demographic decline. The national population census conducted on 25 May 1987[17] revealed significantly worrying trends. This was firstly the continued fall in the overall size of the West German population, and secondly that the FRG had an increasingly ageing population with an excess death-rate over birth-rate.

The national population census conducted on 25 May 1987 revealed the following problems:

1. A declining population size

A population total of some 61.2 million was recorded in 1987, representing a mere 0.7% increase (430,000 persons) on the total recorded in the 1970 census (*Statistisches Jahrbuch* 1990: 55). This relatively minor increase confirmed that the post-war population growth had come to an end. The population size had previously risen between 1950 and 1970 from some 50 million to 60.7 million, representing a rise of some 21% over two decades (*Der Fischer Weltalmanach* 1989: 179-82).

A further trend recorded between 1970 and 1987, was the contrasting development in the separate statistics for the Germans and foreigners. The 1987 census revealed that the number of foreigners in West Germany rose from 2 million in 1970 (4% of the total population) to some 4.15 million in 1987 (6.8% of the total population), while the number of Germans fell by 1.3 million (from 58.2 million to 56.9 million) during the same period (*Statistisches Jahrbuch* 1990: 55; *Der Fischer Weltalmanach* 1989: 180-1). The decline in the German portion of the population raised a political debate in right-wing circles on the issue of

[17] This was the first national population census since 1970.

whether the homogeneity of German society was being threatened by the rising number of foreigners (Paul 1990: 39).

2. Negative trends registered in the population structure

The census highlighted that the population was increasingly growing older in its composition. The following three significant negative trends were revealed by the 1987 census with regard to the age structure (*Der Fischer Weltalmanach* 1989: 180-1):

- Between 1970 and 1987, the number of persons under the age of 15 years fell from 23.2% to only 14.6% of the total population.

- Between 1970 and 1987, the number of persons aged 65 years or over rose from 13.2% to 15.3% .

- The average age of the population had risen from 36.3 years in 1970 to 39.4 years in 1987.

The above data on the population structure showed that the West German population tree was becoming increasingly ill, losing its youthful base and becoming top-heavy with an ageing population [18]. This constituted further evidence for the government that the population required an injection of youth if it was going to avoid long-term decline, which would have negative implications for the economy. As it was predominantly young *Aussiedler* who were entering West Germany for resettlement in the late 1980s, the government could arguably have considered the continued influx of *Aussiedler* as a means of helping to redress the structural imbalances evident within the West German population structure [19].

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[18] In 1914, the German population tree had a pyramid shape, with a large broad youthful base. Since then, the population tree has become increasingly top heavy, with the West German population tree in 1987 (symbolically) displaying the shape of an urn i.e. an increasingly ageing population and a shrinking youthful base (Cromm 1988: 14).

[19] In 1988, some 32.4 % of arriving *Aussiedler* were under 18 years of age. This compared to a national figure of 18.5 % for the same age band. Meanwhile, merely 4 % of *Aussiedler* arriving in 1988 were aged over 65 years of age (national figure: 15.4 %) (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.5 1989: 2).

3. Population decline caused by an excess death-rate over birth-rate

A further facet of the negative population development evident for West Germany since 1970, was a reversal in the relationship between the birth and death-rate. While the birth-rate (per thousand of the population) had continued to exceed the death-rate (per thousand of population) since the formation of the FRG in 1949, a reversal was recorded for the first time in 1972, when the death-rate exceeded the birth-rate (*Der Fischer Weltalmanach* 1989: 177). Further evidence in the 1980s that the West German population was still undergoing decline was shown by the following data:

- The 594,000 births recorded in the FRG during 1983 was significantly exceeded by the 718,000 recorded deaths in the same year (*Der Fischer Weltalmanach* 1985: 533-4). This amounted to an excess of deaths over births by some 124,000 persons (21%).

- During 1987, there was still an excess of deaths over births, although the gap was narrowing. While some 642,000 births were recorded in that year, the number of recorded deaths was 687,400 (*Der Fischer Weltalmanach* 1988: 181-2). Yet if the figures are considered separately for the German and foreign sections of the population, the important role played by foreigners in helping to bring some stability to the population statistics becomes apparent. While foreigners only accounted for 1% of the recorded deaths (8,000 persons), they significantly accounted for some 11% of the births (67,200 births) (*Der Fischer Weltalmanach* 1988: 181-2).

- There had been a decline in the female fertility-rate in West Germany since 1960 resulting in fewer children being born. While the fertility-rate (children per female) was still 2.4 in 1960, it had fallen to 2 in 1970 before falling further to only 1.4 by 1988 (Snyder 1992: 133) [20].

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[20] In order to maintain the population of the Federal Republic at the 1988 level, an estimated additional 200,000 births per annum were required (*Der Spiegel* no.35 1988: 207). Alternatively, it would require an influx of immigrants to help maintain the population level. Cromm states that around 225,000 immigrants were necessary in 1988 to offset the falling population total (1988: 24). Based on such data, the *Aussiedler* influx in 1988 of some 200,000 would have helped to alleviate the problem.
(These calculations were made prior to German unification in 1990).

The reasons for this decline in the West German population can be seen as a consequences of both an overall decline in the level of annual immigration and a decline in the birth-rate as already explained in the above section. West Germany was no longer benefiting from the previous waves of immigrants from East Germany and southern Europe. It was evident in 1988 that not sufficient numbers of children were being born in order to ensure a stable population structure [21]. Furthermore, the West German population was not likely to achieve a reversal of the negative population trends from within itself. The fertility rate of a mere 1.4 children per female in 1988 was well below the calculated replacement level of 2.1 children (the level required to maintain the population total) and was not likely to increase significantly in the foreseeable future without immigration by young families.

The trend of an ageing and numerically declining population would in the long-term, in the absence of renewed immigration by either foreigners or *Aussiedler*, also have a detrimental effect on the government's fiscal policies (e.g. it would lead to reduced revenue from taxation) and its economic policies (e.g. due to a reduction in the available work force). The decline in the population evident by 1988 could have been tackled and compensated for through a renewed wave of immigration. The prospect of maintaining the momentum of *Aussiedler* immigration at a level of over 200,000 per annum well into the 1990s presented the government with a possible solution in seeking to reverse the identified negative trends.

5.4.1.1 Population forecast made by the Federal Institute for Population Research

The government had access in 1988 to population forecasts for the period beyond the year 2000 which suggested further negative developments in both population

[21] The trend towards fewer children in the industrialised western world during the 1980s resulted in terms such as Yuppies (young urban professional) and Dinks (double income, no kids) being applied to describe young families with few or no children (Cromm 1988: 24).

size and composition. The following Table shows the forecasted development in the population size of the FRG for the years 2000 and 2030 as predicted by the *Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung* (FIPR - Federal Institute for Population Research) in Wiesbaden during 1987:

Table 5.1

Population forecasts for the years 2000 and 2030

Year	Population total
1986	61.1 million (actual size)
2000	54.9 million (forecast)
2030	42.6 million (forecast)

Source: *Bonner Almanach* 1987: 109

As shown in the above Table, the size of the population was predicted to fall to only 54.9 million by the year 2000 (compared to 61.1 million as of 31 December 1986), representing a decrease of some 10%. The FIPR predicted a further reduction to only 42.6 million in the year 2030, representing a significant decrease of some 30 % compared to the population figure for December 1986. Unless halted, this decline would have negative consequences for the West German economy. For example (*Bonner Almanach* 1987: 109):

1. It raised questions over the ability of the state retirement pension scheme, reliant on regular national insurance contributions, to fulfil its guarantee to future generations that their pensions would be paid.

2. The size of the national work force would decline as the ageing process continued. In the long-term this would hamper economic expansion and innovation.

3. The declining birth-rate would be felt in the education system with the number of schoolchildren continuing to fall, ultimately resulting in the closures of schools.

4. The declining birth-rate would result in a smaller intake for the West German armed forces which relied on conscription. It was estimated in 1988 that there would be a deficit of some 100,000 conscripts in the 1990s (Cromm 1988: 24).

Furthermore, the FIPR forecasts on the further ageing of the population until the year 2030 will have given the government particular concern. While those aged 60 or older in 1987 amounted to some 12.3 million persons, the figure for those aged under 20 was only some 12.1 million. This near balance between the two groups was forecasted to alter significantly by the year 2030, with the figure for those aged 60 or older rising considerably. It was estimated that while the number of persons aged under 20 would fall to only 6.4 million, the total for those aged 60 or older would reach some 15.4 million, thus double the size of those in the under 20 category (*Bonner Almanach* 1987: 109) [22].

5.5 Research conducted by the Institute of the German Economy

The government sought to counter criticism of its decision to maintain the open-door *Aussiedler* policy by referring to the findings of research on the effects of *Aussiedler* immigration by the *Institut der deutschen Wirtschaft* (IW - Institute of the German Economy) based in Cologne. The government regarded forecasts made by the IW as confirmation that the open-door policy brought benefits to the FRG [23]. Based on the assumption of an additional influx of 2 million *Aussiedler* by the year 2000 under an open-door policy, the IW made the following forecasts:

1. That without additional immigration, the size of the West German population would fall to only some 53.8 million by the year 2000 (*Deutsche Aussiedler* 1990: 3). This was an even more pessimistic forecast than the figure of 54.9 million stated by the FIPR. This forecasted figure of 53.8 million suggested a decline of some 2.5 million between the years 1988 and 2000. It argued that the arrival of an

[22] Only 20% of *Aussiedler* arriving in West Germany in 1988 were older than 45 years. This compared to a figure of 40% for this category in the national population statistics (Walter 1989: 7).

[23] This institute (founded in 1951) is partly funded by German employer organisations and carries out research on employment related issues (*Gabler Wirtschafts-Lexikon* 1993: 1642).

additional 2 million *Aussiedler* by the year 2000 would significantly stall this population decline, with the *Aussiedler* being able to cover some 80% of the natural fall in the national population (*Deutsche Aussiedler* 1990: 2-3). It concluded that the population total would remain around 56 million by the year 2000 if *Aussiedler* immigration continued (*Deutsche Aussiedler* 1990: 5).

2. That the *Aussiedler* would make a contribution to improving the age composition of the West German population. It pointed out that some 50% of the *Aussiedler* arriving in 1988 were under 25 years old, compared to 33% of the national population in that age band (*Deutsche Aussiedler* 1990: 5). The IW claimed that this rejuvenation of the West German population would continue beyond the year 2000 if *Aussiedler* immigration continued under the open-door policy.

The IW and FIPR forecasts had common findings with regard to firstly the future continued decline expected in the West German population, unless there was a significant influx of immigrants, and secondly the further acceleration towards an ageing population structure. These would collectively have a negative impact on the West German economy and society unless reversed by the immigration of young persons (i.e. by *Aussiedler*). Such forecasts will have sent important signals to the government on the long-term need to rejuvenate the population. The continuation of the open-door *Aussiedler* policy, at a time when the eastern European frontiers were allowing increased *Aussiedler* emigration, presented the government with the opportunity to achieve the required rejuvenation. While the demographic rejuvenation was publicly presented merely as a further benefit (or bonus) resulting from increased *Aussiedler* immigration, it was arguably another motivating factor for maintaining the open-door policy.

5.6 The significance of *Aussiedler* for the state retirement pension scheme

A second possible motive of government self-interest linked to the open-door policy was the envisaged positive impact that *Aussiedler* immigration was expected

to have in helping to finance the state retirement pension scheme. The financing of the scheme is based on the so-called generation pact (*Generationsvertrag*), whereby those who now work and contribute to the pension scheme through their national insurance contributions help finance the government's liability for state retirement pension payments. Those currently contributing to this pension scheme simultaneously acquire credits for their own national insurance contribution record, with subsequent generations paying contributions to help finance future pension payments. The pension scheme is financed by contribution levies paid by both employees and employers, topped up by the government's own contributions. It was estimated in 1989 that the state retirement pension scheme provided old age insurance for approximately 90% of West Germany's population (Marsh 1989: 295).

Yet in the long-term, this generation pact depends on sufficient contributions being paid by those working to help finance the scheme. There has been a continuing increase in the number of pensioners becoming entitled to state retirement pensions during the 1980s, while the number of persons employed and contributing in the future being predicted to decline. The problem of financing future pensions was already an issue of concern when Kohl became Chancellor in 1982. Upon being elected into government in 1983 for his first full term in office, Chancellor Kohl stated that one of the government's main policy aims was to secure the long-term financing of future pensions, thereby guaranteeing the continuation of the traditional generation pact (*Jahresbericht der Bundesregierung* 1983: 618-9) [24].

Subsequent data recorded for the West German population, including the population census in 1987, provided the government with further evidence that this generation pact was under increasing strains as the population continued to age and decline in size. The forecasts made by the FIPR and the IW suggested that the combined trends of an ageing and numerically declining population total would continue to pose a problem well into the next century unless there was a significant influx of immigrants or a higher birth-rate.

[24] By 1993, state pension payments (excluding civil servants) accounted for some 8 % of Germany's Gross Domestic Product (Dixon 1993: 3).

According to research presented by the IW, the number of pensioners in the FRG was likely to rise from 13 million in 1984 to some 17 million in the year 2005 (*Aktuell* 1987: 226). It projected its figure to the year 2030 and concluded that for each contributor to the pension scheme, there would be one pensioner to finance. Such forecasts were plausible when taking into account that the number of recipients of state retirement pensions increased between 1970 and 1985 from 10.2 million to 14 million (an increase of nearly 40%), while the number of contributors only rose from 19.6 million to 20.3 million (a rise of under 4%). The figures for the number of contributors actually showed a fall between 1980 and 1985, from 21.1 million to 20.3 million (*Aktuell* 1987: 227).

Immigrants have in the past been significant for the financing of the West German social insurance system. Koch points out that during 1989, foreigners paid a total of DM 12 billion in contributions to the state retirement pension scheme (1993: 10) [25]. This represented 7.8% of all contributions made during 1989 to the state retirement pension scheme. Koch further points out that foreigners only received state retirement pensions to the value of DM 3.7 billion during the same year (1993: 10). This represented only 1.1% of the sum paid out in pensions by the state scheme. Such data supports the argument that the state retirement pension scheme relies on foreigners (immigrants) to help finance its pension liabilities [26]. The IW claimed that while the *Aussiedler* in West Germany would in 1989 and 1990 be net beneficiaries of the state retirement pension scheme by some DM 800 million, it forecasted that the *Aussiedler* would become net payers to the system by some DM 9.9 billion after that until the influx of *Aussiedler* ebbed off in the next century (*Deutsche Aussiedler* 1990: 22).

This conjuncture of *Aussiedler* and the financing of the generation pact was considered by Walter, who concluded that the numeric decline and ageing process

[25] Richert points out that between 1961 and 1990, foreigners living and working in the FRG contributed some DM 140 billion to the state retirement pension scheme (1993: 13).

[26] Börsch-Supan has estimated that it would require an average of some 300,000 immigrants per annum (entering a united Germany) in order to prevent the cost of state retirement pension and medical service contributions from rising for employees in the future (*Wirtschaftswoche* no.3 1994: 8). The state retirement pension contribution level (per employee) rose from 17.5 % (of gross pay) to 19.2 % on 1 January 1994 (*Deutsche Bundesbank Monatsbericht* September 1993: 46).

evident in the West German population represented a time bomb for the social insurance system. He identified the influx of *Aussiedler* and *Übersiedler* as helping to delay the ignition of this time bomb, through the arrival of predominantly young people in these two groups. Walter considered *Aussiedler* immigration to have positive implications for the country, stating (1989: 7):

"The only weak future generation in the Federal Republic of Germany, which must carry the burden of social insurance at the beginning of the next century, therefore receives a marked strengthening."

The government acknowledged the significance that the arrival of increasing numbers of young *Aussiedler* had in helping both to rejuvenate the population and also in ensuring the long-term financing of the state pensions under the generation pact. It stated that because of their advantageous age structure, the *Aussiedler* helped to ensure that West German pensions would be secure in the future (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.5 1989: 2). The statistics for the composition of the *Aussiedler* immigration figures for 1987 and 1988 confirm the government's statement that *Aussiedler* helped to rejuvenate the West German population structure. The number of *Aussiedler* pensioners (aged 65 and over) arriving in those two years was 7,800 and 15,000 respectively, representing less than 5% of the total *Aussiedler* influx for both years (*Deutsche Aussiedler* 1990: 28). The arrival of increasing numbers of young *Aussiedler* for the foreseeable future was regarded by the government not only as a welcomed injection of youth for the ageing West German population, but in the long-term also represented future contributors who would help to finance the generation pact.

5.7 Links between *Aussiedler* immigration and the economic policy of supply-sidism

It can be argued that a third element of government self-interest in maintaining the open-door *Aussiedler* policy in 1988, was the envisaged contribution that the increasing influx of *Aussiedler* could make to the implementation of its economic

policy of supply-sidism [27]. Such a policy focuses on the supply of the factor labour in the employment market. Under Chancellor Kohl, the policy of supply-sidism included the following main aims [28]:

1. To promote a deregulation of the employment market. This could be achieved through enforcing more flexible contracts of employment (e.g. reducing the right to claim unfair dismissal). It also sought to reduce the influence of trade unions in wage negotiations to maintain low wage levels.

2. To seek low costs per unit of production. This could be achieved through maintaining low wage levels (thereby helping to reduce inflation) to improve the competitiveness of West German industry, particularly in export markets.

3. To promote geographical mobility within the national work force.

Leaman, in considering the supply-side element of government economic policy, sums up the aims of this policy by stating (1993: 127):

"The central concern of CDU-led supply-sidism was the restoration of optimal conditions for stable macro-economic growth and for improved corporate profitability."

According to the theory of supply-sidism, improved corporate profitability can be achieved by a reduction in wage levels, and all other factors being equal, this will lead to a reduction in marginal costs and achieve a higher return on invested capital. Leaman sees this ability to achieve higher returns on capital as having a lynch-pin (linking) function in the economic cycle (1993: 127). In such a simple model of the economic cycle, once set in motion, higher returns achieved through lower per unit

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[27] In opposition to the demand management associated with Keynesianism, which regards aggregate demand to be central in determining the level of economic activity, supporters of the supply-side economic school of thought instead place the emphasis on aggregate supply. The policy of supply-sidism was favoured by US President Reagan and UK Prime Minister Thatcher.

[28] Upon being elected into office his 1983, Chancellor Kohl stated that it was the intention of the government to bring about more flexibility into the employment market. Kohl declared: "We don't want more state, but less; we don't want less, but more personal freedom." (*Jahresbericht der Bundesregierung* 1983: 613-5).

costs will eventually lead to higher profits and higher returns on capital invested. This will in turn encourage higher investment in search of high rates of return on invested capital. If this cycle was operated over a number of years, during which wages were kept at a low level, improved corporate profitability would be achieved.

The economic recession of 1981 - 1982 led the CDU government coming into power during 1982 to encourage West German industry to become more competitive in international trade, in order to secure employment in the sector particularly reliant on exports. It was estimated in 1987 that 25% of West German employees relied directly or indirectly on the export industry for their employment. The government confirmed its support for this policy of deregulation in its policy statement of March 1983, declaring that this was necessary to achieve both economic growth and a reduction in unemployment levels (*Jahresbericht der Bundesregierung* 1983: 613-5). Chancellor Kohl called this a more flexible approach to the workplace. The policy of deregulation in the employment market was one of the main principles listed in the Stuttgart Principles, a statement of future government policy, announced by the CDU Party in 1984 (Leaman 1993: 128).

The influx of East German refugees during the 1950s presented a historical precedent for achieving economic prosperity at a time of increased immigration. Abelshauser points out that West German industry has previously been able to rely on East German refugees (between 1950 and 1961) and guest workers (until 1973), for the required pool of labour willing to accept low wages and flexible work conditions. He states that some 3.6 million East German refugees thereby assisted the West German economy between 1959 and 1961 to become more competitive (Abelshauser 1983: 95). The *Aussiedler* represented an important source of immaterial capital i.e. educated and qualified labour made available to the West German employment market. Abelshauser has calculated that on the basis of each East German refugee having a notional value of DM 15,000 (representing the value of their educational training), the total value of human capital imported into the West German economy during the period of 1950 - 1961 amounted to DM 30 billion (Abelshauser 1983: 96). The influx of East German refugees willing to work for low wages assisted the West German economy in helping to keep down

the unit cost of production, thereby helping to ensure the profitability of West German industry during that period.

Leaman makes the point that the West German economy's productivity potential benefited significantly from the quantity and quality of the work force arriving from East Germany. He states (1988b: 113-4):

"The reserve army of unemployed was generally highly skilled, young, mobile and obliged to accept below average conditions of labour. The annual additions to this reserve - from East Germany - maintained the general function of depressing wage levels, but reinforced the specific advantages of age and skill."

As was pointed out in chapter one, a series of agreements were signed by the West German government between 1955 and 1968 with other governments in order to encourage economic migrants (guest workers) to come to the FRG. Their arrival helped West German industry achieve what was later referred to as the West German post-war economic miracle. Meier-Braun states that the government's immigration policy during the 1960s was closely linked to its own employment policy and the interest of West German business (1980: 23).

That such economic migrants were sought merely for the benefit of West German industry was no secret. This was confirmed in 1970, when the SPD government declared that the employment of foreign guest workers in West Germany was necessary for the employment market and also to benefit the West German economy. It declared that the size of the annual intake of guest workers would be related to the developments in the employment market (Meier-Braun 1980: 23). Ebert makes the point that the 2 million guest workers employed in the West German economy in 1981 broadly corresponded to the decreased number of West Germans in the employment market, thereby bridging the gap (1981: 4). The decision to end the acceptance of guest workers in November 1973 in response to the recession in West German industry showed the political self-interest that was inherent in West German government immigration policy.

By 1988 there was a vacuum in the supply of cheap labour for West German industry, although there were still some 2 million unemployed in the country. The former sources of such cheap labour were exhausted so that West German industry relied on outside help. It was necessary to look abroad for cheap labour. An intake of guest workers, as had been the case prior to 1973, was not deemed politically acceptable by the Kohl government, yet *Aussiedler* were regarded as an adequate source of replacement. Just as immigrant labour had been used as a conjunctural economic buffer in the past (Leaman 1988b: 157), *Aussiedler* could be seen as performing the same function in the late 1980s.

The government acceptance of *Aussiedler* during the late 1980s under the open-door policy showed parallels to the acceptance of guest workers during the 1960s. The *Aussiedler* could serve to help top up the reserve supply of cheap labour. While sections of the indigenous work force were likely to resist the implementation of the policy of supply-sidism, the arriving *Aussiedler* were inexperienced in both the functioning of the employment market and in the negotiation of terms and conditions for their employment. The operation of an open-door *Aussiedler* policy could therefore help the government to implement its economic policy of supply-sidism.

5.8 Summary of findings on the argument of moral obligation

The findings made in the process of researching the government's argument, that its open-door policy in 1988 was an expression of a moral obligation towards *Aussiedler*, arguably support the claim that this motive was possibly a surface motive. The government used the occasion of increased *Aussiedler* immigration to further its self-interests in the following ways:

1. To further its ideological support for German nationalism.

2. To counter the demographic decline that had been evident in the FRG since 1971.

3. To help safeguard the state retirement pension generation pact, thereby fulfilling one of the government aims as stated back in 1983.

4. To further its economic policy of supply-sidism.

Such elements of self-interest linked to the open-door *Aussiedler* policy support the argument that the government was to a degree instrumentalising the *Aussiedler* group for its own purposes. The government claim that the open-door policy reflected its humanitarian (moral) stance can be seen as an example of political rhetoric disguising opportunism.

CHAPTER SIX

AUSSIEDLER UNEMPLOYMENT UNDER THE OPEN-DOOR *AUSSIEDLER* POLICY 1985 - 1988

6. *Aussiedler* unemployment under the open-door *Aussiedler* policy 1985 - 1988

6.1 The relevance of considering the issue of *Aussiedler* unemployment

Employment integration is an integral element in the *Aussiedler* resettlement process. The task of integrating *Aussiedler* into the employment market has accompanied the post-war influx of *Aussiedler* since 1950. Yet while the economy had prior to 1973 been able to absorb guest workers and *Aussiedler* into its employment market without major difficulties, the recession that followed the oil crisis of 1973 made this task increasingly difficult. The question posed in the second main research question, of whether there was evidence to justify concerns expressed over the ability of the employment market to successfully absorb the rising number of *Aussiedler*, was one criterion by which to assess the prudence of the government's decision (August 1988) to maintain the open-door *Aussiedler* policy.

The ability of *Aussiedler* to find employment can be assessed by analysing the subsequent data on *Aussiedler* unemployment. Difficulties experienced in their employment integration process would in the short-term period be reflected in the national unemployment statistics. Research on the issue of *Aussiedler* unemployment is a valuable criterion in assessing the effectiveness of the government's *Aussiedler* integration policy under the open-door policy during the period of study.

The West German government in 1988 supported the view that the *Aussiedler* arriving for resettlement did not pose a potential problem group in the employment market (i.e. arguably those groups comprising over 5% of the unemployed), but were welcomed as being a benefit to the national work force. It believed that the

economy would be able to absorb this rising influx of predominantly young people (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.5 1989: 2). The government was aware that it left itself open to criticism over its open-door *Aussiedler* policy if it subsequently failed to ensure their effective integration in the employment market. Such difficulties would put into question the prudence of rejecting annual *Aussiedler* quotas.

It is against the background of concern over the ability of the employment market to absorb these newcomers that the second main research question is considered. It was pointed out in chapter one and chapter two that the government assumed that *Aussiedler* would integrate into the employment market without major difficulties. Chapter six and chapter seven will consider whether the government's optimism was justified. This chapter analyses the extent of *Aussiedler* unemployment for the period September 1985 - September 1988. This allows subsequent developments between September 1988 and September 1992 (analysed in chapter seven) to be put into perspective.

6.2 The importance of employment as an integration factor

The successful integration of those *Aussiedler* of working age (and available for employment) is achieved above all through placement in stable long-term employment. Therefore one of the government's tasks is to ensure the smooth transition for *Aussiedler* from their previous employment in eastern Europe into the West German employment market.

For the individuals themselves, the successful placement in a job enables them to achieve a degree of financial security and thereby a certain amount of financial independence. This has important implications for the *Aussiedler*, particularly those with families, when it comes to finding suitable accommodation. Not all *Aussiedler* seeking accommodation are fortunate enough to have been allocated state subsidised rented housing (*Sozialwohnungen*). A quick move out of their temporary accommodation, either from one of the *Aussiedler* resettlement centres or bed and

breakfast accommodation, into the rented housing sector brings with it the possibility of accelerating the integration process. Furthermore, employment provides the *Aussiedler* with an increased opportunity to form social contacts. It presents them with the chance to improve their German language capabilities through communication at work with colleagues. This can help prevent isolation while also enabling *Aussiedler* to establish contact with a broad cross section of the West German population.

The significance of the role that employment plays in West German society was considered by Francke, a former president of the Federal Institute of Labour (BfA). Francke points to the following three factors when analysing the importance that employment has for the individual (1985: 63-65):

1. Employment belongs to one of the most important basics of our existence.

2. Whether or not one is employed has important financial implications for the individual and the family. It is a means of achieving a higher standard of living.

3. Employment is one of the main mediums through which the individual can achieve both confidence and acceptance, while also contributing to the society around them.

Successful placement in employment not only enables these newcomers to achieve financial security for themselves and their families, but also reduces the potential burden that would fall on the government and local authorities in providing the necessary welfare benefit payments, should they remain unemployed. Francke also points to the significance that those in employment have for the economy as a whole. This concerns the vital contributions they make in providing employers with a work force, as well as providing a steady stream of income for the federal authorities through taxation and the payment of social insurance contributions for the health and state retirement pension schemes (Francke 1985: 63).

6.3 Definition of the term unemployment

During the period of study, those included in the BfA's official statistics on unemployment were those persons registered with the local employment office (*Arbeitsamt*) as being unemployed and looking for employment. In accordance with the *Arbeitsförderungsgesetz* (AFG - Labour Promotion Act 1969), the claimant must firstly have reached the age of 15 years and be ordinarily resident in Germany, and secondly the claimant must be in search of employment for a duration of at least seven calendar days. Furthermore, the claimant must be under the age of 65 years and not have an existing contract of employment.

Special regulations apply to those persons who are unemployed but not available for work through attendance on either employment retraining or German language courses. These two categories are not considered to be available for work while attending such courses. Thus *Aussiedler* attending either German language or employment retraining courses are not included in the monthly statistics on the number of unemployed *Aussiedler* for the duration of their courses.

6.3.1 Definition of the term unemployed *Aussiedler*

The BfA is a self-governing public corporation set up in accordance with the Labour Promotion Act. It publishes monthly statistics on *Aussiedler* unemployment [1]. In addition to giving public information on the state of the national employment market and advising the public on finding (or changing) employment, the BfA oversees the co-ordination of employment training schemes and German language courses (Francke 1985: 90-91).

Separate unemployment statistics are collated for the *Aussiedler* group. Those classified as unemployed *Aussiedler* in the unemployment statistics have the following additional characteristics (*Arbeitsmarktanalyse* 1989: 643):

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[1] The *Ländesarbeitsämter* (regional employment offices) and *Arbeitsämter* (local employment offices) report their monthly statistics to the BfA in Nuremberg (*Bonner Almanach* 1989: 21; Francke 1985: 95).

1. They have been awarded *Aussiedler* status by the federal authorities.

2. They hold a registration form issued by the federal authorities showing the date of arrival in Germany.

3. They have been resident in Germany for less than five years. Those *Aussiedler* who have been resettled in Germany for five years or more since their arrival are no longer specifically classified as being unemployed *Aussiedler*.

The five year rule is based on the government's assumption that *Aussiedler* have completed their integration after five years, and as such, are not to be classified as unemployed *Aussiedler* if still unemployed after this period of time (*Arbeitsmarktanalyse* 1989: 643). This rule continued to apply during the period 1985 - 1992 [2]. A consequence of this five year rule applied by the BfA in the classification of unemployed *Aussiedler*, is that those *Aussiedler* who are either still unemployed five years after arriving in the FRG, or who become unemployed more than five years after their initial resettlement, are excluded from the official statistics on unemployed *Aussiedler* and merely counted as being unemployed.

Data available on long-term unemployment during the period 1988 - 1992 show that the percentage size of those *Aussiedler* still unemployed for over two years was small, ranging between 2.6% and 7.5% and averaging 5% during that period (*Arbeitsmarktanalyse* 1990: 682; *Arbeitsmarkt* 1993: 884). Data is not available on the number of *Aussiedler* unemployed for more than five years, yet the percentage for those *Aussiedler* unemployed for over five years, and thus excluded from the *Aussiedler* unemployment statistics through this time limit, was likely to have been even lower than 5% and therefore deemed not to be significant enough to invalidate the following analysis on *Aussiedler* unemployment.

[2] This five year rule also applied to unemployed *Übersiedler* prior to German unification in 1990. The *Übersiedler* status expired on 30 June 1990 .

6.4 Trends in *Aussiedler* unemployment between 1985 and 1988

The publication of monthly unemployment statistics by the BfA specifically on *Aussiedler* unemployment did not commence until November 1987. The monthly data available on unemployed *Aussiedler* (on a national basis) prior to November 1987 were contained in the structure analysis of national unemployment conducted annually by the BfA at the end of each September. The number of unemployed *Aussiedler* were recorded in the September analysis as part of the analysis of unemployment among specific groups within the community i.e. young persons under 25 years, the disabled and immigrants. September was chosen to conduct this annual analysis as it had shown itself to be the most stable month, being comparatively free from seasonal factors [3].

The annual statistics referred to in this (and the following) chapter on *Aussiedler* unemployment are those for the end of September. This allows a comparison to be made for successive September months, forming a basis for analysis. The statistics released on *Aussiedler* unemployment by the BfA for the period September 1985 to September 1988 are shown in the following Table:

Table 6.1

Aussiedler unemployment between 1985 and 1988

Year (end of Sept.)	Total number of unemployed *Aussiedler*	% Change on last year	*Aussiedler* unemployment as a % of total national unemployment
1985	30,326	- 9.3	1.5
1986	29,832	- 1.6	1.5
1987	36,579	+ 23	1.7
1988	72,747	+ 99	3.5

Source: *Arbeitsmarkt in Zahlen - Aussiedler -Berichtsmonat September 1993* Table 2.

[3] The month September is comparatively free from disruptive factors such as school-leavers entering the employment market, seasonal employment and the lay-offs in particular sectors (e.g. construction) during the winter months.

The data contained in Table 6.1 show that while the number of unemployed *Aussiedler* declined by 9.3% and 1.6% in September 1985 and September 1986 respectively compared to the previous years, the total recorded in September 1987 showed a considerable increase of 23%. The data for the period September 1987 - September 1988 show a further rise of 99%. The significance of the figure for September 1988 was that the level of *Aussiedler* unemployment had doubled during those intervening twelve months. The statistics pointed to an upward trend in the number of unemployed *Aussiedler* since September 1986.

A further way of analysing the data contained in Table 6.1 is to consider the development in *Aussiedler* unemployment as a percentage of the total national unemployment figure. This will show whether or not the unemployed *Aussiedler* were becoming a problem category within the national unemployment statistics. The data show that their percentage of the national unemployed total remained relatively stable between September 1985 and September 1987, varying only between 1.5% and 1.7%. Yet between September 1987 and September 1988 the percentage doubled from 1.7% to 3.5%. The magnitude of this rise was in line with the near 100% rise in the number of unemployed *Aussiedler* for the same period. Furthermore, their percentage of the total unemployed was nearing the 4% level. While *Aussiedler* were not already a problem category within the national unemployment statistics in September 1988, the steep rise recorded in *Aussiedler* unemployment between September 1987 and September 1988 suggested that they could become a problem group within the next few years against the background of rising *Aussiedler* immigration.

6.4.1 Links between *Aussiedler* unemployment and the level of *Aussiedler* immigration between 1985 and 1988

In view of the findings made in Table 6.1 on the development in *Aussiedler* unemployment, particularly the significant rise between 1987 and 1988, the question arises as to whether there was a possible correlation between the rise in *Aussiedler*

immigration and the rise in *Aussiedler* unemployment. The data on *Aussiedler* immigration and unemployment for the period are shown in the following Table:

Table 6.2

***Aussiedler* immigration and *Aussiedler* unemployment 1985 - 1988**

Year	Total *Aussiedler* immigration (annual)	% Change on last year	Total *Aussiedler* unemployment (end of Sept.)	% Change on last year
1985	38,905	+ 7	30,326	- 9.3
1986	42,729	+ 10	29,832	- 1.6
1987	78,498	+ 84	36,579	+ 23
1988	202,645	+ 258	72,747	+ 99

Sources: 1. *Arbeitsmarkt in Zahlen - Aussiedler - Berichtsmonat September 1993* Table 2.
2. *Statistisches Jahrbuch* 1988: 73

The data contained in Table 6.2 show that while the annual number of *Aussiedler* arriving in West Germany between 1985 and 1986 showed a gradual rise of 10%, the rises recorded in 1987 and particularly in 1988 were more dramatic. The level of *Aussiedler* immigration between 1986 and 1987 rose by 84%. The upward trend continued during 1988, recording a significant rise of 258%. The policy of social and political reform in eastern Europe was gathering pace, resulting in an increasing number of ethnic and cultural Germans seeking resettlement in West Germany under the open-door *Aussiedler* policy as travel and emigration restrictions were being relaxed.

The four successive increases in *Aussiedler* immigration figures recorded between 1985 and 1988 are partly mirrored in the *Aussiedler* unemployment statistics trends for the same period. In contrast to the rising immigration levels recorded during 1985 and 1986, *Aussiedler* unemployment actually fell in September 1985 and September 1986 by 9.3% and 1.6% respectively. However, the *Aussiedler* unemployment figures recorded successive rises in 1987 and 1988, thereby

following the rising trend also recorded in the immigration figures during those two years.

The data contained in Table 6.2 show that there was a corresponding (though not parallel) upward trend between the levels of *Aussiedler* immigration and *Aussiedler* unemployment in 1987 and 1988. Against the background of rising *Aussiedler* immigration under the open-door policy since 1987, the data suggest that the employment market was not able to integrate the arriving *Aussiedler* quickly enough to prevent significant rises in *Aussiedler* unemployment. Evidence of such a parallel development will have provided the government with an indication (and warning) in 1988 of future difficulties being faced by *Aussiedler* seeking employment.

6.4.2 Links between *Aussiedler* unemployment and overall national unemployment 1985 - 1988

Having identified a parallel development between the level of *Aussiedler* immigration and *Aussiedler* unemployment between 1987 and 1988, this section considers whether there was an identifiable link in 1987 and 1988 between the levels of national unemployment and *Aussiedler* unemployment. The data for national and *Aussiedler* unemployment during the period 1985 - 1988 are shown in the following Table:

Table 6.3

National and *Aussiedler* unemployment levels

September 1985 - September 1988

Year	Total unemployed nationally (million) (end of Sept.)	% Change on last year	Total unemployed *Aussiedler* (end of Sept.)	% Change on last year
1985	2.15	+ 0.4	30,326	- 9.3
1986	2.05	- 4.7	29,832	- 1.6
1987	2.11	+ 2.9	36,579	+ 23
1988	2.10	- 0.5	72,747	+ 99

Sources: 1. *Arbeitsmarkt in Zahlen - Aussiedler - Berichtsmonat September 1993*, Table 2
2. *Statistisches Jahrbuch* 1985: 111; 1986: 110; 1987: 111
1988: 110; 1989: 110

As can be seen in Table 6.3, the number registered as unemployed nationally between 1985 and 1986 decreased by 4.7%, while the number of unemployed *Aussiedler* also fell by 1.6% during the same period. The slight reduction in the *Aussiedler* unemployment total recorded in September 1986 (while *Aussiedler* immigration rose in that year) can be explained by the temporary improvement registered in the employment market during that period. Yet significantly, while the national level of unemployment remained relatively stable in 1987 and 1988 at around 2.1 million, the corresponding figures for *Aussiedler* unemployment showed considerable increases in 1987 and 1988 of 23% and 99% respectively. The rise in the *Aussiedler* unemployment totals recorded in 1987, and more dramatically during 1988, against the background of rising *Aussiedler* immigration, thus went against the stable trend shown in national unemployment levels.

As the statistics only showed a parallel rise or fall between the two variables national unemployment and *Aussiedler* unemployment in September 1986 (the rise recorded in September 1987 for unemployed *Aussiedler* of 23% showed a considerable difference in the extent of increase when comparing it to the 2.9% rise in national unemployment for September 1987), it was not possible to identify a

close correlation between those variables. It is therefore not possible to solely attribute the steep rise in *Aussiedler* unemployment during the period 1987 - 1988 to a worsening of the economic conditions in West Germany.

6.4.3 Assessment of the developments in the level of *Aussiedler* unemployment 1985 - 1988

The analysis of data shown in Tables 6.2 and 6.3 suggests that there was a higher degree of correlation between the levels of *Aussiedler* immigration and *Aussiedler* unemployment, than between the levels of national unemployment and *Aussiedler* unemployment for the period 1985 - 1988. While the integration of *Aussiedler* into the national employment market also depended on favourable economic conditions, it was arguably the steep rises in *Aussiedler* immigration during 1987 and 1988 under the open-door policy that led to increased *Aussiedler* unemployment, even if the national state of the employment market did show improvements as seen in the slight fall recorded in national total unemployment in September 1988.

The employment market in 1988 was already having difficulties absorbing the rising number of *Aussiedler* at the same rate as the *Aussiedler* were arriving in West Germany for resettlement. Thus further rises in *Aussiedler* immigration levels under the government's open-door policy after 1988 (in excess of 200,000 p.a.) were likely to also result in rising levels of *Aussiedler* unemployment. Unless there were significant improvements in the ability of the national employment market to absorb the arriving *Aussiedler*, it would require either a major *Aussiedler* employment programme to be implemented by the government, or for modifications to be made to the open-door policy (i.e. introducing annual *Aussiedler* immigration quotas) in order to prevent the *Aussiedler* group becoming a problem group within the national unemployment statistics during the forthcoming years.

6.4.4 Estimating the rate of unemployment within the *Aussiedler* community in 1988

Although the BfA publishes monthly and annual statistics on the absolute number of unemployed *Aussiedler*, it does not publish statistics (during the period of study) for the actual unemployment rate within the *Aussiedler* community. Gugel in 1990 estimated that the unemployment rate within the *Aussiedler* community was some 30%, although he gives no details of how this figure was calculated (1990: 113). Subsequent attempts to obtain accurate data on this aspect of *Aussiedler* unemployment through the BfA were unsuccessful. The Federal Administration Office (BVA) in 1990 disclosed that some 25% of *Aussiedler* were still unemployed some 6 months after having completed language and employment training courses (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler, Sonderausgabe* August 1990: 19).

The BfA stated that in order to calculate the *Aussiedler* unemployment rate, it would be necessary to gather data on *Aussiedler* unemployment for a key date e.g. as part of a population census [4]. Yet this calculation was not included in the national population census of 1987. An attempt is made here to estimate the unemployment rate within the *Aussiedler* community at the end of September 1988. This is done by dividing the number of *Aussiedler* registered as unemployed at the end of September 1988 by the total *Aussiedler* working population (of working age) on a cumulative basis for the previous five years 1984 - 1988 (i.e. those qualifying under the definition of unemployed *Aussiedler* under the five year rule). This gives the following calculation:

[4] This information was given by staff at the BfA (Nuremberg) during 1993 in reply to my request for data on the level of unemployment within the *Aussiedler* group.

Table 6.4

Estimating the rate of unemployment within the *Aussiedler* community in September 1988

1.	Registered number of unemployed *Aussiedler* at the end of September 1988:	72,747
2.	Number of *Aussiedler* arriving in West Germany for resettlement during the preceding five years 1984 - 1988 registered as seeking employment (working population) [5]:	201,080
3.	Calculation of the estimated percentage rate of unemployment within the *Aussiedler* community:	
	Unemployment Rate:	**36%**

Sources:
1. *Informationen* 1991: 10
2. *Arbeitsmarkt in Zahlen - Aussiedler - Berichtsmonat September 1993* Table 2.

It has to be pointed out that this calculation is subject to a series of qualifications. The calculation of the working population (201,080) does not for example take account of those *Aussiedler* who have left the pool of working *Aussiedler* during the period 1984 - 1988 as a result of reaching retirement age, those leaving work to look after their children and those becoming unavailable for work due to illness. Having said that, those leaving the pool would have been compensated for to an extent by those young *Aussiedler* entering the pool of working *Aussiedler* who had completed their education and become part of the working population.

[5] The total of 201,080 is calculated by adding the following totals of working *Aussiedler*:
1984: 18,230 1985: 19,484 1986: 23,606
1987: 41,640 1988: 98,120
The totals for 1984 and 1985 are estimated on the basis that 50% of *Aussiedler* arriving for resettlement are classified as seeking employment (*Erwerbstätige*). The BfA stated in 1991 that the percentage had traditionally been around the 50% level (*Informationen* 1991:11). The totals for 1986, 1987 and 1988 are official figures.

This estimated unemployment rate of 36% is broadly in line with the figure of 30% estimated by Gugel in 1990 and higher than the 25% figure given by the Federal Administration Office in 1990. This estimate of 36% compares very unfavourably with the national unemployment rate in 1988 of 8.7% for the FRG (*Statistisches Jahrbuch* 1989: 106). On the basis of the 36% figure, the unemployment rate within the *Aussiedler* community in September 1988 would be more than four times as high as the national unemployment rate. The findings support the argument that the unemployment rate within the *Aussiedler* community in 1988 was indeed significantly high in September 1988, contradicting government claims made in 1988 on the good prospects for *Aussiedler* to find employment.

6.5 Government optimism in 1988 on the ability to integrate the rising number of *Aussiedler* into the employment market

During the months leading up to the announcement of the Special *Aussiedler* Assistance Programme and the decision to continue the open-door *Aussiedler* policy, the government expressed optimism over the task of integrating the rising number of *Aussiedler* into the employment market. Rather than recognising the uncontrolled steep rise in *Aussiedler* immigration levels as a potential problem, Chancellor Kohl considered their arrival to be a benefit to the West German economy (Kohl 1988a: 2).

The government's optimism over the ability to successfully integrate *Aussiedler* into the employment market was based, amongst others, on the following three main points of argument:

1. **Use of *Aussiedler* to fill vacancies in the employment market**
   It was stated that *Aussiedler* immigration not only resulted in an expansion in the overall size of the national work force, but that they also brought with them employment skills (e.g. craft trades such as carpentry and plumbing) which would enable them to find employment quickly upon arrival [6]. It further stated that

[6] The data available on the employment structure among *Aussiedler* showed that they were

Aussiedler frequently filled vacancies left vacant for long periods due to a lack of qualified personnel. It cited the example of the hotel and catering industry as one such sector. It further claimed that the arrival of the *Aussiedler* presented the economy with what it called a real opportunity for additional growth (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.5 1989: 2). Parliamentary State Secretary Erich Riedl pointed out that there were openings for the *Aussiedler* in the services sector (*Sonderprogramm zur Eingliederung der Aussiedler* 1988b: 24).

The government stated that due to the problems experienced in the West German population structure, and the expected fall in the number of persons of working age, the economy would require a further 900,000 people within the next five years to stem the decline. It pointed out that some 60,000 apprenticeship vacancies for young people were expected to remain unfilled during 1989 (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.8 1989: 25).

2. Increased demand in the economy created by *Aussiedler* immigration

Waffenschmidt pointed out that an annual influx of some 200,000 *Aussiedler* would create an increased demand in the economy for goods and services (*Sonderprogramm zur Eingliederung der Aussiedler* 1988b: 25). The arriving *Aussiedler* not only required food and clothing, but also durable goods, housing and transport, which in turn would help create additional employment.

3. *Aussiedler* as a motivated work force

Aussiedler were considered by the government to be a particularly motivated work force. It believed that this characteristic would enable *Aussiedler* to achieve a smooth transition into the West German employment market, while also being an asset to their future employers (*Die Aussiedler sind ein vielfältiger Gewinn* 1988: 2). Riedl claimed that *Aussiedler* workers were well qualified, flexible, hardworking, reliable and motivated (*Sonderprogramm zur Eingliederung der Aussiedler* 1988b: 24).

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well represented (compared to the national work force) in the craft and trades sectors (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.4 1989: 9).

Waffenschmidt summarised the government's optimism over the position of the *Aussiedler* in the national employment market by declaring (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.5 1989: 2):

"I also believe that for the employment market, the arrival of our compatriots means a real opportunity, one which we must point out still more clearly."

The sense of optimism voiced by the government in 1988 was in part due to the improved unemployment figures for that year (as shown in Table 6.3). Furthermore the Gross National Product (GNP) had risen by 3.4 % in 1988 (*Jahresbericht der Bundesregierung* 1988: 331). This was the highest growth in GNP since 1979. In its annual report for 1988, the government pointed to the following positive indicators recorded during 1988 (compared to 1987) to justify its optimism over the future growth in the economy (*Jahresbericht der Bundesregierung* 1988: 331-2):

1. Some 5.9 % more jobs had been found for the unemployed during 1988.

2. Some 6.1 % more vacancies had been registered by the local employment offices (*Arbeitsämter*) during 1988.

3. There had been a 25% reduction in the number of those registered in short-time work.

4. There had been a 17% reduction in youth unemployment for those under 20 years of age.

6.6 Employment integration measures contained in the 1988 Special *Aussiedler* Assistance Programme

In seeking to tackle the problem of *Aussiedler* unemployment, the government announced the implementation of a Special *Aussiedler* Assistance Programme during August 1988. Employment integration formed a major focal point for this

assistance programme. The programme contained the following measures to tackle the problem of *Aussiedler* unemployment (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.1 1988: 11-5):

1. Increased use of German language tuition courses. The aim was to prevent *Aussiedler* from suffering unemployment and isolation as a result of having insufficient German language skills.

2. An improvement in the process for translating *Aussiedler* employment qualifications. The criterion for deciding whether *Aussiedler* qualifications were of equal value to West German qualifications would be up-dated in order to assist in this recognition process.

3. Increased money was to be made available to assist the integration of those *Aussiedler* under the age of 35 years, financing necessary retraining and apprenticeships.

4. The use of work-experience and retraining schemes for unemployed *Aussiedler*.

5. Subsidised loans (up to a maximum of DM 40,000 per applicant) were made available for those *Aussiedler* wishing to become self-employed in the professions.

6. Subsidised loans were made available for those *Aussiedler* wishing to set up either on a part-time or full-time basis in agriculture.

Two particularly important forms of help made available under this assistance programme were the improved qualification translation measures and employment retraining schemes. The problem experienced in seeking to match *Aussiedler* qualifications with the corresponding West German qualifications was recognised as a specific contributory cause for *Aussiedler* unemployment (*Bestandsaufnahme* 1988: 69) [7]. The translation and matching of qualifications was to be carried out by

[7] A government report (1988) on *Aussiedler* integration pointed out that to merely declare specific *Aussiedler* employment qualifications to be of equal value to West German qualifications did not

the federal state in which the *Aussiedler* was resident. The costs incurred for the translation was to be borne by the local employment office (*Arbeitsamt*) if the translation was necessary for the *Aussiedler* in the course of applying for employment.

Placing increased emphasis on *Aussiedler* employment retraining reflected the government's attempt to tackle the problem of limited technological skills, a further identified cause of *Aussiedler* unemployment (*Bestandsaufnahme* 1988: 81-2) [8]. The programme recognised the need for *Aussiedler* to retrain in new skills if the *Aussiedler* were to have equal chances in their search for employment. The government was optimistic that this assistance programme would provide the framework for a speedy and efficient integration into West German society. It further saw this help as a significant contribution in enabling these *Aussiedler* to come to terms with the demands put on them by a modern western industrial society (*Aussiedler - Arbeitshilfen* 1991: foreword).

6.7 Optimism expressed by the Institute of the German Economy on the issue of *Aussiedler* employment integration

The issue of *Aussiedler* integration and the economic implications of *Aussiedler* immigration were addressed in the study conducted by the Institute of the German Economy (IW) previously referred to in chapter five [9]. This study sought to assess the economic implications for the West German economy resulting from the increased level of *Aussiedler* immigration recorded since 1987. The Interior Ministry referred to the findings of the IW study in seeking to show that its decision to maintain the open-door policy was in the economy's best interests. The findings of the study in relation to the demographic and fiscal implications have already been

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make them acceptable to employers. The equating of qualifications led *Aussiedler* to over-estimate the value of their qualifications, making their integration more difficult (*Bestandsaufnahme* 1988: 69).

[8] The issue of specific causes of *Aussiedler* unemployment is covered in chapter seven.

[9] As was pointed out in chapter five, the IW has close links with German private industry and arguably considered the implications of increased *Aussiedler* immigration from an employer's point of view. The IW was commissioned by the government Press and Information Office to carry out the *Aussiedler* study (*Perspektiven* 1989: 840).

discussed in chapter five. The study made the following optimistic main points with regard to *Aussiedler* employment integration under the government's open-door *Aussiedler* policy:

1. It claimed that the *Aussiedler* influx would result in a partial correction in the weaknesses identified in the national employment market. This was a reference to the vacancies that continued to exist in certain sectors of the economy, such as in hotel and catering. The study further claimed that the increased number of *Aussiedler* would enable such vacancies to be filled (Leciejewski 1989: 2-4).

2. It stated that the economy would benefit from the resulting increased demand for consumer goods and services created in the economy by the rising level of *Aussiedler* immigration. It points to the expected prolonged nature of this positive effect on the economy, as the *Aussiedler* influx was likely to continue for several years to come (Vogel 1989: 6-7).

3. It claimed that the arrival of the *Aussiedler* would ensure an increased utilisation of national training schemes and programmes. It further claimed that the West German economy required the additional young *Aussiedler* work force in order to reduce the excess training capacity and unfilled apprenticeship positions that existed in the economy (Leciejewski 1989: 4).

6.7.1 Questionable assumptions made on *Aussiedler* employment

Although the influx of *Aussiedler* brought with it benefits, with regard to the population structure and increased demand for goods and services, the following assumptions made in the IW study with regard to *Aussiedler* employment are questionable:

1. The study claimed that the arriving *Aussiedler* were sufficiently qualified to enter the West German employment market, which was characterised by the rising demand for qualified employees (Leciejewski 1989: 4).

2. It expected *Aussiedler* to be highly motivated. It saw their decision to start a new life in West Germany as evidence of such motivation (Leciejewski 1989: 4).

3. It assumed that the *Aussiedler* would be a mobile work force, one which could succeed in filling existing vacancies in particular sectors and geographical regions, thereby helping to correct the structural problems in the national employment market (Vogel 1989: 17).

The assumptions made by the study on the apparently well qualified *Aussiedler*, their motivation and mobility were not backed by findings made by the BfA in its *Aussiedler* experience report for 1988. The report had actually documented the lack of employment qualifications held by *Aussiedler*, their lack of self-initiative in searching for employment and little willingness to move to other locations in order to take up employment. The report stated (*Arbeitsmarktanalyse* 1989: 642):

"Nearly all Aussiedler require the help of the state and society as their self-help ability is limited."

While the IW study acknowledged that future difficulties could be experienced in their employment integration, it saw the cause of this difficulty in the sheer numbers to be integrated rather than acknowledging that the *Aussiedler* group had specific causes for their rising unemployment (Vogel 1989: 17). The study arguably failed to give sufficient consideration to the specific causes of *Aussiedler* unemployment and instead maintained the overall optimistic approach adopted by the government on their employment integration. Furthermore, the study failed to give sufficient consideration of the significant role played by housing in relation to *Aussiedler* mobility. There had been a marked decline in the level of housing being constructed during the 1980s, with the number of completed new homes falling from some 367,000 in 1984 to 196,000 in 1987 (*Der Spiegel* no.50 1988: 67) [10]. Their inability

[10] Of the 161,200 planning applications approved by the federal authorities for new housing in the first nine months of 1988, some three-quarters were for owner-occupied houses and flats. This left only one-quarter in the rented sector, the very sector which *Aussiedler* particularly relied upon in view of their limited financial resources (*Der Spiegel* no. 50 1988: 73).

to move out of their temporary accommodation within a short period of time in turn made their search for employment increasingly difficult.

The IW study accepted that the integration of *Aussiedler* into the West German employment market would be the deciding factor if the process of *Aussiedler* integration was to succeed in the long-term (Vogel 1989: 17). The optimism expressed both by the government and the IW also contrasted with the findings contained in an internal government document (published in March 1988) prepared in the planning stage for the Special *Aussiedler* Assistance Programme. This government document stated (*Bestandsaufnahme* 1988: 80-1):

"According to the findings of the Employment Department, the difficulties experienced in placing them in employment, compared with previously, have increased. The competition situation for Aussiedler and immigrants, compared to other unemployed who also have good employment qualifications and employment training have become more acute [...]. The placement difficulties can only partially be overcome with the help of the envisaged financial assistance for their integration."

Thus the optimism expressed by both government and the IW also contrasted with the findings contained in the internal government document of March 1988 (*Bestandsaufnahme)* on *Aussiedler* integration. But rather than considering the likely difficulties faced by the *Aussiedler* in seeking employment and the specific causes of *Aussiedler* unemployment, the IW study appeared to be more concerned with giving support to the open-door *Aussiedler* policy. In approving the continued operation of the open-door policy, the IW was arguably welcoming the expected accompanying downward pressure on wage levels and further deregulation in the employment market.

6.8 The relevance of structural changes in the West German economy

Another important issue that was not specifically considered in the IW study, was the question of how the structural changes underway in the West German economy since the 1970s might hinder improved *Aussiedler* employment integration. This section considers that potential additional barrier to their employment integration, addressing the question of whether the employment experience and skills *Aussiedler* brought with them were in demand. It serves to provide a further dimension to addressing the question of whether the *Aussiedler* would, as the government believed, be able to integrate into the employment market without major difficulties under its open-door policy.

In his statement of government policy in March 1987, Chancellor Kohl stated that the FRG faced major structural changes in its economy, with the economy requiring adjustments to implement the necessary changes (1987: 20-1). In the primary sector of the economy, the traditional heavy industries of coal and steel continued to shed excess labour as the EU (formerly EEC) member states sought to reduce their excess capacity and become more competitive in international markets [11]. In addition, the agricultural and forestry sectors continued to reduce the numbers employed as a result of increasing automation [12]. While the numbers employed in manufacturing stagnated, the numbers employed in the service sector had continued to increase [13].

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[11] Between 1980 and 1990, the number of jobs in the West German mining and extractive sector declined by 11.1% (Wolf-Doettinchen ...*et al* 1995: 14).

[12] Between 1980 and 1990, the number of jobs in the West German forestry and agricultural sector declined by 12.5% (Wolf-Doettinchen ...*et al* 1995: 14).

[13] Between 1980 and 1990, the number of jobs in manufacturing fell by 19.8%. The number of jobs in the West German services sector increased as follows (Wolf-Doettinchen ...*et al* 1995: 14): 1. Private service sector: +16.9% 2. Public service sector: +13.1%

In 1987 some three-quarters of the new jobs in the West German economy were created in the services sector, particularly in banking, insurance, media and education (Härtel ...*et al* 1988: 247).

The Bundesbank annual report for 1987 pointed out that the majority of the 180,000 additional jobs created on average per month in the economy during 1988 were in the services sector, while the number of jobs in manufacturing stagnated and those in the construction sector fell (*Geschäftsbericht* 1988: 10).

In view of such structural changes, it was relevant to look at the composition of the *Aussiedler* work force entering West Germany during the late 1980s in order to assess whether a smooth integration into the employment market under the open-door policy was realistic. An analysis of the composition of the *Aussiedler* work force in the year 1988 will enable an assessment to be made as to whether they were concentrated in those sectors of the economy undergoing structural decline. The following Table compares the *Aussiedler* arriving in 1988 by job classification (i.e. their previous employment before emigrating) with those of the national working population:

Table 6.5

Employment composition for *Aussiedler* arriving during 1988

Employment sector categories	Number of *Aussiedler* previously employed in the sector	% of the *Aussiedler* work force arriving during 1988	For comparison: % of the national work force employed in the sector
Craft trades & Manufacturing:	47,831	48.7	36.5
Service sector:	39,009	39.7	54.3
Technical:	7,340	7.5	6.9
Mining & Extractive:	2,247	2.3	0.6
Agriculture & Forestry:	1,630	1.7	1.5
Not classified:	63	0.1	0.2
Total:	98,120	100	100

Source: Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler no.4 1989: 9

When comparing the percentage figures contained in Table 6.5 for *Aussiedler* with the percentages employed nationally in those sectors, *Aussiedler* showed themselves to be over represented in the craft trades and manufacturing sectors of the economy. Nearly half of all working *Aussiedler* (48.7%) arriving in 1988 came into those sectors, while nationally just over one third of the work force (36.5%) was engaged

in such sectors. It can further be seen that the *Aussiedler* were under represented in the service sector of the economy previously noted as the future growth area. *Aussiedler* only accounted for 39.7% of the persons employed in the service sector, constituting the second most important category for *Aussiedler* after craft trades and manufacturing. This compared to the 54.3% employed nationally in the service sector of the economy. The *Aussiedler* were also over represented in the mining and extractive industries with 2.3%, compared to only 0.6% of the national work force.

The comparison made between the employment structure for both *Aussiedler* and the national work force in 1988 showed that *Aussiedler* were indeed over represented in those sectors where firstly employment qualifications were not necessarily required, and secondly in those sectors subjected to the structural changes underway in the West German economy [14]. Meanwhile they were under represented in the service sector, in which the highest growth rate in jobs was expected in the future. The data thus did not give support to the optimism expressed by the government over the ability of *Aussiedler* to achieve a speedy integration into the employment market under a continued open-door *Aussiedler* policy. It can be further argued that those *Aussiedler* over represented in manual work were particularly vulnerable to facing unemployment, as they would be among the first to be affected by the continued structural changes taking place in the West German economy as automation gathered pace, replacing workers in the process.

Just as migrant labour had previously been used in the FRG (prior to 1973) as a buffer to counterbalance cyclical fluctuations in economic growth (Leaman 1988b: 157), the immigrant work force could be expanded or contracted according to the economy's requirements, thereby performing a buffer function. Leaman points out that such flexible immigrant groups could be deployed so as to cushion the effects of the technological changes taking place in the West German economy (1988b: 157). *Aussiedler* could similarly perform such a buffer function. While the German work

[14] Statistics released by the BfA for 1988 showed that while only 0.8% of the population were employed in the category of manual work, the figure for *Aussiedler* was 7.1% and therefore significantly higher. Furthermore, while 19.2% of the working population was employed in the administration and office work category, the figure for *Aussiedler* was only 10.8% (*Arbeitsmarktanalyse* 1989: 644).

force is able to move into management positions, the less qualified immigrants are left to fill the unskilled and comparatively insecure jobs in the economy.

6.9 Tensions between government optimism and statistical data on future developments in *Aussiedler* unemployment

The optimism expressed by Chancellor Kohl's government and the IW contrasted to the evidence available in 1988 on the trends evident in *Aussiedler* unemployment since 1985. The statistics outlined in this chapter showed an upward trend in *Aussiedler* unemployment between 1985 and 1988, with the *Aussiedler* percentage within the total unemployed also continuing to rise. The data suggested that *Aussiedler* unemployment was moving in a precarious upward trend. The data further suggested that there was a correlation (not absolute) between *Aussiedler* unemployment and the level of *Aussiedler* immigration.

The *Aussiedler* were under represented in the services sector, where growth in jobs was expected, while being over represented in the manufacturing and manual work sectors which were shedding labour. The employment profile of the *Aussiedler* arriving for resettlement in 1988 largely did not fit the profile being demanded by the restructured West German economy of the late 1980s. In maintaining the open-door policy, the government was arguably ignoring the statistical evidence and indicators on *Aussiedler* unemployment available in 1988. It was questionable whether the employment market would indeed be able to absorb the rising number of *Aussiedler* expected to arrive in future years under the government's open-door policy. It was probable that *Aussiedler* unemployment levels would continue to rise if the steep rises recorded in *Aussiedler* immigration during 1988 continued in future years.

CHAPTER SEVEN

TRENDS IN *AUSSIEDLER* UNEMPLOYMENT AND ITS SPECIFIC CAUSES

7. Trends in *Aussiedler* unemployment and its specific causes

7.1 The need to consider the government's optimism on *Aussiedler* employment integration

In view of the optimism expressed by Chancellor Kohl's government over the ability of the employment market to absorb the rising influx of *Aussiedler* under the open-door policy, this chapter will consider whether that optimism was justified or exaggerated in the light of the subsequent developments between 1988 and 1992. The government relied on a combination of its Special *Aussiedler* Assistance Programme, the employment market and also the solidarity of the public and employers towards the *Aussiedler*. It was questionable whether government reliance on such forms of help would be sufficient to achieve the aim of successful *Aussiedler* employment integration. In addition to analysing the statistical data and trends on *Aussiedler* unemployment for the period 1988 to 1992, this chapter identifies and discusses the causes of unemployment specific to the *Aussiedler* group. A comparison will be made between those causes identified by the BfA in 1988 and those identified by the BfA during the course of the period of study, analysing whether these specific causes were successfully tackled over the five year period.

7.2 The relevance of confining the research on *Aussiedler* unemployment to former West Germany

At the time that this thesis was planned, German unification was not on the political agenda or likely in the foreseeable future, so that the study was confined to focusing on the open-door *Aussiedler* policy in West Germany. The political and economic

union between East and West Germany in 1990 required a decision to be made as to whether the research should also include *Aussiedler* employment integration in the new *Bundesländer* (federal states) for the period October 1990 - December 1992. The decision was made to continue to confine the statistical research to former West Germany for the rest of the period of study (until 31 December 1992). This decision was based on the following three grounds:

1. The BfA continued to collate and release data on *Aussiedler* unemployment for both former East and West Germany after unification, enabling separate data to be obtained for *Aussiedler* unemployment covering West Germany.

2. The great majority of *Aussiedler* arriving in the unified Germany were still being allocated to the old *Bundesländer* (former West Germany). The following Table shows the number and proportion of *Aussiedler* allocated annually to the new *Bundesländer* (former East Germany) following unification:

Table 7.1

Number and percentage of *Aussiedler* allocated to the new *Bundesländer* (former East Germany) 1990 - 1992

Year of arrival	Total allocated to the new *Bundesländer*	% of all *Aussiedler* arriving in Germany
1990	259	0.1
1991	16,768	7.6
1992	34,285	14.9

Source: *Bundesverwaltungsamt*, Cologne 1993

The data contained in Table 7.1 show that the allocation to the new *Bundesländer* was less than 1% of all *Aussiedler* in 1990, only slowly increasing to some 15% in 1992. The number of *Aussiedler* to be allocated to the new *Bundesländer* was laid down in the Unification Treaty (*Einigungsvertrag* 1990: 899). The Treaty stated that a maximum 20% of *Aussiedler* could be allocated to the new

Bundesländer from 1 December 1990 onwards (*Arbeitsmarkt* 1991: 715). This 20% level was agreed upon between central and federal state governments, to be achieved in a step-by-step process over a number of years (*Arbeitsmarkt* 1993: 886). This comparatively small allocation between 1990 and 1992 reflected the government's view that former East Germany already had major economic difficulties in restructuring its economy, and therefore should avoid additional economic strains on the region through having to integrate a rising number of *Aussiedler*.

3. One of the aims of this thesis is to achieve coherence in the statistical data and calculations made. By continuing to confine the unemployment statistics to former West Germany for the period between 1990 and 1992, it allows such coherence to be maintained and avoids possible confusion through the use of an additional set of figures. There seemed little point in presenting one set of figures until October 1990 and then introducing a split series of statistics for analysis purposes for both former West and East Germany when the size of the *Aussiedler* allocation to the new *Bundesländer* (as seen in Table 7.1) between 1990 and 1992 was not significant.

It was thus concluded that leaving out the new *Bundesländer* would not invalidate the findings on the problem of *Aussiedler* unemployment between 1988 and 1992. While the annual *Aussiedler* immigration figures referred to in this chapter are those registered nationally between 1988 and 1992, both the *Aussiedler* and national unemployment figures referred to are those for the old *Bundesländer* to allow running comparisons with previous years.

7.3 Statistical developments in *Aussiedler* unemployment between 1988 and 1992

The BfA released the following data on *Aussiedler* unemployment for the period 1988 - 1992 as registered at the end of September for consecutive years [1]:

[1] The average monthly level of unemployment during the period 1990 - 1992 was as follows:

Table 7.2

***Aussiedler* unemployment between 1988 and 1992**

Year (end of Sept.)	Total number of unemployed *Aussiedler*	% Change on last year	*Aussiedler* unemployment as a % of total national unemployment
1988	72,747	+ 99	3.5
1989	111,806	+ 54	5.6
1990	156,741	+ 40	9
1991	134,405	- 14	8.4
1992	131,824	- 1.9	7.4

Source: Arbeitsmarkt in Zahlen - Aussiedler - Berichtsmonat September 1993 Table 2.

The data contained in Table 7.2 show an upward trend in the level of *Aussiedler* unemployment between 1988 and 1990. The unemployment total recorded in September 1989 of some 112,000 represented an increase of some 54% compared to the 73,000 registered in September 1988 (having risen by 99% compared to that month of the previous year). *Aussiedler* unemployment continued to rise during the period 1989 to 1990, increasing by some 40% from 112,000 to 157,000 . Furthermore, the percentage for unemployed *Aussiedler* in relation to the total national unemployed also rose between September 1988 and September 1990. While the unemployed *Aussiedler* only comprised some 3.5% of the national unemployed total in 1988, this subsequently rose to 5.6% in 1989 and to 9% in 1990.

The data available for the period 1988 to 1990 suggested that *Aussiedler* could indeed become a problem group within the unemployment statistics over the following twelve months (i.e. by September 1991), unless either the level of *Aussiedler* immigration fell or the employment market improved sufficiently to absorb more *Aussiedler* in search of employment. The statistics between 1988 and

1990: 146,200 1991: 140,600 1992: 134,600
(*Arbeitsmarkt in Zahlen - Aussiedler - Berichtsmonat Dezember* 1991, Table 6
Arbeitsmarkt in Zahlen - Aussiedler - Berichtsmonat Dezember 1993, Table 6).

1990 suggested that the integration of *Aussiedler* was not succeeding as quickly as envisaged by the government in 1988. The rise in the number of unemployed *Aussiedler* indicated that either the employment market was not able to absorb the increasing number of *Aussiedler* arriving for resettlement, or that the competitive position of the *Aussiedler* was continuing to suffer because of the specific causes of *Aussiedler* unemployment.

Yet a turning point was recorded in 1991, with the statistics for unemployed *Aussiedler* at the end of September 1991 (see Table 7.2) showing a fall in the overall total compared to that for the previous year of 14%. This had been the first fall recorded in the September statistics since 1986. A further reduction (although slight) was registered in 1992, falling by 1.9% to some 131,800 while their percentage of the national unemployed also fell to below the 9% level in 1991 and below 8% in 1992.

7.3.1 *Aussiedler* unemployment in relation to *Aussiedler* immigration between 1988 and 1992

The statistical evidence for the period 1987 to 1988, as previously outlined in chapter six, had shown that there was a possible correlation (although not absolute) between the level of *Aussiedler* immigration and *Aussiedler* unemployment. The issue is also considered for the period 1988 to 1992, in order to see whether the statistics provided further evidence to back the argument of such a correlation. Evidence of such a correlation existing for the period 1988 - 1992 would in turn further support the argument that the decision to maintain the open-door *Aussiedler* policy in 1988 was likely to lead to a continued rise in *Aussiedler* unemployment if *Aussiedler* immigration figures rose. The relevant statistics for the period 1988 to 1992 on the levels of *Aussiedler* immigration and *Aussiedler* unemployment are shown in the following Table:

Table 7.3

***Aussiedler* immigration and *Aussiedler* unemployment 1988 - 1992**

Year	Total *Aussiedler* immigration (annual)	% Change on previous year	Total *Aussiedler* unemployment (end of Sept.)	% Change on previous year
1988	202,645	+ 258	72,747	+ 99
1989	377,042	+ 86	111,806	+ 54
1990	397,067	+ 5.3	156,741	+ 40
1991	221,974	- 44	134,405	- 14
1992	230,489	+ 3.8	131,824	- 1.9

Sources: 1. *Arbeitsmarkt in Zahlen - Aussiedler - Berichtsmonat September* 1993 Table 2

2. *Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.45 1993: 4

The figures in the above Table 7.3 show that the rises in *Aussiedler* immigration totals between 1988 and 1990 were indeed paralleled by rises in *Aussiedler* unemployment registered between September 1988 and September 1990. While the level of *Aussiedler* immigration rose by 258%, 86% and 5.3% respectively between 1988 and 1990, the number of unemployed *Aussiedler* rose by 99%, 54% and 40% respectively in the same years. The statistics further show that the *Aussiedler* immigration level reached a near stable situation in 1990, being merely some 5% higher than in 1989. While the immigration influx levelled out, the continued rise in *Aussiedler* unemployment registered in September 1990 (+40%) suggested that the *Aussiedler* were still experiencing difficulties in employment integration.

A similar development was recorded between the level of *Aussiedler* immigration and *Aussiedler* unemployment figures for 1991 and 1992. While a significant fall was recorded during 1991 in the level of immigration (-44%), followed by a slight rise in 1992 (+3.8%), the level of *Aussiedler* unemployment fell in those two successive years by 14% and 1.9% respectively. The further fall in *Aussiedler* unemployment registered in September 1992, while the immigration level continued

to rise, on the surface seemed to contradict the argument that there was a link between these two variables. Yet the percentage spread between these two variables of +4% and -1.9% respectively in each of those years was not significant enough to invalidate the claim that there was a parallel development between the two variables.

7.3.2 Relationship between *Aussiedler* unemployment and the overall national unemployment level 1988 - 1992

The *Aussiedler* unemployment figures are now considered against the overall unemployment figures to clarify whether there was a possible correlation between these two variables for the period 1988 to 1992. The following Table contains data on *Aussiedler* unemployment and national unemployment for that period:

Table 7.4

National and *Aussiedler* unemployment levels

September 1988 - September 1992*

Year	Total unemployed nationally (million) (end of Sept.)	% Change on last year	Total unemployed *Aussiedler* (end of Sept.)	% Change on last year
1988	2.10	- 0.3	72,747	+ 99
1989	1.88	- 10.5	111,806	+ 54
1990	1.73	- 8	156,741	+ 40
1991	1.61	- 6.9	134,405	- 14
1992	1.78	+ 10.6	131,824	- 1.9

* Figures for total unemployed for the period 1990 - 1992 are those for the old *Bundesländer.*

Sources: 1. *Arbeitsmarkt in Zahlen - Aussiedler - Berichtsmonat* September 1993 Table 2

2. *Statistisches Jahrbuch* 1990: 110; 1991: 129; 1992: 126; 1993: 127

After the national unemployment total fell to below the two million level in September 1989, as shown in Table 7.4, the downward trend continued until September 1991 following German unification (October 1990) and increased economic activity in former West Germany. In direct contrast, the *Aussiedler* unemployment figures showed significant rises in September 1989 and September 1990 of 54% and 40% respectively. It was only in September 1991 that both sets of unemployment figures showed a similar downward movement. Yet the contrasting developments shown for 1989 and 1990 continued in September 1992, with the level of national unemployment rising by some 10.6%, while the *Aussiedler* unemployment total registered a fall (although small) of 1.9%.

These two sets of unemployment figures, considered side-by-side, did not provide a basis for identifying a possible correlation between the levels of national unemployment and *Aussiedler* unemployment during the period 1988 to 1992. This confirmed the findings made in chapter six, in which such a correlation could also not be identified between the two sets of unemployment figures for the period 1985 to 1988. On the basis of the statistics for the consecutive September months, it is arguable that while the state of the economy had an influence on the ability of the *Aussiedler* to integrate into the employment market, the level of *Aussiedler* unemployment was more closely linked to the level of *Aussiedler* immigration as shown previously in Table 7.3.

7.3.3 Estimating the rate of unemployment within the *Aussiedler* community in 1992

It was estimated in chapter six, that the rate of unemployment within the *Aussiedler* community in September 1988 was 36%. The Federal Administration Office (BVA) had in 1990 confirmed that some 25% of *Aussiedler* were still unemployed some 6 months after having completed language and employment training courses (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler, Sonderausgabe* August 1990: 19). It was pointed out that the estimated percentage of *Aussiedler* unemployment in September 1988 was therefore four times higher than the national unemployment rate at that time. It

is appropriate to compare the unemployment situation for *Aussiedler* at the end of the period of study 1992 with that in 1988, by estimating the unemployment rate within the *Aussiedler* community in September 1992 and comparing the figures.

The estimated unemployment rate within the *Aussiedler* community in September 1992 is calculated by dividing the number of *Aussiedler* registered as unemployed at the end of September 1992 by the total *Aussiedler* working population (of working age) on a cumulative basis for the previous five years 1988 - 1992 (i.e. those qualifying as *Aussiedler* under the five year rule). This gives the following calculation (subject to the same qualifications made in chapter six section 6.4.4):

Table 7.5

Estimating the rate of unemployment within the *Aussiedler* community in September 1992

1.	Registered number of unemployed *Aussiedler* at the end of September 1992:	**131,824**
2.	Number of *Aussiedler* arriving in West Germany for resettlement during the preceding five years 1988 - 1992 registered as seeking employment (working population) [2]:	723,502
3.	Calculation of the estimated percentage rate of unemployment within the *Aussiedler* community:	
	Unemployment Rate:	**18%**

Sources: 1. *Arbeitsmarkt in Zahlen - Aussiedler - Berichtsmonat September 1993* Table 2

2. *Jahresstatistik* 1989: 10; 1990: 8; 1991: 8; 1992: 3; 1993: 3

[2] The total of 723,502 is calculated by adding the following totals of working *Aussiedler*:

1988: 98,120	1989: 196,288	1990: 192,889
1991: 116,316	1992: 119,889	

This estimated 18% unemployment rate for September 1992 compares favourably to the 36% unemployment rate calculated in chapter six for September 1988. This figure of 18% suggests that the absorption rate by the employment market had improved since 1988, even though the actual total number of unemployed *Aussiedler* in September 1992 (131,824) was some 81% higher than the total for September 1988 (72,747). While the 36% rate calculated for 1988 was four times higher than the national unemployment rate, the 18% *Aussiedler* unemployment rate in 1992 was still three times higher than the overall unemployment rate for the old *Bundesländer* in September 1992 of 5.9% (*Deutsche Bundesbank Monatsbericht Juni* 1993: 7) [3]. This unemployment rate of 18% for September 1992 supports the argument that the unemployment rate within the *Aussiedler* community itself was indeed significantly higher than it was for the national employment market as a whole, contradicting government claims made in 1988 that the arriving *Aussiedler* had good prospects for finding employment.

The reduction in the approximate unemployment rate from 36% to 18% between 1988 and 1992 was influenced by two major factors. Firstly, the West German economy had experienced a marked upturn following economic and political unification in October 1990, with rising demand for West German goods and services resulting in a reduction in the unemployment totals from some 2.1 million in 1988 to 1.8 million (old *Bundesländer*) in 1992 (*Deutsche Bundesbank Monatsbericht Juni 1993*: 7). Secondly, the level of *Aussiedler* immigration dropped substantially between 1989 (377,042) and 1992 (230,489) following the implementation of the *Aussiedler* Resettlement Law in July 1990 [4].

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[3] The unemployment rate for the old *Bundesländer* (West Germany) of 5.9% compares with a rate of 14.2% in the new *Bundesländer* for the same month (*Deutsche Bundesbank Monatsbericht Juni* 1993: 7).

[4] The *Aussiedler* total for 1990 was 397,067 . The total fell in 1991 to 221,974 (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.45 1993: 4).

7.4 The link between an adjustment to the *Aussiedler* policy and the fall in *Aussiedler* unemployment 1991 - 1992

It is contended that a main reason for the decline registered in *Aussiedler* unemployment in 1991 and 1992, as shown in Table 7.2, was attributable to an adjustment made to the government's *Aussiedler* policy through the *Aussiedleraufnahmegesetz* (AAG - *Aussiedler* Resettlement Law). This adjustment, which came into force on 1 July 1990, arguably brought an end to the open-door policy as it had operated since the end of the Second World War. This law contained the following two significant amendments to the BVFG legislation:

1. Those *Aussiedler* wishing to resettle in Germany were first required to submit a written application to the BVA in Cologne [5]. With the exception of family hardship cases, *Aussiedler* applicants could only resettle in Germany after receiving written approval from the BVA (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.14 1990: 6). An administrative control measure was thereby built into the resettlement process, ending the previous situation whereby the German government could merely react to the number of *Aussiedler* who arrived for resettlement without prior approval.

2. A further condition was that those *Aussiedler* applying for resettlement from Poland, Yugoslavia or Hungary would no-longer be assumed to be under pressure to leave and emigrate (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.15 1990: 4). These applicants would in future have to satisfy the condition, previously interpreted liberally by the processing authorities, that they continued to suffer from discrimination and pressure to emigrate because of their German cultural ties (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.15 1990: 5). Meanwhile, those *Aussiedler* applying from the Soviet Union and Romania were considered to still satisfy this condition collectively and thereby exempted from this additional test for *Aussiedler* status (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.15 1990: 4). Despite the amendments brought about by the implementation of the AAG legislation, Interior

[5] The BVA sends out application forms to *Aussiedler* applying for resettlement and processes the applications subsequently received.

Minister Schäuble maintained that the door was still open for *Aussiedler* to resettle in Germany (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.15 1990: 5).

7.4.1 Consideration of government motives for implementing the *Aussiedler* Resettlement Law

In seeking to justify the amendments to its *Aussiedler* policy under the AAG law, the government gave the following two main grounds for this legal adjustment:

1. That the new *Aussiedler* law was a government response to the need for a more orderly process of resettlement. Interior Minister Schäuble declared (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler,* April Newsletter 1990: 21):

"Our standpoint, that the Federal Republic of Germany must also be open to German Aussiedler in the future, demands an orderly and efficient resettlement process."

2. There was a need to tighten up the definition of which cultural Germans were still considered to be under pressure to emigrate, a condition for being granted *Aussiedler* status. Increasingly liberal travel and emigration conditions existed in eastern and south-eastern European countries, particularly in Poland (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler*, April Newsletter 1990: 22-3).

The AAG law represented a significant adjustment to government *Aussiedler* policy. The government's decision to amend the *Aussiedler* policy can be explained with reference to the following three problems creating pressure for a reform of *Aussiedler* legislation:

1. <u>Integration problems</u>

The government had become increasingly concerned by the slow process of *Aussiedler* integration, and the difficulties they were experiencing in integrating into

the employment market. In an interview on the *Deutsche Welle* radio station, Waffenschmidt stated (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.18 1990: 11) [6]:

"It is not acceptable for Germans, who have often had tragic experiences, to have to be accommodated in sports halls and have to wait long periods for a job."

There was the possibility that they would become a distinct problem group in unemployment statistics unless the *Aussiedler* influx was reduced considerably. The Special *Aussiedler* Assistance Programme implemented in September 1988 had not proven successful in solving the *Aussiedler* employment integration problems. According to the government, the pressure put on the economy by the growing influx during 1990 (it had exceeded the 200,000 level by mid-June 1990) required a change in policy. Waffenschmidt declared (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.14 1990: 5):

"This experience makes it necessary to reorganise the Aussiedler resettlement process and to place it on a new basis."

In a further statement over the help that this new law would provide for *Aussiedler* integration, Waffenschmidt stated (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.18 1990: 10):

"Furthermore it shall enable the indigenous population and the responsible departments to allow for an improved acceptance and integration."

The government had to find a solution to the *Aussiedler* problem without appearing to go back on its guarantees given to *Aussiedler* that the open-door policy would continue to operate, having rejected annual quotas on the grounds that such quotas would be inhumane. By imposing the condition that *Aussiedler* had to obtain permission before emigrating, the number of approvals could theoretically be controlled by administrative means. This was possible by delaying the despatch of

[6] The problems caused by *Aussiedler* being accommodated in school sports halls and village halls was given widespread coverage in the West German press between 1988 and 1990 as *Aussiedler* immigration levels reached record figures. The inconvenience caused to local people by such measures attracted increasing public attention.

application forms and further by delaying the processing of the applications received by the BVA.

2. Pressure to tighten up *Aussiedler* legislation

The tightening up of *Aussiedler* legislation in 1990 was not altogether voluntary, but followed strong pressure from individual state governments to tighten up the definition of which areas in eastern and south-eastern Europe qualified as those in which the German minority continued to suffer discrimination and pressure to emigrate. In view of the reform process underway in Poland, Yugoslavia and Hungary since 1987, it had become increasingly difficult for the government to sustain the argument that *Aussiedler* from those countries continued to experience discrimination and pressure to leave because of their German ethnic and cultural ties. The *Bundesverfassungsgericht* (Federal Constitutional Court) had also pointed out the need for a reassessment of whether *Aussiedler* applicants were indeed suffering from discrimination and pressure to emigrate (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler*, April Newsletter 1990: 14).

3. The costs incurred by the resettlement and integration of *Aussiedler*

The cost of financing German unification was continuing to exert a considerable financial strain on government budgets. The rising cost of financing the resettlement and integration of an increasing number of *Aussiedler* since 1988 represented a further financial burden, with the future costs being hard to calculate while the open-door policy continued to operate without administrative controls [7].

The ultimate responsibility for their resettlement fell on the *Länder*, who had put pressure on the government to tighten up the definition of the *Aussiedler* status. Rather than being only a means to help create a more orderly resettlement process, the implementation of the AAG law signalled the introduction of an unofficial

[7] The cost of *Aussiedler* German language courses between 1976 and 1987 was estimated to be DM 3.4 billion (*Bestandsaufnahme* 1988: 6). The government in 1988 expected that the cost for language courses (and related living costs) for the foreseeable future would be some DM 850 million per annum (*Für ein neues Zuhause* 1988: section 3). The subsequent cost for 1988 was DM 800 million (*Arbeitsmarktanalyse* 1989: 647). The BfA in 1993 calculated that every 100,000 additional unemployed in former West Germany (not confined to *Aussiedler*) would cost DM 2.5 billion p.a. to finance. The corresponding figure for former East Germany was DM 1.7 billion p.a. (*Arbeitsmarkt-Entwicklung* 1993: 33).

Aussiedler quota by the government through administrative means. This adjustment to the *Aussiedler* policy was needed to reduce friction between central and state governments.

7.4.2 Declining levels of *Aussiedler* immigration following the implementation of the *Aussiedler* Resettlement Law

The implementation of the AAG law in July 1990 was followed by a significant reduction in the total number of *Aussiedler* arriving in Germany for resettlement. While their total had reached nearly 400,000 during 1990, the figure for 1991 fell significance to some 222,000 , a reduction compared to 1990 of some 45 % (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.45 1993: 4). Further evidence in support of the argument that this new legislation was effectively an unofficial quota, was contained in the government's declaration made in 1991 that it would aim for an annual intake figure of some 220,000 in future years. This annual immigration figure was seen by the government as an acceptable level of *Aussiedler* immigration (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.38 1993: 7). The subsequent immigration total of 230,500 *Aussiedler* arriving for resettlement during 1992 was arguably proof of the implementation of such an unofficial quota, lying close to the government's target of 220,000 p.a. (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.45 1993: 4).

The AAG law not only represented an attempt to gain control over the level of *Aussiedler* immigration, but can also be seen as evidence that the implementation of the assistance programme and reliance on employers showing solidarity towards *Aussiedler* would not alone suffice in tackling the issue of *Aussiedler* unemployment. As was shown in Table 7.2, the level of *Aussiedler* unemployment rose significantly in 1989 and 1990. The *Aussiedler* group comprised 9% of all registered unemployed in September 1990.

The level of *Aussiedler* unemployment did indeed fall by some 14% between September 1990 and 1991. This was considerably less than the 44% fall in *Aussiedler* immigration total for 1991, yet it has to be remembered that the

immigration figure relates to the period up to December 1991. Interestingly, just as the level of *Aussiedler* immigration reached a plateau in 1991 and 1992 (around 222,000 and 230,500 respectively), so did the *Aussiedler* unemployment level (134,400 and 131,800 respectively) at the end of September for those two years. Even after the implementation of the AAG law, the level of *Aussiedler* unemployment registered in September 1992 was still nearly double that which it had been in September 1988. It appears that the difficulties experienced by *Aussiedler* in finding employment were deep rooted and could not be corrected in the short-term. The statistics suggested that the causes of *Aussiedler* unemployment had still not been tackled effectively by September 1992, some four years after the special integration programme was implemented.

7.5 Consideration of the specific causes of *Aussiedler* unemployment

Causes of *Aussiedler* unemployment can be found among the traditional causes of unemployment that have been identified in the German employment market. These include the increased use of automation in industry leading to the shedding of labour and a decline in the number of jobs in the traditional industries, such as in manufacturing. It has already been pointed out in chapter six that *Aussiedler* arriving for resettlement were over represented (compared to the national work force) in those industries and types of jobs which were in decline, but under represented in the services sector, the growth sector in the economy.

In the case of *Aussiedler*, additional causes can be identified as contributing to their difficulties in securing employment. The BfA pointed out that the rise in *Aussiedler* unemployment levels was not alone caused by rising *Aussiedler* immigration, but reflected integration problems specific to the *Aussiedler* group itself (*Informationen* 1991: 12-3). An accurate assessment of the *Aussiedler* unemployment problem can only be made with a clear statement of these specific causes. The Interior Ministry identified the following main specific causes of *Aussiedler* unemployment in 1988 (*Die Leistungen des Bundes* 1988: 14-5; *Bestandsaufnahme* 1988: 81-2):

1. The difficulty of matching *Aussiedler* employment qualifications with the appropriate West German employment qualifications.

2. Significant numbers of *Aussiedler* arriving for resettlement did not have an adequate command of the German language, which in turn hindered their integration into the employment market.

3. *Aussiedler* had gained their employment experiences in central planned economies which operated differently from the West German market economy.

4. *Aussiedler* had comparatively limited technical skills, making their integration into an increasingly computerised and technical economy more difficult. They furthermore held job titles and experience which were not particularly in demand in the West German employment market which had been undergoing structural changes in the 1970s and 1980s.

In addition to these causes, a fifth specific cause was the limited mobility displayed by *Aussiedler* in their search for employment. This had been cited as a specific cause of *Aussiedler* unemployment by the BfA in their *Aussiedler* report for the period October 1987 - September 1988 (Schmitt 1989: 1287). This lack of mobility limited the geographical area which *Aussiedler* were prepared to move to, or travel to in order to take up employment.

The five specific causes of *Aussiedler* unemployment will be considered in more detail in the following sections. The aim is to ascertain to what extent the five stated causes were still considered to be specific causes of *Aussiedler* unemployment during the course of the period of study, despite the implementation of the government's *Aussiedler* assistance programme in 1988. Consideration will be given to statistical evidence and official documentation contained in the BfA *Aussiedler* reports and its annual reports for the period 1988 to 1992 [8].

[8] Koller points out that female *Aussiedler* have more difficulty in finding employment in Germany than male *Aussiedler* e.g. during the late 1980s some 60% of unemployed *Aussiedler* were females. She puts this largely down to family commitments preventing the females from being flexible enough (Koller 1993: 19). This point is also made by the BfA. Of the 34,000

7.5.1 Difficulties concerning *Aussiedler* employment qualifications

Francke has pointed out that employment qualifications are significant for *Aussiedler* seeking employment in a competitive environment (1985: 90). Two major difficulties for *Aussiedler* arriving in Germany are firstly the lack of employment qualifications, and secondly the assessment and translation of their employment qualifications. The difficulties stem from the different education and training programmes that exist in Germany and the respective countries that the *Aussiedler* have left behind in the process of resettlement. The BfA has confirmed that *Aussiedler* as a rule have only limited employment qualifications, which makes the process of employment integration increasingly difficult (*Arbeitsmarkt* 1991: 712).

Aussiedler applying for jobs which require formal qualifications as a condition of employment are faced with the difficulty of proving the value of their qualifications to prospective employers. The value of *Aussiedler* qualifications has to be clear to both employer and employee. Article 92 of the BVFG legislation allows for the equal treatment of their qualifications by employers so as to assist in the integration process [9]. Individual federal states, who have the responsibility for assessing *Aussiedler* qualifications, have the opportunity to interpret this equal treatment of *Aussiedler* qualifications liberally.

While the government can legislate on the issue of equal qualifications, the actual lack of qualifications is another problem hindering the immediate integration of many *Aussiedler*. The Polish and Soviet *Aussiedler* have been identified as two groups which particularly lack formal qualifications. The government puts this lack of qualifications held by these groups down to the difficulties faced by the German

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Aussiedler found work by the employment offices during 1992, merely 37% were for females (*Arbeitsmarkt* 1993: 889). The BfA further points out that females seeking work in secretarial and sales work have particular difficulties because of their frequently limited command of the German language (*Arbeitsmarkt* 1993: 889).

[9] The regulations covering the question of who can translate *Aussiedler* qualifications varies according to the different federal states. In the case of Hessen, the qualifications of craftsmen/women are translated by the local chamber of craftsmen/women (*Handwerkskammer*), those in industry and commerce by the chamber of commerce (*Industrie- und Handelskammer*), and those in farming by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Environmental Protection (*Hessischer Wegweiser* 1989: 18). The costs are covered by the local employment office if the translations are necessary for them to apply for work (*Bestandsaufnahme* 1988: 79).

minority in those countries (*Sonderprogramm zur Eingliederung der Aussiedler* 1988a: 48). This is a reference to the assimilation pressures exerted by the Polish and Soviet governments on these minorities since 1945, including the closure of German schools and forbidding the use of German language in public.

The specific problem of equating qualifications was pointed out in the Interior Ministry consultation paper of March 1988 on the difficulties faced by *Aussiedler* in their integration process. The paper stated that their integration is not assisted by simply declaring that *Aussiedler* hold qualifications of equal value (*Bestandsaufnahme* 1988: 69). It pointed to the differing levels of technological experiences attained by employees in the different economies. The paper further pointed out that this policy of declaring their qualifications to be of equal value has merely led the *Aussiedler* arriving for resettlement to regard their qualifications as being of equal standing in the employment market (*Bestandsaufnahme* 1988: 69). Yet this is not always so. The paper gives examples in those sectors where difficulties arise, such as the medical and teaching professions. In both these sectors, difficulties have been experienced in equating qualifications due to the applicant either having only a limited or very specialised knowledge of their subject (*Bestandsaufnahme* 1988: 75).

This problem was also addressed by the government in the Special *Aussiedler* Assistance Programme of 1988. It pointed out that the previous difficulties faced in equating *Aussiedler* qualifications with German qualifications stemmed from the German authorities using outdated documents when comparing the qualifications e.g. the West German authorities in 1988 were assessing Soviet and Romanian *Aussiedler* qualifications on the basis of comparative documentation (guidelines) dating from 1982 and 1985 respectively (*Sonderprogramm zur Eingliederung der Aussiedler* 1988a: 56) [10]. More money was to be made available to help update the relevant comparative guidelines, enabling potential employers and appropriate professional bodies to have details of the standards required of individuals in their

[10] Further examples of outdated guidelines being used to equate *Aussiedler* qualifications included the following: Hungary: 1980 Czechoslovakia: 1980 Yugoslavia: 1982 Poland: 1985 (*Sonderprogramm zur Eingliederung der Aussiedler* 1988a: 55).

countries when awarding employment qualifications (*Sonderprogramm zur Eingliederung der Aussiedler* 1988a: 15) [11].

Despite the government's good intentions in seeking to improve the competitive position of the *Aussiedler* in the German employment market, the equal treatment of employment qualifications was an issue which could not be resolved in the short-term. Furthermore, the government was also relying on a liberal interpretation of *Aussiedler* qualifications by prospective employers. *Aussiedler* invariably have to complete employment retraining courses to obtain the necessary German qualifications (Schmitt 1989: 1287).

7.5.2 *Aussiedler* having insufficient German language skills

The language difficulties faced by *Aussiedler* upon arrival are cited by the BfA as one of the major causes of *Aussiedler* unemployment. The BfA pointed out that having adequate German language skills was possibly the most important element in this integration process, stating (*Eingliederung der Aussiedler* 1988: 1):

"The integration in employment is the foundation stone for the integration of the Aussiedler in West German society."

At the time of announcing the Special *Aussiedler* Assistance Programme, the government acknowledged that a high percentage of *Aussiedler* had either no or only elementary German language skills (*Sonderprogramm zur Eingliederung der Aussiedler* 1988a: 48). The government put this problem down to the difficulties experienced by the German minorities in the post-war period in preserving their language, which restricted the ability of their children to learn German in school (*Die Leistungen des Bundes* 1988: 1). This was a consequence of the assimilation pressures exerted on the German minorities, particularly in Poland and the Soviet Union (*Bestandsaufnahme* 1988: 7).

[11] Teachers from eastern Europe faced particular problems in gaining approval to teach their combination of subjects in West German schools (*Bestandsaufnahme* 1988: 73). They invariably had to complete additional education courses before being given placements in state schools.

The government consultation paper of March 1988 on *Aussiedler* integration referred to this problem, stating that some *Aussiedler* arriving for resettlement have no knowledge of the German language, while a high percentage only have a poor command of the language (*Bestandsaufnahme* 1988: 7). The paper refers to the results of an *Aussiedler* German language study carried out during 1986 in Nuremberg to examine this problem. The study revealed that some 15% of the 7,030 *Aussiedler* tested did not have any German language skills (*Bestandsaufnahme* 1988: 51). Meanwhile only some 67% of those tested were judged to have sufficient knowledge of the language to realise their integration (*Bestandsaufnahme* 1988: 51). Some 33% of all the *Aussiedler* tested were advised to first complete a German language course before searching for employment. Significant differences between the *Aussiedler* groups were also recorded. While only 20% of the Romanian *Aussiedler* tested were advised to complete a language course, the figure for the Polish and Soviet *Aussiedler* was 80% and 70% respectively (*Bestandsaufnahme* 1988: 51).

The government in 1988 acknowledged the extent of the language difficulties experienced by specific *Aussiedler* groups, stating that some 50% of Polish *Aussiedler* and 30% of Soviet *Aussiedler* taking part in these language tests required more than the maximum period of 8 months for which their language courses ran (*Bestandsaufnahme* 1988: 50-1). It pointed out that the maximum length of the courses had nationally been extended from 8 months to 10 months on 1 January 1988 to cater for the increasing language difficulties being encountered (*Sonderprogramm zur Eingliederung der Aussiedler* 1988a: 48). The courses were also made available to include those *Aussiedler* family members not actively seeking employment, in order to help prevent social isolation (*Sonderprogramm zur Eingliederung der Aussiedler* 1988a: 13-4). The extension of the language courses to 10 months sought to compensate for the declining standard of German among the arriving *Aussiedler* (*Die Leistungen des Bundes* 1988: 10).

The numbers accepting places on language courses broadly rose in line with the increasing number of *Aussiedler* arriving for resettlement. This was seen when

comparing the total number of *Aussiedler* taking part in such courses between January and June during both 1987 and 1988. The total number of language students for the first six months in 1988 was 200% higher than that for the first six months in 1987 (*Sonderprogramm zur Eingliederung der Aussiedler* 1988a: 49) [12].

The consultation paper of March 1988 summed up the problem posed by *Aussiedler* having insufficient German language skills in the following statement (*Bestandsaufnahme* 1988: 52):

"In the current employment market situation, employees with poor German language capabilities hardly have a chance to obtain long-term employment. This particularly applies to the services sector and higher qualified professions. For many Aussiedler, the language deficit alone leads to longer periods of unemployment."

In addition to the problems that language difficulty poses for *Aussiedler* seeking employment, such language problems also slow down their integration in German society as a whole. The government recognised the significance that these language courses played in the integration process, stating that a command of the language was an important starting basis for their resettlement process (*Bestandsaufnahme* 1988: 52) [13]. Command of the German language was particularly significant in the services sector, the growth area in the employment market.

Language tuition was one of the main elements addressed by the Special *Aussiedler* Assistance Programme announced in August 1988, with the government declaring that it sought to match the provision of such language courses with the rise in numbers requiring such language tuition (*Sonderprogramm zur Eingliederung der Aussiedler* 1988a: 13). Yet the government failed to consider further increasing the

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[12] The numbers of *Aussiedler* entering German language courses between 1988 and 1992 were as follows:
1988: 79, 900 1989: 155,400 1990: 175,400 1991: 117,500 1992: 100,800
(*Arbeitsmarkt* 1993: 888; *Arbeitsmarkt in Zahlen - Aussiedler - Berichtsmonat September* 1993: Table 2). The rise in German language students between 1988 and 1990, and the fall in 1991 was reflected in a parallel development in the level of *Aussiedler* immigration during the same period.

[13] These difficulties shown by *Aussiedler* in their command of the German language also highlighted the ambivalence of the term cultural German.

length of the language courses from 10 months to 12 months, which would have given those *Aussiedler* seeking employment a more competitive position in the employment market. The assistance programme merely gave an undertaking that the provision of the language courses for *Aussiedler* would be maintained, despite the significant rises in *Aussiedler* immigration. It stated (*Sonderprogramm zur Eingliederung der Aussiedler* 1988a: 49):

"This shows, that the providers of language courses and the Federal Institute of Labour have reacted with great flexibility to the new situation caused by the rising number of Aussiedler."

Additional documentary evidence that *Aussiedler* had significant German language problems upon arrival is contained in both *Aussiedler* experience reports and annual reports compiled by the BfA during the period of study. The *Aussiedler* experience report covering the 12 month period October 1989 to September 1990, during which the *Aussiedler* influx reached its peak, continued to single out the German language problem of *Aussiedler*. In assessing the problem it stated (*Informationen* 1991: 12):

"Aussiedler are mostly only competitive after completion of a German language course, and not seldom followed by an employment training course."

The report criticises the decision of the government to limit the duration of these German language courses to 10 months. It points out that in those cases where *Aussiedler* arriving for resettlement did not have any German language skills, a 10 month course could not be sufficient in providing them with the necessary language skills required for the employment market (*Informationen* 1991: 21). It gives the example of good language skills being required in secretarial and administrative work as well as in commerce. The report concludes that *Aussiedler* are at a particular disadvantage in their search for employment as a result of their limited, or in some cases missing German language skills (*Informationen* 1991: 22).

The annual reports compiled by the BfA on *Aussiedler* unemployment for the years 1991 and 1992 (the final two years of the period of study) did not point to any improvement in the language situation.

The 1991 annual report referred to the continued need for *Aussiedler* to improve their language skills in order to alleviate their integration problems (*Arbeitsmarkt* 1992: 743). Although the number of *Aussiedler* entering language courses fell in 1991 to 117,500 (1990: 175,400), this reduction did not mean that there was less need for the courses, but reflected the government decision to implement a reduction in the length of courses from 10 months to 8 months (on 1 July 1990). This reduction was made in order to reduce the strain on the BfA budget, with the BfA having responsibility for paying the language course fees and living expenses. The BfA had alone in 1989 paid some DM 2 billion to cover the cost of *Aussiedler* language courses and living expenses (*Arbeitsmarktanalyse* 1990: 684). In the light of the language problems experienced by *Aussiedler*, this reduction in the course duration arguably represented a significant step backwards and was not in the interest of *Aussiedler* integration. The ability of *Aussiedler* to compete in the employment market was reduced even further by that decision.

The BfA confirmed that the language situation had not improved by 1992, stating (*Arbeitsmarkt* 1993: 887):

"The following applies for nearly all Aussiedler; their German language skills are limited or missing altogether."

The BfA annual report for 1992 repeated the point that nearly all *Aussiedler* required language tuition to assist in their integration. While in 1991 some 68% of those taking part in language courses required seven months or longer to complete the language course, the figure rose to 72% in 1992 indicating a further reduction in the level of language skills of those arriving (*Arbeitsmarkt* 1993: 888). The cost to the BfA for the language courses had in 1992 reached DM 2.6 billion, representing an increase of 30% compared to the cost incurred in 1989 (*Arbeitsmarkt* 1991: 715). The rising cost led the government to announce a further reduction in the

length of language courses from 8 to only 6 months from 1 January 1993 onwards. Again, this was arguably not in the interests of *Aussiedler* integration. The price paid for a continued high level of immigration under the open-door policy (modified by the AAG law in July 1990) and rising integration costs was a parallel reduction in the quality of integration assistance for the individual *Aussiedler*. This again raises the question if it would not indeed have been more effective to have introduced annual *Aussiedler* immigration quotas in 1988, to a level which allowed those arriving to receive adequate tuition and training before being left to find employment in an increasingly competitive employment market.

7.5.3 Problems experienced in the transition into the market economy

A further identified cause of *Aussiedler* unemployment is the difficulty experienced by this group in achieving the transition from the central planned economies they have left behind, into the West German market economy. The government's consultation paper of March 1988 on *Aussiedler* integration points out that *Aussiedler* arriving for resettlement are entering a completely different political, economic and social system, thereby creating additional difficulties for *Aussiedler* integration (*Bestandsaufnahme* 1988: 7).

The nature of such transition problems can be understood more clearly by outlining the differences that *Aussiedler* must overcome during the process of integration into market economy. The *Aussiedler* have been educated and trained in centrally planned economies which have adopted different solutions to that chosen by the market economy. For example, the market economy has adopted its own method to ensure the efficient co-ordination of economic activity with the aim of ensuring the adequate provision of goods to satisfy the demand.

In the planned economic systems they have left behind, the co-ordination of economic activity is managed by the state itself, through its central planning departments and organisations. As a consequence, *Aussiedler* have grown up in an

economic system where the decisions concerning the type of goods to be produced and the prices to be charged were decided centrally. Their place in the employment market was not determined by market forces, but by the planning authorities who sought to fulfil specific plans which were worked towards (Lampert 1990: 28). Furthermore, these authorities determined the level of production and the distribution of raw materials.

The central planned economies adopted a different solution to the problem of deciding which socio-political aims should be realised. In seeking to ensure an equal distribution of income, central planned economies (through their planning departments) control the factors of production (land, labour and capital) with the (apparent) aim of working for the common good of the population. In order to satisfy the demand exerted by the population for goods, the production is centred on goods seen to be in the common interest of society. Arriving in Germany, *Aussiedler* are entering a system of economic organisation which has adopted significantly different solutions to the problems of how to allocate resources and co-ordinate its economic activity. In the market economy, the state seeks to play a comparatively limited role i.e. as a regulator and a provider of public utilities. The government lays down the legal framework within which companies can operate. Furthermore, the employment market is characterised by booms and slumps that accompany the economic cycles in the market economy, with the level of employment being largely determined by the demand and supply mechanism for both labour and goods.

The potential problems for the *Aussiedler* resulting from this transition into the German economy can be summarised as follows:

1. Within the market economy there is a need for the individual to make decisions over how to divide up his or her working life in order to achieve personal aims. This for example includes choosing a career or opting for further study and higher education. The *Aussiedler* have in the past not been encouraged to make decisions affecting their own working environment. In contrast, such decisions within the central planned economy are influenced or even decided upon by the

planning departments, with the individual performing functions to fulfil the aims of the economic plan. This difference has consequences for *Aussiedler* when it comes to making decisions over their own working lives in the market economy. They are required to motivate themselves and choose a job. The *Aussiedler* are required to take the self-initiative and not rely upon planning departments to guide them into a particular career.

2. The market economy has by its very nature no guarantees of employment for all those who wish to work. Becoming unemployed is a risk as demand for labour expands and contracts during economic cycles. Dealing with the problem of unemployment and the requirement to be self-motivated in the search for employment in a different economic system arguably requires re-thinking and time to readjust. *Aussiedler* are required to be competitive and to sell their skills to potential employers. They are also entering an employment market in which the state does not seek to influence the decision-making over the type of employment chosen. *Aussiedler* are therefore required to take both the initiative for the search for employment and to take responsibility for planning their own future. Yet the experiences gathered in the planned economies did not prepare them for the integration into the German employment market (*Informationen* 1991: 21).

The long-term nature of this transition problem experienced by *Aussiedler* was highlighted by the BfA in its annual report for 1992. It stated that *Aussiedler* had gained employment training in economic systems which contrast starkly to those found in Germany. The BfA points out that for the majority of *Aussiedler* it is hardly possible to achieve immediate employment integration in Germany following resettlement (*Arbeitsmarkt* 1993: 887) [14].

[14] The employment experiences and the types of occupations held by *Aussiedler* arriving in Germany were of a technical standard that was prevalent in the FRG some 20 years previously (Simmedinger/Weigel 1992: 32).

7.5.4 The problem of *Aussiedler* displaying only limited mobility

Limited geographic mobility, and the limitations that a lack of mobility can place on the employment opportunities for the *Aussiedler*, has also been recognised as a cause of *Aussiedler* unemployment. Limiting the distance one is willing or able to travel to work reduces the opportunities for employment. In its *Aussiedler* experience report for the period October 1987 to September 1988, the BfA pointed out that against government expectations, *Aussiedler* did not show the mobility required of them in their search for employment. It explained this lack of mobility with reference to family ties and the difficulty experienced in finding affordable housing in other locations (Schmitt 1989: 1287). The lack of private transport (through financial constraints), and only limited availability of public transport, further reduces the distances that *Aussiedler* can or may be willing to travel daily. The BfA report notes that *Aussiedler* only display limited regional mobility, presenting an additional barrier in their search for employment (Schmitt 1989: 1287).

It has to be remembered that the *Aussiedler* have left behind neighbours, family and friends in the process of resettlement, thereby leaving behind close relationships built up over time. This may explain why the *Aussiedler* have shown little willingness to be mobile in their search for employment. They require a degree of stability in their new surroundings, choosing to maintain close contact with their family once they have resettled.

The problem of *Aussiedler* mobility continued to be a contributory cause of unemployment throughout the period of study, as confirmed by the BfA in its report on *Aussiedler* unemployment in 1991 (*Informationen* 1991: 19). It explained this with reference to their limited financial means (i.e. preventing the purchase of a car), the continual rent increases (i.e. discouraging a move into more expensive accommodation) and the wish to maintain family links once they had resettled in Germany. These were the same reasons as previously given by the BfA in 1988. Those unemployed have little opportunity to obtain loans from banks to help finance the purchase of a car or to obtain approval for a mortgage to purchase their own

home. This meant that they were largely reliant on the help of their families, thereby drawing together even closer those same family ties which were cited by the BfA as contributing to their lack of mobility and unemployment.

7.6 Summary on specific causes of *Aussiedler* unemployment

The individual contributory causes of *Aussiedler* unemployment showed themselves to be significant ones. The causes can be summarised as follows:

1. The problem of *Aussiedler* only having limited (or even no) German language skills could not be resolved in the short-term. Yet having a good command of the German language was recognised as being the foundation stone for successful employment integration. The decision to reduce the duration of courses on 1 January 1993 from 8 months to 6 months failed to help resolve the problem.

2. While the equating of *Aussiedler* employment qualifications could be speeded up, gaps in their knowledge and experience made retraining and employment refresher courses necessary. This particularly applied to improving the level of their technological skills.

3. The difficulty involved in the transition into the western market economy required major readjustments in thought processes and attitudes which could not alone be taught in formal courses. The employment market required *Aussiedler* to take the initiative and to sell their qualities to potential employers.

4. While the government assumed that *Aussiedler* would remain mobile once having arrived in Germany for resettlement, the evidence showed that their quest for stability and the limited financial resources prevented such mobility. This group could therefore not be used to correct regional imbalances in the German employment market, as originally envisaged by the government.

All in all, the *Aussiedler* faced considerable specific difficulties as they sought to find employment in their new surroundings. By continuing to operate the open-door *Aussiedler* policy against the background of budget limitations, the help made available to finance integration measures was being spread increasingly thinly, as evidenced by the further reduction in the duration of language courses to only 6 months on 1 January 1993. It would have arguably been more prudent to concentrate the limited help available on a particular number of *Aussiedler* arriving for resettlement (by use of annual *Aussiedler* quotas), thereby ensuring that those who came were given the necessary integration assistance in securing employment.

CHAPTER EIGHT

GERMAN GOVERNMENT NEGOTIATIONS ON THE FORMATION OF AN AUTONOMOUS VOLGA REPUBLIC 1989 - 1991

8. German government negotiations on the formation of an autonomous Volga republic 1989 - 1991

8.1 The search for new initiatives by the German government in the face of rising *Aussiedler* immigration

The third main research question posed in this thesis considers the formulation and subsequent implementation by the German government of a policy aimed at persuading potential *Aussiedler* to delay exercising their right to emigrate to Germany under its open-door *Aussiedler* policy. Since the Spring of 1989, the government has sought to implement what one could call an alternative *Aussiedler* policy. This policy aimed to reduce the level of *Aussiedler* influx while not having to go back on its public guarantees that the open-door *Aussiedler* policy would remain in force. The government saw a solution to this political dilemma in seeking to persuade potential *Aussiedler* to delay their resettlement to Germany by emphasising the new opportunities in their own country. Chapter eight (covering 1989 - 1991) and chapter nine (covering 1992) together consider whether this change in direction in the government's *Aussiedler* policy towards the Soviet Germans, by conducting negotiations on the formation of an autonomous Volga republic, constituted a viable and successful element to its *Aussiedler* policy during the period of study. A viable policy would require success in such negotiations to achieve a reduction in Soviet German *Aussiedler* levels while maintaining the open-door policy.

In analysing the government's new initiative in its *Aussiedler* policy during the Spring of 1989, this chapter focuses on the example of the Soviet German minority, the largest remaining German minority in eastern Europe. It identifies the main stages in the German government's political negotiations with the Soviet Union during the period 1989 -1991 to re-create an autonomous German Volga republic in

the vicinity of the former Volga German republic abolished in 1941, which the government considered to be of major symbolic significance in persuading the Soviet Germans that they still had a future in the Soviet Union [1]. A chronological outline is given of the subsequent negotiations that took place between the German and Soviet governments over this issue, covering the period from 1989 until the break-up of the Soviet Union in December 1991. The final part of the chapter addresses the issue of whether the prospect of success in re-creating the Volga republic was likely to indeed persuade a significant percentage of the Soviet Germans to refrain from emigrating to Germany, by looking at the findings of research on their attitude to this policy.

Chapter nine will then consider the subsequent developments in the government's continued negotiations for the formation of an autonomous republic during 1992, the final year in the period of study, with the independent Russian republic in the new post-Soviet era.

8.2 The new emphasis in government *Aussiedler* policy during 1989

Back in the Autumn of 1988, the government had welcomed the rising influx of *Aussiedler* as being an asset to the nation and declared their acceptance under its open-door policy to constitute a moral obligation for West Germany. Yet despite the implementation of an *Aussiedler* assistance programme in August 1988, and an *Aussiedler* housing programme during October 1988, increasing difficulties were being experienced in their integration, particularly with regard to placement in employment and the provision of housing. The extent of their difficulties in finding employment has already been analysed in chapter six and chapter seven. Their successful resettlement was hampered by insufficient low cost rented accommodation being available in both the private and public housing sectors.

[1] The former Volga German ASSR republic covered an area of some 28,000 sq.km. This is equivalent to the area covered by Belgium (30,520 sq.km).

Despite such difficulties, the government rejected demands by members of the opposition SPD to reform the legislation on *Aussiedler* status (to reflect the changed political circumstances in eastern Europe) and to introduce annual *Aussiedler* immigration quotas within the framework of an overall immigration policy. The government had publicly campaigned for the right of ethnic and cultural Germans to emigrate to West Germany under an open-door policy, criticising the violation of their human rights by the eastern European governments, while it sought to limit the inflow of refugees of non-German origin. A growing problem was resource allocation. While the government sought to benefit from the influx of *Aussiedler* politically, it needed to minimise the costs of *Aussiedler* acceptance and integration measures. Yet it had been unprepared for the task of accepting and integrating in excess of 200,000 *Aussiedler* p.a. The government's declaration that the German citizens had a moral obligation to help *Aussiedler* was not subsequently met with the desired public response. The government thus sought a politically acceptable solution to the problem (i.e. one whereby it did not lose face).

A change in government *Aussiedler* policy became apparent during the Spring of 1989. Chancellor Kohl no longer placed the emphasis on the acceptance and integration of *Aussiedler* as representing a national obligation, as he had done in 1988 (Kohl 1988a: 3). The government instead increasingly focused its attention on seeking to improve the living conditions for the German minorities in the *Aussiedler* areas and calling on the potential *Aussiedler* to consider the opportunities available to them in their own country (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no. 11 1990: 7). The West German government wished to see some control being exerted on the rising number of *Aussiedler*. It was aware of a potential mass exodus to West Germany, one which the country could arguably not cope with. The upward trend registered in *Aussiedler* immigration since 1987 was likely to continue in future years with an easing of travel and emigration restrictions for *Aussiedler* seeking resettlement in the FRG.

The government declared that the aim of such a policy of persuasion was to safeguard the culture and language of the German minorities in the Soviet Union, Romania and Poland (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.11 1990: 7). The extent

to which the *Aussiedler* arriving in West Germany for resettlement already had problems with the German language has previously been discussed in chapter six and chapter seven.

Interior Minister Wolfgang Schäuble in March 1989 acknowledged that increasing emphasis was being placed on a government *Aussiedler* policy of giving direct assistance to those particular regions in eastern and south-eastern Europe which the *Aussiedler* were leaving. Schäuble stated that the government sought to provide the potential *Aussiedler* with some form of perspective, encouraging those who had not yet emigrated to reconsider the options available to them in their country. Rejecting claims that the government had changed its *Aussiedler* policy, Schäuble declared (*Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung* 20 March 1989: 1) [2]:

"The aim of our policy has primarily been, and is still so today, to make possible that the Germans find living conditions in their home countries which ensure that they do not have to, or wish to leave their homes."

A successful policy of persuasion would reduce the level of *Aussiedler* immigration into West Germany, thereby reducing the pressure on the government to introduce some form of administrative control (i.e. annual quotas) on *Aussiedler* immigration. Just as the government had devised domestic programmes for *Aussiedler* assistance, this policy of persuasion was also characterised by government offers of financial and material assistance programmes for the German communities in eastern and south-eastern Europe.

[2] Although Schäuble rejected claims that this was a change in policy, a change in tone was evident in government circles when discussing *Aussiedler* policy (*Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung* 20 March 1989: 1). Former slogans such as "national duty" and "moral obligation" were used more seldom as the emphasis in policy changed in the wake of the problems experienced in integrating the 200,000 *Aussiedler* who arrived in 1988.

8.2.1 Choice of the Soviet Germans to analyse the implementation of the new policy of persuasion

In seeking to identify the characteristics of the policy of persuasion being implemented since 1989, chapter eight and chapter nine consider its implementation with regard to those Soviet Germans who had not yet emigrated and were therefore still open to persuasion. The choice of the Soviet Germans was made on the basis that the success or failure of such a policy would be most important in the case of the Soviet Germans. They posed the largest category of potential *Aussiedler*, with over two million Soviet Germans having been recorded in the 1989 Soviet population census.

In considering the case of the Soviet Germans, chapter eight and chapter nine seek to ascertain whether it was realistic for the government to maintain its open-door policy while relying on the success of the policy of persuasion. The research focuses on subsequent government efforts to persuade both the Soviet and Russian governments to establish an autonomous German Volga republic similar to the one which had been abolished by Stalin in 1941. Such a republic was seen to have symbolic value in providing the Soviet Germans with tangible evidence of a better future in the Soviet Union (both political and culturally), thereby encouraging them to stay. At the outset, it appeared an unrealistic aim while the West German government only had a financial lever at its disposal i.e. through granting financial and material assistance for infrastructure and cultural programmes in a future German republic. Yet it had no control over the political implementation of the plan to re-create a Volga republic in Russia and therefore could only play the role of financier.

8.3 Changes in Soviet politics which made discussions on a future Volga republic possible

The implementation of a programme of reform by President Mikhail Gorbachev in 1987 resulted in important changes in Soviet domestic and foreign policy.

Gorbachev was willing to address the issue of the national minorities. His willingness to enter into dialogue with political opponents brought about an increased social and political openness (*glasnost*) and economic restructuring (*perestroika*) in Soviet society. This new political mood also gave a sense of optimism to those members of the national minorities within the Soviet Union who campaigned for either autonomy or the right to emigrate.

The Soviet German minority was able to benefit from this new openness following the relaxation in emigration restrictions which came into force on 1 January 1987. The new approach by the Soviet Union of allowing increased emigration by national minorities had resulted in some 47,572 Soviet *Aussiedler* being able to emigrate to the FRG during 1988 (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler, Sonderausgabe* August 1990: 6). Even if only some 50% of the estimated 2 million Soviet Germans decided to emigrate, it would take some 20 years at the 1988 level of Soviet German emigration (47,572) for them to be resettled in West Germany. Whether the FRG could continue to absorb such numbers alone from the Soviet Union was questionable.

The West German government required a long-term solution to the issue of Soviet German immigration. It saw the opportunity in improving their living conditions, both economically and culturally, as a possible solution to the problem. It considered the re-creation of an autonomous republic for the Soviet Germans to be one important way in which to stem the exodus to West Germany. The new Soviet openness enabled direct negotiations to take place with the Soviet leadership over a future autonomous republic. West Germany had become an important trading partner for the Soviet Union with regard to the exchange of technology. This appeared to give the West German government an important lever in their negotiations on the republic. Waffenschmidt stated that the government sought to gain assurances from the Soviet government that the human rights of the German minority would be respected (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.6 1989: 5). He regarded this as an important precondition in order to give those still undecided on whether to emigrate some perspective for their future.

Waffenschmidt explained the new possibilities open to the West German government in its negotiations with the Soviet Union with reference to the following four factors (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.6 1989: 3):

1. The Soviet Germans had taken the initiative themselves to campaign for the re-creation of the Volga republic.

2. There was a new Soviet policy of entering into dialogue with the national minorities.

3. Intensive efforts were being undertaken by the West German government in negotiations on behalf of the Soviet Germans.

4. There was a realisation on all sides that little time remained if an exodus was to be prevented. The West German government believed that the German minority required a territory of its own in order to prevent such an exodus.

8.4 Identification of the groups to be targeted by the policy of persuasion

Waffenschmidt pointed out that the remaining Soviet Germans could be divided into three categories when it came to the question of whether or not to emigrate. The three identified groups were as follows (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.28 1991: 4-5):

1. Those who would not emigrate at all.

2. Those who would emigrate to join family members in West Germany.

3. Those who would wait to see how things developed in the near future, before deciding whether or not to emigrate.

It was the third above listed group that the German government sought to dissuade from emigrating to West Germany. Yet the size of this group was unknown. The Soviet Germans in particular had shown themselves to be an unpredictable group when it came to calculating those still undecided on emigration. West Germany was faced with an unknown number of Soviet Germans who had not yet declared their true nationality status to the Soviet authorities. This could have been because of the continued fear of possible discrimination towards the German minority that had been prevalent in the post-war Soviet Union (Eisfeld 1989: 21-2). Although the official figure for the size of the Soviet German group was around 2 million, Eisfeld estimates that it was nearer 4 - 5 million (Olt 1991: 10). Although Eisfeld does not give specific evidence to support such figures, it is generally acknowledged that there are an unknown number of ethnic and cultural Germans who had not registered their German nationality with the Soviet authorities. While predicted totals have to be considered with caution, it is indeed likely that the total number of Soviet Germans was higher than the official number of some 2 million.

8.5 Earlier attempts made by the Soviet Germans to re-create the former Volga republic

Before giving details of the negotiations between the German and Soviet governments over the issue of the Volga republic, it is relevant to briefly outline the main post-war attempts made to re-create the Volga republic abolished by Stalin in 1941. This historical backdrop to the negotiations will enable the subsequent events to be put into perspective.

Soviet German demands for the re-creation of the Volga republic prior to 1964 were voiced by individuals rather than any pressure groups (Eisfeld 1992: 137). The post-war Soviet German communities were widely dispersed throughout the Soviet Union following their deportation into exile (as detailed in chapter four). Following their release from the work and detention camps during the late 1940s and early 1950s, a population drift took place towards the warmer Asiatic republics, particularly Kazakhstan, yet it was forbidden for the Volga Germans to return to

their former homes. The Soviet Germans lacked political structures and organisations through which it could publicise its specific demands concerning the re-creation of the Volga republic.

Soviet German activists in 1964 called for greater political and cultural recognition. They demanded the full rehabilitation of the Soviet Germans from Stalin's accusation that they had collaborated with the German enemy, and further called for the re-establishment of the former Volga republic. They began petitioning Soviet politicians and sent delegates to Moscow for meetings with government representatives. The Supreme Soviet parliament announced the partial rehabilitation of the Volga Germans by decree on 29 August 1964, yet refused to enter into negotiations over the Volga republic (Dietz/Hilkes 1988: 5). Their demands for territorial autonomy were rejected by the Russian minister Mikojan on the grounds that there was no territory available for such a Volga republic. Negotiations came to an end in 1967 following the refusal of the Soviet government representatives to meet future Soviet German delegations (Eisfeld 1992: 138). Their campaign for autonomy was merely rewarded by the promise of further improvements in their cultural rights, such as wider use of the German language (Dietz/Hilkes 1992: 98).

The Supreme Soviet parliament eventually passed a decree on the rehabilitation of the Soviet Germans in 1972, thereby ending the previous limitations placed on their place of residence, including the ban on them returning to their former homes in the Volga republic. Yet the re-creation of the Volga republic was still not on the political agenda. This decree on rehabilitation was not officially publicised, with its contents having been merely passed verbally on to individual members of the Soviet German group (Eisfeld 1992: 141). The response of the Soviet German representatives to the continued refusal to re-establish the Volga republic was to form an (illegal) organisation in 1972 called Union of Emigration Seeking Germans (Dietz/Hilkes 1992: 98). Its formation could be considered to be an expression of their frustration and protest over the stance of the Soviet authorities. They voiced their protest by sending petitions to the governments of the USA and both East and West Germany demanding the right to emigrate (Dietz/Hilkes 1992: 98).

After 1972, the demands made by the Soviet German representatives focused on the right to emigrate to West Germany, resigning themselves to the fact that the Volga republic was to remain a footnote in history. A later attempt made in 1979 by the Germans in Kazakhstan (the home of nearly 1 million Germans in 1979) to establish an autonomous German *rayon* (district) at Ermentau also failed, this time because of violent demonstrations and protests by the Kazakh population against such plans (Eisfeld 1992: 147) [3].

8.5.1 West German government interest in re-creating the former Volga republic in Russia

Previous attempts to re-create the Volga republic had failed because of two main reasons. Firstly, there was a lack of willingness on behalf of the Soviet government to consider their demands seriously. Secondly, there was local opposition in the vicinity of the former German republic to such plans. Local party officials possibly feared loss of political control while the citizens feared that they may loose their homes and employment to such newcomers. The West German government had by 1989 realised that the full rehabilitation granted to the Soviet Germans would not be sufficient to persuade them to remain in the Soviet Union. Waffenschmidt saw an important symbolic value in a future Volga republic (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.6 1989: 2-3). Future autonomy would give recognition to the Soviet Germans as an autonomous group and enable the Soviet Germans to have greater control over such cultural aspects as language and education within its administrative borders. Autonomous status would further enable them to voice their grievances directly in Moscow by sending delegates who represented their interests.

Previous post-war West German governments had held back during negotiations with the Soviet Union from calling for the re-creation of an autonomous Volga republic, to avoid the accusations by the Soviet authorities that it was interfering in

[3] As a compromise, the Germans were promised more cultural rights by the Soviet government e.g. to publish their own German language newspapers and to establish cultural organisations including theatre groups. Yet they were refused increased political rights as a national group (Gundlach 1989: 3).

the internal affairs of the Soviet Union. Yet the reform process implemented by President Gorbachev made such negotiations possible in 1989. The Soviet German minority was the largest national group within the Soviet Union without a territory of its own. Beckherrn points out that although a single republic on the lines of the former Volga republic would possibly not be able to accommodate the estimated two million Soviet Germans still resident in the Soviet Union, such an autonomous republic might at least be able to cater for an estimated one quarter of them (1990: 233). This was under the assumption that the Soviet Germans were prepared to resettle within such a republic.

The possible alternative of campaigning for an increased number of German *rayons* (districts), instead of an autonomous republic, was not considered by the West German government to be an acceptable solution (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.6 1989: 3). Waffenschmidt instead supported the idea of a combination of an autonomous republic and surrounding German *rayons*. He stated that while the issue of autonomy was a Soviet internal matter, the West German government would help to finance such future projects (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.6 1989: 4). Achieving a degree of autonomy was seen by the West German government as a means of reversing the cultural assimilation that had taken place since the Second World War. The integration of the autonomous republic and the *rayons* into the Soviet political system would bring with it the possibility for the minority to influence their own future development in the Soviet Union, even if in the case of the *rayons*, this would be largely restricted to local affairs. Yet these *rayons* could at least act as magnets to establish regional German population centres.

8.5.2 Soviet interests in retaining the German minority

Just as German negotiators such as Waffenschmidt saw economic advantages in persuading the Soviet Germans to remain in the Soviet Union, the Soviet authorities also saw economic disadvantages for the Soviet economy if a major exodus were to take place. Particularly the young and motivated Soviet Germans were leaving the

Soviet Union, thereby not being available to the Soviet economy to assist in the restructuring process. Bosch points out that the Germans emigrating from Kazakhstan represented the backbone of the local economy (1988: 20). He further points out that the Kazakh authorities subsequently tried to persuade the potential migrants to remain by painting a negative picture of the situation in West Germany i.e. of rising unemployment and a housing shortage (Bosch 1988: 20). The majority of those Soviet Germans applying to emigrate in the late 1980s were of working age and the damage to the Soviet economy was reported by its central state planning authority (*Gosplan)* to cost the Soviet economy some Rouble 200 million (DM 586 million) per annum (Schwarz 1991: 19; Siegl 1990: 3) [4].

8.6 Negotiations on establishing a Volga republic 1989 - 1991

Although the new West German government initiative on persuading the potential *Aussiedler* to remain was already considered during the Autumn of 1988 and publicised in the Spring of 1989, it took until July 1989 before Waffenschmidt could report any progress in negotiations with the Soviet Union on an autonomous republic. Upon returning from a visit to Moscow during July 1989, Waffenschmidt announced that there was a political will evident in Moscow to find a quick solution to the problem of autonomy for its German minority (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.6 1989: 2). He declared that the Soviet government was considering re-creating a Volga republic for the Soviet Germans, pointing to the discussions that had taken place in the Soviet parliament on the issue during June 1989, and its decision to establish a commission to consider the problem (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.6 1989: 2).

This optimism was not shared in West Germany by members of the opposition SPD party. During a visit to Kazakhstan during October 1989, Gerhard Schröder (prime minister for the state of Lower Saxony) declared that even if the Volga republic was re-created, it was most unlikely that the exodus by Soviet Germans to West Germany could be stemmed. Schröder pointed to the statements made by

[4] Exchange rate at the end of December 1988: Rouble 1 = DM 2,93 (*Statistisches Jahrbuch* 1989: 313).

government ministers which gave potential *Aussiedler* the impression that they would continue to be warmly welcomed in West Germany if they chose to emigrate (Ihlau 1989: 1). Schröder called for a reduction in the range of financial benefits available to the *Aussiedler* upon arrival, thereby removing the financial incentive to seek resettlement in West Germany (Ihlau 1989: 1).

8.6.1 Soviet government announces the full rehabilitation of Soviet Germans in November 1989

The Supreme Soviet parliament declared the full rehabilitation of the Soviet Germans on 14 November 1989. This decision officially absolved the German minority of Stalin's war-time charges made against them of spying and collaborating with the German army in 1941. Those allegations were finally accepted to have been made without basis (Eisfeld 1991: 21). The rehabilitation represented an important concession and a further step in the normalisation of the situation for the Soviet Germans.

8.6.2 Support by the Supreme Soviet in principle for an autonomous German republic

The full rehabilitation by the Supreme Soviet parliament was further backed up by its decision on 28 November 1989 to give support in principle to the re-creation of a German autonomous republic. A commission had been set up by the Nationalities Chamber of the Supreme Soviet on 12 July 1989 to assess the situation of the Soviet German group (Eisfeld 1991: 21) [5]. The Supreme Soviet accepted the recommendations put forward by the commission that the Soviet Germans should regain their autonomy (Eisfeld 1992: 160). President Gorbachev signalled his support for the re-creation of an autonomous state by personally signing the

[5] The Supreme Soviet of the USSR consisted of two chambers, the Nationalities Chamber and the Union of Soviets. The Nationalities Chamber represented the various Soviet republics, autonomous republics, regions and districts enabling (in theory) the interests of the national groups to be represented in parliament.

resolution of the Supreme Soviet (Siegl 1990: 3). Article 1 of this resolution stated that the Supreme Soviet accepted the results and recommendations put forward by the commission on a future autonomy for the German minority. Yet it failed to name possible geographical locations or a timetable. Article 2 of the resolution stated that a further government commission would be set up to look at the practical questions involved in the formation of such an autonomous republic [6].

This commission was given the brief to investigate the problems of the Soviet German minority and put forward solutions, such as possible locations and timetables. Whether the Soviet leadership was genuinely interested in progress on this matter, or merely conducting a paper exercise is open to debate. The West German media reported in early January 1990 that the commission had still not been formed (Siegl 1990: 3). Beckherrn supports the view that the Soviet decision of 28 November 1989 to establish a commission merely reflected Soviet government concerns over the growing exodus of their predominantly young Soviet German work force following the relaxation in travel regulations in 1987 (Beckherrn 1990: 232). While the Soviet authorities were reluctant to let them leave for economic reasons, they were also aware that the local population living in the vicinity of the former Volga republic (predominantly ethnic Russians) and local politicians largely rejected the idea of the Germans receiving an autonomous republic in their area (Beckherrn 1990: 233). Eisfeld points out that the chairman of the commission had previously been a Communist Party secretary in the Volga area (1992: 160).

8.6.3 German government optimism over autonomy gradually gives way to caution during 1990

Yet while the German government regarded the granting of full rehabilitation to the Soviet Germans as a positive move, questions were raised in the German media over the degree of Soviet sincerity on the question of forming an autonomous republic. Surprisingly, the decision of the Supreme Soviet to rehabilitate the Soviet Germans

[6] This was one of three parliamentary commissions set up to consider the autonomy issue for the national groups who had formerly lost their political autonomy. Apart from the Soviet Germans, the other national groups were the Crimean Tatars and the Meskhetian Turks (Siegl 1990: 3).

in November 1989 was not publicised in the national newspapers, but merely reported in two regional newspapers which were published in the vicinity of the former Volga republic (Olt 1991: 10).

The West German press reported that protest meetings had been held in the town of Marx (former Volga German town) during December 1989, following the Supreme Soviet's decision to form a commission on the issue of future German autonomy in the area, voicing their opposition to a possible return by the Soviet Germans (Siegl 1990: 3). The local opposition to the proposed Volga republic included the use of slogans such as "no Fourth *Reich* along the Volga" (Olt 1991: 10) [7]. The press reports suggested that the meetings had been organised by members of the KGB and local politicians afraid of losing their influence and control in the event of a German autonomous republic being created in their region (Olt 1990b: 10).

Members of the Soviet government commission were reported to have travelled to the German minority areas in the southern Asiatic republics, such as Kazakhstan, as well as to the area of the former German republic at Volgograd (Olt 1990a: 12). The commission subsequently reported its findings to the Supreme Soviet in 1990, announcing that one of the most important motives for Soviet Germans to emigrate was the fear of losing their cultural ties and language (Beckherrn 1990: 232). Yet the commission came to the conclusion that it was not at that time possible to establish such a republic in the vicinity of the former Volga republic (Olt 1991: 10).

The commission instead suggested a cultural autonomy for the Germans, one without territorial autonomy (Eisfeld 1992: 160). The chairman of the Nationalities Chamber in the Supreme Soviet declared that a cultural autonomy could only be achieved step-by-step over a period of some ten years and that such cultural autonomy would be a first step towards eventual territorial autonomy (Olt 1990a: 12). This decision was arguably a concession to local opposition against the planned autonomy. The commission stated that local opinion in the vicinity of the former Volga republic rejected the resettlement plans for the Soviet Germans because of the destabilising effect this would have on the economy and the social structure.

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[7] Another slogan reportedly used was: "*Do you want the Germans to become our bosses*?" (Siegl 1990: 3).

Eisfeld claims that Chairman Gusjev had watered down his original brief (to investigate the problems and possible solutions for Soviet German autonomy) deliberately to merely investigate the problem, failing to consider possible solutions (1992: 160). The radical wing of the Soviet German *Wiedergeburt* (Rebirth) organisation, under the leadership of Heinrich Groth, rejected the idea of only having a cultural autonomy and instead insisted that a German Volga republic had to be established (Olt 1991: 10) [8].

The suggestion made by the commission of only a step-by-step move to autonomy represented a major set-back for the German government's policy of persuading potential Soviet *Aussiedler* to stay. The German government had not expected such concerted local opposition to the autonomy plans. Yet unless progress was achieved on the issue, the rate of Soviet *Aussiedler* emigration was likely to continue rising. The pressure was thus on the German government negotiators to achieve some tangible signs of progress on the proposed Soviet German autonomy.

8.6.4 German government financial aid to assist negotiations

Despite the reports of local resistance to German autonomy, the German government sought to give renewed impulses to those negotiations with the help of financial incentives. A major injection of financial aid by the German government for the Soviet Germans was announced during 1990, as part of an allocation of some DM 200 million for the two year period 1990 - 1991 to all *Aussiedler* areas. The majority of this sum was to be used to support both the creation of the German autonomous republic and German *rayons* in the Soviet Union (*200 Millionen DM für Deutsche* 1991: 7) [9].

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[8] The *Wiedergeburt* organisation, founded in March 1989, was an umbrella organisation for the individual groups of representatives for the Soviet Germans (Beckherrn 1990: 231). The major aims of this organisation were to protect the German culture and to campaign for the establishment of the Volga republic (Dietz/Hilkes 1992: 100; Eisfeld 1991: 21).

[9] *Rayons* are an administrative district within the former Soviet Union's (and later the CIS) political administration system. They are relatively small local administrative districts which may for example comprise a group of villages, or a town and surrounding villages. They only have a limited degree of local autonomy. The position of the *rayon* in the administrative structure of the former Soviet Union is shown in Appendix 7. The structure shows that the *rayon* has a comparatively low status within the political hierarchy in comparison to an ASSR republic.

The principles on which this assistance was to be given were announced by the German government in December 1990. These were as follows (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.18 1990: 4-7):

1. The planned measures had to be implemented swiftly to create perspectives for the German minority.

2. The neighbouring national groups were not to be disadvantaged by the aid given to the Germans, thereby preventing possible jealousy.

3. The measures of help were to be discussed by the German Foreign Office with the respective governments.

4. German organisations with local knowledge of the infrastructure and having local contacts were to be used to implement the government assistance.

5. The government help had to be co-ordinated as part of an overall plan of government assistance.

8.6.5 The main forms of assistance to be granted to the Soviet Germans

In deciding upon its allocation of resources and finance for the Soviet Germans, the government identified the following three key areas of assistance:

1. Social assistance.
2. Cultural assistance.
3. Employment assistance.

The German government gave the following details of the specific forms of government assistance to be made available in these three identified categories (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.27 1991: 1-5):

1. Social assistance

This covers the supply of food, medicine and equipment to hospitals. It was particularly aimed to help the disabled and elderly patients. Food and hospital equipment were identified by the government as two areas where supply problems had previously been experienced.

2. Cultural assistance

The aim was to promote the teaching of the German language, literature and culture. Assistance was to be given to German community centres, schools and associations where these facilities were to be provided. The problem experienced by Soviet German *Aussiedler* in their command of the German language has been identified (as discussed in chapter seven) as a major integration problem for those arriving in Germany for resettlement.

3. Employment assistance

Grants were to be made available to applicants eligible for help in setting up new small businesses, such as food processing businesses and cottage industry projects. The aim was for the Soviet Germans to establish their own economic and industrial basis, which as it expands, could employ other Soviet Germans. Apprentices and trainees could visit companies in Germany for placements, returning with the relevant updated knowledge on German business practices and new technology.

In reviewing these three forms of government assistance, Waffenschmidt stated that the central aim was to promote a degree of self-help within the Soviet German communities, with the German government providing the financial backing (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.27 1991: 5). These schemes were to also benefit the non-German local residents, in order to avoid resentment arising over German government help for the German minority. Waffenschmidt hoped that this programme of assistance would give further backing to the German government's push for creating future perspectives for the German minority in the Soviet Union.

The location of the autonomous republic was the subject of speculation by both Waffenschmidt and Soviet German representatives. Even if located inside the territory of the former Volga republic, a great amount of construction work and finance would be necessary to build the infrastructure for new German settlements. Nearly forty years absence had resulted in land and property previously owned by Volga Germans changing ownership. Thus housing and land had to be made available to future new settlers.

Despite the ban imposed prior to 1972, which prohibited the return by Volga Germans to their former republic, individual families are known to have returned. After the former republic had been disbanded, its territory was divided up between the two districts of Saratov (given two-thirds of the republic) and Volgograd (given one-third). It was estimated in 1989 that 20,000 Germans had since returned to live in the Saratov district, with a further 30,000 returning to the Volgograd district (Mettke 1989: 188). For comparison purposes, it is worth remembering that Germans made up some 66 % (380,000) of the total population of 580,000 in the former Volga republic in 1924 (Beckherrn 1990: 223).

8.7 Russia takes over responsibility for negotiations on the Volga republic

Following the lack of progress achieved in negotiations between the Soviet and German governments on the proposed autonomy, the Russian government sought to take the initiative in 1991 to find a solution to the problem. The Russian parliament subsequently passed a decree on 26 April 1991 which granted rehabilitation to those national groups (including the Soviet Germans) who had been oppressed by Stalin during the Second World War. The Russian government also announced that it would form its own committee to reconsider the possibility of establishing an autonomous republic for the Soviet Germans. The working group under the Chairman Prokopjev (Russian minister of nationalities) was given the brief to draft the relevant legislation for the new German republic by the end of 1991 (Eisfeld 1992: 161). Negotiations on the future republic became the responsibility of the

Russian parliament. This presented a possibility for President Yeltsin to attract financial investment and economic co-operation from the German government in return for progress in establishing the Volga republic.

President Yeltsin declared the re-creation of the republic to be a case of late justice, a reference to the abolition of the former Volga republic by Stalin, and suggested that up to 800,000 Soviet Germans could be resettled in such a republic (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 19 August 1991: 1). Once again, no details were given by Yeltsin with regard to the possible location or timetable that would be involved. Yet the German government welcomed the announcement made by Yeltsin and accepted him as a partner in future negotiations on the question of autonomy. The change in negotiators on the Soviet side brought with it the possibility of giving new impetus to the discussions which had previously been overshadowed by the successive delays in establishing the autonomous republic.

Waffenschmidt sought to exert pressure on Yeltsin during his visit to the Soviet Union in July 1991. Upon his return to Bonn, Waffenschmidt announced further success in negotiations. He pointed out that the Russian government had created a commission to look into the issue of the future republic and that this commission would report its findings by September 1991 (*Neue Perspektiven* 1991: 6). Meanwhile progress was being achieved in establishing German *rayons*. Waffenschmidt welcomed the Russian government's announcement of its approval (July 1991) for the formation of a Soviet German *rayon* at Njekrassowo in the Altai area of western Siberia. It was named Halbstadt, thereby reverting to the former German name [10]. This *rayon* comprised 12 villages and had a total population in 1991 of some 22,000 of which 18,000 were Soviet Germans (Bacia 1991: 3).

While the Halbstadt *rayon* was welcomed in Bonn, such *rayons* were not alone considered to be acceptable alternatives to the envisaged Volga republic. Aware of German government expectations in view of the symbolic value of a Volga republic, Yeltsin sought to reassure the German government that negotiations were

[10] The Halbstadt *rayon* was originally founded in 1927 and disbanded in 1938. The basis for the re-creation of this *rayon* was the result of a local referendum on the proposed *rayon* held on 12 June 1991 (Bacia 1991: 3). The location of Halbstadt is shown in the map in Appendix 8.

continuing by announcing on Russian television (in August 1991) that despite local opposition, the Volga republic would be re-created. He repeated his earlier statement that its re-creation was an act of justice, yet did not give any proposed timetable for its completion (*Handelsblatt* 19 August 1991: 4) [11]. The issue of the proposed republic was again discussed between Waffenschmidt and Prokopjev in Bonn during September 1991. The German government reiterated that the Volga republic had priority because the German minority regarded the republic as a symbol for their cultural and economic future in the Soviet Union (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.30 1991: 3).

8.7.1 Russian proposals over a three stage plan for the future Volga republic

Despite the initial optimism expressed by the German government negotiators, it took until October 1991 before further progress was achieved on the plans for an autonomous republic. On the occasion of a meeting of the Soviet German representatives in Moscow during October 1991, Yeltsin was reported to have sent a telegram to the delegates in which he referred to the re-creation of the Volga republic as being part of the on-going political changes in Russia, yet one which could only be achieved in a step-by-step process which required time (*Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung* 21 October 1991: 1). At the subsequent congress held by the Soviet German representatives, a timetable was given for the first time by the Russian minister Prokopjev. He announced the following three stage plan, which he claimed would lead to the creation of the autonomous republic by 1994 (Koch 1991: 4):

Stage 1: Legislation would be passed in Russia before the end of 1991 to establish a legal framework for the creation of a German Volga republic.

[11] It should be remembered that the Russian republic was involved in discussions with the German government on German help for the Russian economic restructuring process. The repeated assurances given to the German negotiators over the Volga republic may arguably have served to appease the Germans in the light of those discussions.

Stage 2: Resettlement by the Soviet Germans would commence in the Volga region during the period 1992 to 1993.

Stage 3: The region would be awarded Russian autonomous status in 1994.

The agreement on establishing the autonomous republic was to be finalised in a joint Russian-German declaration to be signed by President Yeltsin during his next visit to Germany on 21 November 1991. Yeltsin pointed out that the joint declaration would be the first binding document to be signed on the proposed republic (*Autonomie für Deutsche* 1991: 4).

Waffenschmidt welcomed the announcement as evidence of success in negotiations, declaring at the Soviet German congress in Moscow that the conditions for the Germans to remain in the Soviet Union had improved (*Der Spiegel* no.43 1991: 204). He called for the republic to be built in the vicinity of the former Volga republic, pointing to the historical precedent (*Autonomie für Deutsche* 1991: 4). Waffenschmidt regarded the central aim of establishing an autonomous state for the Soviet German minority as having now been ensured, sending an important signal to those potential *Aussiedler* still undecided on whether to emigrate (*Redaktion* October 1991: 1). The hope in German government circles was that this group would be persuaded to await further developments and accept this Russian offer. This would in turn help to reduce the pressure exerted by the exodus of Soviet *Aussiedler* still being registered in Germany during 1991. Waffenschmidt accepted that this step-by-step approach was realistic and also necessary in view of the missing infrastructure in the area of the former Volga republic and the aim of resettling some 300,000 Soviet Germans into the vicinity (*Redaktion* October 1991: 1).

Representatives of the Soviet German *Wiedergeburt* organisation (headed by Chairman Groth) rejected the idea of the step-by-step process at a Moscow congress. The delegates indeed voted to help organise a mass exodus to Germany (of an estimated 2 million *Aussiedler*) if no binding approval for the republic was

given by the Russian parliament by 1 January 1992 (*Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung* 21 October 1991: 1) [12].

In the Volga area itself, the three stage plan was met with resistance. The members of the Saratov parliament voted against the plan (16 October 1991), while also formulating a protest note to President Yeltsin over the issue (Schwarz 1991: 19). The regional parliament argued that in view of the local bad feeling over the proposed republic, it was not at present possible to put the autonomous republic onto their political agenda (Rowold 1991: 3) [13].

8.7.2 German announcement of financial assistance for the future Volga republic

Following the new Russian initiatives on the Volga republic, and in anticipation of the visit to Bonn by President Yeltsin in November 1991, the German parliament voted to release a further DM 50 million in financial aid for the Soviet German minority during November 1991 (*50-Millionen-DM-Hilfsprogramm* 1992: 6). This additional financial aid programme was to assist in the creation of an autonomous German republic.

Some DM 20 million was to be spent on supplying free medical equipment and medicine for the next 9-12 months to the Saratov area. The remaining DM 30 million was to be used to purchase food, equipment and clothing required by the Soviet German population as everyday necessities. These were to be sold in the Saratov area, with the income generated by the sale of these items going towards setting up a special fund to finance the infrastructure for the autonomous state. The first deliveries under this government programme were sent to the Saratov area

[12] A division took place during 1991 within the *Wiedergeburt* organisation over the future way forward for the Soviet Germans. The moderate wing of the delegates under the leadership of Hugo Wormsbecher was outvoted by the radical wing headed by Heinrich Groth. The moderates supported the idea of starting with a cultural autonomy, thereby following the line of progress suggested by the Soviet authorities (Olt 1991: 10; Eisfeld 1991: 21-2).

[13] The German press pointed out that local people in the Volga area referred to possible parallels to the ethnic conflict in the Nagorno-Karabach region (the centre of conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan). The press reported slogans such as "*We don't need autonomy, we don't need a second Karabach*" (Rowold 1991: 3).

during December 1991, forming the start of an initiative which Waffenschmidt hoped would benefit both the Germans and Russians living in the Volga area (*50-Millionen-DM-Hilfsprogramm* 1992: 6).

8.8 Joint Declaration of Intent signed on the Volga republic

German expectations were high for the visit of President Yeltsin to Bonn during November 1991. The talks between Chancellor Kohl and President Yeltsin culminated in the signing of a Joint Declaration of Intent by the two leaders. It covered the establishing of an autonomous republic for the Soviet Germans as well as expanding the political, economic and cultural ties between Germany and Russia [14]. Chancellor Kohl referred to the Declaration as the foundation stone for closer future co-operation between the two states (*Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung* 22 November 1991: 3). German President Richard von Weizsäcker also welcomed the Joint Declaration, stating that it was important for the German minority to know that they had a future in the Soviet Union (*Frankfurter Neue Presse* 23 November 1991: 1).

Yet during his visit, Yeltsin declared that the Soviet Germans could not expect to return to the territory of the former republic (of 1941) as it was now inhabited by other national groups (Tomforde 1991: 4). Yeltsin pointed out that the Russian authorities had chosen an alternative location for the republic covering some 6,000 sq.km (*Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung* 22 November 1991: 3). In addition to the planned republic, new German *rayons* were to be created outside of the intended republic for those unable to resettle in the new republic. In return, Chancellor Kohl promised to contribute to the financing of the future Soviet German republic (*Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung* 22 November 1991: 3).

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[14] The Joint Declaration of Intent included the following statement:
"Germany happily notes that Russia is determined to re-create the republic of the Germans in the traditional settlement areas of the Volga [...]. Both sides are in agreement, that in addition to the creation of the republic for Germans along the Volga, the creation and promoting of individual districts for Germans who wish to remain in their traditional home areas will continue."
Under the Declaration, the Soviet Germans were also to be enabled to use the German language freely, thereby giving them a further reason to stay (*Der Besuch* 1992: 22):

8.8.1 Renewed set-backs in negotiations with Russia

Only a day after the signing of the Joint Declaration, German government officials voiced their criticism and irritation over the intended geographical location for the republic, after having received more detailed information on the proposed site. It transpired that the Russian government had chosen two sites, each of approximately 3,000 sq.km, as the basis for the future autonomous territory.

One site was inside that of the former German Volga republic and could accommodate between 300,000 - 400,000 settlers (*Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung* 23 November 1991: 1). The second site at Kapustin Yar near Volgograd was located outside the former Volga republic (*Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung* 23 November 1991: 1) [15]. Yet the Kapustin Yar site was identified by the German authorities as having previously been used for the destruction of Soviet SS-20 missiles. In addition, this former military training area was believed to have been contaminated by military exercises and was therefore considered unsuitable as a location for the German autonomous republic (*Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung* 23 November 1991: 1).

The German government negotiators sought to calm fears over the intended locations. The government spokesman Dieter Vogel acknowledged that the Soviet Germans may have reservations about the military site at Kapustin Yar but pointed out that a government delegation would visit the proposed site to assess it (*Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung* 23 November 1991: 1). The German government subsequently threatened to withdraw its DM 50 million programme of financial support for the future Volga republic unless a satisfactory location was offered (Urschel 1992: 3). Yet despite this threat, no further initiatives were taken by the Russian authorities before the end of 1991 to resolve the dispute over the intended location.

The Joint Declaration of Intent was rejected by Chairman Groth of the *Wiedergeburt* organisation as a basis for future progress on the issue of the Volga

[15] Kapustin Yar is located in southern Russia near the border to Kazakhstan. Its location is shown in the map in Appendix 9.

republic, as it failed to lay down a specific timetable for progress. Furthermore, Groth rejected the site at Kapustin Yar as unacceptable and instead demanded a location to be chosen inside the former Volga republic (*Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung* 25 November 1991: 2). The chairman further argued that the Joint Declaration document could not solve the problems of the Soviet Germans (*Süddeutsche Zeitung* 25 November 1991: 2).

A further set-back for the German government came with the publication of a public opinion poll carried out in the vicinity of the former Volga republic on the proposed republic. The poll conducted by the Soviet Academy of Research revealed that some 65% of those questioned were against the proposed republic being established in their area (*Süddeutsche Zeitung* 26 November 1991: 8). This negative result was explained by the Academy on the grounds that the local people feared a possible ethnic conflict as well as shortages in housing if the Soviet Germans came to the area.

8.9 The state of negotiations upon the demise of the Soviet Union

As a result of the set-backs experienced by the German government between 1989 and 1991 in its negotiations on the Volga republic, it had not achieved the desired breakthrough by the time that the Soviet Union broke up into independent republics in December 1991. The symbolic autonomous Volga republic was still merely a project confined to the drawing-board. While the Soviet government did grant full rehabilitation to the Soviet German minority, it failed to keep to the agreements signed with Germany on the future territorial autonomy. Its failure to keep to the outlined three stage plan in October 1991 can be largely explained by the continued local opposition that existed in the Volga area to the proposed republic, an obstacle which Yeltsin was unable to overcome. The failure was also arguably a result of exaggerated promises made by the Russian government in anticipation of receiving a reward in the form of further financial aid from Germany.

The rising level of Soviet German emigration to Germany during the period 1988 to 1991 showed that the exodus continued to gain momentum despite efforts made by the German government to dissuade them from emigrating [16]. This was a further indication that German government negotiators had not achieved their aim of reversing the emigration pattern for this minority. Even those Germans expected to move to the Halbstadt *rayon* (announced in July 1991) were not necessarily going to remain there. Their resettlement in Halbstadt from Kazakhstan and other Asiatic republics marked by ethnic conflict may only constitute a temporary stop in the eventual journey to Germany.

A further factor which increased the pressure on the German government to resolve the question of German autonomy was the publication in 1991 of the final Soviet population census carried out in 1989. The census recorded the total for Soviet Germans to be just over 2 million, representing a slight increase in the size of the Soviet German minority compared to the previous total of 1.9 million recorded in 1979 (Stölting 1990: 279). This increase, despite continued emigration to Germany, has been explained with reference to their relatively high birth-rate (Stölting 1990: 279). Waffenschmidt reminded President Yeltsin in December 1991 of the need to accelerate the rate of progress in establishing the Volga republic, pointing to the Joint Declaration of Intent that Yeltsin had signed in Bonn during November 1991 (*Peiner Allgemeine Zeitung* 23 December 1991: 2). The subsequent dispute over the possible location of the republic overshadowed their negotiations as the year drew to a close.

Although the government had agreed to spend the sum of DM 200 million in financial aid for the German minorities in 1990 and 1991 for social, cultural and economic measures, mainly in the Soviet Union, this was still cheaper than paying for the integration measures should the Germans decide to resettle in the FRG. If the policy were to have succeeded, it would have represented a major financial saving for the German government. If this sum of DM 200 million is divided alone by the two million strong Soviet German minority, the savings quickly become

[16] The statistics for the period 1988 to 1991 showed that the level of emigration by Soviet Germans rose from 47,572 (1988) to 147,320 (1991) despite the continuing negotiations (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.45 1993: 4).

evident. Taken over the two year period, this assistance represented DM 100 of assistance per head over two years. Calculated on an annual per head basis, the government's financial assistance amounted to merely DM 50 for each potential *Aussiedler* in 1990 and 1991.

Yet alone the cost of processing each *Aussiedler* emigration application in Germany, without taking into account the cost per *Aussiedler* of the government's resettlement and integration measures, would cost more than DM 50 . It has been estimated that the annual cost to the German government and federal authorities of accepting and integrating the *Aussiedler* in 1991 was some DM 4.9 billion [17].

8.10 Views of the Soviet Germans on the proposed Volga republic

One of the striking aspects of the negotiations conducted by the German government between 1989 and 1991 on the proposed republic, was the absence of available data from government sources on the question of whether the Germans would refrain from emigrating if the Volga republic was re-created. The government worked on the assumption that they would indeed stay if the autonomous Volga republic were to be established. Yet if the following points and findings are taken into account, it was arguably unlikely that the majority of Soviet Germans would remain so long as the open-door policy continued to operate in Germany:

1. Views of the radical wing of the *Wiedergeburt* organisation

Chairman Groth of the *Wiedergeburt* organisation claimed that the majority of Soviet Germans intended to emigrate regardless of any progress achieved on the issue of the republic, having no confidence in the Soviet leadership. He rejected the Joint Declaration of Intent as it failed to lay down a specific timetable, while the

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[17] The sum comprises the following amounts:

DM 2.1	billion	for *Aussiedler* accommodation and integration measures.
DM 2.7	billion	for social security payments and language courses.
DM 57 million		for employment retraining courses.

Total: DM 4.86 billion
(*Stern Magazine* no.48 1991: 54).

intended locations included the contaminated site at Kapustin Yar. Groth was not willing to accept compromise. He declared that no Germans would come to the Volga area if they did not have their own republic (Schwarz 1991: 19). Groth propagated the slogan "autonomy or exodus" (Dietz/Hilkes 1992: 101). Yet to what extent Groth and the *Wiedergeburt* organisation indeed represented, as it claimed to do, the views of the majority of Soviet Germans at the time was unclear (Dietz/Hilkes 1992: 100). Even so, remarks made by Groth were given widespread coverage in the German press.

2. Interviews conducted with Soviet Germans

In order to gain a clearer picture of the views of the potential *Aussiedler*, it is relevant to consider the findings of a study conducted jointly by the East European Institute in Munich and the Union Centre for Public Opinion in Moscow during 1991. The researchers questioned just over 1,000 Soviet Germans in western Siberia and Kazakhstan, considered to be representative of the Soviet German communities (Dietz/Hilkes 1992: 104-5). The questions posed covered the issue of the proposed Volga republic, asking whether success in re-creating the republic would influence their emigration decision. In reply to the question of whether they would refrain from emigrating if the republic became a reality, the following responses were recorded (Dietz/Hilkes 1992: 104-5) :

1. Some 51% of respondents stated that they would leave the Soviet Union regardless of whether or not the republic was re-created.

2. Some 30% of respondents stated that they were still undecided.

3. Some 17% of respondents stated that they would indeed stay if the republic was established.

These findings suggested that less than one in five Soviet Germans would reward the German government for success in its campaign for a Volga republic by refraining from emigrating to Germany. Yet the majority of those questioned had already decided that they would leave regardless of future progress in the issue of

the Volga republic. The researchers pointed out that those prepared to stay did not necessarily intend to move to a future Volga republic (Dietz/Hilkes 1992: 105). Furthermore, only 22% of those questioned believed that the Volga republic was a realistic aim (Dietz/Hilkes 1992: 107-8). The researchers concluded that the majority of those interviewed were sceptical over the future prospects for a Volga republic, so that it was not realistic to expect a change of mind by those who had already decided to emigrate to Germany in the future (Dietz/Hilkes 1992: 107-8).

8.11 Summary

Despite protracted talks on the proposed republic, the negotiations had merely been rewarded with the signing of the Joint Declaration of Intent (yet without a timetable of future progress) and the announcement of a German *rayon* at Halbstadt. German government attempts to slow down the exodus by throwing money at the problem failed to secure progress on the proposed republic. While individual projects could be realised (such as the supply of clothing and medical equipment for the German communities), there was little tangible progress on the Volga republic. The government had continued to negotiate on the assumption that success in establishing the Volga republic would show the German minority that it indeed had a future in the Soviet Union, thereby hoping to reduce the level of the Soviet German exodus to Germany. The immigration statistics showed that this assumption was not necessarily correct.

Despite the previous set-backs, Chancellor Kohl and Horst Waffenschmidt sought to achieve future success in negotiations with the individual CIS republics, particularly with Russia, in their quest to secure progress on the German autonomous republic. The break-up of the Soviet Union in December 1991 and the formation of the Commonwealth of Independent States brought with it a new political constellation. The German negotiators were confident that it brought with it new opportunities for the government to pursue the issue of an autonomous republic with the individual republics, rather than with a central authority. German negotiators welcomed the chance to conduct future negotiations with the Russian

republic, hoping it could achieve the desired breakthrough on the Volga republic by negotiating on a one-to-one basis.

It therefore remained to be seen whether the ability to continue negotiations directly with Russia during 1992 (to be addressed in chapter nine) without the involvement of the Soviet government would bring the desired breakthrough and help stem the exodus to Germany. The evidence for the period 1989 to 1991 showed that the Volga republic project was heading for failure. This was largely due to a lack of commitment shown by both the Soviet and Russian governments in implementing agreements on the republic, and the effectiveness of local protests in the Saratov area against the proposed republic. Even if Yeltsin was sincere in his statements of support for a future republic, he appeared unable to implement his policies at local level in the Volga area against local opposition. Despite German government optimism over future progress on the issue, there was little evidence during the period 1989 - 1991 to support that optimism or the chances of success in the immediate future.

CHAPTER NINE

NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN RUSSIA AND GERMANY DURING 1992 ON ESTABLISHING AN AUTONOMOUS VOLGA REPUBLIC

9. Negotiations between Russia and Germany during 1992 on establishing an autonomous Volga republic

9.1 The significance of the Volga republic for both German negotiators and Soviet Germans

Having documented in chapter eight the set-backs encountered by German government negotiators on establishing an autonomous republic between 1989 and 1991, this chapter examines both the subsequent development in negotiations during 1992 following the break-up of the Soviet Union and the views of the Soviet Germans themselves. The first part of this chapter gives a chronological account of the continued negotiations with the independent Russian government under the leadership of President Yeltsin, seeking to determine whether the optimism of German government negotiators was backed by progress on the issue of the autonomous republic[1]. It further considers whether the Russian government's previous limited commitment to the proposed republic, and the inability of President Yeltsin to impose government policy at the local level (as discussed in chapter eight) continued to hamper progress during 1992. Evidence of further set-backs would put the German government's policy of continuing to provide financial aid in expectation of success under additional pressure and ultimately also put its validity into question.

The second part of this chapter addresses the question of what the Soviet German motives were for rejecting the German government's calls for them to stay, listing

[1] Following the break-up of the Soviet Union, 11 of the former Soviet republics (including Russia) became members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The four republics who did not join were Georgia and the three Baltic states (Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia). Georgia joined as the twelfth member in December 1993. The CIS was to serve members as a political forum for a common economic and military policy.

the relevant push and pull factors. This will help clarify whether, as Chancellor Kohl and Waffenschmidt had claimed, the main motive for their exodus was the wish to preserve their German identity i.e. the wish to live as Germans among Germans. This was an important question, as in continuing to negotiate on the proposed Volga republic during 1992, the government assumed that a significant number of Soviet Germans would refrain from emigrating if the autonomous republic was established. If the dominant motive was for example the wish to join family members in Germany, then clearly even success in establishing an autonomous Volga republic would not stem the exodus to Germany. This, together with the evidence on set-backs in negotiations, would give support to the argument that the government's policy of negotiations was not likely to succeed.

9.2 The new political circumstances for German negotiators resulting from the break-up of the Soviet Union

The break-up of the Soviet Union in December 1991 and the formation of independent republics gave the German government negotiators the opportunity to focus their political negotiations over the Volga republic on the Russian government. The German government was aware that the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union relied on economic support from the West, and arguably assumed that the republics were likely to welcome any forms of financial aid destined for the Soviet German communities. Waffenschmidt had declared that German financial and material aid for the German minority would also benefit the surrounding non-German population (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.32 1992: 8).

The newly independent republics had an interest in holding their German minority (particularly the young people) as they sought to stabilise their economies. The work force (as a factor of production) was an important element for their future economic growth. The emigration by Soviet Germans from Russia, Kazakhstan and the Ukraine had led to unfilled vacancies in the low paid agricultural sector (Eisfeld 1993: 45). Yet the governments in those countries were aware that the treatment of

their German minorities had important implications for subsequent relations with economically strong Germany (Eisfeld 1993: 45). The republics were therefore likely to give some form of support to the initiatives taken by Germany to persuade the Soviet German population not to emigrate to Germany.

Yet the new opportunities presented by the political and economic changes resulting from the demise of the Soviet Union were also accompanied by potential problems with regard to negotiations on the autonomous republic. As shown in chapter eight, Germany had experienced set-backs in negotiations on the republic since 1989 with both the Soviet and Russian leaderships. President Yeltsin had shown signs of being both unreliable and unpredictable in negotiations on the autonomous republic. The revelation during December 1991, that President Yeltsin had recommended Kapustin Yar (supposedly contaminated [2]) as a location for a future Volga republic was evidence of duplicitous decisions being made by the Russian president. The German government could merely provide the financial backing and economic incentives for this proposed republic, leaving the political decision-making in the hands of President Yeltsin.

9.3 Renewed German government optimism over future progress on the Volga republic

The creation of an autonomous German republic remained the main aim of German government negotiations with Russia during 1992, ideally to be located in the vicinity of the former Volga republic. In contrast, the Russian government favoured establishing semi-autonomous *rayons* (districts) for the German minority. This option was not considered by the German negotiators to be an acceptable alternative solution in seeking to persuade the Soviet Germans to stay. While Waffenschmidt welcomed the establishing of German *rayons* (such as Halbstadt established during 1991), referring to them as "islands of hope" [3], he considered that only an

[2] The Russian press had itself reported that the military area of Kapustin Yar was contaminated (*Süddeutsche Zeitung* 4 March 1992: 2).

[3] The slogan "islands of hope" was increasingly used by Waffenschmidt during 1992 (*50-Millionen-DM-Hilfsprogramm* 1992: 6) as it became clear that negotiations on the proposed Volga republic itself were not progressing as quickly as the German negotiators had hoped. By

autonomous republic (with its symbolic value) would be an acceptable solution for the Soviet Germans (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.32 1992: 7-8). A Russian republic, with its ability to grant local self-government to national minorities under its constitution, presented favourable prospects for a future Soviet German republic. In such a republic, within the Russian federation of republics, the German language could become the second administrative language after Russian.

The German government was aware that in addition to Russia, other republics such as Kazakhstan and the Ukraine were interested in retaining their resident German minority. While offers of assistance to prospective Soviet German settlers had been made by the governments in those countries, arguably in expectation of German economic help in return, these did not include granting them their own autonomous republic [4]. The German media reported that Argentina was interested in accepting up to 100,000 Soviet Germans in return for a payment of up to US$ 50,000 per settler (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 4 February 1992: 8). Nothing became of this supposed offer.

9.4 Statement of Bonn's revised policy over negotiations with the independent republics

Following the break-up of the Soviet Union, the German government revised its policy on assisting the Soviet Germans. The revised policy, outlined by Waffenschmidt in a statement on 6 January 1992, incorporated three main aims (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.32 1992: 6). The aims were as follows:

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referring to the German *rayons* as "islands of hope", the inference was that the German minority could first resettle on the islands while awaiting the establishing of the autonomous republic.

[4] For example:
1. President Kravchuk of the Ukraine announced that he had set up a government fund to help finance the future resettlement of up to 400,000 Soviet Germans on fertile lands in the Ukraine (*Süddeutsche Zeitung* 3 February 1992: 2). Four areas in southern Ukraine were named as possible locations for the German settlers (*Positive Signale* 1992: 5). See also *Der Spiegel* no.6 1992: 163 and the interview with President Kravchuk in *Der Spiegel* no.38 1992: 196.
2. President Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan showed interest in resettling the Germans in Kazakhstan yet would not consider creating an autonomous republic or *rayons* for the Germans (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 15 September 1992: 7).

Aim 1: To ensure that as many as possible of the circa 2 million Soviet Germans remained in the former Soviet Union. The open-door policy for Soviet *Aussiedler* to enter Germany would continue to operate, but the emphasis of government policy would be placed on presenting good reasons for the German minority to stay in the former Soviet Union.

Aim 2: The financial and material assistance given to the Soviet Germans should simultaneously benefit the other nationalities in the surrounding vicinity, thereby preventing possible accusations that the Soviet Germans were being treated favourably.

Aim 3: The Soviet Germans were to have a bridge function between Germany and the individual republics. This was considered to be important in the process of achieving a so-called common European home.

These three aims were not new. Aim one had been a central aim in conducting its *Aussiedler* policy since 1988, particularly following the dramatic rises registered in the number of *Aussiedler* entering Germany. Aim two had already formed part of the negotiations with the Russian leadership on the Volga republic, seeking to avoid possible jealousy by the other national groups. Finally, the bridge function (aim 3) had been pointed out by German President von Weizsäcker during Yeltsin's visit to Bonn during November 1991 (*Frankfurter Neue Presse* 23 November 1991: 1).

9.4.1 The ways in which the government sought to realise the stated aims

Having outlined the three central aims of its revised *Aussiedler* policy, the government announced that it would seek to realise those aims in the following ways (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.32 1992: 7-8):

1. The existing Soviet German settlements were to be targeted by the government's programme of assistance to improve their infrastructures. This was to include

promoting agriculture and small businesses, as well as establishing meeting places for German cultural and educational purposes [5].

2. Support for the establishment of German *rayons* throughout the former Soviet Union was to continue, although these were not accepted as alternatives to an autonomous German republic. It named the possible new locations for German *rayons* as Novosibirsk, Tomsk, Orenburg and Swerdlovsk. It pointed out that future German *rayons* could be brought together under an association of German *rayons*, which could in turn help foster relations with twin districts in Germany.

3. The government would continue to support plans for establishing an autonomous German Volga republic, with the Russian government being the main political partner in negotiations. The Joint Declaration of Intent signed between Chancellor Kohl and President Yeltsin during November 1991 was to form the basis for realising the future autonomous Volga republic. The German government would continue to negotiate on an acceptable location for the proposed republic within the geographical area of the former German Volga republic.

These declared ways of implementing its central aims represented a clearly defined programme in anticipation of future progress in negotiations. Yet in the light of the set-backs evident in negotiations since 1989, there was arguably a basis for considerable doubt in January 1992 whether these aims could be realised. Two main reasons for this doubt were as follows:

Reason 1: Previous negotiations with both the Soviet and Russian governments had not been successful. The suspicion and prejudice shown towards the Soviet German minority in local protests in the Volga area over the proposed autonomous republic was likely to remain an obstacle for Yeltsin as he continued negotiations with Germany.

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[5] Details were given in January 1992 on the extent of progress achieved in assisting the *rayon* of Halbstadt (founded 1991) as one of the so-called "islands of hope". The projects completed included a bakery, a dairy and a slaughterhouse. Furthermore, a cultural centre was refurbished and supplied with typewriters and photocopiers. Medical supplies were given to local hospitals in Halbstadt as well as support given in constructing 50 homes for Soviet German settlers (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.33 1992: 10).

Reason 2: The German government had come to realise that this republic could only be realised in a gradual step-by-step approach as stated by President Yeltsin in November 1991. The timetable announced previously by Yeltsin for the formation of the autonomous state (three stage plan) was already behind schedule. Clearer details concerning the timetable for completing the republic were required so that the German negotiators could give those undecided on whether to emigrate hope and a reason to remain. In addition, Waffenschmidt had no accurate figures on the potential number of Soviet Germans that might migrate to such a republic, so that he was arguably negotiating while unsure whether the exodus by Soviet Germans could be stemmed by creating such an autonomous republic.

Waffenschmidt confirmed during January 1992 that a total of some 500,000 *Aussiedler* applications seeking approval to resettle in Germany still remained unprocessed (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 20 January 1992: 1). This figure was more than three times the number of Soviet *Aussiedler* who had resettled in Germany during 1991 (147,320) [6]. This large number of applications placed additional pressure on German negotiators to achieve success in future negotiations with President Yeltsin.

9.5 Renewed set-backs experienced in negotiations with President Yeltsin

The series of set-backs which characterised negotiations on the Volga republic between 1989 and 1991 continued in January 1992. President Yeltsin was reported to have given the local population of the Saratov (Volga) area an undertaking on 6 January 1992 that German autonomy would only be possible where the Germans constituted at least 90% of the population (*Das Parlament* 24 January 1992: 3). Yeltsin had effectively imposed a pre-condition for future German autonomy.

[6] The total number of *Aussiedler* applications still waiting to be processed rose to 700,000 by November 1992 (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 19 November 1992: 8).

Yeltsin's statement brought about immediate protest from the German government, criticising his statement as unhelpful in their on-going negotiations. Waffenschmidt declared the 90% barrier to be contrary to the Joint Declaration of Intent signed in Bonn during November 1991 and called on Yeltsin to keep to the agreement (*Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung* 15 January 1992: 2). The Russian foreign minister Kozyrev countered this criticism by declaring that Yeltsin had been misquoted (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 18 January 1992: 2). Kozyrev confirmed that he regarded the autonomous republic to be a distant aim but refused to suggest a possible timetable (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 16 January 1992: 5). He further claimed that Yeltsin was keeping to the Joint Declaration signed in November 1991, but that the opinion of the local population resident in the proposed autonomous area had to be taken into consideration so as to safeguard their rights (*Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung* 15 January 1992: 2) [7].

Waffenschmidt disputed that this interpretation of the terms of the Joint Declaration of Intent was correct. He stated that the German government did not accept the altered framework of conditions, adding that the Russians knew of the high symbolic value that the republic had for the Soviet Germans (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 21 January 1992: 4). Waffenschmidt threatened to cancel the financial assistance for the future republic which Germany had agreed to make available in November 1991, unless Russia created acceptable conditions for the Soviet Germans (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 18 January 1992: 2). The German government could not recommend payment to be released for investment in a supposedly contaminated military site (Kapustin Yar) in which no-one wished to live. Waffenschmidt called for positive signs from the Russians, such as a decree on the creation of the Volga republic and the establishing of additional Soviet German *rayons* in the Altai area of southern Russia (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 18 January 1992: 2) [8].

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[7] During a visit to Paris in February 1992, President Yeltsin stated that his commitment to establishing the Volga republic had not changed, yet it could only be realised in a step-by-step process. He pointed out that resistance by the local population in the Volga area presented a problem to future progress on the issue (Hehn 1992: 8).

[8] The chairman of the *Wiedergeburt* organisation (Groth) was pessimistic about the future of the Soviet Germans. He rejected *rayons* as being an acceptable alternative to the autonomous republic on the grounds that they did not have a cultural centre. He claimed that 90% of Soviet Germans (some 2 million) wished to resettle in Germany (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 14 February 1992: 5). At a later congress meeting of Soviet Germans

This latest set-back for Waffenschmidt came only some two months after the signing of the Joint Declaration of Intent. The new dispute could be regarded as further evidence that the German promises of financial aid were not sufficient to persuade Russia to accelerate plans for a new Volga republic. Yeltsin's pre-condition of a 90% minimum German composition for a future German republic will have left the Soviet Germans increasingly uncertain whether they still had a future in the former Soviet Union. It had after all been forbidden for the Soviet Germans to return to the Volga region until 1972. Since then only an estimated 18,000 - 20,000 Germans had returned, representing a mere 1% of the total population of 1.5 million people in the Saratov district (Siegl 1992: 2; Mettke 1989: 188). Therefore the aim of autonomy along the Volga had no realistic chance of being achieved in the foreseeable future unless there was a massive programme of resettlement to the area.

Yet there was no encouraging response by the Russian president to give the German negotiators a degree of assurance over future progress on the issue of territorial autonomy. The German government did subsequently freeze the proposed payment of some DM 50 million which had been agreed upon prior to the signing of the Joint Declaration of Intent (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 18 January 1992: 2). Chancellor Kohl meanwhile acknowledged that it was still uncertain whether the Soviet Germans would be granted an autonomous republic in the Volga region (*Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung* 20 January 1992: 2). Interior Minister Schäfer warned Waffenschmidt not to pressurise Yeltsin and called for more consideration to be given to the concerns of the local population in the Volga area (*Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung* 20 January 1992: 2).

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during March 1992, Groth called on the German and CIS governments to enable them to resettle in Germany inside the next 3-5 years, claiming that social and ethnic conflict were inevitable if they remained (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 21 March 1992: 5). At the same congress, Waffenschmidt appealed to the delegates to consider the offers by the various former Soviet republics carefully. While declaring that the door for *Aussiedler* was still open, he warned them not to expect too much of Germany with regard to its ability to integrate the rising number of *Aussiedler* (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 23 March 1992: 1).

9.5.1 Waffenschmidt shows increasing willingness to compromise on the issue of the Volga republic

Soviet-German relations were placed under considerable strain following the controversial remarks made by Yeltsin in Saratov on a 90% minimum German population level in a future autonomous territory. A further set-back for Waffenschmidt came with the release of the findings by the commission set up by the Russian parliament to find solutions to the autonomy problem. The Commission for Nationality Questions announced in January 1992 that it favoured the idea of commencing with a limited core autonomy for the Soviet Germans, in an unpopulated *rayon* north-east of Volgograd, which could be extended geographically at a later stage to create an autonomous republic in the vicinity of the former German Volga republic (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 21 January 1992: 4). Yet no timetable was outlined. The German government subsequently reviewed its position on the issue, and in a statement made on 20 January 1992, Waffenschmidt declared a willingness to seek compromise on the future German settlements. Yet he insisted that the Volga republic must become a reality, stating (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 21 January 1992: 4):

"We will use all our energy to pursue the project Volga republic further."

Waffenschmidt further stated that while the government supported the formation of German *rayons*, such support would not result in a reduction in the level of support it would give to the formation of a republic (*50-Millionen-DM Hilfsprogramm* 1992: 6). In a display of compromise, the government in January 1992 announced that the DM 50 million assistance programme (for the supply of medicine, medical equipment and other goods) held back previously would be released for despatch to the Volga region (*50-Millionen-DM Hilfsprogramm* 1992: 6). The government declared that it would pursue its aims on the autonomous republic regardless of the irritations and the lack of progress achieved in negotiations since 1989 (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.33 1992: 12).

9.5.2 Announcement of additional German *rayons* in Russia

The German-Russian negotiations were given a new impulse by the announcement during February 1992, that Russia had passed a decree on establishing a second German *rayon* (in addition to Halbstadt announced in 1991). This was to be located in the Omsk area of Siberia and named Assowo (shown in Appendix 8), covering nearly 1,300 sq.km (Olt 1992d: 7) [9]. The initiative for this German *rayon* was reported to have been taken by the regional parliament following a local referendum in which 83% voted for such a *rayon* (Olt 1992d: 7). An estimated 134,000 Germans were believed already to be living in the Omsk region, of whom 30,000 lived in the town of Omsk itself (Olt 1992d: 7).

Yeltsin further stated that two additional German *rayons* were to be established in the Saratov and Volgograd areas as the first step in this process of forming an autonomous republic (Olt 1992b: 5). A joint Russian-German commission was to be established in order to co-ordinate the future developments (Eisfeld 1993: 46). Waffenschmidt greeted the announcement, regarding this as tangible evidence of progress. He declared that these developments constituted a great step ahead in the campaign for the autonomous republic (*Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung* 4 March 1992: 2).

Yet as the Russian government released additional information on the two future Volga *rayons*, it became clear that their intended sites included former military areas and were some 300 km apart (Dietz/Hilkes 1992: 104). The Saratov *rayon* covered some 150 sq.km of an area based around the farming co-operative known as Sowchos 23 shown in Appendix 9 (Dietz/Hilkes 1992: 104) [10]. It not only included surrounding villages and agricultural land, but also a former military training ground (*Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung* 4 March 1992: 2). The second *rayon* east of Volgograd included the northern part of the supposedly contaminated military training ground and missile testing site at Kapustin Yar, a site which had been

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[9] According to the German government at the end of 1992, some 15,000 applications had been received to resettle in the Assowo *rayon* (*Russlanddeutsche* 1992: 10).

[10] Of the 700 persons living at the farmers co-operative Sowchos 23, some two-thirds were reported to be Soviet Germans (Olt 1992c: 3).

previously rejected by the German government as being unacceptable as a future site for the proposed republic (*Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung* 4 March 1992: 2). The map shown in Appendix 9 identifies further areas which were seen as forming part of a future chain of German settlements, which could in theory form part of a future German Volga republic. Even so, compared to the area covered by the previous Volga republic abolished in 1941, the picture is of a scattered group of settlements without a natural centre.

While the announced *rayons* were welcomed by German negotiators as a sign that negotiations were once again progressing, the representatives of the Soviet German *Wiedergeburt* organisation rejected the proposed sites for the two *rayons*. They instead demanded the return of their former Volga republic within the borders of 1941 (an outline of the former border is shown in Appendix 9), accusing the Russian government of using delay tactics in negotiations on establishing the republic (Dietz/Hilkes 1992: 104).

9.6 Protocol on the step-by-step formation of the Volga republic

Negotiations on the step-by-step formation of the autonomous German republic were restored in April 1992. A joint Russian-German commission (as agreed upon in the Joint Declaration of Intent of November 1991) was established to consider possible locations for the republic. The commission concluded its negotiations by releasing a joint protocol on the proposed republic, which was drawn up (requiring future ratification) on 23 April 1992 by Waffenschmidt and Russian Minister Tishkev responsible for nationality questions (*Republik der Wolgadeutschen* 1992: 4) [11].

Under Article 1 of this protocol, the Russian government stated that it would establish the autonomous German republic in the vicinity of the former Volga German settlement areas, with the rights of the local non-German population being safeguarded. A German *rayon* was to be established (near Volgograd) as the core of

[11] The protocol was to remain in force for an initial period of five years. It was renewable if both sides agreed.

the future autonomous republic to which Soviet Germans from other republics could eventually resettle.

Under Article 2, the German government agreed to assist in the development of this republic by giving financial and material support to the German population in the *rayons*. This assistance would be in the form of giving help with house construction, agricultural machinery, light industry and education. The aim was to assist in building up an infrastructure in the German communities as a basis for their future economic growth.

Article 4 further stated that the returning Soviet Germans would be given the opportunity to promote their own culture and language. The Russian parliament would pass the necessary legislation for the Germans to operate their own schools and cultural organisations.

Russian minister Tishkev stated that the Volgograd *rayon* would be established by the autumn of 1992 as the first step towards creating the autonomous republic (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 24 April 1992: 1). Waffenschmidt welcomed this protocol, declaring that it represented a breakthrough for the Soviet Germans (*Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung* 24 April 1992: 2). He appealed to the German minority to accept this Russian offer and thus refrain from emigrating to Germany, pointing to the fertile land which the German *rayon* was to include and the exclusion of the military training ground at Kapustin Yar previously offered as a site (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 24 April 1992: 1) [12]. Russian Minister Tishkev referred to the protocol as a foundation stone for the so-called common Russian-German house (*Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung* 24 April 1992: 2).

Yet Waffenschmidt also gave a word of caution by announcing that the German government would not simply grant annual sums of money to the Russian authorities. He declared that the German government would not grant money on the

[12] Chairman Groth of the *Wiedergeburt* organisation surprisingly declared his willingness in April 1992 to assist in establishing the autonomous republic (Olt 1992a: 5). Yet his optimism had turned to pessimism again by June 1992, declaring during a visit to Stuttgart that the Soviet Germans were once again resigned to leaving (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 22 June 1992: 4).

basis of assumptions, but for specific progress in negotiations. It would release money step-by-step in direct response to the requirements of the Soviet Germans who chose to remain or resettle in the vicinity of the proposed republic (*Republik der Wolgadeutschen* 1992: 4).

9.6.1 Renewed doubts over the future of the autonomous republic

The protocol appeared to represent a degree of success for Waffenschmidt. Yet negotiations were not helped by the subsequent comments made by Tishkev on the proposed German republic. Only one week after the protocol was agreed upon, Tishkev was quoted by the Russian news agency Inter-Tass as having stated that the creation of an autonomous republic was not at present on the political agenda (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 30 April 1992: 6). The Russian minister declared that neither the announcement of a timetable, nor the republic were foreseeable in the near future. Tishkev merely acknowledged such a republic to be a future aim, adding that the Russian government sought to direct the Soviet Germans to specific locations in which they could establish their communities (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 30 April 1992: 6).

Tishkev's controversial comment highlighted the different interpretations of the protocol that existed between Russian and German negotiators. While Waffenschmidt interpreted this latest protocol as the first step in the process of establishing a Volga republic, the Russian government merely acknowledged this to be a long-term aim. This was a further example of the two governments interpreting agreements differently, which gave support to the argument that Russia was not seriously interested in establishing an autonomous republic.

9.6.2 Subsequent delays in Russian ratification of the protocol

The circumstances surrounding the ratification of the protocol (drawn up on 23 April 1992) on the step-by-step establishment of the autonomous republic is further evidence of misunderstandings in negotiations. The German delegation arriving in Moscow expected the signing to take place on 6 July 1992, only to be informed by Russian government officials that it did not expect the signing to take place until October 1992 (*Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung* 7 July 1992: 2). The protocol was eventually signed on 10 July 1992, with the Russian authorities explaining the delay as being a consequence of co-ordination difficulties between the different Russian government departments (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 11 July 1992: 1).

Following the eventual signing, the way was theoretically open to commence the first stage of establishing the autonomous republic. The German Interior Ministry declared that the German Volga republic would ultimately become the seventeenth autonomous republic in the Russian federation (*Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung* 11 July 1992: 1). Waffenschmidt maintained his optimism and declared that the signed protocol had resulted in a clearer picture of the future, with both governments having united to realise the aim of creating the Volga republic (*Redaktion* July/August 1992: 6). He regarded the protocol as having laid the legal framework for the future republic and declared it to be an act of justice for the Soviet Germans (*Redaktion* July/August 1992: 6).

9.7 District parliament of Engels rejects the formation of a German *rayon* in the Volga region

Following a visit to Russia during May 1992, Waffenschmidt remained confident that the plans for the Volga republic were on course for success. He declared that the authorities in the Saratov area were intensifying their efforts to implement Yeltsin's decree on the step-by-step formation of the republic (*Süddeutsche Zeitung* 2 June 1992: 7). Yet the implementation of the protocol experienced further

problems in June 1992, when the district parliament of Engels (Volga area) announced that it would not grant permission for a German *rayon* to be established in the vicinity of the city of Engels (*Süddeutsche Zeitung* 24 June 1992: 8). The district parliament thereby rejected Yeltsin's decree on the step-by-step creation of a Volga republic. The district parliament had based its decision on the results of a local referendum held in April 1992. The referendum registered a 80% no-vote on the question of whether to allow a republic to be created in their region for the German minority (*Süddeutsche Zeitung* 24 June 1992: 8).

The Saratov politician Golovatshov, who visited Germany immediately after the result of the referendum was publicised, called upon the German negotiators to show more patience on the issue of the republic. He explained the rejection by the local population on the grounds of prejudices towards the German minority and the influence exerted by local political leaders (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 26 September 1992: 4). This episode once again highlighted the inability of the Russian government to co-ordinate its policies at the local level where its policies were to be implemented. In such a situation, agreements signed by the Russian government remained merely well intentioned yet not enforceable. The renewed delays gave little confidence to those Soviet Germans willing to await possible progress on the Volga republic before making their decision on whether or not to emigrate.

9.8 German protests over Russian hesitation in establishing the autonomous republic

Despite the negative attitude of the Engels district parliament, the joint Russian-German government commission continued its negotiations in Moscow during October 1992. But these negotiations were marked by a serious division in attitudes between the Russian and German government representatives on the issue of when to commence construction of the proposed Volga republic. While the German negotiators sought immediate progress, the Russian commission members spoke of delays in its implementation resulting from technical difficulties

(Ostermann 1992: 2). Former Minister Tishkev (released from his post as minister responsible for nationality questions) revealed that the Russian parliament intended to reconsider or even amend the protocol on the step-by-step formation of an autonomous republic which Tishkev had signed in July 1992 (Ostermann 1992: 2).

Waffenschmidt again sought to take the initiative and went so far as to declare December 1992 as the deadline for the Russian parliament to achieve a breakthrough in implementing the agreed protocol (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 21 October 1992: 2). Waffenschmidt sought to give further weight to German Foreign Minister Kinkel's demand made in early October 1992 for such a breakthrough to be achieved by December 1992, to coincide with the planned visit by Chancellor Kohl to Moscow. Kinkel had called for quick progress on the issue of the Volga republic, declaring that progress was an important barometer of overall Russian-German relations (*Redaktion* November 1992: 24).

Recognising that the Russian government was unlikely to respond to such threats, Waffenschmidt was forced to accept a compromise resulting in a further shift in the government's position. Bonn had until then pushed for a speedy implementation of steps necessary to commence the immediate establishment of such an autonomous republic. Waffenschmidt announced a shift in German government expectations during a subsequent Russian-German commission meeting, stating that if progress was not achieved on the Volga republic, he at least expected progress in establishing new German *rayons* in Russia (Ostermann 1992: 2). Waffenschmidt subsequently called on Yeltsin to implement the decree he had signed in February 1992 on the establishing of two new German *rayons* at Saratov and Volgograd (Ostermann 1992: 2).

This compromise, or correction to German government policy, could be interpreted as acceptance that the Volga republic was indeed, as Tishkev had stated in April 1992, only a future long-term aim. Chairman Groth of the *Wiedergeburt* organisation criticised the government's willingness to compromise. Groth interpreted this compromise as final proof that the German government no longer believed in the establishing of the Volga republic (Ostermann 1992: 2).

Further evidence of uncertainty on the future of a Volga republic became apparent during Waffenschmidt's visit to Russia in November 1992. The local authorities in the Volga region declared that a new German Volga republic could be established on the site of a former military area adjacent to the Elton Sea (location shown in Appendix 9). They explained their rejection of the original proposed site near Engels with reference to the continued local opposition to the proposed Volga republic. Yet Waffenschmidt rejected this alternative offer outright (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung* 25 October 1992: 2). The episode once again showed that the local politicians in the Engels and Saratov areas had no intention of giving into pressure that may have been exerted by President Yeltsin to accept the original sites at Saratov and Volgograd.

The visit by Chancellor Kohl to Moscow during December 1992 was also marked by a lack of progress on the issue of the republic. President Yeltsin merely stated that his government would adhere to all agreements which it had signed, while Chancellor Kohl called for the protocol signed in July 1992 to be put into action. (*Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung* 17 December 1992: 1). Yet the deadline previously declared by both Kinkel and Waffenschmidt of December 1992 for progress to be achieved passed without a breakthrough, or any evidence that the Volga republic was likely to become a reality in the foreseeable future.

At the end of the period of study in December 1992, the German government negotiators were not significantly closer to achieving the desired breakthrough in creating an autonomous republic for the Soviet Germans than they had been in 1989. The proposed timetable by which the resettlement in the Volga area was to commence in 1992, passed without progress being achieved. Furthermore, no new timetable was put forward by Yeltsin.

9.9 Limited success achieved in establishing German *rayons*

While the government was unable to achieve its prime aim of persuading the Russian government to establish an autonomous Volga republic, limited success could be pointed to in slowly building up the two German *rayons* at Halbstadt and Assowo. As shown in the map in Appendix 8, different types of German help had been given to those two *rayons* by the end of 1992. In the case of the Halbstadt *rayon*, this help was centred on the town of Halbstadt itself, where a house construction programme commenced, small businesses (such a dairy and bakery) were set up and medical supplies were made available. As shown in Appendix 8, the help to surrounding places was restricted to a combination of economic aid (Orlovo and Sumanovka) and the promotion of a German cultural centre at Kusak. A similar picture is shown for the Assowo *rayon*, where the house construction programme was concentrated on the main town of Assowo, while economic aid for small business units has been made available in Aleksandrovka and Pobocino, and German cultural meeting places established in Zvetnopol'e and Aleksandrovka. While the range of help was relatively small, they were seen by the German government as examples of what could be achieved on a large scale in a future Volga republic. The measures of help given to the *rayons* were seen as helping to modernise the infrastructures of the German settlement areas, while simultaneously establishing a series of symbolic foundation stones for a better future.

9.10 Consideration of the reasons for the failure to achieve progress on establishing the Volga republic

The German negotiators had by December 1992 not been able to realise the three central aims they had set themselves back in January 1992 following the break-up of the Soviet Union.

Its first aim had been to stem the rising level of emigration to Germany. The exodus of Soviet *Aussiedler* continued until the end of the period of study, with the level of emigration during 1992 reaching some 195,600 *Aussiedler* (*Info-Dienst Deutsche*

Aussiedler no. 45 1993: 4). Even the announcement by Russia of additional German *rayons* being established did not have the desired effect. Eisfeld has made the point that despite progress on the *rayons*, the emigration to Germany did not slow down, with these *rayons* merely representing islands of hope for the Soviet Germans fleeing from the ethnic conflict in the Asiatic republics (1993: 45) [13]. Those who came to live in the *rayons* did not necessarily intend staying there, possibly seeing them instead as an in-between stop on their journey to Germany.

Under its second declared aim, the government had sought to extend its help to the other national groups already resident in the Volga area. It had implemented a DM 50 million assistance programme for the Saratov area, yet this did not have the desired effect. The decision of the Engels district parliament in July 1992 to reject the proposed location of the Volga republic in its vicinity showed that prejudices and suspicion towards the Germans remained among the local politicians.

The third aim, of giving the Soviet Germans a bridge function between Germany and the Soviet Union, could not be realised as the Volga republic remained a plan on the drawing-board, with few Soviet Germans having decided to resettle in the Volga area. Those few who lived in the Saratov area could not realistically fulfil this bridge function.

In seeking to find explanations for the limited success achieved by the German government in negotiations with both the Soviet and Russian leadership, it is necessary to recognise that Gorbachev and Yeltsin were not able to gain support for their policies at the local level. Yet this was essential if the Volga republic was to become a reality. The provision of financial assistance and the promise of further help by the German government proved insufficient to achieve the necessary support for the Volga republic. While the German government merely had a financial lever at its disposal, its policy of persuading potential *Aussiedler* not to emigrate was always going to be left open to set-backs. In retrospect, it would have been easier to have concentrated on establishing a network of such German *rayons* for the Soviet

[13] A report on the difficulties experienced by the Germans in the republic of Kyrgyzstan, including pressure being put on them to leave the Islamic republic, is given by Büscher (1991: 19).

Germans, rather than merely aiming for the Volga republic. A federation of German *rayons* could have also acted as magnets for Soviet German settlers.

9.11 Research conducted on the Soviet German emigration motives

Emigration statistics for Soviet Germans moving to the FRG for the period 1988 - 1992 are shown in the following Table:

Table 9.1

Soviet German emigration to the Federal Republic of Germany 1988 - 1992

Year	Number of Soviet Germans emigrating to the FRG	% change on previous year
1988	47,600	+ 329
1989	98,100	+ 106
1990	148,000	+ 51
1991	147,300	- 0.5
1992	195,600	+ 33

Source: Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler no.45 1993: 4

The data contained in Table 9.1 show that the level of emigration to Germany rose significantly between 1988 and 1990. The slight reduction recorded during 1991 (by 0.5%) can be explained by the introduction of the *Aussiedler* Resettlement Law in July 1990, whereby potential *Aussiedler* where obliged from 1 July 1990 onwards to submit a written application for resettlement. Yet the upward trend continued during 1992, rising by a further 33% in comparison to 1991. The total influx of 195,600 Soviet *Aussiedler* in 1992 was over four times the total of 47,600 registered in 1988, the year in which the sum of *Aussiedler* from all *Aussiedler* countries in eastern and south-eastern Europe reached some 202,000.

Research on the question of why the Soviet Germans have continued to emigrate to Germany, despite the continuation of the reform programmes initiated by President Gorbachev and the negotiations taking place on the Volga republic, was carried out by Dietz and Hilkes of the East European Institute in Munich during the period 1989 - 1990. Their findings go some way to explaining why the exodus continued to rise during the period of study.

The study found that the main motives for their decision to emigrate to Germany were as follows (Dietz/Hilkes 1992: 115):

1. The wish to join family members already in Germany: 44%
2. The wish to escape ethnic conflict in the Asiatic republics and live as Germans among Germans: 36%
3. The wish to improve their economic prospects: 11%

A further way of analysing their emigration motives is to consider the responses for particular age groups. The study also sought to ascertain whether the views altered when considering the responses for different age bands. The three age bands were as follows (Dietz/Hilkes 1992: 116-8):

1. Those born before 1930 (age band 1).
2. Those born between 1930 and 1955 (age band 2).
3. Those born after 1955 (age band 3).

The researchers found that the responses to the question of their emigration motives were indeed polarised according to age bands. The findings for the different age bands were as follows:

<u>The motive of family reunion</u>

This remained the main motive for their emigration, with the percentage varying between 46.6 - 48.3% for the three different age bands.

The ethnic motive

The significance of this motive indeed varied in significance between the three age bands. The percentage declined from 44.2% (age band 1) to 39.5% (age band 2), before falling considerably to only 31% (age band 3) for the youngest *Aussiedler*.

The economic motive

The percentages recorded for this motive showed that the economic factor was more influential for the younger *Aussiedler*. While the percentage was only 7.8% for the oldest in age band 1, it rose to 9.9% in age band 2 and further to 13.2% for the younger *Aussiedler* in age band 3.

9.11.1 Analysis of the main emigration motives

The three main emigration motives (and the different responses recorded between the three age bands) will now be considered individually:

1. The family motive

The research suggested that the main motive was not the wish to live as Germans among Germans (as the government had claimed), but to join family members who had already resettled in Germany. It is known that the Soviet German families have large extended families, with the younger family members taking the responsibility for the care of the older family members. As it was predominantly the younger generation (of working age) that emigrated to Germany, the older family members invariably followed at a later stage.

Since the relaxation in the Soviet emigration regulations in January 1987, a total of some 294,000 Soviet Germans had resettled in Germany by the end of 1990. By the end of the period of study in December 1992, this total rose to 637,000 (*Info-Dienst Deutsche Aussiedler* no.45 1993: 4). Those who had left to resettle in Germany invariably caused a chain migration to take place, with those leaving encouraging those still undecided to follow them. The wish not to be left alone and possibly isolated were relevant aspects to the family motive. Even if the German government

had made significant progress, the creation of a Volga republic was arguably unlikely to stem the exodus of those who sought to join relatives already in Germany.

2. The ethnic motive

The wish to live as Germans among Germans, a theme repeated regularly by the German government when explaining the *Aussiedler* motives, only came in second place among those questioned in this study. The responses among the age bands showed considerable differences. One main reason why the ethnic factor was the main motive (with 44,2%) for the older respondents in age band 1, is likely to have been their experiences of ethnic discrimination during the Second World War and the post-war years. In contrast, the younger *Aussiedler* (born after 1955) put less emphasis on the ethnic motive (with 31%) as they had not experienced the same level of discrimination as their parents had done. The living conditions for the Germans improved following Stalin's death in 1953 and their partial rehabilitation by the Soviet government in 1964.

The ethnic conflicts that prevailed in the Asiatic republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, marked by a resurgence in Islamic fundamentalism and anti-foreign sentiments, had increased the pressure on the Soviet Germans to emigrate. Such conflicts added to the sense of insecurity felt by the German population in those republics (Malchow ...*et al* 1990: 109). There have been frequent accounts since 1989 of Soviet Germans being pressurised by the Kazakh peoples to leave Kazakhstan (Eisfeld 1993: 49). The size of the German population in the republic has subsequently declined from some 957,000 registered in 1989 to only 696,000 at the end of 1992, a decline of some 27% within four years (Eisfeld 1993: 48). They either moved to the FRG or migrated internally within the (former) Soviet Union. Furthermore, the introduction of the Kazakh language as the official administrative language in Kazakhstan (replacing Russian) raised concerns among the German communities that the use of the German language would go into further decline (Eisfeld 1993: 47). In the absence of an autonomous republic in Russia and only moderate progress having been achieved in establishing German *rayons*, the option to resettle in Germany was seen as a solution to their dilemma.

3. The economic factor

The finding that economic considerations were the main motive for only some 11% of those questioned was surprisingly low in view of the frequent claims by opponents of the open-door *Aussiedler* policy that *Aussiedler* were merely economic refugees. Eisfeld has pointed out that one important reason why the economic motive comes low in the range of motives was because the Soviet Germans as a whole had achieved a comparatively high standard of living (i.e. invariably having a house and a car), so that economic motives did not play such an important part in their decision to leave (1989: 22). Yet the worsening economic situation in the individual independent republics, despite the reform programmes underway, contrasted directly with the image portrayed in the media about the prosperous life in West Germany (Malchow ... *et al* 1990: 45). Furthermore, positive news (i.e. contained in letters received from relatives already in Germany) over the economic situation in the FRG will have served to heighten the wish to join their relatives and to share in the apparent economic prosperity that prevailed in the West.

It is interesting to note that the significance of the economic factor as a motive to emigrate was highest (13.2%) in the youngest age band and lowest in the oldest age band (7.8%). Thus the wish to share in the economic prosperity in Germany was most pronounced among those born after 1955, thus the young and mobile. The West has continued to act as a magnet to immigrants from eastern Europe. Oskar Lafontaine had spoken of the links between *Aussiedler* emigration and the economic motive, pointing to the extensive range of financial benefits available to the arriving *Aussiedler,* which he argued, encouraged them to resettle in Germany (Malchow ...*et al* 1990: 76). The magnetic attraction posed by the West may have at least played a subconscious part in the decision-making process of the younger *Aussiedler* on whether or not to emigrate.

9.11.2 Summary of findings on the main emigration motives and possible implications for government policy

The findings made by Dietz and Hilkes suggest that there was a polarisation of motives according to age. While the ethnic/national motive was less important for the younger *Aussiedler*, the economic motive was more important for this group. The government's statement that the *Aussiedler* came primarily to live as Germans among Germans (i.e. to escape ethnic conflict and to preserve their German culture) were not borne out by the findings of this study, with the ethnic motive placed second after the family reunion motive.

This data had implications for the likely future success of the German government's policy in the former Soviet Union. The government saw the Volga republic and the German *rayons* as a home for those potential Soviet *Aussiedler* who wished to escape ethnic conflict and sought to preserve their German culture. Yet the study suggested that less than half the *Aussiedler* came for such ethnic/national motives. Furthermore, over half the *Aussiedler* (55%) in all three age bands came primarily for either family (44%) or economic reasons (11%). It can be assumed that even if the government succeeded in negotiations to establish a Volga republic, this would not hold back those who left for family or economic motives. This was shown by the Soviet *Aussiedler* emigration total reaching nearly 200,000 in the final year (1992) of the period of study.

9.12 The consequences of the limited success of government negotiations with Russia for its future *Aussiedler* policy

The findings show that the German government could only point to a limited success (establishment of *rayons*) as a result of prolonged negotiations. Both Soviet and Russian negotiators had shown themselves to be unreliable and prone to make promises which they possibly knew they could not keep. The emigration figures suggest that the Soviet Germans voted with their feet, seeing no future prospects in the former Soviet Union where ethnic and religious conflict had become more

pronounced since the reform process gathered pace. The research conducted by Dietz and Hilkes suggests that the exodus would continue even if the Volga republic were to be established in the near future.

It is contended that the problems experienced in the *Aussiedler* integration process in Germany, and the failure to achieve success in establishing an autonomous republic for the Soviet Germans, led the German government to unofficially limit future *Aussiedler* numbers by administrative means. This was evident in the government's decision to implement the *Aussiedler* Resettlement Law in 1990. The government's open-door *Aussiedler* policy, which it defended as morally justified in 1988, had arguably already come to an end in July 1990.

Furthermore, in accordance with the *Kriegsfolgenbereinigungsgesetz* (KfbG - Law Governing the Resolution of the Consequences of War) legislation implemented on 1 January 1993, the future level of total *Aussiedler* immigration was to be limited to some 220,000 p.a. Although the government insisted that the door still remained open, the new legislation meant that it had effectively accepted an annual (albeit generous) *Aussiedler* quota. The open-door had become an administrative channel through which the *Aussiedler* would in future be processed using an unofficial quota system. The new restrictions which came into operation under the KfbG legislation showed that the government was moving closer to accepting the need for an *Aussiedler* quota system. It finally accepted that the ability of Germany to integrate the *Aussiedler* had to be taken into consideration in implementing its *Aussiedler* policy following the end of the Cold War in Europe.

CHAPTER TEN

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

10. Summary and conclusions

10.1 Government reassessment of its open-door *Aussiedler* immigration policy in 1988

Immigration has become an increasingly controversial issue in European politics since the onset of a major post-war economic recession and rising unemployment during the early 1970s. While foreign immigrant workers had initially been welcomed by the West German government and industry during the 1950s and 1960s, contributing to the country's economic growth, public and political opinion subsequently turned against accepting further immigrants in the 1970s. The government closed the door of entry for guest workers in 1973. While successive German governments have since continued to restrict immigration by guest workers and asylum seekers, it has maintained an open-door immigration policy for ethnic and cultural Germans (*Aussiedler*) from eastern and south-eastern Europe, allowing *Aussiedler* to enter for resettlement without limiting the numbers admitted. German law recognises those ethnic and cultural Germans awarded *Aussiedler* status as members of the German nation and gives them the right to resettle in Germany. As the annual levels of *Aussiedler* immigration were comparatively small prior to 1987, compared to immigration by foreigners, the *Aussiedler* had entered West Germany largely unnoticed, thereby escaping media and public attention.

The process of economic and political reform gathering pace in eastern and south-eastern Europe during 1987 and 1988 led to the introduction by governments of increasingly liberal travel and emigration regulations for their citizens. This resulted in increased emigration requests by members of national and religious minorities, such as by *Aussiedler* wishing to emigrate to West Germany to join family members or in search of new opportunities. The growing volume of east-west migration has brought a new dimension to European migration patterns.

As the monthly *Aussiedler* immigration totals continued to rise dramatically in 1988, compared to previous years, this group became the subject of increased political debate in West German politics. The *Aussiedler* influx reached a new peak in 1988, during which over 202,000 *Aussiedler* arrived for resettlement (compared to 78,500 in 1987). The debate concerned the question of how West Germany should react to significant rises in *Aussiedler* immigration, made possible by the open-door *Aussiedler* policy. Public unease was heightened by the knowledge that an estimated 3.5 million potential *Aussiedler* might yet exercise their right to resettle in West Germany. The Soviet Germans alone accounted for some 2 million of this total. The *Aussiedler* arriving for resettlement had to be integrated into the West German employment market and found accommodation. This placed growing financial strains on both central and local government budgets.

Chancellor Kohl's government came under increasing pressure during 1988 to reconsider the justification for maintaining the open-door *Aussiedler* policy in view of the political changes underway in eastern Europe, and to formulate adequate responses to the growing problems posed by increased *Aussiedler* immigration. The government rejected opposition SPD calls for the introduction of an annual *Aussiedler* immigration quota and to tighten the legal definition of *Aussiedler* status. It reassessed the *Aussiedler* policy in August 1988, opting for the following:

1. To continue the open-door *Aussiedler* policy.
2. To implement *Aussiedler* assistance and integration programmes to assist them achieve social and employment integration.
3. To negotiate for an improvement in the living conditions of the German minorities in their home countries. They would be encouraged not to emigrate to West Germany and instead to build a new future in their own country. The government's negotiations with the Soviet and Russian governments were primarily to focus on establishing an autonomous German Volga republic, similar to the republic abolished by Stalin in 1941.

A number of major concerns were raised over Chancellor Kohl's reassessed *Aussiedler* policy. These specific concerns included the following:

1. There were questions about the government's motives for deciding to continue operating the open-door *Aussiedler* policy, despite political changes underway in eastern Europe.

2. It was questionable whether the announced *Aussiedler* assistance programme would suffice in enabling *Aussiedler* to integrate effectively into the employment market and thereby prevent rising *Aussiedler* unemployment.

3. There was a questionmark over the likely success of the government's campaign for an improvement in the living conditions of the German minorities still living in the *Aussiedler* areas, particularly with regard to its negotiations with the Soviet and Russian governments on establishing an autonomous republic for the Soviet Germans in Russia.

The above concerns over the government's *Aussiedler* policy were formulated into three major research questions, which form the focus for research in this thesis.

10.2 Justifications put forward by the government in 1988 for maintaining the open-door *Aussiedler* policy

The first main research question considers the justification put forward by the government for maintaining the open-door *Aussiedler* policy. The government argued that the main justifications were as follows:

1. That West Germany had a traditional open-door *Aussiedler* policy.
2. That *Aussiedler* are ethnic and cultural Germans (the descendants of former German colonists).
3. That *Aussiedler* are members of a community that suffered misfortune and hardship during the Second World War (*Schicksalsgemeinschaft*) because of their German background.
4. That the West German government had a moral obligation to accept *Aussiedler* for resettlement without restriction and to assist them in their integration.

The government argued that in maintaining the open-door *Aussiedler* policy it was complying with a legal obligation under the Basic Law (Article 116). It rejected criticism levelled at it by SPD opposition leader Oskar Lafontaine that it was guilty of meddling with German nationality. Lafontaine accused the government of pursuing a nationalistically motivated *Aussiedler* policy, one which used nationalistic criteria as the basis for selecting those allowed to enter the FRG rather than the needs of the individual. Lafontaine questioned whether proof of having German ancestors should entitle someone to enter the FRG without being subject to immigration controls, while political asylum seekers were rejected on the grounds that the "boat was full" and the economy unable to absorb additional immigrants.

The first main research question considers whether the arguments given by the government for continuing the open-door *Aussiedler* policy were justified or merely surface motives, covering undisclosed nationalistic, political and economic motives. The findings for the first main research question are summarised in the following sections 10.2.1 - 10.2.4 . The conclusions are stated in section 10.2.5 .

10.2.1 The claim that the government was upholding a traditional open-door *Aussiedler* policy

Successive post-war West German governments have maintained the open-door *Aussiedler* policy implemented since the end of the Second World War, thereby recognising ethnic and cultural Germans arriving from eastern and south-eastern Europe as members of the German nation. The combination of the German citizenship legislation based on the principle of *jus sanguinis* (the law of blood) and Basic Law Article 116 enabled the open-door policy to continue. The eastern European governments had traditionally (prior to 1987) followed restrictive policies in response to emigration applications by members of their German minorities. The *Aussiedler* became the subject of negotiations between the West German and the respective eastern European governments, with the subsequent level of *Aussiedler* emigration reflecting the state of East-West relations. The open-door *Aussiedler* policy could be maintained by West German governments in the knowledge that a

mass exodus by ethnic and cultural Germans to the FRG was not realistic while the Cold War continued to cause tensions between East and West.

Since coming into office in 1982, Chancellor Kohl had repeatedly called upon the eastern European governments to allow increased *Aussiedler* emigration, criticising their restrictive emigration policies as a violation of human rights. The government welcomed the rising influx of *Aussiedler* during 1987 and 1988, considering the rise as a reward for its *Aussiedler* policy. Yet SPD opposition leader Lafontaine questioned Chancellor Kohl's motives for maintaining the open-door policy. He pointed out that if the government insisted upon bringing home millions of Germans, it should also provide the necessary integration measures.

Concern over government *Aussiedler* policy was also expressed by the *Länder* (federal state) governments, who ultimately faced the task of accommodating and integrating the arriving *Aussiedler*. Individual *Länder* governments called for a more controlled influx of *Aussiedler* to take account of their ability to provide the necessary services to those newcomers. Yet Waffenschmidt, the minister responsible for *Aussiedler* matters, rejected calls for a quota system, arguing that any form of restriction on *Aussiedler* immigration would be inhumane. He supported the continuation of the open-door *Aussiedler* policy in 1988, despite the changes underway in eastern Europe.

10.2.2 The claim that *Aussiedler* are descendants of former German colonists

A second justification for the open-door policy was the claim that *Aussiedler* are ethnic and cultural Germans, the descendants of former German colonists. The thesis considered the evidence in the case of the Siebenbürger Saxons (Romania, formerly Hungary) and the Volga Germans (Soviet Union). The findings are as follows:

1. The members of these two groups are descendants of former German colonists. The origins of the Siebenbürger Saxons and Volga Germans go back to the twelfth century and eighteenth century respectively. Historians have identified the locations of their former German homes on the basis of documentary evidence and surviving dialects.

2. Even though the colonisation by the Volga Germans took place some six centuries after that of the Siebenbürger Saxons, the circumstances surrounding the colonisation and settlement by Germans in these two areas showed a series of parallels. These were as follows:

   (i) Both groups were invited to settle in the areas by the respective rulers of Siebenbürgen and the Volga area. The motives of Russian Empress Catherine the Great and Hungarian King Geza II are believed to have revolved around military, economic and religious factors, as they sought the assistance of foreign settlers to help both protect newly acquired territory and to help stimulate the economy of those areas.

   (ii) Both groups of colonists left their German homes at their own free will.

   (iii) The push and pull factors identified for their migration from Germany to both Siebenbürgen and the Volga showed parallels. While the push factors reflected the economic and social hardship endured in the German states they had left behind, the pull factors were the attractions offered by their destinations of self-government, tax exemptions and the availability of land.

   (iv) Both became privileged groups. They were granted the right to hold their own markets, choose their religion and be exempt from serfdom restrictions.

3. Both groups were successful in founding German settlements, enabling the Siebenbürger Saxons and Volga Germans to preserve their homogeneous character until the twentieth century. Siebenbürgen and the Volga became important settlement areas for German colonists and their families.

10.2.3 The claim that *Aussiedler* are members of a *Schicksalsgemeinschaft*

A third justification put forward for the continued use of the open-door *Aussiedler* policy had been the argument that *Aussiedler* are members of a *Schicksalsgemeinschaft*. The government pointed out that *Aussiedler* in particular had suffered as a result of their German background during the Second World War. The validity of this claim was considered in the case of the Romanian and Soviet Germans. The evidence showed that both the Romanian and Soviet Germans were instrumentalised by the German National Socialists during the period of 1933 - 1945, although to differing degrees, as well as suffering deportation by the Romanian and Soviet governments. The findings are summarised as follows:

1. Both groups were used by Hitler to help in the implementation of his *heim ins Reich* policy, whereby he sought to bring home the various splinters of the German nation to German soil through concluding resettlement agreements with eastern European governments. The Germans included in such agreements were not always transferred back to Germany, but also resettled in territories annexed by the German military forces in eastern Europe in an attempt to "Germanise" those areas as colonial outposts.

2. The Romanian Germans were subjected to the ideological influence of the National Socialist regime in Berlin. The NSDAP was able to generate a degree of support within the Romanian German communities. This support for the German regime was rewarded by Hitler exerting successful pressure on the Romanian government in 1940 to publicly recognise the rights of the German minority. This enabled them to have greater cultural autonomy. Against the background of the Romanian-German wartime alliance, Romanian Germans joined German military units. In contrast, there was no evidence that the Soviet Germans gave similar ideological or military support to the German regime during that period.

3. Both Romanian and Soviet Germans were subjected to deportation during the Second World War. Up to 100,000 Romanian Germans were deported to the

Soviet Union under a Romanian-Soviet agreement covering reparation payments to help rebuild the Soviet economy after the destruction caused during the war. Soviet German groups, including the Volga Germans, were deported into exile and the autonomous Volga republic abolished in response to the German attack on the Soviet Union in 1941. Both the Romanian and Soviet Germans were forced to work in Soviet hard labour camps, only being released from detention after the end of the Second World War.

10.2.4 The claim that the government had a moral obligation towards *Aussiedler*

A fourth identified justification put forward by the West German government in 1988 for maintaining the open-door *Aussiedler* policy, was its claim of having a moral obligation towards *Aussiedler*. This moral obligation stemmed directly from the government's view that these *Aussiedler* were not only Germans, but had also suffered considerably as a result of their German background during the Second World War. The thesis considered whether there was evidence to support the argument, or whether this declared moral obligation was possibly a surface motive covering nationalistic, economic and political government interests.

There is evidence to support the argument that the government's use of this declaration of moral obligation could have covered a series of undisclosed motives, linked firstly to support for German nationalism and secondly to political self-interest. This evidence can be summarised as follows:

1. The government denied that its *Aussiedler* policy was motivated by nationalistic considerations, yet this was arguably disingenuous given the government's previous attempts (since coming into power in 1982) of seeking to foster a new German identity based on German nationalism. The so-called *Wende* (new orientation) implemented in West German politics since 1982 was accompanied by a new mood of German nationalism. The arrival of increasing numbers of *Aussiedler* under the open-door policy fitted into the government's ideology of

championing the German national cause. The government sought to revive a German patriotism based on German nationalism rather than on the universal values of the German constitution.

2. The motive of government self-interest could be identified in the following areas:

(i) Demographic considerations

The continued influx of predominantly young *Aussiedler* enabled the government to implement a policy aimed at slowing down the demographic decline in both numbers and the age structure evident in the West German population statistics since 1972. The national population census conducted in 1987 confirmed that the German population was continuing to spiral into demographic decline. This had negative implications for future West German economic growth. Furthermore, forecasts stated that the population would continue to decline unless there was a significant immigrant influx and an increase in the fertility rate.

(ii) Fiscal considerations

The arrival of increasing numbers of young *Aussiedler* was welcomed by the government for fiscal reasons. Their resettlement was seen to have a positive effect on the financing of the state retirement pension scheme. One of the consequences of the demographic decline registered in West Germany since 1972 had been dwindling national insurance contributions paid into the state retirement pension scheme by the working population. *Aussiedler* would therefore be seen as welcomed contributors to the scheme which was under increasing financial pressure, and likely to undergo further strains if the forecasted demographic decline proved to be correct.

(iii) Economic supply-side considerations

The government's economic policy was one marked by promoting supply-sidism i.e. the restoration of optimal conditions for stable macro-economic growth and for improved corporate profitability. By allowing the continued influx of *Aussiedler* in 1988 under the open-door policy, the government arguably sought to help realise such a policy. It sought a deregulation of the employment market

by use of flexible contracts of employment and promoting the acceptance of lower wage levels. The influx of East Germans during the 1950s and the guest workers during the 1960s presented a historical precedent which the government arguably hoped to repeat with the influx by *Aussiedler* in the late 1980s.

10.2.5 Conclusions reached on the government's justification for maintaining the open-door *Aussiedler* policy

Based on the findings contained in chapters two to five, the following conclusions are made in answering the first main research question on the government's justification for the open-door *Aussiedler* policy:

1. While there had indeed been a traditional open-door *Aussiedler* policy since the end of the Second World War, such a policy was no longer appropriate in the late 1980s following the improvement in East-West relations and an improvement in conditions for the ethnic groups in eastern Europe. During the Cold War period, marked by assimilation pressures on individual ethnic and cultural groups, the open-door policy enabled family reunions to take place. This open-door policy could previously be maintained in the knowledge that a mass exodus by *Aussiedler* to West Germany was unlikely to be given approval by the governments in eastern Europe. Yet the reform process underway in eastern Europe presented a new situation in which *Aussiedler* immigration was able to rise significantly.

2. There was evidence to support the argument that *Aussiedler* had a German ethnic or cultural background going back several centuries. Their descendants had emigrated on their own accord, seeking improved lives abroad. They had left behind them a disequilibrium in their former German homes and established German colonies, such as in Siebenbürgen and along the river Volga. These Germans remained part of the German Diaspora.

3. The ethnic and cultural Germans resident in eastern and south-eastern Europe became scapegoats during and after the Second World War for the actions of the German military. Furthermore they had been instrumentalised by Hitler for ideological and military purposes. Yet the exodus of the German communities to Germany had already begun before the end of the Second World War with the signing of the Hitler-Stalin Non-Aggression Pact in 1939. Deportation, discrimination and isolation justified the application of the term *Schicksalsgemeinschaft* to those German communities who had suffered such a common fate.

Yet the use by the government of the term *Schicksalsgemeinschaft* in the 1980s was applied too broadly. The reasons are as follows:

Firstly, it did not take account of the fact that while there were victims of National Socialism in those communities, there were also members of the German communities who gave active military and ideological support to the German regime (as in Siebenbürgen). In contrast, there were other groups (such as the Volga Germans) who were deported into exile on prefabricated grounds.

Secondly, no differentiation was made between the different generations of ethnic and cultural Germans when applying the term *Schicksalsgemeinschaft.* The assumption was still made in 1988 that the Germans continued to be under pressure to emigrate. This enabled the children and grandchildren of the wartime generation also to be considered as members of the *Schicksalsgemeinschaft.* This allowed for a broad and liberal interpretation of the term *Schicksalsgemeinschaft.*

4. The claim that the government was maintaining the open-door policy because it felt a moral obligation towards *Aussiedler* has to be seen in part as constituting a surface motive. There is evidence to support the argument that the government in 1988 used the argument of having a moral obligation while at the same time being opportunistic. The government's claim that it was not motivated by nationalistic or economic considerations was arguably disingenuous. Allowing the open-door policy to remain in force fitted into the conservative pro-German political mood at that

time. The open-door policy was partly motivated by electoral self-interest. As for the economic self-interest, this revolved around demographic, fiscal and supply-side considerations. Prior to German unification in 1990, the increasing numbers of arriving *Aussiedler* were grasped as an opportunity to rejuvenate the population structure, help safeguard the state retirement pension scheme and to help deregulate the employment market.

The various justifications put forward by the government for its open-door *Aussiedler* policy in 1988 arguably contained a degree of rhetoric aimed at increasing the degree of sympathy and acceptance shown towards *Aussiedler* and the government's *Aussiedler* policy. By declaring the acceptance of *Aussiedler* to be a national task and referring to the moral obligation towards *Aussiedler*, it can be argued that the government was seeking to act as the state's moral tone-setter. At the same time, the government was seeking to cloak its own self-interests with a coat of morality. The rejection of annual quotas for *Aussiedler* immigration and allowing growing pressures to build-up in the employment and housing markets (until the introduction of the *Aussiedler* Resettlement Law in 1990) showed limited consideration for both the *Aussiedler* and the indigenous population.

10.3 The problem of *Aussiedler* unemployment under the open-door *Aussiedler* policy

The second main research question set in this theses considered whether there was evidence to justify concern over the ability of the employment market to successfully absorb the rising number of *Aussiedler* arriving under the open-door policy. This includes an assessment of the unemployment problem for the *Aussiedler* group during the preceding period 1985 - 1988. Having opted to maintain the open-door policy, the success or failure in achieving the integration in German society could be assessed in the short-term by considering the developments in *Aussiedler* unemployment. Consideration was given to the question of whether there was a possible link between the level of *Aussiedler* immigration and subsequent *Aussiedler*

unemployment, and whether the specific causes of *Aussiedler* unemployment identified in 1988 could be resolved during the period 1988 - 1992.

The findings for the second main research question are summarised in the following sections 10.3.1 - 10.3.3 . The conclusions are stated in section 10.3.4 .

10.3.1 Evidence of rising *Aussiedler* unemployment between 1985 and 1988

There was evidence in 1988 that *Aussiedler* were already facing difficulties in their employment integration, with the number of unemployed *Aussiedler* in West Germany having risen by some 240% between September 1985 and September 1988. In contrast, the national total of all unemployed persons had fallen between September 1985 and September 1988 by 2%. The available data suggested that *Aussiedler* were not benefiting from the growth that had been taking place in the West German economy during that period. The employment market was not be able to absorb the increasing numbers of *Aussiedler* as quickly as they were arriving. The unemployment data supported the argument that there was a degree of correlation (although not absolute) between the levels of *Aussiedler* immigration and *Aussiedler* unemployment.

A further factor which was likely to make employment integration increasingly difficult was the structural change taking place in the West German economy during the late 1980s. The research revealed that *Aussiedler* were indeed over represented in those sectors of the economy (such as manufacturing) most prone to the shedding of labour, where formal academic or employment qualifications were not a requirement. In contrast, the *Aussiedler* were under represented in the growth area of the economy (the services sector), where qualifications and command of the German language were becoming increasingly important.

The statistical developments for the period 1985 - 1988, as well as the evidence on structural changes in the West German economy, gave clear indication in 1988 that

the level of *Aussiedler* unemployment was likely to continue rising while the open-door *Aussiedler* policy remained in force. Yet Chancellor Kohl's government remained confident in 1988 that *Aussiedler* could be integrated effectively into the West German employment market, despite evidence that *Aussiedler* were already experiencing difficulties in finding employment. The Chancellor pointed to the apparent positive *Aussiedler* characteristics of being motivated and hard-working, as well as the growth evident in the West German economy in 1988, as providing the right conditions for accepting an increased number of *Aussiedler*.

Although no official statistics had been released on the actual rate of unemployment within the *Aussiedler* community, it was estimated in this thesis that the unemployment rate in September 1988 was around 36%. This was considerably higher than the national unemployment rate of 8.7%.

10.3.2 Increasing difficulties experienced in *Aussiedler* employment integration between 1988 and 1992

An analysis of the subsequent developments in *Aussiedler* unemployment for the period from 1988 to 1992, revealed that there was a marked increase in *Aussiedler* unemployment until September 1990. The rise in *Aussiedler* immigration to some 202,000 in 1988, 377,000 in 1989 and nearly 400,000 in 1990 was paralleled by rises in *Aussiedler* unemployment during the same period. While the national total number of unemployed persons fell during the period from September 1988 to September 1990 by 18%, the number of unemployed *Aussiedler* rose during the same period by 215%. *Aussiedler* comprised some 9% of all those registered as unemployed in September 1990.

The statistics for the period 1988 - 1990 supported the argument that there was a correlation (although not absolute) between the levels of *Aussiedler* immigration and subsequent *Aussiedler* unemployment. The statistics furthermore supported the argument that the employment market was not able to absorb the *Aussiedler* as

quickly as they were arriving. Thus their integration into the employment market was not functioning as well as the government had hoped for back in 1988.

The Special *Aussiedler* Assistance Programme, announced by the government in August 1988, only included limited additional help for solving the problem of *Aussiedler* unemployment. This help was largely confined to the provision of increased finance being made available to fund additional German language and employment training courses. The government programme merely created a broad framework of assistance but left the implementation of the programme and the task of employment integration to the local employment offices, declaring the integration of *Aussiedler* to be a national task and appealing to the German public (and employers) to show solidarity towards the arriving *Aussiedler*.

The reduction in the level of *Aussiedler* immigration by some 40% from nearly 400,000 in 1990 to some 230,500 in 1992 was a consequence of an amendment to government *Aussiedler* policy during 1990. The government sought to react to the growing problem of *Aussiedler* employment integration in 1990 by introducing an (unofficial) administrative control mechanism by which the government was able to exercise some degree of control over *Aussiedler* immigration, without appearing to close the immigration door for *Aussiedler*. It achieved this by implementing the *Aussiedler* Resettlement Law in July 1990. This legislation made it necessary for potential *Aussiedler* wishing to emigrate to Germany to submit their application to the Federal Administration Office in Cologne, and await their written approval.

The effectiveness of this amendment to government *Aussiedler* policy was seen in the subsequent 40% fall in *Aussiedler* immigration between 1990 and 1992. Yet *Aussiedler* unemployment only fell by 16% between September 1990 and September 1992, thus not as quickly as the level of *Aussiedler* immigration. This constituted further evidence that the national employment market was not able to absorb the *Aussiedler* at the same rate as they were arriving.

The estimated unemployment rate within the *Aussiedler* community for September 1992 was calculated as 18%, which compares favourably with the 36% rate

estimated for September 1988. The reduction showed that the unemployment problem had become less pronounced following the implementation of the *Aussiedler* Resettlement Law in 1990. Even so, an unemployment level of around 18% was still large enough to warrant concern.

10.3.3 Findings on the specific causes of *Aussiedler* unemployment

The research shows that while the causes of *Aussiedler* unemployment can be found among the traditional causes of unemployment, such as the increased automation in German industry and the decline in the primary and secondary sectors of the German economy, there were also specific causes of *Aussiedler* unemployment. The specific causes identified by the Federal Institute of Labour included the following:

(i) *Aussiedler* only had a limited command of the German language.

(ii) Problems resulting from their transition from a central planned economy into a market economy. This included the need to retrain in the use of modern machinery and technology.

(iii) The problem of matching *Aussiedler* employment qualifications with the appropriate German qualifications.

(iv) *Aussiedler* lacked geographical mobility, thereby limiting the radius in which they were willing to accept offers of employment.

These specific causes were of a nature which could not be solved in the short-term. The first two above causes for example required extensive language tuition and retraining courses. A sufficient command of the German language was the most important factor for achieving a successful integration in employment. The *Aussiedler* had to adapt to a new type of economic system in which they had to learn to sell their qualities. The difficulties experienced by the federal authorities in translating *Aussiedler* employment qualifications caused delays in the employment integration process. Finally, the limited geographic mobility shown by *Aussiedler*

could be explained by their search for stability and the wish to live in the vicinity of friends and relatives.

10.3.4 Conclusions reached on the integration of *Aussiedler* in the employment market

Based on the findings contained in chapters six to seven, the following conclusions are drawn in answering the second main research question on the employment integration problems faced by *Aussiedler*:

1. There was evidence to justify concern over the ability of the employment market to absorb the rising number of *Aussiedler* under the open-door policy, despite the implementation of the Special *Aussiedler* Assistance Programme in 1988. The statistical evidence for the period 1985 - 1988, during which the number of *Aussiedler* arriving for resettlement reached 202,000 (1988) showed that *Aussiedler* were already experiencing difficulties in integrating into the employment market. The statistics suggested that *Aussiedler* would face increasing problems if the future annual *Aussiedler* totals continued at the 200,000 level already reached in 1988.

2. The arriving *Aussiedler* were predominantly in those employment sectors which were shedding labour and thus more likely to have difficulties in securing employment in Germany. Those seeking employment in the hotel and catering sector had better opportunities to secure employment, yet those were invariably jobs with unsociable hours and limited employment protection.

3. There was a parallel development (though not absolute) during the period 1988 - 1992 between the levels of *Aussiedler* immigration and *Aussiedler* employment. The data on *Aussiedler* unemployment for the period 1988 - 1992 show that *Aussiedler* were not benefiting from the economic upturn that took place in the German economy following German unification. The government had been too optimistic over the ability of *Aussiedler* to integrate smoothly into the employment market.

4. The government was arguably only able to prevent rising unemployment, as registered between 1988 and 1990, by introducing the *Aussiedler* Resettlement Law in 1990. This allowed for a form of administrative quota system to be implemented by the backdoor, such as by allowing the number of unprocessed applications to continue rising without allocating sufficient staff to process the applications. Having given repeated guarantees prior to unification that the door would remain open, the government could not politically afford to announce an official annual *Aussiedler* quota figure.

5. The level of unemployed *Aussiedler* fell after July 1990, as the number of *Aussiedler* entering Germany for resettlement declined significantly. The *Aussiedler* Resettlement Law was a belated but necessary correction to government *Aussiedler* policy, helping to prevent *Aussiedler* from becoming a bigger problem group within the unemployment statistics. A calculation for the estimated unemployment rate within the *Aussiedler* community in 1988 suggested that up to one-third (36%) of *Aussiedler* were unemployed. By September 1992 the estimated unemployment rate had declined to 18%.

6. The specific causes of *Aussiedler* unemployment as identified in the research for the period 1988 - 1992, showed that the causes were of a deep-rooted nature and thus could not be resolved in the short-term. The causes specific to *Aussiedler* identified in 1988 were the same ones identified throughout the period of study (up until 1992). The Special *Aussiedler* Assistance Programme implemented in 1988 was not able to address these problems effectively. The programme had merely extended the government forms of help to a larger number of *Aussiedler* by increasing the budget levels to finance *Aussiedler* integration. Furthermore, the *Aussiedler* did not display the level of mobility as claimed by the government, seeking stability in the vicinity of relatives and friends after having resettled in Germany. Limited resources preventing the purchase of private transport largely left *Aussiedler* reliant upon public transport, thereby limiting the radius within which they could or would accept employment.

10.4 Negotiations on establishing the Volga republic as a future home for the Soviet Germans

The third main research question set in this thesis considered whether there was evidence to support the argument that the government's policy of seeking to dissuade potential Soviet *Aussiedler* from emigrating to Germany, by negotiating on the re-creation of a German Volga republic, was a viable addition to its *Aussiedler* policy. It was questionable whether the German government's policy of persuasion could hope to succeed while it merely provided financial backing for the proposed republic. In addition to considering the level of success in negotiations with the Soviet and Russian Governments during the period of study, the thesis also considered the findings of research on the views of the Soviet *Aussiedler* themselves on the viability of re-creating the Volga republic and the main emigration motives.

The findings for the third main research question are summarised in the following sections 10.4.1 - 10.4.3 . The conclusions are stated in section 10.4.4 .

10.4.1 Problematic negotiations on the Volga republic 1989 - 1991

Having welcomed the influx of the rising number of *Aussiedler* in 1988 as being a benefit to the economy and society, the West German government gradually toned down its enthusiasm for the newcomers during the Spring of 1989 once the extent of the integration problems became clear. Yet after having given repeated public guarantees that the door would continue to remain open to *Aussiedler*, stating that the open-door reflected the government's feeling of moral obligation towards *Aussiedler*, the Chancellor found himself becoming a captive of his own ideology. In seeking a way out of this dilemma, the German government opted to put the emphasis in future *Aussiedler* policy on persuading potential *Aussiedler* not to emigrate to Germany.

Chancellor Kohl saw the growing political and social reform programmes being initiated by President Gorbachev in the Soviet Union as the opportunity to negotiate for a Soviet German autonomous republic. Finding a long-term solution to the *Aussiedler* emigration problem was particularly important to the government in the case for the Soviet Germans, as they represented the largest German minority in eastern Europe. The German government attached major symbolic importance to the re-creation of a German Volga republic, supporting this policy with financial and material assistance.

German government negotiators experienced a series of significant set-backs between 1989 and 1991 in their attempts to achieve progress on establishing a Volga republic for the Soviet German Diaspora. These set-backs can be summarised as follows:

1. Despite having given public support to the idea of granting the Soviet Germans regional autonomy, Soviet President Gorbachev was unable to break down local resistance in the Volga area to such plans. This resistance had been marked by violent demonstrations against the proposed republic in the vicinity of the former Volga republic by local citizens. These demonstrations are believed to have been instigated by local KGB members who saw their influence in the area threatened by such proposals.

2. Following the transfer of responsibility for the proposed republic in early 1991 to the Russian government, in whose borders (and jurisdiction) such a republic was to be established, Russian President Yeltsin sought to achieve a compromise by announcing the creation of a German *rayon* (district) at Halbstadt in July 1991. *Rayons* have a more restricted local autonomy which avoided conflict with local opponents. While German negotiators welcomed such *rayons*, they sought to exert pressure on Yeltsin by pointing out that *rayons* did not constitute an acceptable alternative to the republic.

3. President Yeltsin's announcement in October 1991 that a German Volga republic would be re-created under a three stage plan, with resettlement by the German

minority commencing in the proposed area during 1992, with autonomous status to be awarded in 1994, was initially hailed as progress by the German government. Yet the local government in the Saratov (Volga) area rejected the plans and subsequently formulated a protest note to President Yeltsin.

4. The signing of a Joint Declaration of Intent in November 1991 by Kohl and Yeltsin on the proposed three stage formation of the Volga republic initially appeared to represent progress for German negotiators, yet quickly turned into disappointment once details of the proposed locations were revealed. A proposed site at Kapustin Yar (near Volgograd) was identified as being the site of a contaminated former military training ground, used for the destruction of Soviet SS-20 missiles, and thus declared unsuitable by the German government negotiators as a site for the proposed republic. Furthermore, the site lay outside the borders of the former Volga republic abolished in 1941.

The German government sought to put pressure on the Soviet and Russian governments by threatening to withhold the planned packages of financial aid for the Volga area if progress was not achieved in negotiations. Yet no significant breakthrough had been achieved by December 1991. The Soviet negotiators had made a series of promises which they were not then able (or willing to) implement at the local level, showing a lack of commitment. At the time that the Soviet Union broke up in December 1991, the Volga republic remained a project on the drawing-board.

The Soviet Germans responded to the continued uncertainty over the republic by voting with their feet. The Soviet *Aussiedler* emigration figures of 148,000 in 1990 and 147,300 in 1991 were evidence that the exodus was continuing and only prevented from having been higher through the administrative controls introduced by the *Aussiedler* Resettlement Law in 1990. Publication of details from the Soviet population census conducted in 1989, revealing that the total number of Soviet Germans exceeded two million, merely served to put further pressure on German negotiators to achieve success in negotiations on the proposed Volga republic.

10.4.2 Further set-backs in negotiations with the Russian government during 1992

The disintegration of the Soviet Union and the emergence of independent republics gave the government renewed hope during 1992 that it could achieve progress in negotiations with Russian President Yeltsin. Yet negotiations between Germany and Russia on the Volga republic were marked by further set-backs. These set-backs are summarised as follows:

1. Negotiations were put under renewed pressure in January 1992, following the declaration by President Yeltsin in Saratov (Volga area) that German autonomy would only be possible where the German minority comprised at least 90% of the local population. This condition could not be achieved in the short-term. The German government criticised this statement and declared it to be contrary to the Joint Declaration of Intent signed in November 1991. German government aid for the proposed republic was frozen and Chancellor Kohl was left to acknowledge that the future of the Volga republic remained uncertain.

2. The Russian announcement in February 1992 of two new German *rayon*s to be established in the Saratov and Volgograd areas, declared as a first step towards future autonomy, was greeted by Waffenschmidt as a great step ahead. Yet as details of the proposed sites became known, it transpired that the Saratov *rayon* included a former military training area, while the second *rayon* at Volgograd included part of the previously rejected contaminated military site of Kapustin Yar. Furthermore, the two *rayon*s were some 300 km apart.

3. A Russian-German protocol on the Volga republic was signed in April 1992, under which the proposed republic was to become the seventeenth member of the Russian federation. While the German negotiators greeted the protocol as a breakthrough and appealed to the Soviet Germans not to emigrate, but instead accept this Russian offer, a Russian negotiator subsequently claimed that the Volga republic was not on the political agenda.

4. The district parliament in Engels (Volga area) during June 1992 announced that it rejected the idea of a step-by-step re-creation of the Volga republic. The parliament pointed to the results of a local public opinion poll which recorded an 80% no-vote on the question of whether to allow a German Volga republic. This was a set-back as the town of Engels had been a major population centre for the Germans in the former German Volga republic abolished in 1941.

The year 1992 ended with no significant progress having being achieved in establishing the proposed Volga republic, despite attempts by Waffenschmidt to put Yeltsin under pressure by declaring December 1992 to be a deadline for a breakthrough to be achieved. Thus the final year of the period of study passed without the government having achieved the aim as declared in 1989 of re-creating a German Volga republic.

10.4.3 Research on the views and emigration motives of the Soviet Germans

Research carried out among Soviet Germans in 1991 on the question of whether a republic would stop the Soviet German exodus concluded that merely some 17% of those questioned would be willing to stay in their country if the Volga republic was re-created. Furthermore, only some 22% of those questioned believed that the German government's negotiations on the proposed Volga republic would be successful. Assuming that these results were representative for the Soviet German group, the findings showed that the German government's presumptions as to the likely success that the creation of a Volga republic would have in stemming the exodus were over optimistic.

Furthermore, research conducted in Germany on the main emigration motives of the Soviet *Aussiedler* concluded that the main emigration motive was the wish to join family members already living in Germany, and not the ethnic motive as the German government had claimed. The wish to live as Germans among Germans and to escape ethnic conflict was only the second major stated motive. The economic

motive only came in third place. Considering the responses within individual age bands, the research showed that the economic motive was more important for the young and mobile Soviet German respondents. These findings contradicted the government's claim that the *Aussiedler* primarily came to Germany to live as Germans among Germans. It could therefore be assumed that even if the autonomous Volga republic were to be established, it would not necessarily succeed in stemming the exodus of Soviet Germans. Some 196,000 Soviet *Aussiedler* arrived in Germany for resettlement during 1992, indicating that the Soviet Germans were voting on the Volga republic issue with their feet.

10.4.4 Conclusions reached on the government's campaign for establishing a Volga republic

Based on the findings contained in chapters eight - nine, the following conclusions are drawn in answering the third main research question on the government's negotiations on establishing a Volga republic for the Soviet Germans:

1. The government policy of seeking to dissuade potential Soviet German *Aussiedler* from emigrating to Germany only had limited success. The envisaged Volga republic had not been realised by the end of 1992. The rising emigration figures for the Soviet Germans between 1988 and 1992 arguably showed that the Soviet Germans had lost confidence.

2. The reasons for the failure to secure progress on the issue of the Volga republic can be summed up as follows:

(i) Although both Soviet and Russian leaders gave repeated promises that progress would be achieved on the issue, both President Gorbachev and President Yeltsin proved unable to implement the policies in domestic politics. The leaderships were unreliable, placing doubt on the viability of this element of German *Aussiedler* policy. Despite sufficient evidence having been available to highlight this problem,

the German government did not let itself be deterred from its stated objective of securing progress on the Volga republic.

(ii) The German government wrongly assumed that the prospect of receiving economic assistance from West Germany would help persuade the Soviet / Russian leaderships to give concessions on establishing the Volga republic. The critics of Gorbachev and Yeltsin in the Volga area were not enticed by such a prospect and succeeded in preventing progress from being achieved.

(iii) The German government negotiators failed to appreciate the level of resistance that continued to exist in the former Soviet Union against giving concessions to the former military opponent Germany. The promise of money to help fund the establishing of the republic was not able to change the anti-German mood prevalent in the area of the former Volga republic.

(iv) Local Communist Party members resident in the former German Volga republic are believed to have encouraged the negative response to the planned Volga republic because of vested interests in maintaining the status quo. An influx of Soviet Germans would have meant changes in the local political and social structures. It became apparent that while German negotiators merely had financial inducements at their disposal, these were not sufficient to have the desired impact in securing support for the Volga republic. Attempts to throw money at the problem, in the hope that success would eventually come, turned out to be counter-productive.

3. The negotiations during the period 1988 - 1992 showed that while there was resistance to the proposed Volga republic, there was relatively little resistance towards granting the German minority a more limited form of local autonomy at the *rayon* level. These were initially seen by German negotiators as a welcomed addition on the way to establishing the Volga republic, but not taken seriously as an alternative. The help given to the *rayon*s Halbstadt and Assowo showed what could be achieved on a small scale in promoting small infrastructure projects in the German settlements. Yet by not accepting a policy of making progress in small

steps, the German negotiators placed themselves and the success of their Volga republic policy under considerable pressure. Lack of progress on the issue was likely to have made those potential *Aussiedler* still undecided and despondent more likely to opt to emigrate while the door was still open.

4. Research among Soviet Germans on the significance of the planned Volga republic suggested that a significant number of potential *Aussiedler* would seek resettlement in Germany even if the Volga republic became a reality. There was an overall scepticism among the Soviet Germans over the likely success of negotiations on the proposed Volga republic. This sceptical mood contrasted with the optimism expressed by German government members on the likely success that a future republic would have in stemming the *Aussiedler* exodus to Germany. Based on such research findings, the government's policy was not a viable element to its *Aussiedler* policy.

5. Research on the emigration motives of Soviet *Aussiedler* suggested that their prime motive for coming to Germany was not to live as Germans among Germans (i.e. the ethnic motive), but the desire to join relatives and friends already resident in Germany. Assuming that this was a representative view, then even success in establishing a Volga republic was unlikely to stem the exodus to Germany in the foreseeable future while the open-door policy was maintained, further putting the government's policy into question. An alternative concept of promoting groups of *rayons* spread geographically may have had better chances of being accepted by the Soviet / Russian leaderships and also by those politicians at the local level (Volga area) who opposed the setting up of the Volga republic.

10.5 Assessment of government *Aussiedler* policy 1988 - 1992

The acceptance and integration of the ethnic and cultural German refugees between 1945 and 1949, and the *Aussiedler* since 1950 has been one of the major West German achievements in the post-war period. Yet while previous governments had upheld the constitutional obligation to accept *Aussiedler* for resettlement, the

government under Chancellor Kohl arguably used this obligation simultaneously to instrumentalise the *Aussiedler* for its own nationalistic, economic and political purposes. This is demonstrated by a sequence of U-turns in *Aussiedler* policy, firstly the implementation of an unofficial quota with the introduction of the *Aussiedler* Resettlement Law in July 1990, and secondly the decision to officially limit future *Aussiedler* immigration levels to around 220,000 from January 1993 onwards through the *Kriegsfolgenbereinigungsgesetz*, which showed the effective abandonment of the open-door policy and its ideological / constitutional foundation of *jus sanguinis*.

The shift to pragmatism was the understandable result of a combination of factors, notably the unprecedented numbers not just of *Aussiedler* but of economic and political refugees, of *Übersiedler* and the massive cost burdens of German unification. Such pragmatism would be acceptable and excusable for German voters under any other circumstances where moral principle had not been placed at the centre of decision-making as an ineluctable burden which the German state had to face whatever the costs. Elevating policy to the level of non-partisan political morality and obligation, the Kohl government provided a dangerous hostage to fortune which has now contrived both to compound financial burdens on the German state and expose the rhetoric of the moral high ground as disingenuous and dysfunctional. It reveals lessons for the conduct of citizenship and other human rights within an increasingly fraught international context of migration and economic disparity.

The findings in this thesis show that the whole *Aussiedler* issue is interwoven with Germany's past. By maintaining the closed system of German citizenship, based on common blood ties, the government failed to adopt a broader citizenship which was based on the political concept of the nation. By refusing to amend the legal basis of the *Aussiedler* status, it continued to put the emphasis on a German community based on recognition of specific ethnic and cultural ties, enabling the government to carry out the ingathering of the German Diaspora. The government in turn failed to recognise that Germany had become a multi-cultural society, instead maintaining the *Aussiedler* status for those with German cultural ties going back several centuries. It

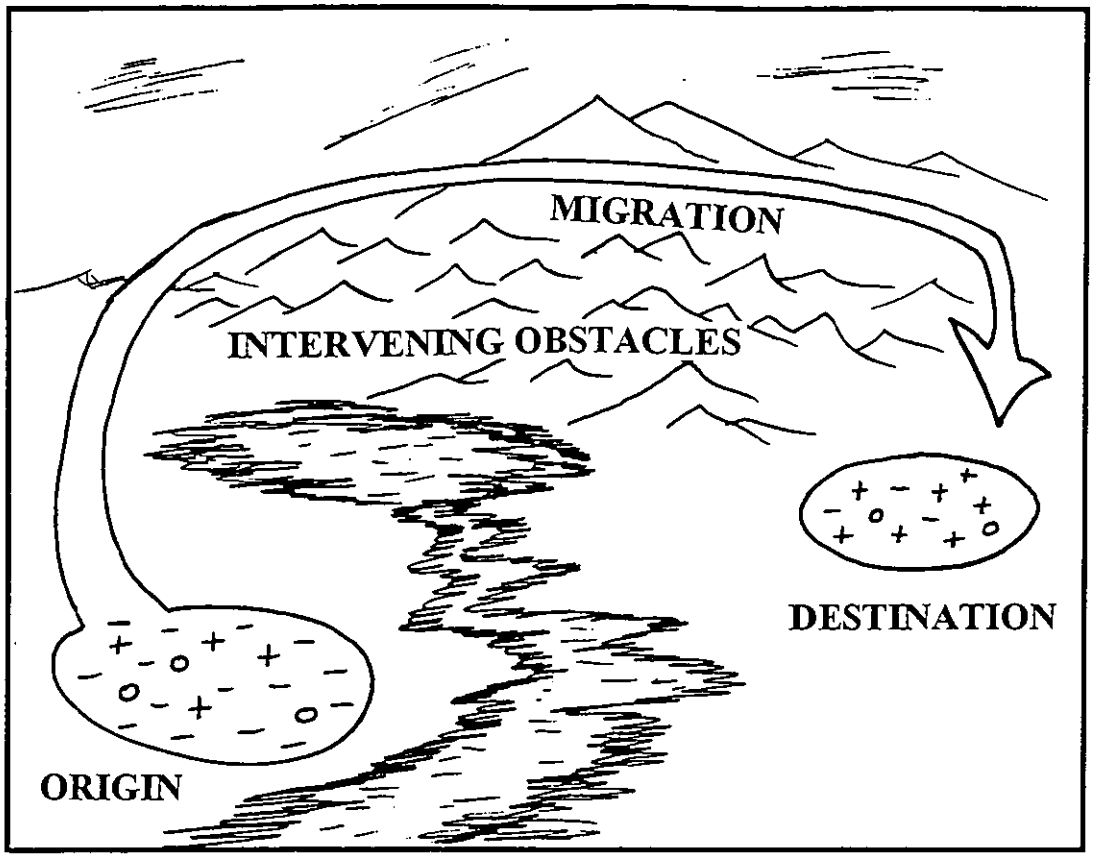
continued to maintain the myth of the ethnic homogeneous German nation, failing to recognise that a cultural German nation can exist without them necessarily having to form a political nation. It is to be hoped that future administrations in Germany will address the broader issues of citizenship, immigration, ethnic minority rights and "national" culture against the background of the kind of policy failure outlined in this thesis.

APPENDICES

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Migration determinants shown topographically



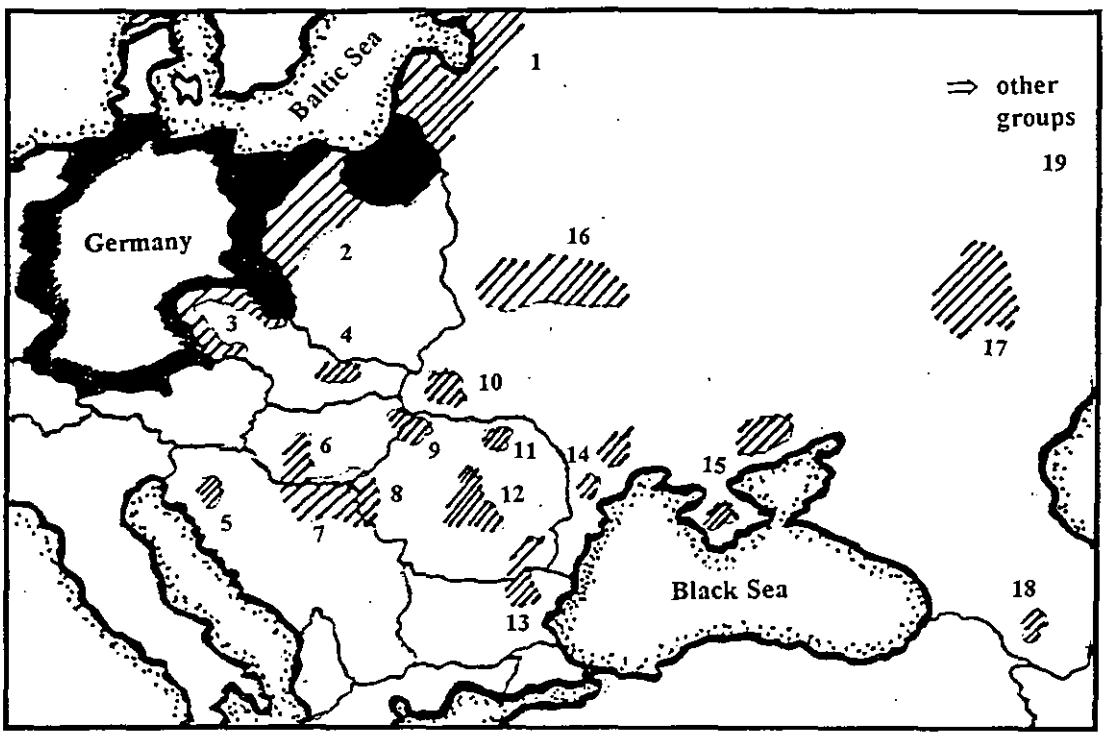
Source: Bond 1990: 24

KEY

+	Pull (positive) factors
-	Push (negative) factors
o	neutral factors (indifference)
⇒	direction of population movement (migration)

Appendix 2

Historic German settlement areas in eastern and south-eastern Europe



Source: Bergel 1985: 140

Scale: 0 — 500 km

KEY

Areas in which the Germans settled prior to the outbreak of the Second World War

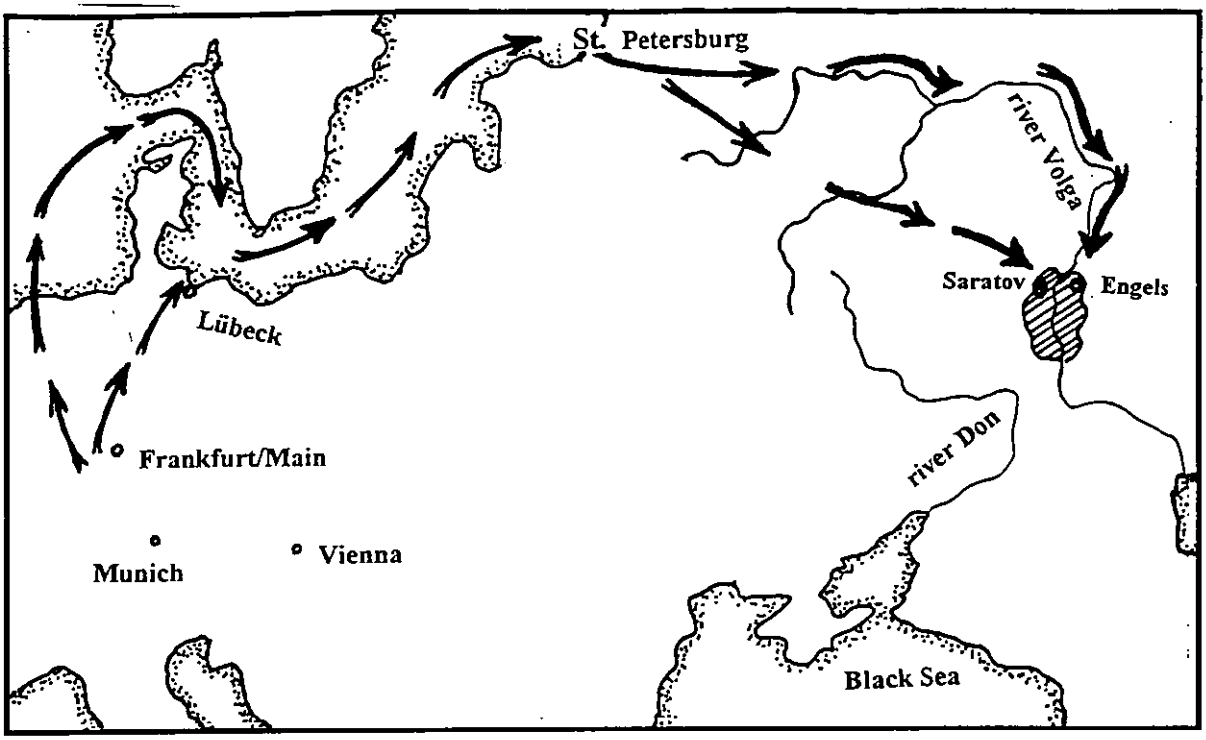
Territory of the German *Reich* (1937)

List of the individual German groups in eastern and south-eastern Europe

1 Baltic Germans
2 Polish Germans
3 Sudeten Germans
4 Carpathian Germans
5 Gottschee Germans
6 Danube Germans
7 Batschka Germans
8 Banat Swabians
9 Sathmar Germans
10 Galician Germans
11 Bukovina Germans
12 Siebenbürger Saxons
13 Dobrudja Germans
14 Bessarabian Germans
15 Black Sea (Crimean) Germans
16 Volhynian Germans
17 Volga Germans
18 Caucasus Germans
19 other Groups (i.e. in Siberia and Kazakhstan)

Appendix 3

Migration routes taken by the German colonists on the journey to the Volga area in Russia during the eighteenth century



Sources: Unruh 1989: 23
Richter-Eberl 1989: 44

Scale : 0 — 500 km.

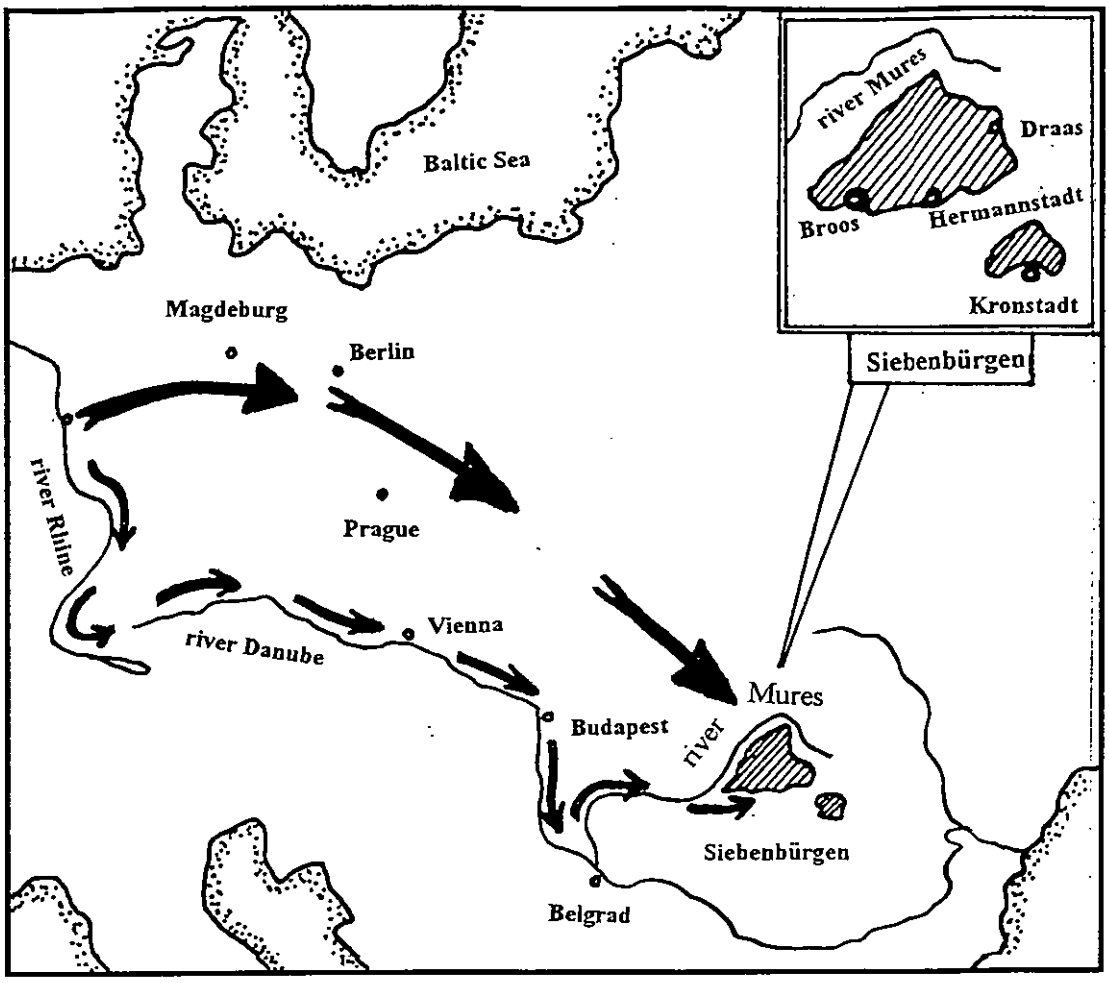
KEY

routes taken by German migrants (1763-67) to the Volga area

Volga area settled by German colonists

Appendix 4

Possible migration routes taken by the German colonists on the journey to the Siebenbürgen area during the twelfth century



Sources: Bergel 1980: 38 (land route via Magdeburg and Silesia)
Schröcke 1987: 11 (land route via Magdeburg)

The way via the rivers Rhine, Danube and Mures was a possible alternative route.

Scale : 0 500 Km.

KEY

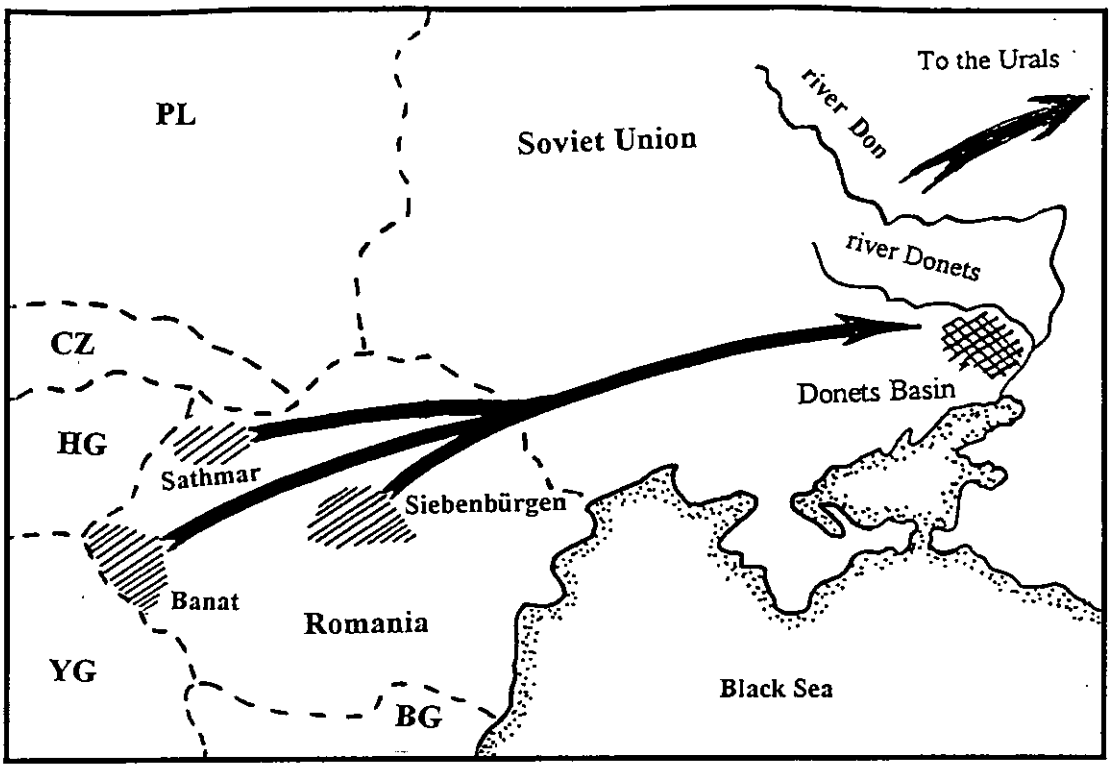
➡ river route taken by German migrants

➡ land route taken by German migrants

German settlement areas in Siebenbürgen

Appendix 5

Deportation routes of the Romanian Germans deported to the Soviet Union during the Second World War



Sources: Wagner 1982: 83
Zikeli 1983: 45

Scale : 0 — 300 km

KEY

➔ deportation routes to the Soviet Union

German settlement areas from which Romanian Germans were deported

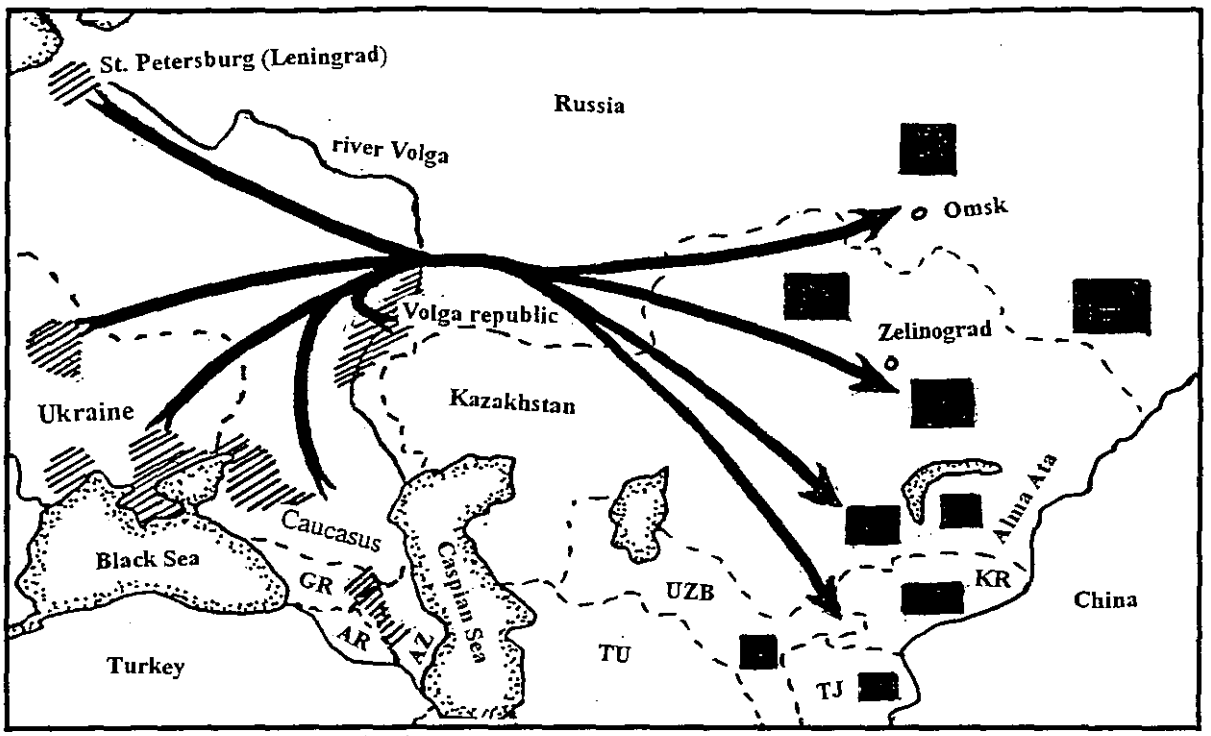
destination for those deported to the Donets Basin

List of abbreviations used in the above map

BG:	Bulgaria	HG:	Hungary
YG:	Yugoslavia	CZ:	Czechoslovakia
PL:	Poland		

Appendix 6

Deportation eastwards of Soviet German groups during the Second World War



This map is based on the following sources: Richter-Eberl 1989: 178
Der Spiegel no. 43 1991: 205

Scale : 0 500 km

KEY

➔ deportation routes eastwards

//// former German settlements from which expelled

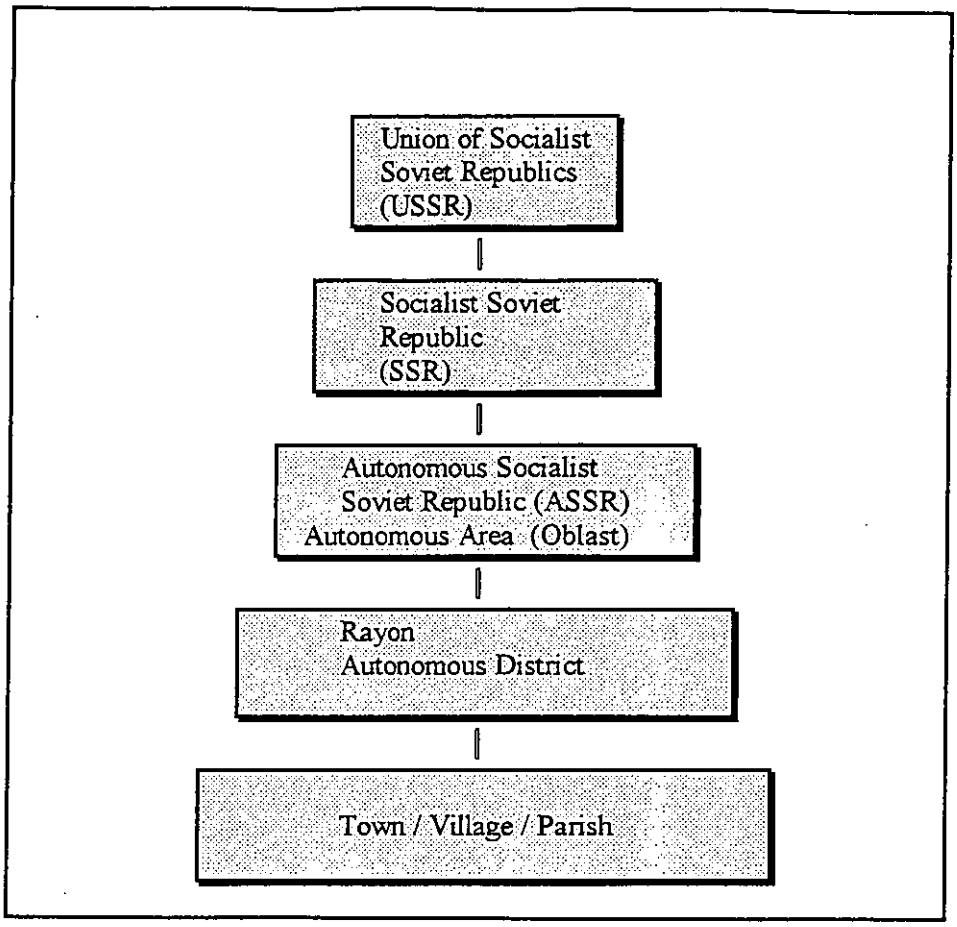
■ locations of new German settlements following deportation

Abbreviations used in above map for Soviet republics

UZB:	Uzbekistan	TU:	Turkmenistan
GR:	Georgia	AZ:	Azerbaijan
TJ:	Tajikistan	AR:	Armenia
KR:	Kyrgyzstan		

Appendix 7

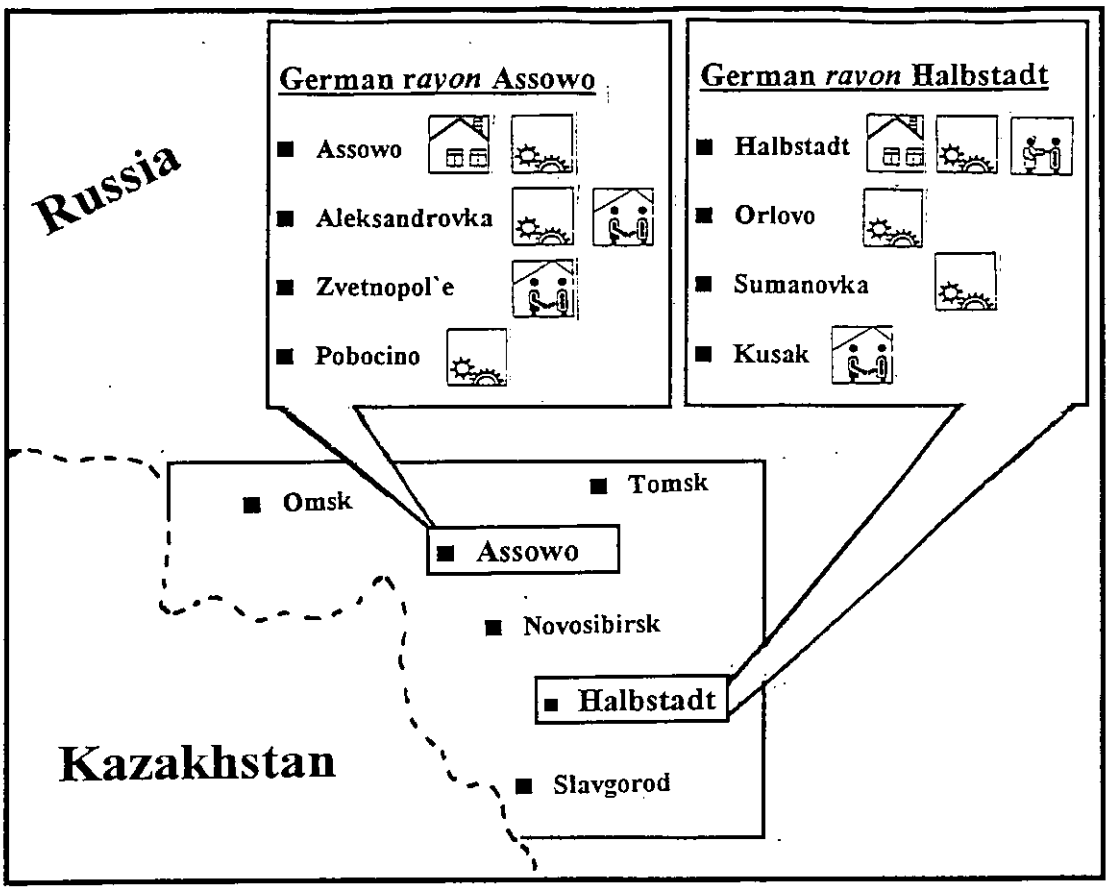
Political / administrative hierarchy of the former Soviet Union



Source: Mark 1991: 7

Appendix 8

Location of the German *rayons* at Halbstadt and Assowo and forms of German government assistance available in 1992



Source: *Hilfen für Deutsche* (1993): pamphlet

Scale : 0 500 km

KEY

Forms of German government assistance for the two German *rayons*

house construction programm

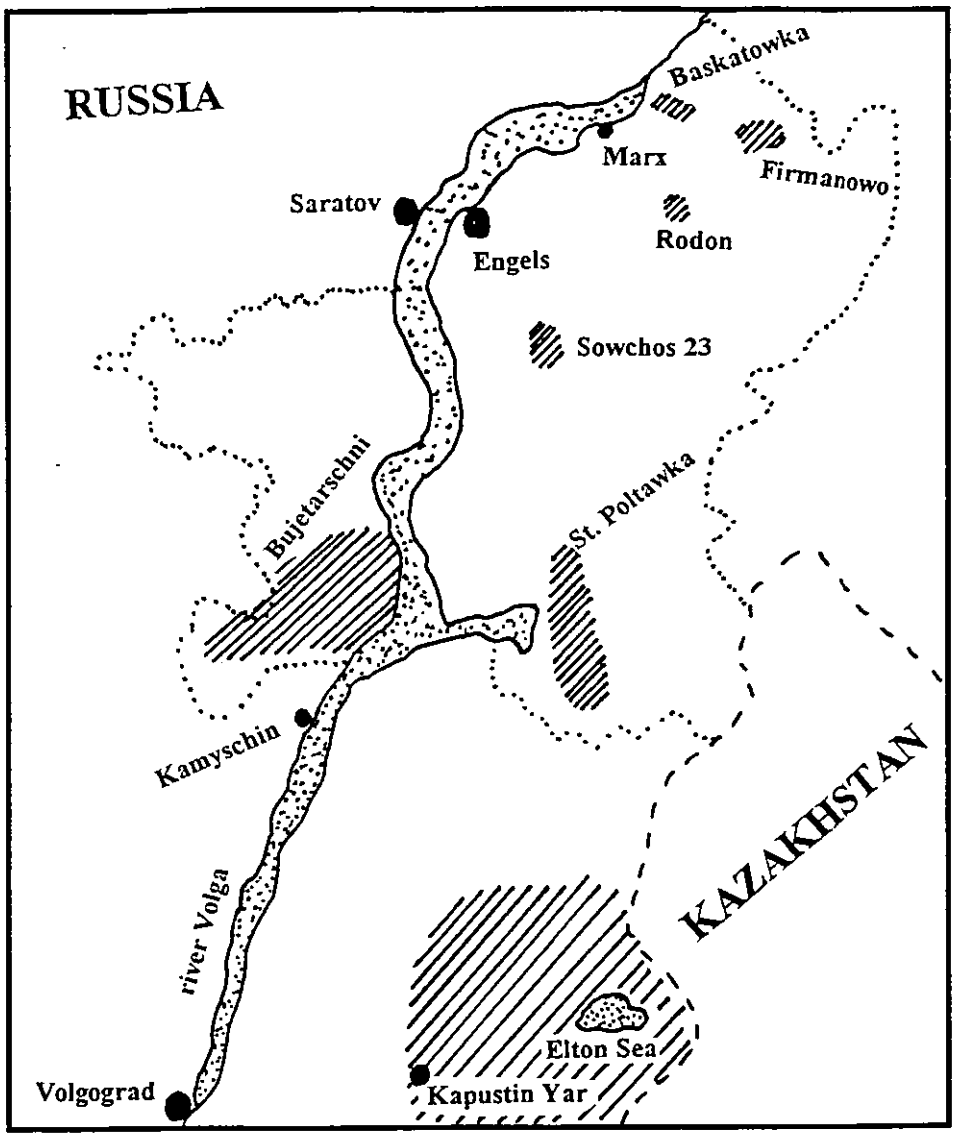
economic assistance (i.e. bakery, cheese factory and/or butcher)

cultural meeting places (i.e. German books, newspapers, film shows and information forums)

medical help for hospitals and health centres (i.e. supply of medicine and medical equipment)

Appendix 9

Planned German settlements in and around the former German Volga republic



Source: Olt 1992b: 5

Scale : 0 — 50 km

KEY

German settlement areas forming part of a planned future German Volga republic

border of the former autonomous German Volga republic (ASSR) abolished in 1941

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15 September 1992: 'Nasarbajew: Keine Autonomie für Deutsche in Kasachstan', p. 7
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14 February 1992: 'Rußlanddeutsche wollen ausreisen', p. 5
4 February 1992: 'Viel Spekulation, aber kein Angebot', p. 8
21 January 1992: 'Hornhues gibt einer autonomen Republik für die Rußlanddeutschen wenig Chancen', p. 4
20 January 1992: '"Kein Druck auf Jelzin wegen der deutschen Wolgarepublik', p. 1
18 January 1992: '"Ohne Klarheit in Moskau kein Geld"', p. 2
16 January 1992: '"Republik der Deutschen ist Fernziel"', p. 5
19 August 1991: 'Jelzin stellt autonome Republik für Deutsche in Aussicht', p. 1
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24 April 1992:	'Pläne für eine deutsche Republik an der Wolga nehmen Gestalt an', p. 2
4 March 1992:	'Bonn begrüßt Jelzins Dekret für die Rußlanddeutschen', p. 2
20 January 1992:	'Bonner Regierung streitet um Hilfe für die Rußlanddeutschen', p. 2
15 January 1992:	'Wunsch nach Ausreise wächst', p. 2
25 November 1991:	'Rußlanddeutsche mit Angebot Jelzins unzufrieden', p. 2
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22 November 1991:	'Kohl spricht auch das Gemüt seines Gastes an', p.3
21 October 1991:	'Jelzin verspricht Aufbau einer Wolgarepublik', p.1
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no. 4 (June 1989) 'Aktuelle Aussiedlerstatistik', p. 9
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