'Feeling at Home': Soviet Mennonites in Bielefeld, Germany, 1950-1990

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The intense yearning to leave the Soviet Union for Germany, the country Soviet Mennonites had come to consider their homeland, is reflected in the memoirs of Soviet Mennonite minister Peter Derksen. Derksen arrived in Germany in 1979 and in his published memoirs recalls how the question of getting to Germany had come up over and over again when he was still in the Soviet Union. Together with other family members he had written many letters requesting the Soviet authorities to grant them permission to return to their "fatherland". The desire to go to Germany was so great it threatened to eclipse even peoples' deeply held faith. As Derksen comments: "If everyone had been so motivated to get to heaven as they were to get to Germany!"[1]

This paper examines how Soviet Mennonites[2] came to terms with their images of Germany in the particular context of their lived experience in the city of Bielefeld. Located in northern Germany, Bielefeld is a medium-sized city that became the home for many Soviet Mennonite *Umsiedler*, as they were called in Mennonite circles, or *Aussiedler,* as German society labelled them. The discussion begins by reflecting on the situation of Soviet Mennonites as that of a diaspora. The concept of diaspora has recently been extended to help understand and explain the culture of ethnic minorities other than Jews, on whose account the word originally entered the

language. Viewing the experience of Soviet Mennonites under the rubric of a diaspora offers particular insights into notions of "home", "homeland", and "feeling at home." First generation Mennonite immigrants in Bielefeld are an example of a diasporic group that comes "home". The second part of this paper will examine this "coming home" by exploring specific arenas of interaction between Mennonites and Bielefeld society as each attempted to resolve their images of each other and of the outlines of their shared life in the city. Here we will examine key points of intersection: finding a place to live, perceptions of family and sexuality, and religious life will be examined to explain the process of Mennonite newcomers coming to "feel at home" in Bielefeld.

The epilogue in John B. Toews's 1982 study *Czars, Soviets & Mennonites* suggests the events between the Soviet First Five Year Plan and the German attack on the Soviet Union during World War II, "created a Mennonite diaspora unprecedented in both its scope and its sense of isolation."[3] Since Toews wrote those words the concept of "diaspora" has been the object of renewed interest among cultural critics. His use of the term, however, conforms to some of the definitions that have been offered by others. Chaliand and Rageau suggest that a diaspora is "the collective forced dispersion of a religious and/or ethnic group, precipitated by a disaster, often of a political nature." They argue that important to the maintenance of a diaspora is the group's "collective memory, which transmits both the historical facts that precipitated the dispersion and a cultural heritage."[4] Others point to the importance of lasting "sentimental or material links" of the diaspora "with its land of origin."[5] Alan Anderson extends the notion of sentimental homeland links to include "the case of ethnic minorities which have recreated a homeland," the classic example being Zionism.[6] Mennonites in the Soviet Union also recreated their attachments to Germany. The dispersion of Mennonites from their cultural hearth in South Russia to Kazakhstan in the decades between the 1917 revolution and the 1960s marked their transformation from an ethnic minority to a diaspora. For Mennonites in the Soviet Union during this period the object of their yearning became Germany. As Toews argues, Soviet "Mennonitism found an ally in its German cultural identity which provided it with a sense of continuity and belonging. World War II with its anti-Germanism, forced deportations, and prison camps enhanced a minority consciousness for the majority of Russia's Germans."[7]

Along with a feeling of German identity came the longing to actually go to Germany. The memory of connections to a homeland has often been posited as the "central, if not sole, defining feature" of a diaspora group. As cultural geographer Michael Roark suggests however, homelands may be mythic and are used by ethnic groups "to strengthen a sense of identity or claim to a territory."[8] Over the time of their stay in the Soviet Union during the Cold War this consciousness increasingly focussed on Germany as a Mennonite homeland. Germany was recreated as a homeland and became the cultural and geographic object of Mennonite yearning to go home. To use Benedict Anderson's concept of imagined communities: "in the minds of each," (in this case, Mennonite) "live[d] the image of their communion" with other Germans.[9] By the 1970s any connection to Germany was increasingly

mythical and for many had even replaced connections to their Russian-Mennonite ethno-religious identity. Most of Bielefeld's Mennonite immigrants from the Soviet Union had only had a brush with the German state during their brief stay in occupied Poland. Many had never been in Germany proper and most had a limited knowledge of its postwar history. The city of Bielefeld held no particular significance for migrating Mennonites from the Soviet Union other than the increasing number of connections with those who had migrated earlier. Mennonites who migrated to Bielefeld in the 1970s and 1980s are an example of a diasporic group confronting its imagined homeland and in the construction of their new lives having to come to terms with contradictions between the imagined and the real.

Bielefeld traces its origins to the growth of towns in the middle ages. An early merchant economy became more specialized in trading the linens produced from the flax grown in the surrounding hinterland. Before the industrial era the city was already considered the linen capital of the region. In the 1850s Bielefeld's textile merchants responded to mechanization in their industry by establishing a number of textile mills in what had formerly been a merchant town.[10] Industrialization brought increased migration of workers and their families and for the first time Bielefeld became a receiving society for significant numbers of newcomers. In the following decades, the textile industry spawned related activities in the metals industries, including the production of sewing machines and bicycles, which gradually came to dominate the industrial sector before the First World War. Additional new industries in the food products sector manufactured baking powder and spices.[11] From the small city of ten thousand before the mechanization of the textile industry, Bielefeld had grown to a city of 82,580 by the First World War. The city's identity as a town of bourgeois merchants and peasant weavers had also changed and its working class was now the dominant group numerically if not politically.

Bielefeld remained ethnically homogenous during this period. In 1905 Bielefeld residents born in the city and in the region comprised 44 and 29 percent of the population respectively, with non-German arrivals only accounting for 1.1 percent of the population. This undisturbed homogeneity of Bielefeld society would be seriously challenged by the events and aftermath of World War Two. As the Second World War progressed Bielefeld's population steadily declined and women and children were evacuated from the city in response to Allied bombing. By April 1945 the city's population had been cut in half to 69,446 people. Evacuation to the countryside coincided with declining living space in the city. Allied bombing caused increasing damage to the housing stock and by October 1942 a shortage of six thousand homes was reported.[12] Important in shaping attitudes to the later arrival of ethnic Germans was the post-1945 influx of expellees from Eastern Europe and refugees fleeing East Germany who dramatically shaped the collective memory of Bielefeld as a receiving society. The expulsion of millions of Germans from Eastern Europe was a product of agreements made between the Allies at the Potsdam Conference in the summer of 1945. Under these agreements, the borders of Poland were shifted to the west, placing areas with largely German populations in Polish territory. Eastern European countries were also permitted to expel their German

populations, a task pursued aggressively and harshly by Poland and Czechoslovakia in particular. By 1950 almost eight million expellees had arrived in what had become West Germany. Among these were some Prussian Mennonites who would provide the nucleus for later arriving *Aussiedler* Mennonites.[13] The hardening of relations in the emerging Cold War and the resulting creation of a Communist East Germany resulted in the arrival of additional Soviet-zone refugees. Most expellees and Soviet-zone refugees left their former homelands on short notice and arrived in West Germany with little. They reached Bielefeld while the city was still reeling from extreme shortages of housing due to wartime destruction of the housing stock. By 1947 over seventeen thousand expellees, 13 percent of the population, lived in the city. Expellees and refugees continued to arrive unabated for the next few years until, in 1954, 30.2 percent of Bielefeld's population consisted of these migrants.[14]

The signal for a new era of migration to Bielefeld was the arrival of small numbers of Mennonites from Paraguay in the 1960s, some ten years after the period of expulsion had ended and shortly after the building of the Berlin Wall closed off the flow of refugees fleeing East Germany. The new immigrants began to enter Bielefeld's public consciousness in 1968 when the *Westfalen Blatt* reported the situation of a woman from Paraguay who must have arrived in 1964 because she indicated she had lived in temporary housing for four years. The report also mentioned another seventeen families from Paraguay that were living in the Bültmannshof neighbourhood at the time.[15] Between 1957 and 1970 the number of migrants remained low; with only 2,100 arriving in Bielefeld during the entire thirteen-year period. The first Polish and Soviet ethnic German immigrants began arriving after the Willy Brandt government normalized German-Polish relations with the signing of the 1970 Warsaw Treaty. That same year a treaty was also signed with Moscow, opening slightly the possibility of emigration for Soviet ethnic Germans. Numbers of ethnic Germans arriving in Bielefeld ranged from 300 to 600 per year for the first half of the 1970s, then climbed to 1,100 to 1,300 per year for the last three years of the decade. In the 1970s the city accepted just over 7,000 ethnic German immigrants, a large number for its population.[16] In the 1970s Bielefeld became home for three times as many ethnic Germans as other cities of similar size. In absolute terms, in Nordrhein-Westfalen the number of immigrants settling in cities was only exceeded by the larger city of Cologne and the Ruhr industrial cities of Düsseldorf and Dortmund. In the 1980s the number of arrivals fluctuated but increasing restrictions by their countries of origin reduced the number arriving in the later 1980s to the levels of the early 1970s. Between 1977, when the immigrant flow began to increase, and 1991 Bielefeld became home to slightly more than 24,000 *Aussiedler.* Almost one-half of these came from the Soviet Union and, in 1987 for instance, twenty-four percent were Baptist and twenty-one percent Mennonite.[17]

Location was critical for most Mennonite immigrants because in spite of the notion that they were going to their ethno-cultural homeland, the proximity of others who shared their history remained important. As Susanna Koop put it, "...our people want to live together. Those that want to go to church stick together even

more."[18] The desire to live near each other was observable both at the neighbourhood level within cities and in the pattern of regional concentrations. A 1976 German contributor to the Winnipeg based *Der Bote* estimated that three quarters of all Baptist and Mennonite immigrants in Germany at the time could be found within a hundred-kilometre radius of Bielefeld. Smaller centres such as Lage, Espelkamp and Paderborn, all within this circle, also became nuclei for settlements of Mennonites.[19] Although neighbouring communities were also attracting immigrants, in 1980 the *Neue Westfälische* assured its readers that Bielefeld remained the preferred home for ethnic German immigrants and had received the highest number of immigrants in the area the previous year despite the claims of neighbouring Paderborn.[20]
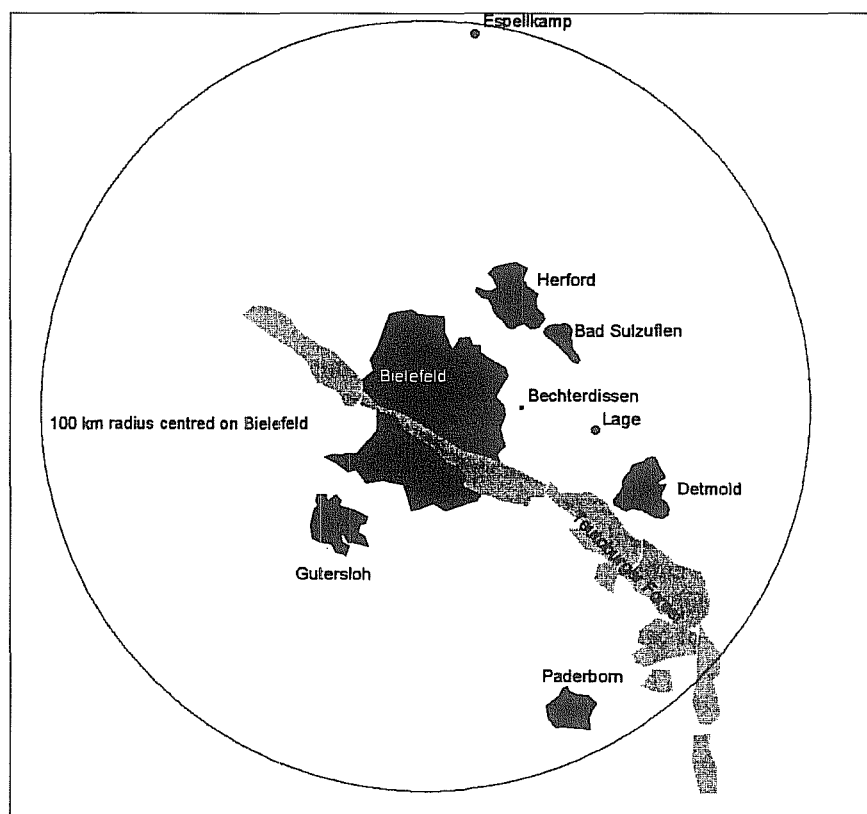

Figure 1. Bielfeld and Surrounding Area

The reason for Bielefeld's attraction seemed to be the connection between Soviet Mennonites and the expellee population that had preceded them. When ethnic Germans who had migrated to South America in the late 1940s began returning in the early 1960s they concentrated in the small community of

Bechterdissen not far from Bielefeld. A part of the area's appeal seems to have been a small number of Mennonites from Prussia who had settled in the Bielefeld area as part of the refugee movements of the immediate postwar period. The refugees who settled in Bielefeld immediately after the war and the South American immigrants of the 1960s attracted more immigrants to the area in later decades.

These newcomers getting off the bus in Bielefeld immediately began the process of coming to terms with their new environment and finding their place in it. For most families their first home was the city's temporary housing facilities on *Teichsheide Strasse*. During periods of increased arrivals other temporary housing facilities were used but the abiding memory for most Mennonites was the shelter at *Teichsheide*. The apartment-like structure located on a short street just off Herforder Strasse between Baumheide and City Centre, had suites for immigrants and offices for various settlement agencies. The facility was used to provide shelter while immigrant needs were assessed and matched with available housing. Immigrants were provided with a hot meal, cash, public transportation passes, furniture, bedding and an initial consultation with social workers.[21] Mennonite immigrant memories of life in the processing facilities and temporary housing were for the most part unpleasant. Life at *Teichsheide* meant cramped quarters, shared kitchen, laundry and bathroom facilities and a lack of privacy.

In spite of having to live in temporary housing upon their arrival, *Aussiedler* received preferential treatment in the allocation of permanent housing compared to foreign guest workers. They received "special help from housing and social welfare authorities in finding accommodation" and were highest in priority for social housing stock apartments. In fact, in some cases *Aussiedler* could get an apartment ahead of local families who had been looking for housing for years.[22]

Making the choice of a permanent home was stressful for immigrant families. Their aim was to strike a balance between housing costs, adequate physical space and proximity to family and church. Proximity to church was important, particularly for Mennonites and Baptists. The combination of the city's policy to disperse immigrants and their own preference for locations near their own people sometimes prolonged their stay in temporary housing.[23] Often the choice of neighbourhood was based on earlier decisions made about the location for the group's church building. For instance, Mennonites living in Bielefeld who still attended the original Mennonite church in Bechterdissen decided in 1978 to build a new church in Bielefeld. They chose a location in Baumheide, where many of them lived. This location added to the attraction of the neighbourhood for other immigrants.[24]

Unlike the importance of the location of their church, ethnic businesses played a minor role in immigrant choices about where to live. Up to the late 1980s, the development of ethnic establishments in Bielefeld was limited. Factors such as limited potential for entrepreneurship under the Soviet system, a rural culture with a history of consumer goods shortages, the resulting reliance on cooking and baking at home, and limited knowledge of how to navigate the official regulatory system, may have contributed to the lack of business and service establishments founded by newcomers.

Ethnic Germans were also afraid of the high costs they faced in Bielefeld's housing market which, while regulated, was still less sheltered than in the Communist states they had come from. According to one newspaper report, a cause of long stays in temporary housing was the inability of the immigrant family to reconcile themselves to a commitment of 600 DM per month in rent when they still had no work. High rents were one of the concerns raised with city officials in the occasional joint meetings held to hear immigrant complaints and problems. In spite of rent subsidies, immigrants found rents in Bielefeld to be high and lacked confidence in their ability to pay.[25] Financial considerations and the rejection of offers of housing in less attractive neighbourhoods were important reasons underlying stays of as long as a year in temporary housing. In 1976 the Social and Housing Committee considered eliminating temporary housing by directing immigrants to a permanent home upon their arrival. The committee concluded, however, that this would be "hardly possible or sensible." In spite of this decision, one committee member maintained that a certain amount of pressure would have to be exerted on immigrants to speed their transfer to permanent housing.[26] Necessity, in the form of more immigrants at one time than the temporary housing facilities could accommodate, drove the committee to place sixteen families directly in their permanent homes in 1977 and 1978. The committee remained persuaded, however, that this "bureaucratically complicated undertaking" should only be used in emergency situations.[27]

Officials increased pressure on immigrants by limiting the number of times an ethnic German family could reject housing offered to them. In a 1977 public meeting with the Social and Housing Committee, ethnic German immigrants expressed their displeasure at having to accept housing after three offers.[28] In spite of the urgent attempts by the Housing Committee to place immigrants in permanent housing quickly, stays in temporary housing could drag on and could have demoralizing effects on immigrants. One Mennonite woman, whose stay extended to four years, believed that she "would never feel completely at home in Bielefeld."[29] When the flow of immigrants increased in the latter half of the 1970s and temporary housing space was at a premium the issue of the length of stay became particularly urgent. In the spring and summer of 1976, both Bielefeld newspapers, the *Neue Westfälische* and the *Westfalen Blatt* puzzled over the problem of lengthy stays in temporary housing, concluding that the desire to choose housing that would satisfy the need to have "a feeling of belonging together," and the fear of housing costs were the main reasons for extended delays in accepting permanent housing.[30]

Usually, permanent housing was an apartment in a social housing development. Mennonite immigrants received apartments sized to match the numbers and structure of the immigrant family. In rare cases homes were traded in order to achieve particular objectives such as ensuring that a household was closer to relatives, work, or more suitable physical arrangements. The pressure on the city's available social housing was at times acute. Since *Aussiedler* were granted preference, the housing problem caused "massive complaints from the population."[31]

The City of Bielefeld's programs and policies for settlement assumed that ethnic

German integration would only be successful if immigrants were dispersed throughout the city. Background papers for a 1979 meeting of Bielefeld's Social and Housing Committee outlined the city's policy. The Housing Department was "determined to supply housing to ethnic Germans throughout the city's neighbourhoods" rather than permitting development of concentrations in specific neighbourhoods or ghettoes. The report acknowledged there were limits to applying the policy because of the lack of housing stock in various city neighbourhoods, but maintained that granting requests for "the wished for neighbourhoods (Baumheide and Meyer in Sieker) would lead to undesirable concentrations of *Aussiedler*" in the city. The report assured its readers that the department was "working against this development as much as possible."[32]

Despite the official policy to spread them throughout the city, Mennonite immigrants preferred to settle close to each other. Although Mennonite immigrants were not accounted for separately in most city statistics, some idea of settlement patterns is indicated by reports in the minutes of the city's Social and Housing Committee. A 1979 report prepared for the committee included statistics for the previous three years of settlement activity. The report showed that in spite of official policy there were concentrations of immigrants in particular neighbourhoods (See Figure 2.). The Baumheide neighbourhood in Heepen and the Meyer neighbourhood in Sieker, where a large social housing complex was located, proved to be popular among *Aussiedler* and Mennonites in particular. Baumheide was a separate statistical area in the Northeast part of the city south of the main route to the neighbouring city of Herford and along what would later be the Milse section of the city's light rail transit line. In 1975 its population was just over 7,000 people. Over one-quarter of the 2,945 immigrants in the three years examined in the report made their home in Baumheide.[33]

From the late 1960s through the 1980s Bielefeld newspapers frequently drew attention to the *Aussiedlers'* tendency to live together. One newspaper article reported on the work of a cultural geographer who claimed that three-quarters of *Aussiedler* migrants settled in the three neighbourhoods of Baumheide, Sieker and Stapelbrede.[34] Other articles speculated that the desire to live near each other was part of the process of adjustment. It was implied that ethnic Germans had to be encouraged to get used to their surroundings—left on their own they would create ghettoes. In 1987 newspaper reports still pointed out that Mennonites in particular wanted to live near their coreligionists; Baumheide, Sieker or Sennestadt were listed as the neighbourhoods of choice.[35]

Ethnic Germans with the memory and experience of being a threatened minority in Eastern Europe reverted to the safety of living near each other when confronted by a new and strange German society. Sectarian Mennonites and Baptists had the added problem of facing a secular German population perplexed by their devotion to religion. Bielefeld newspapers, at least, attributed the tendency to congregate to the still strong attachments of ethnic Germans to family and religion; those values, the newspaper suggested, had regrettably long been left behind in modern Germany.[36]
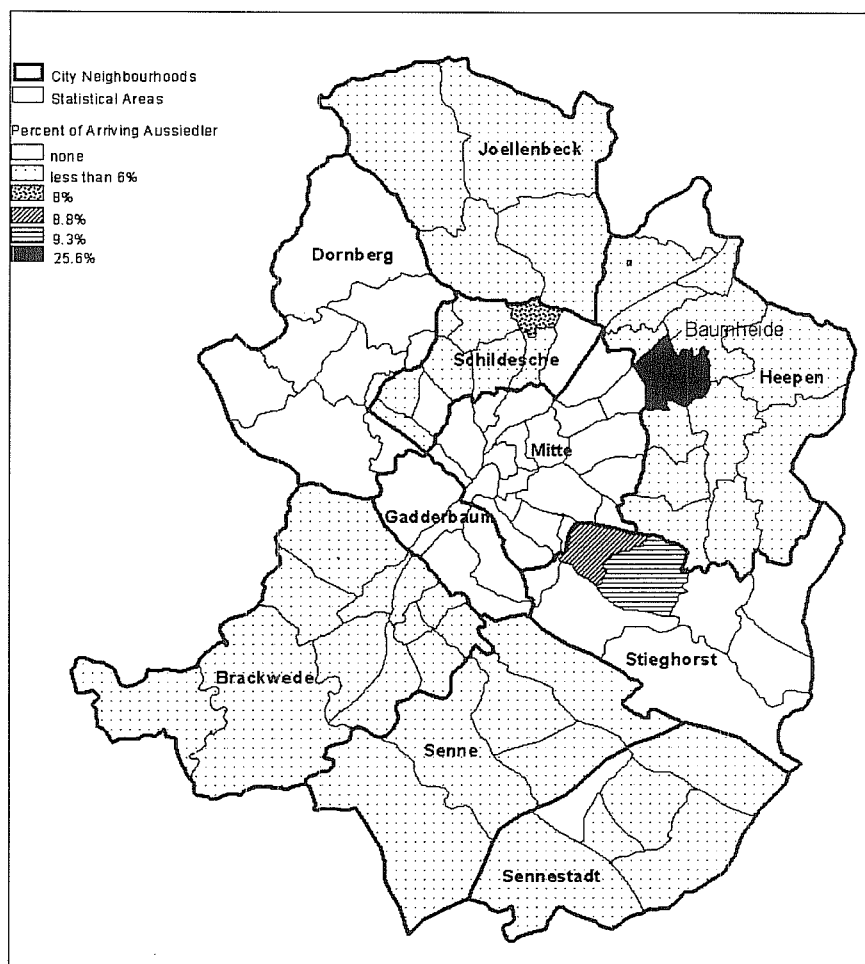
Figure 2. Aussiedler Neighbourhoods, 1977 to 1979

Family was a powerful attachment for Mennonites who arrived in Bielefeld in the 1970s and 1980s. Mennonites left behind in the Soviet Union suffered further fragmentation of their families after the already disruptive years leading up to and during the Second World War. After arriving at their work camps in Archangelsk, Barnaul, or on the banks of the Yenessei River, the remaining men were almost immediately taken away to serve in the *Trudarmiia*. Women, young boys and old men soon dominated the population profile of those evacuated ahead of advancing German armies as it did for those repatriated after the end of hostilities.

Reconstructing family was difficult in the Soviet Union, as most Mennonite women were isolated in remote camps with no freedom to move. Many held on to the hope of being reunited with their husbands and for some the easing of

restrictions after 1955 made this possible. Others simply remained widowed. The label of "Fascist" and "enemy of the people" polarized identities, forcing Mennonites to choose either Slavic or German rather than multiple identities. Marriage patterns often reflected the depth of commitment to earlier ethnic identities. Mennonites and other ethnic Germans either reinforced their connections to fellow ethnics through marriage or separated themselves from their ethnic roots and accepted Slavic identities and often Slavic marriage partners.

Although many children of marriageable age continued to seek out fellow ethnic German partners, prewar limitations that had dictated that eligible partners be drawn from the same colony, faith background and often the same village, lost their validity. Analysis of names on lists kept by the *Mennonitsche Umsiedler Betreuung*, a settlement agency for Mennonite immigrants in Germany, suggests that among Mennonite immigrants approximately 36 percent of families had either a non-Mennonite father or mother.[37]

Shared punishment and being labelled as enemies of the Russian people reinforced ethnic German endogamy for some, but the demographic profile of Mennonites remaining in the Soviet Union meant that not all women desiring marriage could find an ethnic German husband. Marriages with Russian men were common but had serious implications when children and siblings involved in these *Mischehen* (mixed marriages) were confronted with the emigration to Germany of other members of their family. Although in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union children with non-German spouses had been included in the extended family, they were the cause for sharp divisions at the time of emigration. Many Bielefeld families continued to have ties to their former homelands through family members who had stayed behind because they had chosen Russian or Kazakh identities ahead of their German ethnicity.

Mixed marriages among ethnic Germans migrating to Bielefeld challenged both ethnic and national identity. German citizenship laws permitted the non-German spouses of immigrants to become citizens providing one of the partners had a right to citizenship on the terms granted to ethnic Germans. In reality, however, Germany's ethno-culturally based definition of citizenship meant that for non-German partners acquiring German citizenship implied a complete change from a Slavic or Asian identity. It occurred rarely among immigrants arriving in the period up to 1989.[38] Prior to 1989 most Mennonite immigrants to Germany were not part of mixed marriages. Analysis of family names in the *Mennonitische Umsiedler Betreuung* immigrant lists suggests that approximately 94 percent of Mennonite immigrant families were the products of marriages between two ethnic German partners, even if in some cases they were not both Mennonite.[39] Slightly lower rates of endogamy were reported by a survey of all the major ethnic German immigrant groups conducted by the *Ost-Europa Institute* in which 89 percent of respondents immigrating to Germany had ethnic German spouses. Bettina Strewe argues that part of the reason for the high rates of endogamy among immigrants was that "Germans married to partners from other ethnic groups develop more contact with these groups and hence have a lower tendency to emigrate" to Germany.[40]

The high rate of endogamy that had characterized ethnic Germans generally in the Soviet Union before the Second World War steadily eroded in the period up to 1989. Strewe quotes Soviet sources suggesting that only 40 percent of ethnic German men and 35 percent of ethnic German women who were married in 1989 entered into marriages involving their own ethnic group. Although, as these numbers would indicate, intermarriage became progressively more common among ethnic Germans in the Soviet Union, the incidence of intermarriage was not reflected in the immigrant flow to Germany and Bielefeld. Mennonites arriving in Bielefeld before 1989 were the product of a process that selected those with a high level of endogamy and who viewed "mixed marriages" as undesirable. In surveys of ethnic German immigrants conducted by the *Ost-Europa Institute*, the social distance maintained between themselves and the non-German groups among whom they lived came through clearly. When asked about the desirability of potentially having a son- or daughter-in-law from various ethnic groups, ethnic Germans clearly favoured fellow Germans; Kazakhs were favoured least, and Slavic groups most among the non-German ethnic groups.[41] In her memoirs, Katharina Krüger expresses the consternation of many ethnic Germans confronted by the prospect of the mixed marriages of their children:

> My sorrow was that of many German mothers, particularly when surviving children reached marriageable age and lived in an area where there were few or no Germans and they married Russians. These mixed marriages of the late postwar years were destined to end in pieces. .... In these cases it was the hatred arising out of the war that played a role. It was the Germans who were to blame for the unholy war started by Germany, who had attacked Russia and as a result it was clear that the blame in such a marriage always rested with the German.[42]

Since ethnic German immigrants are not identified in German population data it is not possible to assess the degree of intermarriage over time between ethnic German immigrants and the native population of Bielefeld. Based on observation it would appear, however, that among Mennonite and Baptist immigrants there appears to have been a high rate of endogamy, with marriage partners from the same religious group being the preferred partners for the children of Mennonite immigrants. These attitudes towards marriage with German nationals were reflected in Hans Warkentin's comment that he had "imagined Germans to be something else. ...For instance if my daughter came to me and said, 'I have met a German on the street here...I want to marry him,' I would have grave second thoughts about it, I would say 'No, be careful'."[43]

By the time Mennonite immigrants arrived in Bielefeld, German society had been through a number of changes in its views of women and family. In the immediate postwar period the emphasis had been similar to that in Canada. Family had suffered immeasurably during the war and had to be reconstructed and protected.[44] Protection and reconstruction implied a return to a model based on a

husband working and providing for his stay-at-home wife and their children. The model only lost its coherence in the 1960s when, as sociologist Eva Kolinsky suggests, women "began to seek equal opportunities through careers." She maintains, however, that in spite of more women pursuing a career, "West Germany clung to a traditional concept of the family and its classical role divisions."[45]

By the late 1960s and 1970s, when most immigrants arrived in Bielefeld, Mennonite migration had very different dynamics from that of the immediate postwar period. For these Mennonites initial postwar family formation had occurred in their former homelands in the Soviet Union or Paraguay, and most immigrants arriving in Bielefeld were part of families and extended family groups. These groups might include an older widow or couple, and married children with large families, some with five or more children, would be part of the group. To the casual observer, these reconstructed families seldom betrayed the turmoil out of which they had been fashioned.

Ethnic Germans faced adjustments to their notions of the family unit when they arrived in Bielefeld. One important adjustment concerned family size. In the sample of Mennonite immigrants from the *Mennonitische Umsiedler Betreuung* lists, the average number of children in the 1972 to 1988 period was 1.9 per family while the desired number of children for West Germans as indicated by survey research dropped from 2.5 to 1.45 between 1965 and 1975 and remained at the lower level.[46] If families without children and those with only one adult member are eliminated from the sample, the number of children in Mennonite immigrant families rose to just under three (2.94). Most noticeable were the very large families; 18 percent of families with children had five or more.[47]

The tendency to have large families seems to have diminished almost immediately upon arrival. A fertility study based on immigrant surveys among *Aussiedler* found that ethnic German women had significantly fewer children during their fertile years after arriving in Germany, compared to their fertile years in their former homes. Demographers, R.H. Dinkel and U.H. Lebok found that the "fertility of former migrants did not only adapt immediately to the much lower level in the new host country, it dramatically declined to a level of only about 40 percent of the German rates at the same age periods." The decline for Mennonites and Baptists, which traditionally had higher fertility rates than other ethnic Germans, was even greater.[48] Dinkel and Lebok suggest that the process of adapting to the more competitive labour market of Germany for both men and women might "have caused an overreaction in family formation procedures."[49] In addition to economic factors identified by Dinkel and Lebok there may, however, have been cultural influences that were just as important for further family formation.

Mennonite attitudes toward family formation were affected by constant media references to their large families. Although immigrants also had older family members among their numbers, Bielefelders took note of their large number of children and the positive influence they would have on the population profile. Mennonites and other *Aussiedler* were valued in Germany because of their potential contribution to correcting the aging population profile of German society. However, media

references to their large families also highlighted how different they were from the host society. Initially there was considerable optimism about integrating the young into society. In the 1970s Bielefeld newspapers suggested that the larger families of *Aussiedler* would surely hasten their adjustment to life in their city. A 1971 article in the *Neue Westfälishe* suggested that the children would integrate quickly but "for the older immigrants it might never be completely successful."[50] The paper was still optimistic six years later when it argued that the lower average age of immigrating families would "ease their integration and increase their mobility."[51] By that time, however, it had become apparent that younger immigrants had no less difficulty adjusting to life in Bielefeld than did their parents and grandparents. At a meeting of immigrants and city officials in 1976, immigrants noted that their children had many problems in adjusting to their new home.[52] The state responded to the problems of immigrant children with integration programs directed specifically at younger immigrants. The headline of a lengthy article in a 1977 issue of the *Neue Westfälishe* proclaimed that "*Aussiedler* children must be integrated into society: Serious problems caused by Western lifestyles." The article quoted schoolteachers who claimed "they knew about these problems from earlier years," and believed that "integration is most successful if children are forced to make new contacts."[53] The constant attention given to the size of their families accompanied by what they perceived as coercive socialization programs for their children may have also contributed to ethnic Germans' decisions about further family formation and size. They often found themselves in a contest over the socialization of their children. The uneasiness felt about family formation in this new environment may have contributed as much to declining fertility as did labour market factors.

An important arena of conflict between ethnic Germans and the dominant society was their different conception of family and sexuality. Bielefeld newspapers claimed that immigrant families were much more intimately connected than their German counterparts, but also patriarchal. The *Neue Westfälische* commented that among Bielefeld's ethnic German immigrants there was till a "strong feeling of family connectedness," a characteristic that the paper conceded was "sadly missed in West German cities."[54] Some of the disillusionment that ethnic German immigrants felt upon their arrival in Bielefeld was, however, attributed to their "incorrect" ideas of what it meant to be "German". Among other characteristics it was noted that immigrants erroneously thought that respect for parents was part of what it meant to be German.[55] Ethnic German immigrants held to what they believed were German traditions of order and authority, traditions they found sorely lacking in the German society in which they were now making their home. Immigrant respondents in a 1976 study portrayed their own families as ones where "all the relatives are part of the family;" "families do things together;" the "guidance of the family head has validity;" and "old and young live together." In contrast, in native German families "individual family members did not stick together," and "everybody does whatever they want to."[56] Rita Knobel-Ulrich, a language teacher, indicated that in her classroom immigrant parents "could not comprehend that here [in Germany], criticizing a teacher is permitted and that school friends of their children had serious

arguments with their parents." In contrast to the situation in native German families, all the immigrant families in the teacher's experience were characterized by "patriarchal authority: The father is the supreme unshakeable and unquestioned authority."[57]

The problem of sexuality and its portrayal in the media, and particularly in school, also challenged immigrant views of appropriateness. The problem was examined in a lengthy newspaper article in 1973. The newspaper quoted from a letter sent by an immigrant from the Soviet Union who had been shocked by portrayals of sexuality in the books her son brought home from school. According to the newspaper the problem was an ethnic German "attitude to all questions of human sexuality that was rooted in their patriarchal family structure." The issue, the newspaper went on, "had obviously been missed in the preparation for their resettlement and at the time of their initial contact" with German society. In a somewhat patronizing tone, the paper suggested that changes in ethnic German attitudes should be evolutionary; newcomers would have to "catch up on their development" in order to "affirm sexuality as an integral part of humanity."[58] The problem did not go away quickly, however, and ethnic German immigrants repeatedly raised the issue when they were invited to meet with city officials. On one occasion, when immigrants met with SPD politician Kurt Vogelsang, he responded that maybe the method of teaching the curriculum could be changed and that exemption from instruction could be considered.[59]

A third disjuncture was in the practice of religion. In the Soviet Union after the end of World War II, churches that were not specifically German enjoyed a period of increased tolerance. Baptist numbers began to grow dramatically. Lutherans and Mennonites, however, were subjected to increased persecution and, as a result of the combined identification of religion and German ethnicity, one writer suggests "it appeared as if the Lutheran Church and faith had been completely extinguished among Soviet Germans." Mennonite religious life was similarly devastated.[60]

The greater tolerance that Baptists enjoyed was important for the revival of church and faith practices in the Soviet Union after the Second World War. Baptist religious expression became the nucleus for the new adherents recruited in the religious revival of the 1950s. Many Lutherans and Mennonites either became Baptists or affiliated themselves with the Baptist church, thus forging a distinctive religious-cultural expression. After 1955, the removal of some of the restrictions on Germans also revived Lutheran and *Kirchliche* Mennonite religious practice.[61] Toleration and eventual official registration by the Soviet state, however, did not imply religious freedom, even for Baptists. The various waves of anti-religious policies included restrictions on teaching the young, on public assembly, on promotions and opportunities in education and in the work place and on the distribution of Bibles and other religious literature. As a result, the almost complete loss of earlier traditions coupled with the vagaries of Soviet religious policies stimulated the invention of new systems of religious symbols, meanings and practices.

The social cost of being baptized and becoming a member of a Baptist or

Mennonite church sharpened the sense of group membership and hardened boundaries between adherents and their non-adhering neighbours and fellow ethnics. A person becoming a church member faced the prospect of being immediately disadvantaged in Soviet society. Baptism required state approval and the identity of the applicant became known at work, frequently resulting in a prematurely terminated career path or denial of an application for an apartment. Colleagues at work were encouraged by the Communist Party to influence applicants for baptism to reverse their decision. A 1973 law forced marrying couples to pledge to raise their children in the spirit of communism. In Gerhard Hamm's experience, not signing the pledge because of religious conviction led to a variety of consequences. Hamm, an itinerant evangelist, discovered that couples for whom he performed the marriage service were sometimes not granted marriage licenses by the state, or were denied housing. For many others there could be any of what he thought were "thousands of harassments used by the atheists without conscience qualms."[62] The clarity of an individual's choice became a mark of membership and in kinship and community circles there came to be only two labels—believers and unbelievers. Nominal membership or participation without commitment became unlikely and then untenable. As one German immigrant described it to a German language newspaper correspondent: "every visit to a worship service was a conscious decision to take all the resulting difficult consequences upon oneself."[63]

Membership also implied a withdrawal from those activities of the dominant society that potentially compromised believers' standards of faith and personal ethics. This was particularly true for children. In the Soviet Union minors were not allowed to become members of the church and officially proselytizing was illegal in public. The only lawful religious instruction for minors was in the home. The state, on the other hand, had an active program of clubs and organizations that were made attractive to children and young people and whose agenda clearly aimed at inculcation of Communist ideology, including systematic atheism. Parents and the church developed a heightened sense of responsibility for the mental and philosophical worlds of children. Membership in organizations of the dominant society became antithetical to religious belief for adherents of Baptist or Mennonite churches. Peter Epp was called before his supervisor to account for his lack of participation in workers' committee meetings at his work place. He could avoid answering for his aversion based on religious grounds by reminding his superior that he was disenfranchised because he had been arrested and convicted of a crime.[64]

The Soviet and Slavic milieu stimulated the creation of other religious rituals and perspectives. The significant influence of Baptist church expression and the dominance of its Slavic membership also produced a faith practice among ethnic Germans that intertwined western evangelical and Orthodox elements. Mennonite historian Walter Sawatsky suggests that Orthodox influence accounted for Baptist and Mennonite emphasis on worship rather than on theology, on standing or prostrating oneself when praying, on the value of shedding tears during worship, and on dogged resistance to domination by a church hierarchy. Soviet proscription

of public proselytizing also raised the profile and shaped the symbolic content of life cycle events for religious adherents. Funerals, marriages and birthdays became opportunities for education and proselytizing without officially violating the law. Birthdays included religious education for the children and in large families and closely knit social networks these events occurred often. Funerals were venues for confronting non-adherents with their unbelief and its consequences for the hereafter while marriages provided further opportunity to address the unchurched without formally being accused of propagandizing.[65] Mennonites and Baptists in the Soviet Union also adhered to conservative modes of dress, particularly for women. Women believers were to wear a head covering in the form of a kerchief, to refrain from wearing ornamentation and using make-up, and to wear dresses as a symbol of modesty.

Mennonites and Baptists were unprepared for what they would encounter when they settled in Bielefeld. Many used words like "shocked," "disillusioned,' and "disoriented" to describe their experience. German culture was much more secular than they had imagined. It placed high value on associational life as a mark of being an integrated and participating member of society. It reposed little value on spiritual and religious devotion. Surprise and disillusionment with the German society was accompanied by dismay when they observed their co-religionists. They found native German Mennonite and Baptist churches an affront to their piety because of their secular dress, music styles and their seeming lack of emphasis on regular church attendance.

Indeed, by the 1960s and 1970s Germany was a secular society that was very different from what Mennonites had imagined. The strong association of faith and nationality that pervaded ethnic German notions of what it meant to be German was not reflected in modern German or Bielefeld culture. In surveys exploring attitudes towards religion in Germany the number of respondents who maintained that they were members of their church and followed its doctrines declined from 49 to 38 percent for Catholics in the eleven years between 1971 and 1982. Protestant responses indicated an even greater decline from 37 to 14 percent during the same period.[66] Trends in Germany suggest the value system in Germany underwent what social analysts called a gradual "modernization" in the ten-year period from 1965 to 1975. Declining religiosity was accompanied by increasing interest in leisure activities and in the associations dedicated to such activities.[67]

Even more shocking for Mennonite immigrants was what they found in the churches of coreligionists. Peter Epp, a minister in a Bielefeld Mennonite Church, recalled how after arriving in Bielefeld,

> ...the first disappointment was experienced in the worship services of the church. Modes of dress, hairstyles, jewellery, particularly the male clothing styles worn by women, shocked me. ...Women in men's clothing were unfamiliar to us in Russia, outside of workplaces where it was necessary. In Russia you could identify Christians by the clothes they wore on the street. In Germany, I could not see the difference even in the church

sanctuary.[68]

Ethnic Germans held on to their conservative modes of dress in Germany. At a 1976 conference for area Baptist youth held in Paderborn near Bielefeld, a North American observer noted the conservative dress of the women and ministers who wore dark suits and white shirts without ties.[69]

Discomfort with established churches in Germany went beyond dress. Hans von Niessen, a long time settlement worker among Mennonite immigrants, describes how he came to realize that joining existing churches would cause problems for immigrants:

> ....German churches are different than these people. Over there, they had come to the faith, to the church, under stressful conditions. There were none among them who having been baptized would come to church two times a year for the next ten years.... A person who did not care about any of this in Russia did not come to the church, but a person who, under these difficult circumstances submitted to baptism was a true believer, declared himself, and suffered the consequences.

The dichotomous view of religious membership that developed in the Soviet Union was carried over into their new city home. In Bielefeld references to an individual quickly placed them in the category of 'believer' or 'unbeliever'.[70]

Niessen went on to describe the poor attendance at German Mennonite churches and the reaction of perplexed immigrants who could not understand why in a country with the freedom to worship, German Christians did not avail themselves of the opportunity. He concluded that when immigrants joined "a church like this there will be problems—big problems."[71] Others pointed out that in the Soviet Union there had been "long and intensive" worship services and the one-hour services in Germany gave rise to disillusionment and were evidence of the chasm between the expectations of church in the two groups.[72] For a young Alexander Neufeld it was hard to reconcile joining a church "youth group that on the one hand had such powerful sermons and Bible teaching and then on Sunday afternoon played soccer and went hiking without any further discussion about it.... In Estonia," he said, "we had four Sunday services."[73]

In the case of the Baptist and Mennonite churches the gap between host and immigrant coreligionists was too great to bridge and most ethnic Germans quickly migrated to or started churches with exclusively immigrant membership. An example of this trend was the pattern of Mennonite churches in Bielefeld. In 1987 the largest Mennonite church was the *Mennoniten Gemeinde Bielefeld*; ninety-six percent of its 728 members were ethnic Germans. Its parent congregation just outside the city in Bechterdissen had 670 members with 75 percent of its membership ethnic Germans from the Soviet Union and South America.[74]

Existing German Baptist and Mennonite Churches found the influx of ethnic German coreligionists and their approach to church to be an enigma. In their view,

immigrants tended to see issues in black and white, noting only the negative aspects of diversity and being unable to accept those who thought differently. In a published article entitled, "A letter to an elder of an *Aussiedler* congregation," Peter J. Foth, pastor of a German Mennonite Church, suggested that immigrant churches were well attended because of the desire of members to "find a place where they are secure, to set themselves apart from the 'world'; they feel pressure to not be seen as 'worldly' or apostate."[75]

To some extent the conservative outlook demonstrated by some sectarian churches may have intensified upon their arrival in Germany in reaction to the culture shock they experienced. In the more conservative churches attended by some of Alexander Neufeld's fellow immigrants, the outlook brought along from Russia was greatly reinforced as a method of maintaining boundaries between immigrants and the host society. In Russia it "was not as strict and conservative as it became here. It was a reaction to the freedom here. You can see that Russian Germans here are more German in many ways, particularly in their feelings of being German, than native Germans."[76] In addition to the comments about conservative dress referred to earlier, the North American observer at the Paderborn youth convention noted their intentional resistance to religious practice around them. He noted that the conference was organized by the reformed Baptist group, formerly from the Soviet Union, whose membership included mostly ethnic Mennonites for whom the name "Mennonite" was a "reminder of the lax religion that they had heard was practiced in the West." A minister at the conference had noted with sadness that "he was increasingly troubled that there was not enough weeping. In Russia there had been much more weeping over committed sins, but in Germany the flow of tears had stopped."[77]

Mennonites arriving in Bielefeld came face to face with the homeland of their imagination and had to find strategies to adjust to the contradictions between the homeland they had imagined and day-to-day life in Bielefeld. Living close to fellow Germans and more specifically fellow Mennonites had been important in maintaining their identities in an often hostile dominant society. In Bielefeld they thwarted the city's policies and created concentrations of Mennonites in specific neighbourhoods. Baumheide became the neighbourhood of choice for Mennonites in the 1970s and 1980s. It was a neighbourhood where they could live close to their church, where younger families could maintain close contact with older family members and where social relations were easily maintained.

Bielefeld's immigrants were isolated from the West's sexual revolution of the 1960s and in the years before their immigration they had recovered the patriarchal assumptions and the extended family world of their pre-war experience. They imagined Germanness to include this notion of family. When they arrived in Bielefeld they were shocked and disillusioned to discover that post-sexual revolution Germany had very different ideas of family. Offensive portrayals of sexuality in schools and the media, the disregard for the authority of teachers, parents and particularly fathers, and media attention focussing on their attachments to family reinforced their sense of being different from their German neighbours.

Mennonites in Bielefeld retreated to their families and, as had been their experience in the Soviet Union, family remained important in resisting integration into the surrounding society.

Mennonite religious practice defined an ethos and world-view that was in conflict with dominant German culture. The conscious aim of Mennonites and Baptists in Bielefeld was to ensure that religious beliefs governed their adaptation to the new world and that faith sustained their resistance to the undesirable aspects of the dominant society. These immigrants viewed joining Bielefeld's youth and sports clubs and its unions and leisure associations as threats to their faith and its transmission to the next generation. While the tension between the church and the organizations of secular society pervades many churches, it became especially significant in the Bielefeld context because of the host community's emphasis on participation in civic organizations as a mark of successful integration into the host society. The combination of a society that placed a high value on associational life and an immigrant group deeply suspicious of the ideological agendas of such secular associations produced a tension that prevented each from coming to terms with the other. In Bielefeld there were sufficient numbers of new immigrants in the 1960 to 1980 period to reinforce the conviction that the church should be the primary locus of social life.

These strategies were those that had served them well in the diaspora. To survive in a society generally hostile to their religious and ethnic identity Mennonites had huddled together, trying to live as close to each other as possible by retreating into their families and their faith to maintain their German identities. When confronted with life in Bielefeld, so different than what they had imagined, they once again huddled together, seeking refuge in their families and the faith practices they knew.

Notes

[1] Peter (Isaac) Derksen, *Es wurde wieder ruhig: Die Lebensgeschichte eines mennonitischen Predigers aus der Sowjetunion* Winnipeg: Mennonite Heritage Centre, 1989), 150.

[2] In this paper no distinction will be made between Mennonites and Baptists of Mennonite origin. Estimates by Hans von Niessen, a long time settlement worker among *Umsiedler* in Germany, suggest approximately one-half of those identifying themselves as Baptist had Mennonite origins. See Horst Gerlach, *Die Rußlandmennoniten: Ein Volk Unterwegs* (Kirchheimbolanden: Author, 1992), 170.

[3] John B. Toews, *Czars, Soviets & Mennonites* (Newton: Faith and Life Press, 1982), 177.

[4] Gérard Chaliand and Jean-Pierre Rageau, *The Penguin Atlas of Diasporas* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), xiv-xv.

[5] Milton J. Esman, "Diasporas and International Relations," in Gabriel Sheffer (ed.), *Modern Diasporas in International Politics* (London and Sydney: Croom-Helm, 1986), 333.

[6] Alan B. Anderson, "Diaspora and Exile: A Canadian and Comparative Perspective,"

International Journal of Canadian Studies 18 (1998), 19-20. For a critique of the use of diaspora as an analytical category see: Yasemin Nuhoŏlu Soysal, "Citizenship and identity: living in diasporas in post-war Europe," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 23 (2000), 1-15.

⁷ Toews, *Czars, Soviets & Mennonites*, 182.

⁸ Michael O. Roark, "Homelands: A Conceptual Essay," *Journal of Cultural Geography*, 13 (1993), 9.

⁹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections of the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2ⁿᵈ edition (London: Vero, 1991), 6.

¹⁰ Reinhard Vogelsang, *Geschichte der Stadt Bielefeld: Band II. Von der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts bis zum Ende des Ersten Weltkriegs* (Bielefeld: Verlag fur Druckgrafik Hans Gieselmann, 1988), 25-26.

¹¹ For an overview of Bielefeld's industrialization see: Karl Ditt, "Von der Industriellen Revolution zur Dienstleistungs-Ökonomie: Wirtschaftsgeschichte Bielefelds im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert," in *Stadtbuch Bielefeld: Tradition und Fortschritt in der ostwestfälischen Metropole*, ed. Andreas Beaugrand (Bielefeld: Westfalen Verlag, 1996), 488-499. For a theoretical examination of industrialization that uses Bielefeld as a case study see Günther Schönbauer, *Die Industrialisierung Bielefelds in der 2. Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts: Eine soziologische Untersuchung zur Früh- und Hochindustrialisierung in Preußen* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1987).

¹² Andreas Bootz, *Kultur in Bielefeld 1945-1960* (Bielefeld: AJZ Verlag, 1993), 236 and Thomas Günlter and Arno Ley, eds., *"Wir waren froh, daß wir das Leben hatten": Bielefelder erleben die letzten Monate des Zweiten Welkriegs* (Bielefeld: Westfalen Verlags, 1995), 94.

¹³ After the war the German government set up a commission to document the experiences of Germans in the East between about 1944 and 1946. For an English excerpt from the findings see: Theodor Schieder, *Documentation on the Expulsion of Germans from Eastern-Central-Europe: a selection and translation from Dokumentation der Vertreibung der Deutschen aus Ost-Mitteleuropa*, 4 vols. (Bonn: Federal Ministry for Expellees, Refugees and War Victims, 1955-57). See also Gerhard Reichling, "Die Aussiedlung von Deutschen aus Osteuropa im Lichte der europäischen Nachkriegsentwicklung," *AWR (Association for the Study of the World Refugee Problem)* 15 (1977), 206 and Werner Nellner, "Die Wanderungen der Vertriebenen im Bundesgebiet—Vorraussetzung für ihre Wirtschaftliche Eingliederung," in *...Aus Trümmern wurden Fundamente: Vertriebene/Flüchtlinge/Aussiedler Drei Jahrzehnte Integration*, ed. Hans Joachim von Merkatz (Düsseldorf: Walter Rau Verlag, 1979), 35-68.

¹⁴ Statistisches Amt der Stadt Bielefeld, *Statistisches Jahrbuch, 1. Jahrgang 1946-1950* (Bielefeld, 1950), Table 35, 47 and Idem, *Statistisches Jahrbuch, 1955*, (Bielefeld, 1955), Table 30, 21. For the origins of expellees in Bielefeld, see Bootz, *Kultur in Bielefeld*, 236. See also Statistisches Amt der Stadt Bielefeld, *Statistisches Jahrbuch 1. Jahrgang 1946-1950* (Bielefeld, 1950), Table 16, *"Die Wohnbevölkerung 1950 nach dem Wohnort am 1.9.1939 (nach der Volkszählung vom 13.9.1950).*

¹⁵ "Nach vier Jahren 'Übergang' hofft Mennonitin auf ihre eigene Wohnung: 80 mennonitische Rückwanderer in Bielefeld," *Westfalen Blatt*, 27 August 1968 and "2100 Aussiedler fanden eine neue Heimat in der Leinenstadt: Mit dem letzten 'Transport' kam im November auch Familie Wiebe an," *Westfalen Blatt*, 8 December 1970. All references to Bielefeld newspapers are from the clipping collection in the Bielefeld Stadtarchiv (BSA), particularly the volume: *Kultur –u. Geistesgeschichte 110b Band I u. II. Vertriebene, Flüchtlinge, Landmannschafte*. The collection includes clippings from the *Neue Westfälische, Freie Presse, Westfalen Blatt*, and the *Westfälische Zeitung* assembled in binders organized along thematic lines. Most immigrants from Paraguay were Mennonites who had migrated there either because they failed Canadian medical requirements, or in the case of German soldiers could not wait for a change in Canadian rules that barred their entry. Frank H. Epp indicates that by the spring of 1962 about five hundred Mennonites from Paraguay had returned to Germany. Frank H. Epp, *Mennonite Exodus: The Rescue and Resettlement of the Russian Mennonites Since the Communist Revolution* (Altona: D.W. Friesen & Sons, 1962), 441.

[16] See *Sozial u. Wohnungsaussuß Protokolle. 18. 12. 79*, BSA. "2100 Aussiedler fanden eine neue Heimat in der Leinenstadt: Mit dem letzten 'Transport' kam im November auch Familie Wiebe an." *Westfalen Blatt*, 8 December 1970 and "Aus der UdSSR kamen bis 30. Juni weniger Aussiedler nach Bielefeld: Zahl der deutschstämmigen Übersiedler aus Polen blieb gleich," *Neue Westfälische*, 29 July 1982.

[17] The numbers in this summary are taken from the city's Social and Housing Committee reports or from various newspaper reports where they are attributed to that committee. See: "Aus der UdSSR kamen bis 30. Juni weniger Aussiedler nach Bielefeld: Zahl der deutschstämmigen Übersiedler aus Polen blieb gleich," *Neue Westfälische*, 29 July 1982; "Die Aussiedler und ihr Deutschland: Vertriebenenbeirat zu Engliederungsfragen," *Neue Westfälische*, 15 April 1981; "Spätaussiedler wollen fast nur nach Baumheide, Sieker und Sennestadt: Sie gehen by der Vergabe von Sozialwohnungen vor/Notlösung," *Neue Westfälische*, 16 September 1987. and *Sozial u. Wohnungsausschuß, Protokolle, 18.12.1979*, BSA. The 1977 to 1991 statistics are from Wulf Drexler, Burkhard Hoffman and Hans Georg, *Probleme und Chancen des Integrationsprozesses: Aussiedlerfamilien aus der ehemaligen Sowjetunion*. Stadt Bielefeld and Ministerium für Arbeit, Gesundheit und Soziales des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen, Bielefeld, 1992, 7.

[18] Susanna (Regier) Koop. *Interview*, Bielefeld, January 28, 1999.

[19] Isaak Thiessen, "Umsiedler aus Russland," *Der Bote*, 13 January 1976.

[20] "Paderborn liegt nicht an der Spitze: Spaetaussiedler zeigen Vorliebe fuer Bielefeld: 1178 kamen 1979/Heime sind voll," *Neue Westfälische*, 3 January 1980. See also the map in Gerlach, *Die Rußlandmennoniten*, inside back cover.

[21] *Sozial u. Wohnungswesen Protokolle, 21. 12. 1976*, BSA. The cash amounted to 126 DM for single people. 227 DM for a couple and 57 to 101 DM for each child depending on their ages.

[22] Thomas Faist and Hartmut Häuberman, "Immigration, Social Citizenship and Housing in Germany," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 20 (1996): 87-88.

[23] *Sozial u. Wohnungswese Protokolle, 18.05.1976, 3*, BSA.

[24] Peter Epp, "Jubiläumsfest in der Mennonitengemeinde Bielefeld," *Der Bote*, 17 February 1999.

[25] "Bei Aussiedlern fehlt es oft am ganz Alltäglichen: Bielefelder CDU um tatkräftige Hilfe bemüht," *Westfalen Blatt*, 20 July 1976. See also representations to the Social and Housing Committee at joint meetings in 1977 and 1978. *Gespräch des Sozial- und Wohnungsausschusses mit Aussiedlern am 15.03.1977*, 2, BSA and *Gespräch des Sozial- und Wohnungsausschusses mit Aussiedlern am 13.06.1978*, 3, BSA.

[26] *Sozial und Wohnungswesen Protokolle*, 14.06.1976, 8, BSA.

[27] *Sozial und Wohnungauschusses Protokolle*, 18.12.1979, BSA.

[28] *Sozial und Wohnungswesen Protokolle*, 15.03.1977, 2, BSA.

[29] "Nach vier Jahren 'Übergang' hofft Mennonitin auf ihre eigene Wohnung: 80 mennonitische Rückwanderer in Bielefeld," *Westfalen Blatt*, 27 August 1968. See also Klaus Boll, *Kulturwandel der Deutschen aus der Sowjetunion: Eine Empirische Studie zur Lebenswelt Russlanddeutscher Aussiedler in der Bundesrepublik* (Marburg: Elwert, 1993), 155.

[30] See for instance: "Genügend Sozialwohnungen für die Spätaussiedler vorhanden: Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl und Wunsch nach billigen Wohnungen erschweren die 'Umsetzung'," *Westfalen Blatt*, 24 April 1976, "'Wohnungen für Aussiedler gibt es genug': Stadt Bielefeld: 'Auch Arbeitsplätze vorhanden/Probleme liegen auf einer anderen Ebene'," *Neue Westfälische*, 24 April 1976 and "Mehr Aussiedler—kürzere Verweildauer: Teichsheide in unbefriedigendem Zustand," *Neue Westfälische*, 15 June 1976.

[31] *Sozial und Wohnungwesen Ausschuß, Protokolle*, 18.12.1979, 5-6, BSA.

[32] *Sozial und Wohnungsausschuß Protokolle*, 18.12.79, BSA. The desire to live in these two

neighborhoods came out often in the committee's deliberations. See also *Sozial und Wohnungswesen Protokolle*, 14 June 1976. 7. BSA.

[33] *Sozial und Wohnungsausschuß Protokolle*, 18.12.79. BSA. Population figures are from Statistisches Amt der Stadt Bielefeld, *Statistisches Jahrbuch*, 1975.

[34] "Aussiedler suchen in den Nachbarn die alte Heimat: Wissenschaftler fragt nach Gruenden fuer Umsiedlung und Wohnungssuche, " *Westfalen Blatt*, 12 January 1978.

[35] "Spätaussiedler wollen fast nur nach Baumheide, Sieker und Sennestadt: Sie gehen bei der Vergabe von Sozialwohnungen vor /Notlösung," *Neue Westfälische*, 16 September 1987.

[36] "Mindestens 5000 Aussiedler wollen nach Bielefeld Mittel für 165 Wohnungsneubauten sichergestellt: Bislang kamen knapp 100 Personen / Individuelle Beratung im Übergangsheim Teichsheide," *Neue Westfälische*, 5 May 1977. "'Wohnungen für Aussiedler gibt es genug': Stadt Bielefeld: 'Auch Arbeitsplätze vorhanden/Probleme liegen auf einer anderen Ebene'," *Neue Westfälische*, 24 April 1976.

[37] The *Mennonitische Umsiedler Betreuung* maintained lists of all immigrants believed to be of Mennonite ethnicity regardless of their religious adherence. The lists were started in 1972 and up to 1992 contained 82,913 names, grouped by family with birth dates, place of origin, the maiden names of married women, and the names and birth dates of children. Approximately twenty-eight percent of the families on the list arrived before 1989. For analysis a sample of 699 families (2,469 persons) was drawn from those arriving before 1989, representing ten percent of such families. To determine Mennonite ethnicity, surnames were compared with lists of the original Mennonite immigration to Russia in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Non-Mennonite husbands were in 18.9 percent and non-Mennonite wives in 18.7 percent of families. Included in the above were 5.2 percent of families where both husband and wife had non-Mennonite surnames, indicating earlier intermarriage with other ethnic Germans. *Mennonitische Umsiedler Betreuung, Umsiedlerliste, 1972 bis 1992*, June 4, 1993, Neuwied, 5 vols. Mennonite Heritage Centre, hereafter MHC. The lists of original immigrants are in Benjamin Unruh, *Die niederländisch-niederdeutschen Hintergründe der mennonitschen Ostwanderungen im 16., 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* (Karlsruhe: By the Author, 1955).

[38] For an overview of the applicable German legislation see: Harald W Lederer, *Migration und Integration in Zahlen* (Bamberg: Europäisches Forum für Migrationsstudien, CD-ROM edition, 1997), 227. The numbers of ethnically mixed families migrating to Germany increased dramatically after 1989 when the movement was dominated more by economic than by ethnic motives.

[39] *Mennontische Umsiedler Betreuung, Umsiedlerliste, 1972 bis 1992*, June 4, 1993, Neuwied, 5 vols., MHC.

[40] Bettina Strewe, *Forschungsprojekt "Deutsche in der Sowjetunion und Aussiedler aus der UdSSR in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland" Arbeitsbericht Nr. 6, Was ist deutsch and den "Rußlanddeutschen"? Überlegungen zur ethnischen Identität der Deutschen in der früheren Sowjetunion* (München: Osteuropa-Institut, 1992), 14.

[41] Ibid., 12.

[42] Katharina Krüger, *Schicksal einer Rußlanddeutschen: Erlebnisbericht* (Göttingen: Verlag Graphikum, 1991), 190-191.

[43] Hans Warkentin, Interview. This observation is based on interaction with various ethnic Germans and attendance at ethnic German churches in Bielefeld and other cities while the author was conducting research in 1998, 1999 and 2000.

[44] For an analysis of immediate postwar views of family see: Elizabeth Heineman, "Complete Families, Half Families, No Families at All: Female-Headed Households and the Reconstruction of the Family in the Early Federal Republic," *Central European History* 29 (1996): 19-60.

[45] Eva Kolinsky, ed., "The Family Transformed: Structures, Experiences, Prospects," in *Social Transformation and the Family in Post-Communist Germany*, 208. London: MacMillan

Press Ltd., 1998).

[46] Wolfgang Glatzer et al., *Recent Social Trends in West Germany 1960-1990* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag; Montreal; Kingston; London; Buffalo: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), 118, Table 3.

[47] *Mennonitische Umsiedler Betreuung. Umsiedler Listen, 1972 bis 1992.* MHC.

[48] R.H. Dinkel and U.H. Lebok, "The Fertility of Migrants Before and After Crossing the Border: The Ethnic German Population from the Former Soviet Union as a Case Study," *International Migration* 35 (1997): 258-259.

[49] Ibid., 260.

[50] "Aussiedlerfamilien kamen an: wie Fremdlinge von einem anderen Stern: Keinem von ihnen hat das Leben etwas geschenkt," *Neue Westfälische*, 14 December 1971.

[51] "Mindestens 5000 Aussiedler wollen nach Bielefeld Mittel für 165 Wohnungsneubauten sichergestellt: Bislang kamen knapp 100 Personen / Individuelle Beratung im Übergangsheim Teichsheide," *Neue Westfälische*, 5 May 1977.

[52] "Aussiedler klagten Politiker ihr Leid: Vogelsang besuchte Umsiedlungsheim Teichsheide," *Westfalen Blatt*, 21 July 1976.

[53] "Aussiedlerkinder müssen in die Gemeinschaft integriert werden: Schwerwiegende Probleme durch westliche Lebensweise," *Neue Westfälische*, 25 February 1977.

[54] "Die ersten Umsiedler aus Polen: Acht Jahre auf Ausreisegenehmigung gewartet Dann kosteten die Pässe ein kleines Vermögen," *Neue Westfälische*, 25 February 1971

[55] "Die Aussiedler und ihr Deutschland: Vertriebenenbeirat zu Eingliederungsfragen," *Neue Westfälische*, 15 April 1981.

[56] Hans Harmsen, "Probleme der inneren Beheimatung deutscher Spätaussiedler: Ein wissenschaftliches Kolloquium der Deutschen AWR-Sektion," *AWR Bulletin: Vierteljahreshefte für Flüchtlingsfragen*, 21 (1983), 94.

[57] Rita Knobel-Ulrich, "Das 'neue Leben' der Spätaussiedler," *Volk auf dem Weg*, 5 (May 1980), 9. A printed version of a radio broadcast. Also reprinted in *Wegweiser*, 1-2 (1980), 8-12.

[58] "'Sind wir denn hierhergekommen, daß man unsere Kinder verdirbt?': Für manche Umsiedler-Familien wirkt 'sexuelle Freizügigkeit' wie ein Schock," *Westfalen Blatt*, 23 January 1973.

[59] Waltraut Sax-Demuth, "Freiheit schafft manchmal Probleme," *Westfalen Blatt*, 13 November 1979.

[60] Christel Lane, *Christian Religion in the Soviet Union: A Sociological Study* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1978), 195, 201. See also Edgar C. Duin, *Lutheranism under the Tsars and the Soviets, Volume II* (Ann Arbor: Lutheran Theological Seminary and Xerox University Microfilms, 1975), 761.

[61] Mennonites remaining in Russia after the emigration of the 1870s comprised two main groups. Mennonite Brethren had separated from the main group as a result of pietist influences in the nineteenth century while the main body was referred to as the Church (*Kirchliche)* Mennonites. For a history of the Mennonites in Russia before the revolution see: James Urry, *None but Saints: The Transformation of Mennonite Life in Russia 1789-1889* (Winnipeg: Hyperion Press, 1989). For more on the Mennonite experience during the Soviet Union see also Walter Sawatsky, "From Russian to Soviet Mennonites 1941-1988," in *Mennonites in Russia 1788-1988: Essays in Honour of Gerhard Lohrenz*, ed., John Friesen, (Winnipeg: CMBC Publications, 1989), 299-337.

[62] Gerhard Hamm, *Du has uns nie verlassen...: Erfahrungen christlicher Familien in der Sowjetunion* (Wuppertal: R. Brockhaus Verlag, 1978), 147; Walter Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals Since World War II* (Kitchener, ON: Herald Press, 1981), 72.

[63] Isaak Thiessen, "Umsiedler aus Russland," *Der Bote*, 17 February 1976.

[64] Peter Epp, *Ob Tausend Fallen: Mein Leben im Archipal Gulag* (Weichs: Memra Verlag, 1988), 202.

[65] Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals*, 341-342 and 68-70. Descriptions of how a religious leader used weddings to proselytize is in Gerhard Hamm, *Du hast uns nie verlassen*, 137-150. See also: Isaak Thiessen, "Umsiedler aus Russland," *Der Bote*, 17 February 1976.

[66] Glatzer, *Social Trends*, 335.

[67] Ibid., 237.

[68] Peter Epp, "Warum gibt es Annäherungsprobleme?" in *Mennonitisches Jahrbuch 1990: Aussiedler—Gemeinsamkeit suchen* (Karlsruhe: Arbeitsgemeinschaft deutscher Mennonitengemeinden in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Berlin (West) e.V., 1990), 81.

[69] Walter Sawatsky, "Mennonitische Umsiedler kommen zusammen," *Der Bote*, 7 September 1976.

[70] Author's personal experience.

[71] Hans von Niessen, Interview.

[72] *Der Bote*, "Neue Mitarbeiter helfen Umsiedlern," 22 July 1975, 5.

[73] Alexander Neufeld, *Interview*.

[74] *Alexander Neufeld Papers*, Mennonitischen Umsiedlerbetreuung Statistics, June 1987.

[75] Peter J. Foth, "Brief and den Ältesten einer Aussiedlergemeinde," in *Mennonitisches Jahrbuch 1990: Aussiedler—Gemeinsamkeit suchen*, (Karlsruhe: Arbeitsgemeinschaft deutscher Mennonitengemeinden in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Berlin (West) e.V., 1990), 89.

[76] Alexander Neufeld, *Interview*.

[77] Walter Sawatsky, "Mennonitische Umsiedler kommen zusammen," *Der Bote*, 7 September 1976.