# Refusal on the Rhine: The French Zone of Occupation and the German Refugee and Expellee Crisis, 1945-1949

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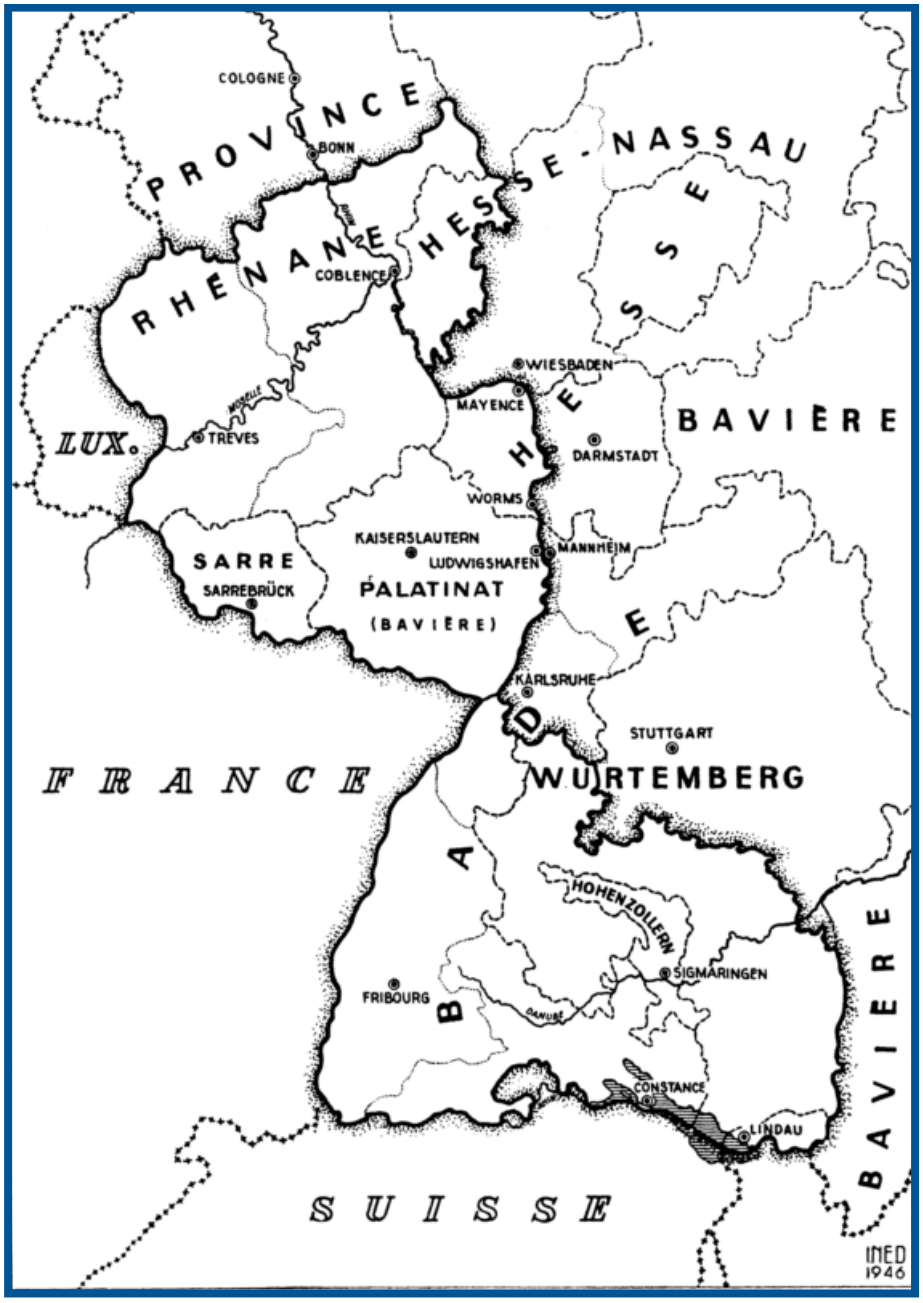
# List of Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| ACA | Allied Control Authority |
| ACC | Allied Control Council |
| AOFAA | Archives de l'occupation française en Allemagne et en Autriche/Archives of the French occupation of Germany and Austria |
| CFM | Council of Foreign Ministers |
| CGAAA | Commissariat Général des Affaires Allemandes et Autrichiennes/General Commissioner for German and Austrian Affairs |
| CGP | Commissariat Général au Plan/General Planning Commission |
| CORC | Coordinating Committee |
| CRX | Combined Repatriation Executive/Combined Displaced Persons Executive |
| DDF | Documents diplomatiques français/ Diplomatic Documents of France |
| DP | Displaced Person |
| FRG | Federal Republic of Germany |
| FZO | French zone of occupation |
| GPRF | Gouvernement Provisoire de la République Française/Provisional Government of the French Republic |
| IRO | International Refugee Organisation |
| MAE | Ministère des Affaires Étrangères de la République française/ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the French Republic |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organisation |
| NIO | Office National d'Immigration/National Immigration Office |
| PDR | Prisonniers, Déportés et Réfugiés/Prisoners, Deportees (Displaced Persons) and Refugees |
| POW | Prisoner of War |
| OEEC | Organisation for European Economic Co-operation |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| UNO | United Nations Organisation |
| UNRRA | United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Association |

# List of Tables

# French Zone of Occupation, 1945-1949




Source: Institut National des Études Démographiques (INED), *Population* 1:4 (1946) 738

# Introduction

Prior to World War Two, an estimated 14 million German-speakers lived throughout Central and Eastern Europe, outside the borders of Germany, where they had often been settled for centuries, in addition to the 65 million German citizens living in Germany itself. The closing months of the war and the immediate post-war period saw two vast movements of these populations. In the first, approximately seven million Germans on German territory as it had existed in 1937, prior to pre-war and wartime annexations, fled west in advance of the Soviet Army during the last months of the war. In the second, German-speaking populations, or those who were otherwise deemed to be ethnic Germans, were expelled from the liberated states of Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary as well as from Romania, Bulgaria, The Netherlands and Yugoslavia. By the end of 1950, over 9 million refugee and expellee Germans had arrived in western Germany.

**Table 1: Distribution of Total Population and Refugees among the West German States January 1, 1951**

| State | Population | Increase of Population | Refugees | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1.1.1951 | 1939-1951 | 1.1.1951 | |
| | 1,000 | % increase over 1939 | 1,000 | % of total popn on 1.1.51 |
| **Schleswig-Holstein** | 2,557.2 | +60.9 | 967.6 | 37.8 |
| **Lower Saxony** | 6,775.4 | +49.3 | 2,090.4 | 30.8 |
| **Bavaria** | 9,121.3 | +29.6 | 2,182.7 | 23.9 |
| **Hesse** | 4,343.7 | +24.9 | 830.9 | 19.1 |
| **Wurtemberg-Baden** | 3,923.5 | +22.0 | 832.6 | 21.2 |
| **North Rhine-Westphalia** | 13,254.4 | +11.1 | 1,706.5 | 12.9 |
| **Wurtemberg-Hohenzollern** | 1,250.6 | +16.2 | 149.2 | 11.9 |
| **Baden** | 1,351.7 | +9.9 | 144.3 | 10.7 |
| **Rhineland-Palatinate** | 3,035.8 | +2.5 | 213.2 | 7.0 |
| **Bremen** | 564.4 | +0.3 | 58.6 | 10.4 |
| **Hamburg** | 1,620.4 | -5.3 | 192.0 | 11.8 |
| **Western Germany** | 47,798.4 | +21.5 | 9,368.0 | 19.6 |

From Statistisches Bundesamt, *Wirtschaft und Statistik* 3 (Wiesbaden 1951) 436, reproduced in Friedrich Edding, *The Refugees as a Burden, a Stimulus and a Challenge to the West German Economy.* (The Hague 1951) 10

The expulsions were initially spontaneous, uncontrolled and unregulated; however, in August 1945 the United States of America, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union met at Potsdam to discuss the post-war settlement and sought to impose a measure of control over the expulsions in Article XIII of the meeting Protocol. In the protocol text they recognised 'that the transfer to Germany of German populations, or elements thereof, remaining in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, will have to be undertaken' and agreed

'that any transfers that take place should be effected in an orderly and humane manner'[1]. They requested that the governments concerned temporarily suspend the expulsions, but in practice these continued, though somewhat less violently than before. By 1950, an estimated 2.6 million ethnic Germans remained outside of Germany. Anywhere from 1.5 to 2 million are thought to have died during flight and expulsion.

The influx of these millions into a Germany that had lost a quarter of its pre-1938 territory and was devastated physically, economically and morally by the war placed a huge strain on the country's meagre resources. The burden, moreover, was not distributed equally; refugees flooded the countryside and small towns but were kept out of larger cities that had suffered proportionately greater destruction, many of whose own residents had also taken refuge in less damaged areas, sometimes nearby but frequently a great distance away.

Though the influx of refugees and expellees swelled the German population by 16 percent on territory that was a quarter smaller than it had been in 1937, one region in Germany remained largely closed to them: the French zone of military occupation. In 1945, the French occupying authorities refused entry to the refugees, and though they eventually took in some over the course of their occupation, it was an order of magnitude lower than those absorbed into the American, British and Soviet zones.

This thesis proposes to investigate the reasons for this initial French position of refusal and to trace how and why it evolved into one of grudging acceptance over the four years of occupation, from the immediate end of hostilities in 1945 to the creation of the West German state in 1949. In doing so, it places the question of the refugees in the broader context of France's overall war aims and its policy towards post-war Germany. Security was the over-riding French concern, coupled with the aim to once again become the prevailing power in Europe, and to keep in check German might, through military, political, economic, social and demographic means. Economic considerations were another motive; France's economic priorities were to reconstruct the country after wartime devastation and to launch its economy on a solid, and above all modern footing, for which it needed German resources, including labour. Demographic concerns also preoccupied French policy-makers, and the question of how to handle German 'excess population' provides a perspective on French migration policy. These concerns drove French policy and led France to pursue, to the extent possible, an independent path, distinct from its Anglo-American allies as well as from the Soviets. This was not always possible, or practicable, and changes on the ground as well as the growing threat of the Cold War lessened France's ability to act on its own over the period, obligating it to accept a series of compromises. The refugee question is one illustration of the trajectory French policy took over this time; but as the question of the refugees was subsumed to France's pursuit of its post-war aims in Germany and Europe it is necessary to examine it in this broader context.

[1] Article XII, Protocol of the Proceedings, August 1, 1945, The Berlin (Potsdam) Conference, July 17-August 2, 1945. Accessed http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/decade17.asp. Note: this article was numbered XIII in the communiqué of the Conference, but XII in the final protocol. As common usage refers to Article XIII this thesis will follow that usage.

## Theory

The examination of public policy development is largely the purview of political scientists and a number of theoretical frameworks have developed over the last few decades to explain policy development and policy shifts. These include punctuated-equilibrium policy change theory, first developed by Frank Baumgartner and Bryan Jones, and the multiple streams approach elaborated by John Kingdon.[2]

I have considered these frameworks and, while they offer useful elements for explaining or understanding the nature of policy change and the factors that influence it, applying any one of them to this particular case would produce an inadequate result. This has to do with the unusual set of circumstances surrounding post-war occupation, which set it apart from the national (or sometimes EU) policy-making processes usually examined in the literature.

First, policy development or change analysis relies on a long time-frame in order to appropriately take into account the status quo existing prior to a policy change, the circumstances of the change itself, the period of its implementation and then a mid- to long-term assessment of its impact. Punctuated equilibrium theory in particular argues for a long period of stasis that is then 'punctuated' by change. Multiple streams theory posits a certain equilibrium, and independence of problems, policies and politics over time until a 'window of opportunity' opens, and a 'policy entrepreneur' uses the window to bring the streams together and create a new solution to an existing problem. However, the circumstances surrounding the refugee crisis in Germany and French occupation did not emerge from stasis or equilibrium; they represented instead rupture and discontinuity. Policy was made, and implemented, in the context of entirely new structures: the occupation framework of the Germany-wide Allied Control Authority (ACA), the Military Government in the French Zone of Occupation (FZO), and a new post-Liberation political structure in France. The situation was unexpected and unprecedented, not just the defeat and unconditional surrender of Germany, but the mass movement of populations in the wake of that defeat.

Moreover, in policy cycle terms, the actual length of time the occupying powers governed Germany was short: just over four years. Naturally, policies implemented at that time had long-term effects, but the ability of the occupying powers directly to control those effects was substantially reduced with the establishment in 1949 of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the conversion of their own Military Governments into High Commissions. They did retain some powers that were gradually then conferred to the FRG in the 1950s, but no longer governed by decree.

Another complicating factor, as far as the application of theoretical frameworks is concerned, is the complexity of occupation governance. Public policy analysis tends to focus on examination of a policy change on a specific and limited policy issue in a single jurisdiction, whether national or sub-national, with clearly identifiable policymakers and influencers, a clear line of accountability to political bodies and adequate information regarding the problems, policies, networks and outcomes. In cases of occupation, a foreign power acting essentially as a proconsul establishes policies on behalf of the occupied country. In the

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[2] Kingdon developed the multiple streams theory in the 1980s and Baumgartner and Jones their punctuated equilibrium theory in the 1990s. For a more recent assessment of both I have consulted Sabatier, Paul (ed.), *Theories of the policy process*, 4th edition (Boulder, CO 2014).

German case, there was thus a divide between policymakers - the occupying authorities - and implementers, who were often the German administrations. The political influence that the Germans could wield was limited, restricted as it was to *Land* legislatures; in any event, the occupying powers could review legislation before it was voted on, and veto it as necessary. For the occupying powers, the more significant political influence came from their own sending governments, who dictated the framework for policy development through broad guidance (domestic policies and programs), direct instruction and budgetary control.

Finally, in the case of the occupation of Germany, there was an additional layer of complexity posed by quadripartite, later tripartite, coordination in the Allied Control Authority. While Zone Commanders disposed of absolute authority in their zone, there were matters which had to be discussed among all the Allies. This discussion was intended to conclude in formal unanimous agreements, but that was frequently not the case. Still, while each individual member of the ACA held veto power, the means of influence each had over the other were considerable, if not equal.

That said, the multiple-streams approach does offer some elements that assist in understanding the process, particularly how the interplay of problems and politics leads to a search for solutions, in the form of policies. The policy to close the French zone of occupation to refugees and expellees was a consequence of France's larger Germany policy, which in turn was connected to its own post-war ambitions of national and political recovery. For the French, the mere existence of additional people on German territory was the problem; their presence constituted a threat in security, political and economic terms. If absorbed into the German population, they would augment its war-making potential; they represented a counterweight to the decentralised, preferably dismembered German polity France hoped to see emerge along the Rhine and they embodied a competitive threat, both for precious resources in the short term and in the contribution they might make to the German economy in the long term. In that sense, French policy regarding the refugee and expellee crisis was an instrument and means of furthering larger political objectives, not an end in itself.

Closing the zone was a first step, but it was in another way simply the local manifestation of France's broader approach, which was to seek, insofar as possible, a removal or reduction of the refugee problem from Germany itself. This led to the development of the series of related policy objectives that France pursued throughout its occupation: a program of mass German emigration, an end to population transfers, restrictive nationality measures, even aggressive adoption campaigns.

In the meantime, the existence of the refugees and expellees was a fact, and their care and integration was in the hands of the occupying powers and local German authorities. As with any public policy, the French stance had to be adjusted from time to time as it encountered changing and complex circumstances. In this thesis I examine four of these adjustments and the development of one policy cluster over the course of the four years of the occupation: 1) France's contribution to the 'transfer plan' meant to implement the Potsdam agreement, 2) France's refusal to take in additional German minorities beyond those covered by Potsdam, 3) the policy cluster of mass emigration, labour emigration, nationality restriction and adoption, 4) the decision to accept German refugees sheltered in Denmark into the French zone, and 5) the opening of the French zone to some redistribution from other zones. I argue that the adjustments made were made in

consequence of, and coherence with, overall French objectives: to keep numbers as low as possible, to minimise 'harm' to the zone, either economic or social, and as a means of exchange to achieve other policy aims, especially in negotiations with Allies.

## Historiography

Two broad areas of research inform this topic, both of which have an extensive historiography attached to them, but which themselves intersect only slightly. The first is the issue of the German refugees and expellees and the second is the history of the French zone of occupation and French post-War policy towards Germany. The intersection - French occupation policy vis-à-vis the refugees and expellees - has received very little attention from historians: a handful of in-depth studies by German historians, focusing on local, or *Land*-level impacts of the crisis, some recent attention from English-language historians and two brief articles in French.

### *Historiography of the Refugees and Expellees*

The overwhelming majority of the research on the question of the German refugees and expellees is in German but English-language scholarship has increased in recent decades. The nature and scope of the research has altered over time, shaped by events such as Germany's economic recovery, FRG Chancellor Willy Brandt's policy of *Ostpolitik*, the *Historikerstreit* and the fall of the Berlin Wall and the unification of the two post-war German states. The collapse of Yugoslavia and ensuing ethnic cleansing further occasioned a new look at the fate of once multi-ethnic regions of Europe and the 'unmixing' of peoples across the twentieth century. Three broad periods can be identified: the immediate post-war period, up to 1955, a middle period, to 2000, and twenty-first century scholarship.

1945-1955: Many non-German post-war observers assessed the phenomenon of expulsion (or 'population transfer') as unfortunate but necessary. This 'lesser evil' perspective reflected the view, voiced even during the war by Herbert Hoover, that 'The hardship of moving is great, but it is less than the constant suffering of minorities and the constant recurrence of war.'[3] Without justifying the expulsions on the grounds of retribution, there is, in the work of several authors, the implication that expulsions were ineluctable, given the failure of national minorities protection in the wake of World War I, and that national homogeneity was a desirable and attainable goal. In this sense, population transfers were a way of righting the mistakes of the post-World War I Versailles settlement that had imperfectly applied the notion of 'national self-determination' to nation-states that remained nonetheless multi-ethnic. The assumption persisted among these writers that multi-ethnicity was a negative characteristic and that as far as possible 'nation' should coincide with 'nation-state'.

However, another school of thought in the immediate post-War period held that the border redrawing and expulsions agreed by the Allies were unjust and ill-conceived, and that 'no excuse of retribution can justify a policy which set out to eliminate the poison of these very methods and ended by adopting them'[4]. A

[3] Herbert Hoover and Hugh Gibson, *The problems of lasting peace* (New York 1943) 233.

[4] Hans Rothfels, 'Frontiers and mass migrations in Eastern Central Europe', *Review of Politics* 8 (1946) 37-67, 59

strong current of public opinion in the United Kingdom and the United States protested against the expulsions. The challenge of how to integrate this vast group into war-torn Western Germany preoccupied many, both German and foreign.

During this period, there was very little commentary by French authors on the German refugees and expellees. The majority of French texts on the 'German Question', France's Germany policy or Franco-German relations did not mention the German refugees at all, or only in very brief passing. French officials made few or no references to the problem in public until they developed proposals in 1946 and particularly in 1947 for mass migration as a solution for the 'surplus' German population. The first academic texts to pay any significant attention to the phenomenon are by demographers sketching the population upheavals of the post-war period and the demographic impact of the war, from 1947 on[5].

1955-2000: Several elements shaped historiography in the period, particularly in Germany where the overwhelming amount of examination and analysis of the refugee crisis and the occupation period as a whole took place. These included: generational change in the late 1960s that called for greater national reckoning with the Nazi period and the war; *Ostpolitik* and greater direct engagement with East Germany, the Soviet Union and the other states of the Warsaw Pact, and a focus, some decades after the transfers, on how the refugees had integrated into the Federal Republic, socially, politically and economically, frequently examined from a local or micro-history perspective. The history of memory - focusing on the stories of individual refugees and expellees[6] - influenced consideration of the question.

The events of 1989 and the unification of Germany in 1990 radically shifted both the space of history and methodology. For the first time it was possible to compare the experiences of expellees in both the German Democratic Republic and the German Federal Republic. Studies became more transnational in scope as the histories and perspectives of countries in Eastern and Central Europe were incorporated and previously inaccessible archives were opened to researchers.

However post-Cold War Europe brought with it as well the disintegration of the multi-ethnic Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia; 'ethnic cleansing' flared up in Europe and beyond. The principle of self-determination came into conflict with the principle of state sovereignty. This spurred a new interest in the nationality 'problems' of the early twentieth century. The expulsions and population exchanges of the end of the Second World War were reviewed in the light of lingering nationalisms in Europe.

Twenty-first century scholarship has continued this examination of the ethnic turmoil of Europe's twentieth century as well as re-situating the expulsions in frameworks seeking to understand refugee movements and forced migrations in an inter-disciplinary way, often taking a global perspective. A new element is the growth of non-German scholarship in this area, particularly among English-language scholars. One of the most recent, and comprehensive, works is Matthew Frank's 2017 text *Making Minorities History:*

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[5] *Population*, the publication of the French National Institute for Demographic Studies (INED), was founded in 1946 and published extensively on the demographic consequences of the war, migration policies around the world and demographic developments in individual nations.

[6] See: Robert G. Moeller, 'Germans as victims?: thoughts on a post-Cold War history of World War II's legacies', *History and Memory* 17, no. 1/2 (2005) 147-195; Philipp Ther, 'The burden of history and the trap of memory', *Transit Online* (2007), http://www.iwm.at/transit/transit-online/the-burden-of-history-and-the-trap-of-memory/ , 1-12

*Population Transfer in Twentieth-Century Europe*, which is the first English-language work to look at the French zone, among others, in any detail. French scholarship, however, remains limited.

### *Historiography of France's German Occupation Policy*

Another significant area of research for this thesis has been the examination of the history of France's post-war occupation of Germany, including how France's Germany policy meshed with its overall foreign policy and its own post-war development. The French occupation sector has notoriously been neglected in occupation research, owing to the fact that France was seen as less crucial to Germany's own evolution than were the 'Big Three' occupying powers (USA, UK, USSR), and also to the more prosaic fact that the French archives only opened to researchers in the late 1980s. With the exception of the American researcher F. Roy Willis in the early 1960s, the French zone was essentially ignored by English-language researchers until the 2000s. German researchers, especially those based in the former zone, paid more attention. Some earlier studies, written before the French archives were opened, were critical in tone, reflecting a sometimes bitter folk-memory of French occupation as having been harsh and exploitative. Later works that made use of the archives went some way to balancing this view, placing the French occupation in the broader post-War occupation context as a whole and offering more nuance. In particular, the French approach to culture, education and social policy has received recognition as being more flexible and accommodating of local particularity than the approaches adopted by the other occupiers.

### *Historiography of the Refugees and Expellees in the French Zone of Occupation*

The general subject of the German refugees and expellees remains virtually unexamined by French-language specialists. The few references that exist in French are either translations of other works or the occasional item in pieces written by German historians writing in French, such as Rainer Hudemann. I have found only two brief essays in French that deal specifically with ethnic German refugees; the short article 'La France et le problème des réfugiés et expulsés allemands après 1945', written by noted expert on Franco-German history, Georges-Henri Soutou, in 1998, and an even briefer piece 'L'expulsion des Allemands des Sudètes vue par la France, 1944-1966', written by Cécile Laurent and drawing from an unpublished 2011 Master's thesis by Antoine Marès.

The subject of the refugees and expellees in the French Zone of Occupation has received somewhat more attention from German historians, but is still considerably under-researched compared to the numerous examinations of refugee reception and integration in the other three zones of occupation. The German studies[7] take a regional approach, examining the impact of policy on a specific *Land* of the FZO. English-speaking historians have begun to turn their attention to the French zone; works include Jessica Reinisch's

[7] The principal ones I have found include Wolfgang Hans Stein, 'Vertriebene, Flüchtlinge und andere Zonenfremde in Rheinland-Pfalz' in Heyen, Franz-Josef, ed. *Rheinland-Pfalz Entsteht: Beiträge zu den Anfangen des Landes Rheinland-Pfalz in Koblenz 1945-1951 (1984)*; Michael Sommer, *Flüchtlinge und Vertriebene in Rheinland-Pfalz. Aufnahme, Unterbringung und Eingliederung [*Refugees and Expellees in Rhineland-Palatinate. Intake, Accommodation and Integration.] and Andrea Kühne *Entstehung, Aufbau und Funktion der Flüchtlingsverwaltung in Württemberg-Hohenzollern, 1945-1952 (1999) [*Emergence, Development and Operation of the Refugee Administration in Württemberg-Hohenzollern, 1945-1952]

comparative examination of public health in occupied Germany[8] and Matthew Frank's previously mentioned *Making Minorities History* (2017)

The gap in the literature I address stems from this relative dearth of examination, not just of the French zone, but of the French policy response to the population movements - from an official French perspective, rather than from the view of the German authorities (who dealt with the day-to-day refugee management on the ground), or of the refugees themselves.

## Materials and Methods

My principal primary source has been the archives of the French occupation, now held in the archives of the French Foreign Ministry just outside of Paris. The French occupation authorities were divided between Berlin, seat of the Allied Control Council, and Baden-Baden, the headquarters in the zone itself; in addition each *Land* in the zone had its own governor. Each of these instances had a division or section dedicated to Displaced Persons and Refugees; the responsibilities of these sections also extended to prisoners of war, missing persons and war dead. The archives of these services, but also of the French Administrator General in the Zone, as well as the Cabinet of the French Commander in Chief, have provided much of the material I have used. The archives are not exhaustive - sets of minutes of meetings are frequently incomplete, or reference is made in documents to other papers, which are missing from the file. Moreover, since the archives were transferred to Paris from Colmar in 2009, some of their components, such as the files of the Commissariat Général des Affaires Allemandes et Autrichiennes (the General Commissioner for German and Austrian Affairs, the main body in Paris charged with coordinating France's German policy) have remained uncatalogued, and thus difficult to access; I was not able to consult them.

The French government has been gradually publishing collections of important diplomatic documents edited by historians, the *Documents diplomatiques français*. The volumes from 1945-1949 have been invaluable in providing an oversight of French foreign policy at the time. However, the *DDF* restrict themselves to 'official' notes, letters, telegrams and memoranda. Part of the value of the physical archives is that they contain a wealth of informal material that provides equally precious insight into policy development.

The United States government series of diplomatic documents, *Foreign Relations of the United States* (*FRUS*), has also proved to be a valuable resource. I have also made use of the collected documents of the Allied Control Authority, made available online by the US Library of Congress.[9]

In addition, I have made extensive use of articles in the contemporary French press - predominantly *Le Monde* - as well as American and British media. I have further consulted articles in more academic French publications of the time (such as the periodicals *Population* and *Politique Etrangère*) and in American and British journals for a contemporary view on both the refugees and expellees and the 'German question' more broadly.

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[8] Jessica Reinisch, *The perils of peace : the public health crisis in Occupied Germany* (2013)

[9] https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/enactments-home.html

Secondary source reading has covered post-war France and the development of the Fourth Republic; Franco-German relations in the immediate post-war period and France's approach to the German question, economic policy, foreign policy and immigration and demographic policy under the Fourth Republic, German occupation history and works examining the refugee and expellee crisis from a variety of angles. I have also looked at broader studies of twentieth-century minorities policy, ethnic cleansing and refugee management.

The opening chapter of the thesis will provide some context, describing - briefly - the French post-war situation, France's Germany policy, the origins of the refugee/expellee crisis and some overall definitions. The rest of the thesis is organised chronologically by year from 1945 to 1949; each chapter examines in depth one of the particular policy adjustments described above, linked to that year. The conclusion will evaluate the success and impact of the policy initiatives the French undertook and their overall effect on the zone.

All translations are my own; the original language version of each citation appears in annex A.

# Chapter 1. Context

## French Post-War Aims

In 1944, when Paris was liberated after four years of German occupation, France counted 600,000 war dead and had suffered destruction amounting to 100 billion dollars. Four thousand bridges had been destroyed, and one in seven people was without adequate housing. Reconstruction and recovery were the first challenges to be faced by the Provisional Government of the French Republic headed by General Charles de Gaulle. More than that, however, de Gaulle's ambition was to overcome the stigma of 1940's defeat and restore France to a position of international significance and independence.

These two ambitions were separate - reconstruction and recovery were above all an economic challenge while restoration of French power was a political and strategic one - but they were, naturally, linked. To project political strength, France needed not just economic stability, but also economic clout. After two world wars in a generation, economic stability needed peace; in the French view, peace in turn depended on a weakened and contained Germany.

## France's Germany Policy

> Our aim being to make Germany incapable of conducting a war, it would seem reasonable, when creating our plans for the settlement of German questions, to start from the basis of our security needs - military and economic.[10]

The 'German question' - what to do with post-war Germany - was one of the central challenges for French and Allied policymakers. Security was the driving motivation; it was predominantly, but not exclusively, a foreign policy question, as it had significant repercussions for domestic conditions as well, including defence and strategic policy, economic recovery, and demographic and immigration policy. The question of the refugees and expellees was one element of the larger German problem. It was not the most significant question preoccupying French policymakers, not least because of the limited scale of the problem in their own zone; economic questions, particularly the challenge of obtaining enough coal and other materials to ensure French recovery, were more central to French aims, as was the overarching question of Germany's, and Europe's, political and strategic future. However, the policy France developed on the refugee question, and the way that policy evolved, does reflect the broader evolution of France's Germany policy over the occupation period and the shifts and course corrections that had to be made in response to changing external and domestic circumstances.

De Gaulle laid down the fundamental elements of France's Germany policy which remained unchanged in principle even after his abrupt departure from government in January 1946. These consisted in ensuring control over the Rhineland and the Ruhr, demilitarisation of Germany, including an end to war industries, harnessing control of German industry and decentralising political concentration of power, even to the point of detaching areas of territory such as the Left Bank of the Rhine and the Saarland. Gaining

[10] *Documents diplomatiques français* (further *DDF*), 1945i, 36, Compte-rendu, réunion du 20 janvier 1945 sous la présidence de M. Dejean, 20 January 1945, 66-69.

control (and not just French control - the intention from the beginning was to place the Ruhr under an international regime) over Germany's industrial potential would remove any chance it might 'recreate its aggressive might'. The separation of the Ruhr and the Rhine would deprive Germany of 97.8 percent of its coal, 93.4 percent of its steel and over 60 percent of its metallurgical and chemical industries.[11]

For France, the presence of the refugees in Germany was a source of concern, given their numbers. Demographically, they risked aggravating the challenge to France posed by Germany's population strength; despite the losses of the war, Germany's population at the end of 1946 was greater than it had been in 1939. Economically, although the refugees in the short term posed a vast challenge to the German economy, it could be foreseen that their eventual integration and employment would only boost German growth and strengthen Germany's position as a competitor to France on world markets. Politically they represented the potential for instability and irredentism; the population movements in the months following the war altered the religious and social structure of the receiving regions and led, the French argued, to a mixing of 'cultures', with Prussians introduced in large numbers into areas where they had not previously lived. This in turn jeopardised regional particularism, which was an essential element for the French policy of, ideally, division of Germany into several autonomous states, or at the very most a loose federal configuration.

Initially, the French zone remained largely unaffected by the arrivals of German refugees and expellees onto German territory due to the simple fact of its geographical location: the zone was farthest removed from the borders the refugees crossed. The French then seized on their non-involvement in the Potsdam Conference to distance themselves from the decision taken there to endorse the expulsions from Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Polish-administered territories, and in essence closed the frontiers of their zone. The threats the French saw facing Germany from the presence of the refugees posed even more of a problem for the French zone of occupation. It was difficult enough to ensure food and housing for the zone with the population it had, much less for thousands of additional destitute people; moreover, the French occupying forces, unlike the Americans and British, 'lived off the land', obtaining much of their food supply from the local economy. The French - particularly de Gaulle - believed that the success of their German policy depended in large part on the specific character of the Rhineland and southwestern territories they occupied, far removed in 'character' from northern Germany's Prussianism. To dilute this 'character' by the introduction of other populations would erode France's influence. De Gaulle spoke of

> territories which, by their nature, are at one with France […] the Left Bank of the Rhine, the Palatinate, Hesse, Rhineland Prussia and the Saarland…these lands must become one with France. Does this mean annexation? No: moreover, I don't wish to play with words. This should be an economic and moral union, a presence, an indefinite control.[12] […]One only needs to look at a map for this truth to stand out. If these states of Rhineland Germany truly partake of the occidental spirit, I believe they will abandon the idea of a Germany grouped round a now-toppled Prussia and will turn towards the horizon that offers them the most hope, towards western Europe and above all towards France.[13]

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[11] *DDF* 1945i, 197, Note de M. Burin de Roziers, Conseiller du Cabinet du Président du GPRF, pour le Général, 16 March 1945, 362-4

[12] Speech of General de Gaulle to French officials of the Military Government in the French Zone of Occupation, Baden-Baden, 05 October 1945, cited in Charles de Gaulle, *Lettres, Notes et Carnets, Mai 1945-Juin 1951* (Paris 1984) 96

[13] Speech in Baden-Baden, de Gaulle *Lettres*, 97

Concretely, the principles underlying France's Germany policy translated into some very basic and unwavering stances. First among these was France's refusal to allow the establishment of any kind of central institution or administrative organ in Germany, on the grounds that it would prejudge Germany's final form - which, France argued, could only be determined in a peace treaty between Germany and the Allies. In order to avoid a punitive and unsustainable situation like that created by the punishing reparations regime imposed after World War I, reparations would be in kind, rather than financial, with a distinction between restitution - of specific, identifiable objects taken by Germany during its occupation; replacement, of such objects with identical or near-identical ones, if the objects themselves were no longer available, and reparations, which would consist of removal of industrial machinery, in order to serve the economic reconstruction of war-damaged Allied economies, raw materials, such as coal, and semi-finished products, finished products, and services, notably labour.[14]

## The Refugee and Expellee Crisis

This thesis does not aim to examine in detail the origins or the circumstances of the expulsion of German nationals and ethnic German populations from central and eastern Europe in any detail. However, the presence of millions of refugees who had fled westward before the advance of the Red Army, and millions more expellees turned out by Polish authorities in the territory they now occupied, and by the Czechoslovaks and Hungarians, upended much of the planning the Allies had undertaken during wartime regarding the post-war order by adding millions of uprooted, destitute people to the population to be governed by the occupying forces. Feeding, housing and peacefully employing the population of conquered Germany would have been challenge enough; the refugees and expellees added several million more to the equation.

The displaced Germans varied greatly in terms of origin, class and occupation, and gender was an important factor, with women from some regions - though not all - disproportionately represented among adult refugees, though in fact overall to a lesser degree than in the broader German post-war adult population. The fact that male conscription had begun later, and lasted less time, meant that populations in the east suffered fewer male losses through death or captivity.

It is important, when looking at the population crisis of immediate post-war Germany, not to focus exclusively on the refugees and expellees; the 'indigenous'[15] populations on the reduced German territory had also been subject to upheaval and displacement, with large numbers unhoused through bombardment and other war damage and a substantial number who had been transferred into Germany during the war years as a result of the *Heim ins Reich* program that sought to consolidate ethnic Germans into the expanded Reich territory. German economic historian Edgar Salin, in a 1950 article, spoke of all of these displaced Germans as the 'nomads'.[16]

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[14] *DDF* 1945i, 215, Note de la Direction des Affaires Politiques sur les principes d'une politique des réparations, 22 March 1945, pp. 399-400

[15] The term 'indigenous' is used here, along with 'native' and 'local', to distinguish populations who had been resident in a specific zone in 1939 and still were in the same locality, region or zone in 1945, from those who had arrived during the war or afterwards.

[16] Edgar Salin,'Social forces in Germany today', *Foreign Affairs* 28 vol. 2 (1950) 265-277

## Definitions

The question of the terminology used when considering the refugees, expellees and displaced persons is complex. Terminology can exacerbate what has been called the 'invisibility' of many forced migrants, who do not, for whatever reason, fit the agendas or mandates of aid institutions and are not therefore termed 'refugees'. The displaced Germans who fled the front lines or were later transferred under Potsdam were explicitly excluded from the mandates of the international organisations charged with the care of the rest of Europe's displaced persons, whether the United Nations' Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), the International Refugee Organisation (IRO) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The expellees were considered to be 'returning', despite the fact that they and their ancestors had not lived on German territory for centuries; in their case, 'nation' was conflated with 'nation-state'.

One of the challenges in policy development was the confusion surrounding the categories of people liable to be of concern to the occupying powers. Even before the end of the war, Germany contained millions of uprooted people. It took some time before a standard vocabulary developed in any language. Some of the most frequent terms are examined here.

*Evacuees*: this term was generally applied to persons who had been evacuated from their dwelling due to the threat of hostilities or direct war damage (largely through aerial bombardment). Most evacuees hailed from cities or industrial zones; in some cases they did not move far - evacuees from the city of Hamburg often just moved into neighbouring districts in Schleswig-Holstein or Lower Saxony - but in other cases evacuees were transported across the country, or even into areas that after the war were again under different national jurisdictions, such as Austria, Czechoslovakia or the Benelux countries. The category of evacuees lends itself to confusion insofar as they were, in the early post-war period, referred to by the Allies (at least in English and French) as 'refugees'. All of the early transfer movements of German civilians focused on these internally displaced 'refugees', and were focused on facilitating the return of German nationals from one zone of current German territory to another zone of current German territory. Once a refugee had been transferred back to the zone of origin, or a German POW arrived home, they became a 'returnee'.

*Refugees*, however, was a term that also applied to German nationals who had fled German territory in advance of Allied armies, generally from eastern parts of Germany, fleeing before the Red Army. Significant movements of these populations began well before the end of the war, starting on a low-level and individual basis in the autumn of 1944, but reaching huge proportions in the first four months of 1945. Not all of this category of refugees were on German territory as of 8 May 1945; quite a few of them were on the territory of neighbouring states that had been occupied by Germany. Denmark found itself with 200,000 German refugees on its soil.

*Expellees* referred to people who had not held German nationality before 1937, but who were of German ethnic origin, living in eastern and central Europe, and who were, on the basis of their ethnic origin, driven out from the countries in which they held residence and driven into Germany. Quite often, through

Nazi annexation, these people had obtained German nationality after 1937. In reviewing past discourses Pertti Ahonen, who has written extensively about forced migrations in Europe notes that some who were later labelled 'expellees' had come to Germany voluntarily during the war as part of the *Heim ins Reich* population transfers, and also that 'expellee', as translated by *Vertriebene,* was frequently applied to in a blanket fashion to the refugees from ex-German territory as well.[17]

> the term *Vertriebene* was fundamentally important to the wider West German narrative because of its usefulness as a catch-all category that elided differences and created an impression of seeming national homogeneity among a population group that was in fact highly diverse and divided…The word is suggestive of a planned, largely unitary process, an organised, forced removal of an ethnic community from a particular region on the initiative of hostile, presumably foreign authorities. When applied to the German expellees, it cultivated the impression of unity.[18]

*Reichsdeutsche* and *Volksdeutsche* were two terms that the Allies were often loath to use as they had essentially been invented by the Nazis, but which were a convenient enough shorthand that they nonetheless were frequently employed without translation in English and French. Essentially, *Reichsdeutsche* were understood to refer to people of German origin who had a pre-1938 claim to German citizenship, while *Volksdeutsche* denoted everyone else of Germanic origin in Europe, however ancient their claims to a particular territory might be. As a category *Volksdeutsche* was highly mutable, and moreover was as closely linked to Austria as it was to Germany, since many *Volksdeutsche* populations lived on lands of the former Habsburg Empire. Mother tongue was a criterion of category membership, however the overlap of heritage with mother tongue was often only tangential; many populations were identified as *Volksdeutsche* - self-identified, or designated as such by local authorities - despite a limited command of the language. The *Volksdeutsche* category was imprecise, vague, fluid; it captured all of the confusion and the inherent contradictions of the implacable transition to 'nation-states', in the sense of the state finally becoming identical to a nation, that characterised the messy transition of the nineteenth-century Europe of multinational empires to a late twentieth-century Europe that tried to create an overlapping uniformity of ethnicity, nation and state.

There were other terms, less frequently used, that nonetheless illustrate the definitional challenge facing this displaced population. 'Refugees', translated into German produced the word *Flüchtlinge*. *Flüchtlinge*, translated back into English and French, sometimes gave the result 'fugitives/fugitifs', rather than 'refugees/réfugiés'.

Occasionally the term *transferee* was used to describe someone undergoing a zone-to-zone transfer; the term *resettler* was also used. These terms largely erased any evacuee/refugee/expellee distinction and were increasingly frequently used with respect to population redistribution efforts of the late 1940s.

There were other uprooted populations on German territory in 1945, including foreign prisoners of war (POWs), foreign interned civilians and foreign forced labourers. The latter two groups were labelled

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[17] Pertti Ahonen, 'Reflections on forced migrations: transnational realities and national narratives in post-1945 (West) Germany', *German History* 32:4 (2014) 599-614, 603-604

[18] Pertti Ahonen, 'Reflections', 603

*Displaced Persons* (DPs), though de facto foreign POWs were sometimes subsumed into the category of DPs as well. Initially the French used the term *déporté* - deported - to refer to displaced persons, as that was the term used for the French citizens sent to Germany under the German occupation of France. However as soon as they formally joined the Allied Control Authority (ACA) structures within Germany they adopted the term *personne déplacée*.

# Chapter 2. 1945 - War's End: Turmoil and Occupation

## Occupation of Germany

Though their Allied counterparts had been planning for the aftermath of the war since 1943, the French, preoccupied with the re-establishment of their own governing structures, began post-war German planning in earnest only in late 1944 and early 1945.

France had been granted a zone of occupation by the United States, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union at the Yalta Conference in 1945. Churchill was particularly insistent, as he did not want the United Kingdom to be the only Western European power in Germany facing the Soviet Union, especially as US intentions were not yet clear on the size and duration of their post-war presence in Europe. France's zone was in the south-west of Germany, a patchwork of small territories and parts of *Länder* carved from areas originally assigned to the US and UK; eventually it was divided into four regions, each with its own *Délégué Supérieur*, or military governor: Baden, Württemberg-Hohenzollern, Rhineland-Palatinate and the Saar. As the French from very early on treated the Saar differently, with a view to obtaining its economic attachment to France, it will for the most part not be considered in this study.

The zone was quite agricultural, with predominantly small and medium-sized farms; there was also a large forestry sector. Manufacturing was reliant on small and medium-sized enterprises and specialised industrial and artisanal work. Before the war, the region had had a higher-than-average export rate, due to its industrial specialties, such as precision mechanics and chemicals.[19] The zone's population without the Saarland was just over five million inhabitants; there were no large cities.

The ACA's control mechanisms in Germany consisted of the Allied Control Council (ACC), with its seat in Berlin; representatives on the ACC were the Commanders-in-Chief of the four occupying Military Governments. The ACC was intended to ensure uniformity of action among the Allies, who otherwise had supreme authority in their individual zones, and to take decisions on military, political or economic questions affecting the whole of Germany. The permanent Coordinating Committee (CORC) was charged with carrying out the ACC's decisions; it in turn had a coordinating structure divided into 12 directorates corresponding to different German administrations (Legal, Labour, Social Affairs, et cetera). One directorate, of most relevance for this thesis, was responsible for Displaced Persons, Prisoners of War and Refugee Affairs.

Each Allied power had its own Military Government structures in its zone, headed by their respective Commanders-in-Chief; the French based theirs in Baden-Baden. The French Commander-in-Chief was General Pierre Koenig, a Free French commander, hero of the battle of Bir Hakeim and military governor of Paris following the Liberation. His deputies were Generals Koeltz (until March 1946) and Noiret (1946-1949). Until late 1947, the zone had a civilian administrative structure parallel to that of the Military

[19] Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, *hereafter* MAE, Archives de l'occupation française en Allemagne et en Autriche, *hereafter* AOFAA, 7PDR55, French Military Government, Long-Term Programme in the French Zone of Occupation, undated, Autumn 1948. For a list of AOFAA files, see p.72 below.

Government, headed by an Administrator General, Émile Laffon, who had been a significant figure in the Resistance.

The French delegation to the ACC was set up divisionally to correspond to the structure of the ACC's own Directorates; the head of each division would meet in committee with his Allied counterparts on issues pertaining to their area of responsibility, prepare decisions to be made by the Council or carry out tasks assigned to them by the Council. The head of the Division for Prisoners of War, Displaced Persons and Refugees (*Prisonniers, Déportés et Réfugiés*, or PDR, to use its French acronym) in Berlin was Léon de Rosen.[20] In addition to the Berlin PDR Division, which handled inter-Allied relations on these issues, the Baden-Baden headquarters also had a PDR Section, which handled related questions within the zone itself, as did each of the *Länder* Military Governments, who were responsible for population movements and related categories at the *Land* level.

In Paris, an inter-ministerial body was established as the main point of contact for German and Austrian affairs; it changed name and configuration more than once, but was for most of the period in question known as the *Commissariat général des affaires allemandes et autrichiennes* (General Commission for German and Austrian Affairs, or CGAAA).

France opposed the creation of centralised administrative structures in Germany from the beginning of the ACC's work. As General Koenig explained to the ACC, he was not authorised to approve any measure that would prejudge the status of the Rhine-Westphalian region until that question was discussed by the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) and a decision taken. 'Whatever limitations might be applied to the role that such planned central administrations might play, the very principle of their creation would prejudge the status of the regions in question.'[21] As the London CFM in September 1945 had not resulted in a decision, Koenig was unable to discuss the central administration questions, and requested their postponement. The question would remain essentially unaddressed until the end of quadripartite cooperation in 1948; as a result, the French maintained their veto on central administrative structures.

## Post-War Population Movements

By early September 1945, the Allies were coming to grips with the scale of the problem posed by the millions of people uprooted by the war: refugees, expellees, evacuees, POWs both German and foreign and the millions of non-German displaced persons of many categories, including forced labourers and camp inmates.

Displaced persons from Allied nations had first priority and almost the entirety of those from Allied countries were returned home before the end of 1945. By early October, Administrator General Laffon reported there were approximately 95,000 displaced persons in the FZO;[22] by late November this number

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[20] de Rosen and his two deputies, Ivan Wiazemsky and Georges Rochcau, had been refugees themselves, their families having fled the Russian Revolution to France. De Rosen remained stateless until 1940; he enrolled in the French Army, was captured, escaped and then joined the Free French in London and Algiers. Wiazemsky was a Russian Prince and Rochcau was an ordained Orthodox priest.

[21] MAE, AOFAA, GFCC38, Annex B to CONL/M (45) 7, 01 October 1945

[22] MAE, AOFAA, ADM40/3, Memorandum Laffon to Koenig on Reorganisation of the PDR Division, 10 October 1945

was down to 72,400, of whom almost 80 percent were Poles and 8 percent were Balts. Later levels stabilised as they dwindled to the 'hard core'. Well before war's end, the western allies had agreed not to carry out involuntary repatriations of displaced persons.

Already, the French were contemplating the mass displaced populations in Germany as a source of migrants, particularly labour migrants, not least because, unlike the native German population, the DP and POW population was disproportionately male and young. 'The idea of having them emigrate *en bloc* to France or the French Empire is of course desirable, but its realisation is currently impossible because this would invite the worst diplomatic complications with the USSR and Poland. Yet repatriating them by force would be an anti-liberal solution distasteful to all French citizens and their government.'[23]

## Return of the internally displaced: the 'One-for-One' exchanges

In September 1945 the British, American and French representatives on the Combined Displaced Persons Executive (CRX) of the ACC decided that 'despite the acute problems of food supply and housing, common to all the zones, the German refugees will be better supported in their district of origin than anywhere else they might find themselves […] As a result, it is recommended that the repatriation of these Germans be undertaken everywhere it is practicable.'[24] The Soviet zone was incorporated into the scheme. It was agreed that these repatriation exchanges should take place on a 'one-for-one' basis - zones would swap no more than they received from each other - in order to avoid over-burdening any one zone beyond its current level of population. Consolidation of the population in regions where they were likely to have family or other ties made sense from the point of view of enabling people to draw on local support networks and recover from the effects of war more quickly, but it implied an enormous effort in terms of transport and logistics.

By October, the ACC had agreed on an order of priority for transfers. Displaced persons were the top priority, followed by internally displaced Germans ('German refugees') and then by German minorities (expellees). Of the German refugees, those actually within Germany would take precedence over those outside Germany's borders.[25] At this point, of over 3.2 million internally displaced Germans in the British and American zones, roughly 363,000 were originally from the French Zone[26]. For their part, the French estimated the number of internally displaced Germans in their zone at 350,000. They had little trust in the intentions of their British and American allies: 'the French zone is deficient, in terms of food supply. It is to be seriously feared […] that this winter the British will drive their refugees into the French Zone to be rid of them, while the Americans will turn a blind eye or imitate them.'[27] The lack of complete information on precisely whom they held in their zone meant the French struggled to proceed with exchanges. Transport

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[23] MAE, AOFAA, ADM40/3, Memorandum, 10 October 1945

[24] MAE, AOFAA, 1ADM41, Report on inter-allied Frankfurt conference concerning DPs, 10 September 1945

[25] MAE, AOFAA, GFCC23, Decision at the 12th meeting of the Coordinating Committee of the Allied Control Authority, 06 October 1945

[26] MAE, AOFAA, GFCC23, Decision at the 12th CORC meeting, 06 October 1945

[27] MAE, AOFAA, ADM40/3, Memorandum Laffon to Koenig on Reorganisation of the PDR Division, 10 October 1945

targets were rarely reached,[28] and the Americans in particular continued to be exasperated at French slowness in organising transfers, fuelling French fears that they would send unauthorised transports to the FZO at the onset of winter, which would not count against the one-for-one exchange; the French risked having to harbour ever more destitute residents without being able to reciprocate.

## Flight and Expulsion: France and the Sudeten German question

Like their Allied counterparts, the French were informed before war's end of the Czech government's intentions to proceed with population transfers. In March 1945, as pressure from the Czech provisional government grew for support from the future occupying powers regarding 'population transfers', the UK sought from the French an agreement that they would advise the Czechs to wait until there was a coordinated Allied answer on the question.[29]

There is some evidence that the Czech government did ask directly for the French to take a position on the expulsions but on 5 July 1945, a message from the Chargé d'Affaires in Prague, Keller, indicated that the Czech delegation returned from meetings in Moscow without having obtained an answer from Paris. 'As a result', note the editors of the *DDF* in a footnote, 'the question of the transfer of the Bohemian Germans would be settled by agreement between Czechoslovakia, the USSR, Great Britain and the United States, and would be submitted on 8 July 1945 to the Conference of the Three at Potsdam. France…was thus excluded from the discussion'.[30]

On 1 August 1945, UK Ambassador Duff Cooper informed the French of the agreement reached at Potsdam on the transfer of the ethnic Germans and expressed the 'earnest wish' of the three Potsdam signatories that France would agree to the 'equitable distribution of these Germans';[31] the expression 'earnest wish' seems to indicate that the UK recognised France would believe itself under no obligation to mitigate a problem over which it had had no decision-making power.

In these early weeks, France's policy on the transfers was unclear. On one hand, as part of the reinforcement of its recovered European role, France was determined to cultivate a strong relationship with Czechoslovakia, as a series of high-level visits and bilateral agreements in mid- to late-1945 demonstrate; this may have made it less inclined to overtly criticise Czech actions.[32] Further evidence of this at least tacit support came in September: 'The right of the Czechoslovak state to take measures indispensable to maintain its existence and integrity cannot now be contested. This is what has been recognised, in principle, by the heads of government of the three powers meeting in Potsdam last July. It is also what the French government

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[28] MAE, AOFAA, 1ADM40/3, Telegram Laffon to Délégation Supérieure Württemberg, 18 November 1945

[29] MAE, Dossier Y (126), Letter UK Amb. D. Cooper to Foreign Minister Bidault, 18 March 1945

[30] *DDF* 1945i, footnote p. 825

[31] MAE, Dossier Y (126), Letter UK Embassy to Minister Bidault, 01 August 1945

[32] MAE, Dossier Z (51), Telegram Prague/Keller to Quai d'Orsay, 04 September 1945

has acknowledged as of now, implicitly if not explicitly.'[33] That said, however, 'the French Government has not yet taken a position on the question.'[34]

This ambiguity about Czech actions did not extend to Potsdam; France would not be bound by the decisions taken there and on the question of the expulsions they were particularly adamant: France did not subscribe to Article XIII of the agreement on minorities to be transferred.[35] A direct Czechoslovak request to the French in September 1945 to take up to 500,000 Czech Germans in the FZO was rejected; as an internal memorandum noted 'it is difficult to imagine that France could accept to absorb into its zone 500,000 individuals who have always been dangerous, intolerable and unassimilable elements for the Czechoslovak Republic.'[36]

From the beginning of the crisis and the occupation of their zone, the views of at least some French officials on population questions were based heavily on ethno-cultural, almost racialising, assumptions, which crop up repeatedly in their analyses and contributed to French problematisation of the issues. This stance was linked to their ambitions for greater autonomy in the westernmost regions of Germany, which they sought to foster through the development of local or regional 'particularism'. Particularism was the policy of supporting the development of strong regional identities, as a counterweight to any centralising tendencies - without, however, necessarily overtly pushing for separatist movements to arise. In the French zone, this meant both bolstering the Catholic character of the zone (Catholics were the majority in many - though not all - FZO districts) and countering 'Prussian' influence from the North and North-East, which was seen as a 'centralising force'. A note by Administrator General Laffon is typical of these common racialising views. 'Ethnically,' he claimed, the Sudeten Germans 'differ entirely' from the Germans of the French Zone. 'They are "Border Germans", like Silesians or Bavarii who, by their race as by their civilisation, have nothing in common with Badeners, Württembergers or Rhinelanders.'[37] Views could shift; a few years later French authorities would argue a preference for receiving Germans originating from Czechoslovakia or Hungary over northern 'Prussian' elements harboured in Schleswig-Holstein.

## The Transfer Plan of 20 November 1945

Despite the mass movements transferring into the other zones, it appeared that by late October there still were no, or very few, German refugees originating from Poland or Czechoslovakia in the FZO.[38]

Well before October, there was agreement in the ACC of the need for an overall plan concerning the population transfers that had been sanctioned by the Potsdam agreement. The French had misgivings about

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[33] MAE, Dossier Z (51), Note 'Minorité allemande de Tchécoslovaquie', 07 September 1945

[34] MAE, Dossier Z (51), Note 'Minorité allemande de Tchécoslovaquie', 07 September 1945

[35] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR, Memorandum de Rosen to General Koeltz, 21 September 1945

[36] MAE, AOFAA, ADM40/3, Memorandum Laffon to Koenig, 10 October 1945

[37] MAE, AOFAA, ADM40/3, Memorandum Laffon to Koenig, 10 October 1945

[38] MAE, AOFAA, ADM40/3, Memorandum Laffon to Koeltz, 02 October 1945

the negotiation of the plan, since by definition it was aimed at carrying out the provisions of the Potsdam accords; France's non-signature of the accords made even the principle of negotiation on that basis unacceptable.[39] The US and the Soviets put forward proposals; both aimed to commit France to an 'unsustainable burden',[40] with the US proposing to send an initial 100,000 German expellees to the French zone within weeks and an unspecified number after that; and the Soviet Union proposing France take 650,000 overall.

Though France believed it should not be bound by the Potsdam accords, and despite the fact that the French zone already had to rely on substantial food imports, it did recognise that the humanitarian crisis required a response.[41] Yet French negotiators believed certain basic principles should prevail: the movement of internally displaced German refugees should take priority over transfers, as at least they were more likely to 'have a roof' to return to,[42] and the Czechs and Poles should agree to suspend transfers until spring 1946. The French argued they were unable to take in refugees, given food shortages both in the zone and in France itself.[43] The Soviets tried to make accommodations for the French, but the US and UK refused, on the grounds that there should not be simply a tripartite burden-sharing of the German minorities.[44] As a first compromise, recognising that some concession would have to be made on the minorities question, the French offered to take the 150,000 Germans in Austria included in the discussions, but only in spring.The final distribution plan was agreed formally on 20 November 1945. It covered the entire population expelled from Poland (3.5 million persons) to the Soviet and British zones, and from Czechoslovakia, Austria and Hungary (3.15 million persons) to the US, Soviet and French zones, distributed as follows:

**Table 2: Quadripartite Transfer Plan, 20 November 1945**

| Zone | From Poland and Polish-Administered Territories | From Czechoslovakia | From Hungary | From Austria | Zone Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Soviet Zone | 2,000,000 | 750,000 | | | 2,750,000 |
| British Zone | 1,500,000 | | | | 1,500,000 |
| American Zone | | 1,750,000 | 500,000 | | 2,250,000 |
| French Zone | | | | 150,000* | 150,000 |
| Total | 3,500,000 | 2,500,000 | 500,000 | 150,000 | **6,650,000** |
| | | | | *Not before April 1946 | |

[39] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR97, Memorandum de Rosen to Koeltz, 06 November 1945

[40] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR97, Memorandum de Rosen to Koeltz, 06 November 1945

[41] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR97, Memorandum de Rosen to Koeltz, 06 November 1945

[42] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR97, Memorandum de Rosen to Koeltz, 06 November 1945

[43] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR97, Memorandum De Rosen to Koeltz, 'Brief account of the discussion of the PDR Directorate concerning the distribution of minorities among the four zones', 10 November 1945

[44] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR97, Memorandum De Rosen to Koeltz, 'Brief account of the discussion of the PDR Directorate concerning the distribution of minorities among the four zones', 10 November 1945

De Rosen drew attention internally to the benefits of this plan: France was limited to 150,000 and had months to prepare for their arrival. Perceived ethnic affinities were also upheld. 'We have avoided taking eastern minorities, which is important given the policy we are following in the zone […] I estimate we will have no difficulty in assimilating the 150,000 minority Germans from Austria, given the affinities which have always existed between southern Germany and Austria'.[45]

Jacques Tarbé de Saint-Hardouin, the Diplomatic Counsellor of the French Commander-in-Chief, concurred with de Rosen's positive assessment:

> Given the initial positions and the terms of the Potsdam Accords, [the agreement] represents a great success. It also represents a sincere effort on the part of our Allies to settle this particularly serious question […] taking into practical account the fact that we cannot be bound by this question. We are asked only to take a little more than two percent of the total of the populations needing to be rehoused, that is, simply to make a gesture of good will.
> Should we refuse to make this gesture? Strictly speaking, we aren't held to it because we are not signatories of Potsdam, but we should not ignore the fact that if we do not reach agreement on this point with our Allies, we will not be able to do much to prevent infiltrations - which they may themselves support - into our zone. In addition, given the harrowing nature of this problem from a humanitarian perspective, the Anglo-Saxon press will not hesitate to denounce our selfishness, and will be delighted to let the entire responsibility fall on us for all the misery and loss of human life that is sure this coming winter to burden these populations expelled from their homes.
> [Moreover] by associating ourselves with this project we negate the arguments of those who claim that quadripartite action is impossible due to the 'obstruction' of France[…] This will considerably reinforce our position and help us to focus attention on its real purpose, that is, that we cannot accept anything that prejudges the future of the [Ruhr and Rhineland].[46]

This last observation of Tarbé de Saint-Hardouin illustrates that the refugee question, rather than being central to French concerns, was at best seen as a means to the more critical end of obtaining satisfaction on the territorial/security question. Some humanitarian principles came into play, but in essence the French approach was guided by the need to maintain cooperation at the quadripartite level with a view to ensuring France's broader security objectives. Lastly, there was also a degree of making virtue out of necessity; as refugees would enter the zone one way or another it would be better to regularise those movements, in order both to control them and to have them taken into account by the other Allies.

[45] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR97, Memorandum de Rosen to Koeltz, 14 November 1945

[46] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR97, Note Diplomatic Counsellor Tarbé de Saint-Hardouin to SGAAA, 15 November 1945

# Chapter 3. 1946 - The Human Chessboard

### Population Movements - 'One-for-one' continues

Early in the new year, the French obtained the agreement of the other allies for a suspension of the one-for-one exchanges for at least two months, in accordance with the general view that winter transfers were to be avoided.[47] A shortage of rolling stock and the priority given to movements of DPs meant one-for-one exchanges did not resume until well into the spring.

The French were aware that they would likely be unable to transfer all the internal refugees that they had on their books. They estimated that no more than 55-65 percent of the refugees from other zones in their zone would move, given the uncontrolled entries and exits that still took place and the resistance to being transferred shown by some of the evacuees.[48] Moreover, they recognised 'we have no instructions to oblige the reluctant refugees to depart unless Berlin [the ACC] has the authority to issue orders that repatriation can be effected *manu militari* if required'.[49] In any case, repatriating those who did not want to be repatriated - often because they considered themselves well-settled - would not only subject them to unwarranted hardship, but would harm the economy of the zone.[50]

### Transfer plan implementation

The Soviets, who had held the chairmanship of the ACA when the transfer plan was agreed, had been determined to obtain a quick agreement. A French assessment[51] from April 1946 attributed this Soviet haste to a desire to safeguard its role as 'protector' of Czechoslovakia and Poland while also lessening the load of the Soviet zone by transferring refugees to the American and British zones, particularly as the Western Allies were not in a position to observe or control movements over the Czech and Polish borders into the Soviet zone.

The French believed the British and Americans had for their part committed themselves very lightly, neither examining the numbers presented in the Soviet memorandum nor specifying that the plan should exclude the Germans who had been expelled before the plan was adopted. While the French had also accepted the Soviet figures as given, to its advantage these had proven to be greatly exaggerated.

The plan's execution revealed problems; the British discovered that many of the Germans from Poland they received had originated in fact from the Soviet zone, and the Poles were rigorously selecting the rest so that the British received very few healthy men of working age, less than 8 percent of the total. De Rosen noted this added to growing US-UK discontentment with France, which they considered to be a

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[47] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR97, Memorandum Koeltz to Koenig 'Interzone Transfers', 03 January 1946

[48] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR97, Memorandum Koeltz to Laffon, Return to zone of origin of German refugees in French zone, 16 February 1946

[49] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR67, Note on Interzone Repatriation of Refugees, 21 February 1946

[50] MAE, AOFAA, ADM40/3, Memorandum Laffon to Koenig on Repatriation of German Refugees, 11 March 1948

[51] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR97, Note to CGAAA, 'Transfer of German Minorities', 11 April 1946

beneficiary, along with the Soviets, of 'an accord of which they are the victims'[52]. Indeed, while France had committed to receiving 150,000 Germans nationals from Austria, recent numbers revealed that there were perhaps fewer than 10,000 eligible Germans there.

However, the most overt discord in the committee was between the British, Soviet and American representatives concerning the numbers of expellees from Poland. Since both the magnitude of the problem and the interpretations of the provisions of the agreement were subject to widely disparate opinions, the US and UK pressed for a revision of the plan. The French were aware that any revision would target the FZO, and seek to increase its quota.[53]

An August update on the implementation of the plan[54] observed that, though the transfers were meant to be completed by July 1946, in reality only 3 million of the total of 6.650 million minority Germans covered under the Potsdam agreement had arrived in Germany. While the pace of transfers originally agreed had been 'practically unrealisable', the French were of the view that the implementation delay was a 'very clear sign of the tendency of the Anglo-Saxons to slow down carrying it out, as if they realised the error they committed, and the fool's bargain they concluded, in agreeing to these transfers'.[55]

The French assessed that the Americans and British would seek any means available to find an agreement to suspend transfers and had abandoned support for the idea of transferring all minority Germans to Germany. In contrast, the Soviets feared a suspension of the movements and strove instead to accelerate transfers into the American and British zones, ensuring that they themselves retained only a minimal percentage. 'Overpopulation in the western zones of Germany, and the resulting economic imbalance, offer for the Soviets a political interest that has in no way escaped them'.[56] Hence the Soviet insistence - in violation of previous ACC agreements - that movements under the transfer plan took precedence over all others, including displaced persons.

The French by this time had begun to reshape their own discourse, both internally and externally, by claiming they had always opposed the transfers - despite their actual policy silence on the issue in 1945. 'The French authorities warned from the beginning about the serious drawbacks of the transfer into Germany of the German minorities; on many occasions, French representatives in the Allied Control Authority signalled the danger of this policy; their constant opposition was not in vain as it allowed for the number of German minorities to be transferred into Germany to be reduced from twelve million to 6.650 million and for the French portion of these transfers to be limited to a maximum of 150,000.'[57] Further French achievements

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[52] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR97, Note to CGAAA, 'Transfer of German Minorities', 11 April 1946

[53] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR97, Note to CGAAA, 'Transfer of German Minorities', 11 April 1946

[54] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR97, Memorandum (Secret) General Noiret to the CGAAA, 03 August 1946

[55] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR97, Memorandum (Secret) General Noiret to the CGAAA, 03 August 1946

[56] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR97, Memorandum (Secret) General Noiret to the CGAAA, 03 August 1946

[57] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR97, Memorandum (Secret) General Noiret to the CGAAA, 03 August 1946

included obtaining the 'theoretical increase in the Soviet zone's share, in order to lessen that of the Western zones' while 'convincing the Anglo-Saxons of the error that had been made'.[58]

However, the French knew to read the signs:

> in the PDR Directorate, where the French representative participates as spectator, or referee, of the passionate disputes between the Anglo-Saxons and the Soviets concerning the numbers involved in the current transfers, he is often the target of somewhat envious, if not bitter, remarks regarding the limited participation of the French zone. It is to be expected that in any future transfers, not foreseen in the transfer plan of 20 November 1945, the French zone may be asked to make a particular effort.[59]

Yet while the French authorities in Baden-Baden, Berlin and Paris were congratulating themselves at successfully upholding an exclusionary policy, the French and German authorities at the *Land* and local level in the zone had a different assessment of the problem. Severe labour shortages were taking a toll and they were desperate for workers, preferably sourced from amongst expellees in the American and British zones; otherwise the labour shortages risked attracting irregular entries into the zone.[60] Württemberg-Hohenzollern's Military Governor Widmer pressed for recruitment,[61] noting that the province had been asked to expect 75,000 ethnic Germans from Austria, which would have posed serious difficulties from a lodging, food supply and general assistance perspective, but would at least have solved the labour problem. In the event only 768 had arrived, in a 'fragmented and chaotic' manner; a 'complete fiasco'[62] had it not been for the 20,000 *Reichs-* and *Volksdeutsche* who had entered Württemberg by their own means.

## France's Commitment: The Germans in Austria and the *Volksdeutsche* Question

At the beginning of October 1945, US General Eisenhower had brought to the urgent attention of his ACC colleagues the problem posed by the presence of over 150,000 German nationals in Austria, which was in worse shape economically and in terms of food supply than Germany. American concern about the situation meant they ensured it would be included in the 20 November 1945 transfer agreement, even though Austria had not been mentioned in Article XIII of the Potsdam agreement, and it fell to France to take them in. Only then did the question arise: who were the 'Germans in Austria' covered by the agreement? The ensuing debate was revealing in terms of the confusion surrounding the categorisation of the refugees and expellees, and German and ethnic German populations across Europe; it also uncovered conflicting priorities and interests not just among allies, but between the administrative structures of the same occupying power. Each sought to redefine the problem of the refugees through competing definitions of who was or was not German, what the implications of the Potsdam agreement were, and who was responsible for which populations, all of which would necessarily have an impact on both current and future transfers.

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[58] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR97, Memorandum (Secret) General Noiret to the CGAAA, 03 August 1946

[59] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR97, Memorandum (Secret) General Noiret to the CGAAA, 03 August 1946

[60] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR76, Letter Dr. Eschenburg to the Military Governor of Württemberg-Hohenzollern, 09 August 1946

[61] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR67, Memorandum from Military Governor Widmer to AdmiGen Laffon, 18 September 1946

[62] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR67, Memorandum from Military Governor Widmer to AdmiGen Laffon, 18 September 1946

To begin with, as Allied authority officials in Austria pointed out, unlike in other countries in central Europe, 'there has never been a "German minority" residing normally in Austria'.[63] Second, a decision by the Berlin Coordinating Committee to treat each occupying power's German and Austrian zones as one for purposes of the one-for-one exchanges of internally displaced Germans, meant that those Germans who had their regular pre-war domicile in one of the zones of occupation in Germany, and who had moved or taken refuge in Austria during the war, were required to return to their pre-war German domicile. (In fact, virtually all of the 150,000 referred to by Eisenhower were in this situation, a distinction that was lost in the negotiation of the 20 November agreement; the Soviets had employed the figure without examining the composition of the group.) Therefore, these 'temporarily displaced' German nationals were not covered under the 20 November agreement (it should be noted that while one-for-one exchanges in Germany returned people to the domicile they had had on 01 September 1939, in the case of Austria the date was pushed back to its annexation by Nazi Germany on 13 March 1938).

Third, any 'Potsdam' ethnic German minorities, that is, who had fled or been expelled from Czechoslovakia, Hungary or Poland, would be included in the Potsdam totals, and transferred to the respective receiving zone in Germany as stipulated in the 20 November agreement. Therefore, by a process of elimination, the 'Germans in Austria' had to refer to Germans who had settled in Austria before its annexation by Nazi Germany in 1938, and who had not taken Austrian citizenship. However, even here there were exceptions, as the Austrian government itself had no great desire to expel all the German citizens on its territory and drew up a broad list of humanitarian and economic exemptions, all of whom would be eligible for Austrian nationality.[64] The numbers of this category of pre-1938 arrivals were unclear; estimates in the early months ranged from ten[65] to sixty thousand[66], but nowhere near the figure of 150,000 cited in the 20 November agreement.

However, at the same time the transfer plan was being negotiated in autumn 1945 more 'ethnic German' populations were entering Austria in significant numbers, from Romania, Bulgaria, and above all neighbouring Yugoslavia. Some had fled; others were expelled in much the same uncontrolled manner as in the early months of the Polish and Czech expulsions. Their numbers quickly grew beyond those of German nationals in the country and presented a problem, in terms of providing shelter, food and eventually employment, to Austrian and Allied occupying officials alike. By January 1946, 'non-Potsdam' ethnic German refugees, that is, those not originally from Poland, Czechoslovakia or Hungary, numbered 281,903.[67]

The Allied Council in Austria assumed the 'considerable number of Germanic people' in Austria, originating from Yugoslavia, Romania and Bulgaria were included under the transfer plan, as neither the

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[63] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR76/1, USFA note to CRX Berlin, 28 January 1946

[64] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR97, Berlin/PDR, Handwritten 'note préliminaire', undated but early March 1946

[65] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR97, Note to CGAAA, 'Transfer of German Minorities', 11 April 1946

[66] MAE, AOFAA, GFCC23, Note of the Research Section on the Germans of Austria, undated (late 1945-early 1946)

[67] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR97, Report from Vienna/Creusot to Berlin/de Rosen, '*Volksdeutsche* in Austria', 25 January 1946

Allies in Austria nor the Austrian Federal Government wished to see them remain.[68] The Berlin Control Council did not agree; the French privately noted, the *Volksdeutsche* originating from elsewhere in Europe 'were no more German than are the Austrians in Austria. There is no more reason to group them on German territory than on Austrian territory. As the Allied Governments have never taken a decision with respect to them, there is no reason why the Control Council should.'[69] The Soviets in Austria contributed to the lack of clarity; French authorities there reported a request from the Soviet authorities to transfer 7000 *Reichsdeutsche* from their Austrian zone and observed that Soviets were in fact expelling anyone of German origin in their zone, including those who had acquired Austrian citizenship long before 1938.[70] In return, the French insisted to the Soviets that they would accept only those that corresponded to the definition adopted by the Control Council; any *Volksdeutsche* or anyone of any other nationality would be refouled. There was a clear misunderstanding, intentional or otherwise, between the Soviets and the other Allies concerning *Reichsdeutsche* and *Volksdeutsche* in Austria.[71]

The revelation of this significant misunderstanding in interpretation between at least the western Allies in Berlin and those in Vienna led to a long debate between the two Control Authorities, pitting not just the occupying powers against each other, but also revealing different opinions among officials of the same power, with those in Austria wishing to rid the country of the *Volksdeutsche* problem and those in Germany reluctant to admit them and thereby compound their own challenge.

In the meantime, the French authorities in Baden-Baden and Berlin were conscious of their excellent fortune in having agreed to a number that could have implied an extra 150,000 mouths to feed, but which turned out to amount to a fraction of that. Their goodwill gesture, designed as a concession of their hardline position and a nod to the plight of the millions of refugees, would mean in reality little sacrifice on their part. As Deputy Commander General Koeltz wrote in an internal memo, while the result 'gives an idea of the excellent operation realised by the French zone of occupation with respect to the sharing of minorities, the greatest discretion is advisable, in order not to awaken the jealousy of the Americans, British and Soviets who receive many MILLIONS of Germans expelled from Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary.'[72]

### *Volksdeutsche* - The 'ethnic German' populations of Yugoslavia, Romania and Bulgaria

As illustrated by the debate over the 'Germans in Austria' question, the *Volksdeutsche* population in Austria was swiftly becoming another challenge for the Allies, and one without a simple solution. The Yugoslav

[68] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR97, Reply to Allied Control Authority in Germany from Allied Council for Austria, undated but after 10 January 1946

[69] MAE, AOFAA, GFCC23, Note of the Research Section on the Germans of Austria, undated (late 1945-early 1946)

[70] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR76, record of telephone conversations with Berlin and Innsbruck, 20 May 1946

[71] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR97, Minutes of the 32nd Meeting of the PDR Directorate of the Allied Commission for Austria, 16 July 1946

[72] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR103, Memorandum classified secret, signed Gen. Koeltz, 20 February 1946

government was, in addition, pressing for the ACC to extend the 20 November plan to transfer to Germany the more than 100,000 members of the German minority still in Yugoslavia.[73]

Already challenged by the transfers committed to at Potsdam, the western Allies in Germany quickly came to agree that further transfers into Germany had to be prevented. 'From the point of view of French interests any increase in the German population in Germany must be avoided by all means. The introduction into Germany of 6,650,000 minority Germans from Poland, Czechoslovakia and Austria is already[…] catastrophic in this respect.'[74] Any precedent of a transfer not sanctioned by the Potsdam agreement was to be strictly avoided. Having contested the legitimacy of the Potsdam agreement and refused to be bound by its provisions, the French now saw it as a bulwark against even greater population transfers, and began to champion it in that respect: 'Potsdam […] refers to the minorities of Poland, Czechoslovakia and Austria, but in no way to those in Yugoslavia, Romania and Bulgaria,'[75] the French delegation was 'firmly opposed to all new introductions into Germany of German populations other than those already agreed'.[76] Paris concurred: 'the aim we are pursuing is to keep these linguistic minorities in their country of domicile; any exception we might make risks bringing about the failure of this policy.'[77] The Soviets were alone in supporting the Yugoslav request.[78]

The question of the *Volksdeutsche* became one of migration management; if they were a problem, whose problem were they? The question, moreover, did not refer merely to central and eastern European countries; all of Germany's neighbours had populations of German nationals of longer or shorter date[79] and countries further afield, such as Egypt, China and some Latin American nations, also contemplated expelling their German populations. The authorities in the French zone noted that it was inexact to claim that 'the problem of these German minorities is a German problem […] the problem of the German minorities of Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary only became a German problem'[80] with the decision at Potsdam. Strictly speaking, the 'problem of national minorities should only be of interest to the country where they are located or the United Nations.'[81] Likewise, the problem of the minorities from Yugoslavia and Romania had become an 'Austrian problem', given the presence of so many of them there.[82]

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[73] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR97, Memorandum PDR/de Rosen to Pol. Counsellor Tarbé de Saint-Hardouin, 18 February 1946

[74] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR97, Memorandum PDR/de Rosen to Pol. Counsellor Tarbé de Saint-Hardouin, 18 February 1946

[75] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR97, Memorandum PDR/de Rosen to Pol. Counsellor Tarbé de Saint-Hardouin, 18 February 1946

[76] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR76/1, Statement of the French Delegate to the 18th Meeting of the Prisoners of War and Displaced Persons Directorate, 11 March 1946

[77] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR76/1, Telegram CGAAA/Mayer to Vienna, Innsbruck, Berlin and Baden-Baden, 05 April 1946

[78] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR76/1, DPOW/M(46)5, Minutes of the 17th Meeting of the Allied Control Authority, Prisoners of War and Displaced Persons Directorate, 25 February 1946

[79] See Marlou Schrover, 'The deportation of Germans from the Netherlands 1946–1952' in *Immigrants & Minorities: Historical Studies in Ethnicity, Migration and Diaspora* (2015) DOI: 10.1080/02619288.2015.1006522

[80] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR97, Memorandum PDR/de Rosen to CGAAA, 28 June 1946

[81] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR97, Memorandum PDR/de Rosen to CGAAA, 28 June 1946

[82] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR97, Memorandum PDR/de Rosen to CGAAA, 28 June 1946

This framing of the question misrepresented the situation somewhat - a sizeable fraction of minority Germans had already been expelled well before Potsdam, so Potsdam did not entirely create the problem, but rather recognised it. However, it illustrated the French view that the ACC should not have to solve the entirety of the German minority question; they were further frustrated by the insistence - of the Yugoslavs among others - to exclude German-speaking minorities from the mandate of the IRO, then under negotiation.[83] Solutions contemplated by the French involved either engaging in talks with the countries of origin - 'and nationality' - of the minorities, to get them to modify their policy ('it is unfortunately unlikely that this solution will meet with success') or asking the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations to modify the decision taken by the Refugee Committee excluding German minority refugees; their future emigration overseas could then be organised.[84] The French maintained their opposition in following years to any consideration of transfers of the Germanic-origin minorities from Yugoslavia or Romania to Germany; however they did conduct labour recruitment missions among them in Austria and in 1947 continued to press that these *Volksdeutsche* in Austria should be eligible for the protection and assistance of the IRO.[85]

One question that became clear as the French were arguing against any further acceptance of minority populations originating outside Germany was the need to address the problem of German nationals who found themselves, as a result of the war, outside Germany. These included Germans in Norway, Switzerland, France itself and the 200,000 Germans sheltered in camps in Denmark. The principle, for the French, was to create and uphold a distinction between what they characterised as the legitimate return of 'real'[86] Germans to Germany, and the unfounded requests for transfers of ethnic Germans. By taking up this question on Denmark's behalf, France also played the role it had adopted on other issues as the spokesperson in the ACC of Germany's European neighbours.[87]

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[83] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR97, Memorandum PDR/de Rosen to CGAAA, 28 June 1946

[84] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR97, Memorandum PDR/de Rosen to CGAAA, 28 June 1946

[85] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR76, Telegram CGAAA to Vienna, copied to Berlin and Baden-Baden, 13 July 1947

[86] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR76, Telegram CGAAA to Vienna, copied to Berlin and Baden-Baden, 13 July 1947

[87] MAE, AOFAA, GFCC23, Draft Decision of the Coordinating Committee CORC/P(46) 225, Annex 'A', 05 July 1946

# Chapter 4. 1947 - The Demographic Challenge

## Demographic Factors and France's Policy towards Refugees and Expellees

Though the French response to the refugee and expellee crisis in Germany was conditioned by security and economic considerations, both of these were linked in turn to demographic realities. French security, the reasoning went, was threatened at its most basic level by the simple mathematical increase in the population of its already much-bigger neighbour. Pressure sparked by overcrowding and penury made that population inherently more dangerous. The situation had been significantly aggravated by Europe-wide poor harvests in 1946 and 1947, which made the food supply situation more precarious than it had been even at war's end. Economically, the refugees in the early years were a cost, to Germany and its occupiers; before monetary reform, Marshall Aid and the *Wirtschaftswunder* it was difficult to imagine the 'surplus' population could ever be absorbed into the job market, housed and clothed and fed decently. Yet it was almost more threatening, from the French perspective, to imagine a Germany where they could be employed and fed, as that would imply a higher level of German economic activity and prosperity than France was willing to accept, at least in the short term, and at least until France itself had safely launched its own program of economic modernisation and recovery.

These millions of refugees constituted a demographic challenge, one that was best met, in the views of French strategists, by a combination of measures. Mass emigration of the refugees was the first and most obvious solution, though its implementation was not self-evident. Labour migration to France was another - of refugees, but also of DPs and POWs - and had the advantage of contributing to French recovery while relieving pressure in Germany.

Another approach was to address the question at its source: who are the Germans? Who is German, who is not, and who can or should be made German? The French early on adopted a restrictive stance on nationality, which they emphatically did not believe should be granted automatically to the refugees and expellees, in an effort to keep the number of German nationals as low as possible.

Children became another battleground; from the beginning of its occupation, France launched an effort to reclaim every child in Germany that was, or could have been, the offspring of at least one French parent. Subtracting a child from Germany for adoption in France meant one less German and one more French citizen.

Each of these policy measures, or clusters of measures, will be examined in turn after a brief review of France's own demographic situation and approach to nationality and immigration at the time, which informed its policy.

## France's Demographic Situation

In order to tackle the enormous job of post-war economic reconstruction, the GPRF established a planning commission, the *Commissariat Général au Plan* (CGP), at the beginning of 1946. The CGP was headed by Jean Monnet, a few years later one of the founders of the European Coal and Steel Community, and guided

the implementation of the recovery plan bearing his name. The 'Monnet Plan' foresaw the modernisation and reconstruction of the French economy, based substantially on use of the coal of the Ruhr and the Saar with the aim of making France the leading steel producer in Europe, and thus was a critical element of France's Germany policy. The CGP calculated the labour required for the plan's implementation and concluded that France was short 1.5 million labourers; a shortfall that would need to be met through permanent immigration or temporary migrant labour.

France had long been haunted by the spectre of demographic decline, particularly compared to Germany, and renewal on this front was a post-war priority. 'The lack of men and the weakness of the French birth rate are the underlying cause of our misfortunes,' de Gaulle announced to the Consultative Assembly in March 1945, and 'the principal obstacle in the way of our recovery'.[88] This required concerted action: immigration as well as natalist policies meant to reverse almost two centuries of decline in the birth rate. Accordingly, France's first immigration law was promulgated in November 1945. It established a system whereby entry was controlled by the National Immigration Office (NIO) and work permits were granted 'without taking national origin into account.'[89] This neutrality with respect to origin, Patrick Weil notes, is apparently remarkable given the racialist, and sometimes outright racist, views of many of the members of the committee.[90] Yet the strict legal neutrality of the text was not necessarily reflected in the neutrality of its implementation - as Weil points out, the NIO necessarily made choices regarding where to direct its recruitment efforts, which resulted in *de facto* national preferences.[91] The NIO's earliest recruitment offices in Austria and Western Germany were initially directed at displaced persons but gradually opened to German recruitment.[92]

For those who pushed for ethnic categorisation of immigrants, Germany had always figured high on the list, along with other 'Nordics'; within Germany, preference was given to southern regions on the grounds of 'cultural proximity' and thus enhanced assimilability. Even if not represented in the final immigration law, these were commonplace views that, as we have seen, were reflected frequently in the correspondence of French zone officials. Given this perception of Germany as both a natural country of emigration and a desirable source of immigrants to France (in theory; however, French public opinion was not in fact favourable to German immigration[93]), it was logical that the idea of encouraging German labour

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[88] General de Gaulle, speech to the Consultative Assembly, 03 March 1945, quoted in Patrick Weil, *How to be French: Nationality in the Making since 1789* (trans. Catherine Porter) (Durham, N.C. 2008). Translation of *Qu'est-ce qu'un français? Histoire de la nationalité française depuis la Révolution*, (Paris 2005), 131

[89] Patrick Weil, 'Racisme et discrimination dans la politique française de l'immigration: 1938-1945/1974-1995' in *Vingtième Siècle, revue d'histoire*, 47 (July-September 1995) 77-102, 95

[90] The committee's secretary general, Georges Mauco, had played a prominent role before and during the war, including under Vichy, in developing policy with respect to migrants and refugees and had strong views on the assimilability - and inassimilability - of different ethnic groups.

[91] Weil, 'Racisme', 97

[92] Jean Bourgeois-Pichat, 'La situation démographique', *Population*, 3:1 (1948) 147-157, 153

[93] Alain Girard, 'Le recours à la main-d'oeuvre allemande', *Population* 2:3 (1947) 579-581, 581

migration to France would take hold, as a complement to the mass emigration France saw as the solution to Germany's 'surplus' population.

Other means of comparatively boosting French population were also favoured, including naturalisations, which increased substantially in the early post-war years.[94] And France was, like many other western countries, embarking on its own baby boom.[95]

## Germany's Demographic Situation and the Emigration Solution

At the Moscow Council of Foreign Ministers, in March 1947, Foreign Minister Georges Bidault addressed the German demographic question, formalising France's position that emigration provided the only secure solution to Germany's population problems. In this question, Bidault noted,

> as with all the other German problems, France is guided by the notion of security […] It is undeniable that the human potential hitherto at Germany's disposal has constituted a powerful element of its war potential, comparable to that represented by its industrial power. A demographically unbalanced Germany will always contain a latent war danger and this danger will be all the greater if it is difficult for its population to live on its territory.[96]

Bidault proposed several measures 'in the interests of peace, and to raise the living conditions of the Germans themselves': no further transfers beyond those already agreed; a cessation of the Potsdam transfers, should the sending countries agree; repatriation or resettlement outside of Germany of the DP population and, finally, German emigration.[97]

To support their proposal of mass German emigration, it was important for the French to promote the concept of Germany's 'overpopulation', and to emphasise both its negative humanitarian impact and the inherent, and dangerous, instability it entailed. Repeatedly, in speeches such as Bidault's to the CFM, and in interventions in the Control Council structure, they pressed the idea that the growth of the German population, unbalanced in demographic terms with distorted ratios of age classes and genders, crowded into a truncated territory and with additional populations of displaced persons and *Volksdeutsche* refugees, was a problem that could not be solved within the confines of Germany itself. As one internal French note[98] on the German demographic situation noted, the refugee and expellee populations could be housed and fed in the countryside and small towns, but not employed; conversely, cities might be able to offer jobs, but not food and accommodation.[99] Remedying either deficit would take capital and material that Germany would lack 'for decades'.[100] The only solution was 'organised and orchestrated emigration' of first, displaced persons,

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[94] Weil, *How to be French*, 145

[95] Bourgeois-Pichat, 'La situation démographique' (1948), 150

[96] President Georges Bidault, Statement to the Moscow Council of Foreign Ministers, 15 March 1947 in *Déclarations de M. Georges Bidault, Président de la Délégation française au Conseil des Ministres des Affaires Étrangères, Session de Moscou, mars-avril 1947* (Paris 1947) 11

[97] Bidault statement 15 March 1947, 12-13

[98] MAE, AOFAA, ADM41, PDR Note on the German Demographic Problem, 13 September 1948

[99] MAE, AOFAA, ADM41, PDR Note on the German Demographic Problem, 13 September 1948

[100] MAE, AOFAA, ADM41, PDR Note on the German Demographic Problem, 13 September 1948

and second, of Germans. By 1948, the DP population was shrinking to the 'hard core', already viewed as a problem which 'seems unlikely to find a solution, as no country views happily the obligation to take in a needy contingent'.[101] However, a solution to the DP problem was urgent, not least given the costs borne by the member states of the International Refugee Organisation that was responsible for their care.

German emigration should not unduly weaken economic productivity, but should 'diminish both its population density and its reproductive potential'.[102] In this respect, the French envisaged a gendered emigration; while they generally (though not exclusively) sought male labour migrants for France - and labour migration was still viewed as temporary - permanent overseas migration should be predominantly female. 'Efforts should be focused on large families, women with several children, young widows or unmarried mothers, young single women and adolescents.'[103] The French further believed that largely female migration was less likely to create political problems in the receiving countries: 'because the majority of the emigrants will be female, there is no real basis for the fear that extensive Pan-Germanist organisations will be created abroad.'[104]

The French thought the *Volksdeutsche* should be the first focus of any emigration policy, for several reasons in keeping with their overall demographic approach: the *Volksdeutsche* 'not only have the greatest number of children per family, but also constitute a moving tide, still not definitively settled, not assimilated, and to whom it does not seem appropriate to automatically grant German nationality.'[105] Their migration would remove any present or future contribution they might make to Germany's population and any claim they might make to German nationality.

France's German emigration policy linked in different ways to the other policies they were pursuing elsewhere in the Control Council. To ensure its success, they reasoned it would important to avoid redistribution aimed at lessening population density as overpopulation would create a 'psychological climate' better suited to promoting emigration.[106] Furthermore, it would be essential to avoid 'accidental' increases in population density; all steps must be taken 'to ensure that German nationality not be granted to, nor the return permitted of, elements residing outside the frontiers for many long years and whose repatriation is not justified by imperative reasons.'[107]

The French position on emigration was not shared by their British and American counterparts. While both were prepared to consider some German emigration as a distant possibility - and by 1948-1949 were taking some German emigrants themselves - they saw mass migration as neither practicable nor realistic in the short term. US Commander-in-Chief Clay remarked bluntly it was 'well known that no government in

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[101] MAE, AOFAA, ADM41, PDR Note on the German Demographic Problem, 13 September 1948

[102] MAE, AOFAA, ADM41, PDR Note on the German Demographic Problem, 13 September 1948

[103] MAE, AOFAA, ADM41, PDR Note on the German Demographic Problem, 13 September 1948

[104] MAE, AOFAA, ADM41, PDR Note on the German Demographic Problem, 13 September 1948

[105] MAE, AOFAA, ADM41, PDR Note on the German Demographic Problem, 13 September 1948

[106] MAE, AOFAA, ADM41, PDR Note on the German Demographic Problem, 13 September 1948

[107] MAE, AOFAA, ADM41, PDR Note on the German Demographic Problem, 13 September 1948

the world will accept German emigrants.'[108] Transportation shortages were another obvious bottleneck. Mainly, however, the British and Americans were concerned about the negative impact of further reducing the economic potential of Germany through excessive labour migration; as an American expert put it, 'selective emigration would do more harm than no emigration at all'.[109] And finally, they did not view the problem in the same way the French did. It was not the numbers of Germans that posed difficulties - one British expert suggested 'it cannot safely be asserted that there is in fact a large surplus population in the Western zones'.[110] Rather, the problem, if there was one, lay in density, distribution and integration; this last was above all an economic question (and partly a social one).

The French, in turn, were distrustful of American ambitions to raise German industrial output as a means of integrating refugees, and viewed later British determination to have some Marshall Aid converted to a grant for refugees as a purely self-interested initiative, rather than as a 'sincere desire to reconstruct a healthy economy'.[111] As for the Germans themselves, while some estimates put the wish to emigrate at 20 percent of the indigenous population and 33 percent of the refugees,[112]most German authorities opposed immigration schemes, fearing losing both viable labour and the increased populations that justified higher industrial output levels and, after 1948, Marshall Aid.[113]

## Labour Migration: the POW example

> France retains prisoners of war because of a vital necessity: the reconstruction of its economy, ruined by four years of occupation. They are a reparation that has been granted in a strict spirit of justice, for the devastations France suffered at the hands of the enemy […] Prisoners of war provide the labour […] which is the first and immediate contribution of Germany to the recovery of France.[114]

As noted above, with a view to contributing to France's recovery plan, migration was above all intended to fill labour needs. Germany had three potential sources of labour to offer: prisoners of war, first as a form of in-kind reparations and later converted to civilian contracts; displaced persons and finally German civilians. The latter two categories also offered scope for more permanent, family-based migration, and were encouraged to migrate with their family members. The case of prisoner of war labour is illustrative of both France's critical need for labour migration and the policy lengths it was prepared to go to to get it and manage it, in this case, creating structures for conversion of POW to civilian labour.

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[108] MAE, AOFAA, AP115, Extract of minutes of 12th meeting of the Commanders-in-Chief of the Western Zones, 31 March 1949

[109] MAE, AOFAA, AP115, Comment of US Labour Counsellor on the 'Coordinated Statements', Appendix C TWPR/P(49)6, 8 February 1949

[110] MAE, AOFAA, ADM41, Opinion of the British Economic Counsellor on the 'Coordinated Statements', Appendix A of TWPR/P(49)3, 25 January 1949

[111] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR55, Report on WCC Conference on German Refugees, 02 March 1949

[112] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR55, Report on WCC Conference on German Refugees, 02 March 1949

[113] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR55, Report on WCC Conference on German Refugees, 02 March 1949

[114] MAE, AOFAA, AP169, La Documentation française, 'Les Prisonniers de Guerre en France', 03 July 1947

Use of POW labour began even before the end of the war, with about fifty thousand at work; their numbers sharply increased up to the end of 1945 as more than 484,000 were added, many transferred to France from the American zone in Germany. The peak level reached was 555,892 at work in November 1945; France actually held more, but only 75 to 80 percent were able to work at any given time. Their numbers remained around the half million mark until mid-1946, when liberation and repatriation began and then accelerated with the implementation of a repatriation plan as of April 1947. By early 1948 there were fewer than 200,000 at work in France, and their numbers steadily declined over the year until the last POWs were liberated and returned at the end of 1948.[115]

Many worked in agriculture, followed by reconstruction and de-mining, and then coal and other mines. Still others worked in steel and metalworking, chemical plants or textile factories.[116]

Beginning in 1947, the French offered one-year contracts as free labour to German POW workers, in an effort to mitigate the impact their departure would have on the French economy. Under these contracts, the POWs would be freed and hired as the equivalent of other foreign labour in France, with the same rights (social security, ration cards) and paid at least in theory the same as a similar category of French worker would be, although 30 percent of their salary would be held back by the French state as reparations, and another percentage would be sent directly to their families. Another benefit was the right to return for a period of leave to Germany before the contract began, with up to 30 kilograms of goods.

Once liberated, the four powers agreed that POWs, like civilians, would be returned to their zone of origin. However, as with civilians, the western zones did not repatriate against their wishes those originally from the Soviet zone and the provinces now under Polish administration.[117]

German POWs were also used as labour throughout the French zone. By September 1945, French civil authorities in the zone were seeking to fill key jobs in industry and agriculture, while 'of course keeping in mind labour needs in France and security requirements in the FZO'.[118] Yet needs in France took clear priority, and POW labour was sometimes withdrawn from the zone for work in France.[119] However, POWs interned in the FZO could have their captivity 'suspended' by the Commander of the Occupation Forces if they belonged to categories of 'indispensable workers' in agriculture, industry and public service (and provided they were not Nazi party members).[120]

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[115] Fabien Théofilakis, *Les prisonniers de guerre allemands en mains françaises (1944-1949): captivité en France, rapatriement en Allemagne*, (PhD thesis Université de Paris Ouest Nanterre 2010) 537-538

[116] Théofilakis, 547

[117] MAE, AOFAA, ADM41, Memorandum Laffon to Koenig, 23 September 1945

[118] MAE, AOFAA, ADM40/3, Memorandum Laffon to the Deputy Commander of French Occupation Forces, 26 September 1945

[119] MAE, AOFAA, ADM40/3, Letter Laffon to Military Governor of Rhineland Hesse-Nassau, 'Coordination of questions concerning German POWs', 10 December 1945

[120] MAE, AOFAA, ADM41, Memorandum Laffon to Military Governors, 10 December 1945

The first POWS who had opted for free labour contracts in France began work in August 1947. 136,000 had chosen the option[121], but about ten percent failed to fulfil their contracts by, for example, remaining in Germany after their three-week home leave was finished. As they were expected to return to Germany on completion of their contracts, their numbers began to decrease after July 1948. By 01 July 1949, 50,000 remained in France.[122]

By the end of 1948, the quasi-totality of POWs held by the French had been liberated and repatriated; converted POW labour had mostly departed by the end of 1949. The POWs had constituted 'a key element of the success of the French recovery',[123] providing a surge of labour at a time when none was available elsewhere and serving as a form of short-term labour migration, destined to solve an economic but not a demographic problem.

## The Nationality Question

Questions quickly arose concerning the nationality of the newly arrived populations in Germany and the rights they should be accorded. The expelling countries had, for the most part, stripped them of citizenship. As the overarching French interest was to limit, not expand, the number of German nationals, France adopted a restrictive stance on the granting of nationality to the refugees and expellees. Civic rights - specifically electoral rights - were another question. The French zone Directive No. 44, concerning the establishment of electoral lists in the zone, took account of some movements during the war years, but not others. Under the Directive, eligibility was granted on the basis of 'electoral domicile'. In principle, to acquire electoral domicile in a commune or municipality, one had to have resided there for one year prior to 01 May 1946. Provisions were made to accommodate returning evacuees, victims of internment and liberated POWs; however, all those who had acquired German nationality after 12 March 1938, and therefore *Volksdeutsche* expellees, were excluded from the electoral roll.[124]

A draft law on the granting of nationality to persons transferred under the Potsdam agreement came before the ACA in the spring of 1946. Generally speaking, the US, UK and Soviets were in favour of both granting nationality as widely as possible, and reducing the residence requirement for electoral eligibility; the French opposed, and began a long campaign both to restrict nationality and to delay voting rights. One approach they used was to press for a return to the pre-1914 situation whereby nationality was first granted by a *Land,* which then in turn entailed conferral of German nationality. However, they also recognised that adopting this approach might put *Länder* in a situation where they would feel compelled to confer nationality on a large number of refugees, hampering their own future development and right to choose in the matter.[125]

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[121] Louis Henry, 'La situation démographique, *Population*, 3:4 (1948) 713-730, 727

[122] Louis Henry and Jacques Voranger, 'La situation démographique', *Population*, 4:3 (1949) 523-534, 533

[123] Théofilakis, 536

[124] MAE, AOFAA, AP17, Directive No. 44 of the Commander-in-Chief, concerning the establishment of electoral lists in view of German elections, 28 May 1946

[125] MAE, AOFAA, AP17, Memorandum Political Counsellor Tarbé de Saint-Hardouin to the Director of the Division for Interior Affairs, 28 August 1946

While they eventually accepted a year-long residence limit for voting, as this conferred no special benefit on transferred vis-à-vis locally established populations, they disagreed with the other Allies on the date of application of the law's provisions. The US, UK and Soviets believed nationality should be granted to people who had arrived in Germany after 8 May 1945; the French insisted that the date of eligibility should be that of the Potsdam Accords, 2 August 1945, and that nationality should be refused anyone who had arrived on German territory before that date[126] - once more accepting the legitimacy of the Potsdam accords when they served a limiting purpose, as in the case of restricting additional *Volksdeutsche* transfers.

The debate continued throughout 1946 and into 1947; the French refused to alter their position and instead expanded it, insisting on excluding all who came before the Potsdam accords, all those who were from a country cited in Potsdam but who were residing in a zone other than that to which they had been assigned, and all those who came from any country not listed in the Potsdam agreement. In an internal briefing note, the Research section mused 'there could perhaps be some interest in leaving these people without nationality',[127] and letting *Länder* decide for themselves, which might naturally give rise to restrictions, as some political parties would not want to grant civic rights to the refugees and overpopulated *Länder* would also wish to lessen their burden. 'It is not certain that the *Länder* would be as generous as the occupying powers are proposing to be. This would be valuable from a French point of view, as it is not in our interest to settle a population almost irremediably in Germany by granting it German nationality.'[128]

The French also objected to the draft law in that it would grant German nationality to all children, legitimate and illegitimate, which it feared would obstruct France's own policy concerning recuperation of part-French illegitimate children.[129]

The French also employed their standard argument of refusing to prejudge the future form and status of Germany; granting German nationality 'would risk presenting the negotiators of the Peace Treaty with an accomplished fact.'[130]

France maintained its opposition to the draft law until the quadripartite work of the Control Council ended in March 1948, and resisted discussion at the tripartite level. The *Länder* adopted independent laws on nationality and electoral rights; those in the Bizone mostly along the lines that had been supported by the UK and US, with automatic conferral of nationality and rapid granting of civic rights. The French were stricter; in reviewing the draft law for assistance to refugees submitted at the *Land* level in the Rhineland-Palatinate parliament, for instance, the Justice Section of the Military Government objected to the word *Volkszugehörigkeit* in the text, which they translated as 'state of belonging to the German people': it 'could

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[126] MAE, AOFAA, AP17, Internal Account of Meeting of Mixed Committee on conferral of German nationality, 11 October 1946

[127] MAE, AOFAA, 1GFCC, Briefing Note, 24 June 1947

[128] MAE, AOFAA, 1GFCC, Briefing Note, 24 June 1947

[129] MAE, AOFAA, 1GFCC, Briefing Note, 24 June 1947

[130] MAE, AOFAA, 1GFCC, Minutes of 127th CORC, item on Draft Law Granting Nationality, 02 July 1947

open the way to all kinds of interpretations (pan-Germanist tendencies)'.[131] For definitional purposes they believed it would be enough to state 'All persons who do not possess German nationality, but who were expelled from their homes (or cannot return there) as Germans, will be treated as German nationals' in the application of the law.[132] The implication of this, though it was not addressed by French officials, was that 'Germanness' would be defined essentially by the expelling nations as reflected in their decision to expel certain persons and not others. In any event, this French objection proved moot, as the term *Volkszugehörigkeit* was incorporated into most of the corresponding laws in the *Länder* of the Bizone, and finally into Article 116 of the constitution, the German Basic Law adopted on 23 May 1949.

The French sought to limit as much as possible, and for as long as possible, the creation of new German citizens. Yet, as much as it was about keeping German population numbers down, it was also linked to their overall approach of decentralisation for Germany and their reluctance to take any decision that might compromise its future status. While the British and Americans favoured rapid expellee integration in order to maintain stability in their partition zones[133], this was less of a concern for the French zone, given the far smaller numbers involved; the French further believed that integration could in fact be better achieved through *Land* nationality, which would also boost regional particularism. Voting rights concerned the French as they assumed refugees would prefer centralising solutions; only long-settled residents of a region, with a strong personal regional identity, could be expected to support federalist structures. By restricting voting, they hoped to limit the influence of the refugees and expellees on the development of future German federal arrangements.

## Children and adoptions

Hundreds of thousands of French forced labourers, male and female, and male POWs worked in Germany during the course of the war; one inevitable result was the birth of children with at least one French parent. Consistent with French demographic concerns, it quickly became a priority of the French government to recuperate, where possible, these children and return them to France - either to be reunited with their French parent, or for adoption by French families.

One challenge, however, was the absence of any statistics on the numbers involved. As part of the early post-war effort to enumerate all nationals of the United Nations[134] in Germany, the French suggested including specific information on all children - legitimate or natural - who had one or more parents who were nationals of the United Nations.[135]

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131 MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR66, Note for the Head of the Administrative, Cultural and Social Affairs Division, 12 January 1949.

132 MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR66, Note for the Head of the Administrative, Cultural and Social Affairs Division, 12 January 1949.

133 Andrew Demshuk, 'Citizens in Name Only: The National Status of German Expellees, 1945–53', *Ethnopolitics*, 5:4 (2006) 383-397, 384

134 Note: the term 'United Nations' was a synonym for Allied nations and referred to signatories of the 'Declaration by United Nations' of 1 July 1942, which became the basis of the United Nations Organisation in 1945.

135 MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR76/1, Annex 'A' to DPOW/M(46)5, Minutes of the 17th Meeting of the Allied Control Authority, Prisoners of War and Displaced Persons Directorate, 25 February 1946

The Soviets supported such a census, as they too were interested in recuperating children with one or two Soviet parents. However, the US and UK were more reluctant to pursue the idea. '[The US delegation] seems not to desire the least difficulty with the Germans in those cases where one of the parents is German[…] It also seems not to want to plan ahead regarding children of GIs'.[136] The US also wanted to avoid registering DP children, for fear of bringing them to the attention of their 'home' governments in eastern Europe.[137]

In an effort to overcome concerns, the PDR section advised senior French commanders that the French delegation 'has tried to minimise its real intentions by insisting the exercise is simply an innocent census of children, and not at all intended to take charge of them or to change their nationality at the stroke of a pen.'[138] There were estimated to be 'more than 100,000 (if not 300,000) abandoned children grouped in *Kinderheime'*. France could not renounce the idea of finding and recovering children taken from their parents by the Germans. The German authorities were 'reluctant to admit the existence of these children and only return them when constrained to do so. There are two possible reasons for this attitude: either the continued desire to develop German human potential or the desire to hide the kidnappings committed by Germans'.[139] Of course, 'developing human potential' was precisely what the French hoped to facilitate in France by recuperating as many children as possible.

In a memorandum to the CGAAA on the broader German demographic problem, General Koenig noted with respect to emigration that 'the ideal solution would consist in introducing into France, not young people, already formed (or deformed), but rather easily assimilable children, or even babies. For reference, there are thousands of children of French origin in Germany, born during the war years.'[140] In March 1946, the GPRF announced its official decision to transfer to France 'all children born or arrived in Germany since 1 October 1938, legitimate or natural, and one of whose parents, is, or is believed to be, a French national'; the French Ministry of Public Health and Population was responsible for the operation. 'The national interest,' the zone was informed, 'requires that this recuperation of children of French blood be carried out with the greatest success'.[141]

Testifying to the extent to which nationality played a critical role in the considerations of officials, the Ministry of Public Health and Population spelled out 'indispensable' procedures 'concerning vital statistics and nationality. It seems […] to be preferable that these children, and possibly the people who take them in, should know nothing of their foreign origin and that in the future all trace of their foreignness

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[136] MAE, AOFAA, GFCC24, Briefing Note for French delegation on the Census and Registration of Child Nationals of the United Nations in Germany, 04 March 1946

[137] MAE, AOFAA, GFCC24, Briefing Note on the Census and Registration of Child Nationals, 04 March 1946

[138] MAE, AOFAA, GFCC24, Briefing Note on the Census and Registration of Child Nationals, 04 March 1946

[139] MAE, AOFAA, GFCC24, Additional information on Child Searches, 04 March 1946

[140] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR97, Memorandum Koenig to CGAAA, 'The German demographic problem', 09 March 1946, 1-6, 5

[141] MAE, AOFAA, 5PDR55, CGAAA memorandum to PDR Division Baden-Baden, 22 May 1946

should vanish.'[142] As wards of the state, they would be issued a 'certificate of origin', equivalent to a birth certificate, which could indicate a new name for the child and make no mention of its birthplace; the new Nationality Code allowed for French nationality to be acquired by declaration upon the child's arrival in France.

By the end of 1946, 219 children had been repatriated to France and the PDR section had established more than 6000 dossiers on children of potential interest. General Koenig warned

> it would be best if this task could be accomplished as rapidly as possible, to minimise the effects of time that work against us. The children are ever more difficult to find, they become more German in their language and their ways, they forget more and more their parents from whom they continue to be separated and, finally, the proofs of paternity become increasingly difficult to establish.[143]

The French authorities required German officials at the local level to inform them of all children born of German mothers and French or Allied fathers, military or civilian, whether the fathers had recognised the children and whether the mothers intended to keep the children or not.[144] If a father did not recognise paternity and the German mother chose not to raise the child, the procedure required that she formally give it up to the French authorities, as French law required that a child be 'abandoned' prior to being adopted. Mothers were informed of the consequences of doing so -the break would be permanent - and were granted a month (later extended to three) to revoke their decision if they wished.[145]

Despite initial estimates that thousands of children could be involved in these movements, the actual numbers, though not precisely known, did not amount to more than several hundred; Yves Denéchère cites one document with the figure of 961 repatriations, of whom 286 returned to their own families and 452 were placed with adoptive families[146]. The PDR section's activity report for July to September 1948 notes the 'slowing down' of admissions into the zone's nurseries, however 56 repatriations were made to France.[147]

In the second half of 1949, once the German Federal Republic was established and France was represented by its High Commission, operations were wound down and most of the nurseries closed. This raised the question of how to recuperate any children who might be given up by their mothers in future, although the Inspector for Health, PDR affairs and Population in the High Commission was of the opinion that 'in my view, this operation should not be continued' as 'the number of children likely to be available for

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[142] MAE, AOFAA, 5PDR55, Letter Ministry of Population/Family and Childhood Division to CGAAA, 10 July 1946

[143] MAE, AOFAA, ADM40/5, Letter Koenig to CGAAA, Search and repatriation of children, 10 January 1947

[144] Yves Denéchère, 'Des adoptions d'État : les enfants de l'occupation française en Allemagne, 1945-1952', *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 57:2 (2010)159-179, 163

[145] MAE, AOFAA, 5PDR55, Letter Ministry of Public Health and Population, Childhood Division to PDR Baden-Baden, 03 April 1947

[146] Yves Denéchère, 'Des adoptions d'État', 179

[147]MAE, AOFAA, ADM41, PDR Activity Report July-September 1948, 27 October 1948

France is very low and will continue to decrease; however, disadvantages of a political nature will grow on the German side'.[148]

Yves Denéchère remarks that this policy of repatriating all children of even partial French heritage was entirely in keeping with France's post-war populationist policy. Not only were these children to be recuperated, but there was also official opposition to French children (such as the children of American GIs and French women) being adopted abroad.[149] The fact that the adoptions were essentially policy-driven leads him to call them *des adoptions d'État*, or state adoptions[150]. The change in French policy from mid-1949 on was due in part to there being fewer cases, but above all to the creation of the West German state, with its own interests in the matter.[151] Tara Zahra observes that post-war populationism was a manifestation of post-war nationalism, a way of rebuilding nations and reclaiming national sovereignty. 'Like women, children were seen as a form of national 'property' that required protection from foreign invasion and appropriation […] every European government sought to replenish its dead soldiers and civilians, recover its "lost children", and secure the labour power needed for post-war reconstruction.'[152]

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[148] MAE, AOFAA, French High Commission to Germany/Inspector for Health, PDR and Population to CGAAA, 25 August 1949

[149] Yves Denéchère, 'Des adoptions d'État', 162

[150] Yves Denéchère, 'Des adoptions d'État', 160

[151] Yves Denéchère, 'Des adoptions d'État', 178

[152] Tara Zahra, '"A Human Treasure": Europe's Displaced Children Between Nationalism and Internationalism', *Past and Present*, Supplement 6 (2011) 332-350, 334-335

# Chapter 5. 1948 - Ruptures and Shifts

By September 1948, the total number of expellees in the three western zones was 7,468,000; 800,000 were expellees who had initially landed in the Soviet zone and then fled further west. The French zone held approximately 70,000, about one percent of the total.[153] By the beginning of 1948, 5127 expellees in total had been received from Austria under the 20 November transfer plan.[154] About 41,000 DPs remained in the French zone in late 1948.[155]

French efforts to limit entries into the zone were hampered by the gradual freeing of circulation among zones; the number of clandestine entries grew quickly.[156] Authorisation to stay in the zone was granted at the district or *Land* level; the initial decision was taken by German authorities, and then approved by the PDR services. The steady rise in population led the French to issue strict guidelines to the local German authorities in mid-1948, recommending admission only for family reunification, employment of specialised labour to fill pressing economic gaps or exceptional humanitarian cases. Meant initially to be restrictions, during later debate on redistribution the French authorities instead presented these guidelines as opportunities for free movement and proof that the zone was not closed.

The French PDR authorities regularly met with the German Refugee Commissioners of the *Länder* of the French Zone, who clearly shared the perspective of the French on the desirability of keeping the zone closed, especially once provisions to import needed labour were in place. The minutes of the 15 September 1948 meeting reported, for instance, that the commissioners

> thanked the French Occupation authorities for having been able, until now, to prevent the inflow of refugees into their provinces and social agitation […] The Refugee Commissioners count on the French authorities to continue to hold the same firm policy, and avoid that the French zone receives refugees who would not fail to upset the homogeneity of the Zone.[157]

PDR head de Rosen assured the commissioners that 'there was no reason to believe that the French authorities in the Zone would modify the policy that they had followed to date,' including 'finding a solution to the problem of German overpopulation through organising the emigration from Germany of the surplus population'.[158]

### Long-term planning for the FZO

As part of planning required for the implementation of the European Recovery Program, the Marshall Plan office of the Planning and Statistics Section of the French Zone developed a memorandum outlining the

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[153] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR55, Refugee Defence Committee Field Representative's Report: Visit to Germany and Austria, August-September 1948, 01 November 1948

[154] MAE, AOFAA, AP169, PDR Monthly report, 28 January 1948

[155] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR55, Appendix 'A' to Refugee Defence Committee Field Representative's Report, 08 October 1948

[156] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR66, Note to file, 23 July 1948

[157] MAE, AOFAA, HC16, Minutes of a meeting with the Refugee Commissioners of the FZO, 15 September 1948

[158] MAE, AOFAA, HC16, Minutes of a meeting with the Refugee Commissioners of the FZO, 15 September 1948

long-term program of the FZO, largely concentrating on economic forecasts.[159] However, the program also contained a demographic forecast that would prove difficult for the French; though produced by French experts, a lack of communication among different branches of the Military Government and a lapse in oversight meant the demographic provisions contradicted and undermined the French authorities' usual policy objective of keeping the zone as free of refugees as possible. The forecast stated that there would be different sources of population growth over the five years to 1952-53, including 'a certain transfer of the surplus population of the other two Western Zones'.[160] A pro rata distribution of the seven million refugees in Western Germany would mean France could receive an additional 900,000; however, given the reluctance of most refugees to transfer, only a third of these, or 300,000, might be expected to do so.[161]

### The Case of the Germans in Denmark

The largest group of German nationals outside Germany at war's end were the 200,000 Germans contained in camps in Denmark, to which they had been transferred by ship from East Prussia and Pomerania for safety in the early months of 1945.

Denmark first began to make informal approaches concerning the return of the Germans on its territory in early 1946,[162] in July, the French introduced a resolution to the CORC, supported by the UK and the USA, calling for their repatriation.[163] By seeking agreement on the principle that Germans who had been living in Germany but were displaced, either inside or outside present borders, should have precedence, they hoped to bolster arguments against the 'repatriation' (that is, expulsion or transfer) of other ethnic Germans who had not lived in pre-war Germany. The Western Allies believed that repatriating the Germans who had taken refuge outside of Germany would complete the restoration of Germans internally displaced by the war, undertaken by the one-for-one transfers.

However, the Soviets blocked the resolution; the French attributed this to the fact that the majority of these refugees were quartered in countries in the west and south-west of Europe, which the USSR had no interest in assisting. 'In contrast, the Soviet delegation is very interested in the question of German minorities, because the near-totality of the minorities to be transferred are situated in countries under Soviet control or influence.'[164]

The French approach on this question was to seek to limit any measure that might contribute to the overpopulation of Germany, while setting out consistent conditions for repatriation - provided that clarity would, as in the Danish case, entail at most only a limited increase in numbers admitted into Germany. They

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[159] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR55, French Military Government, Long-Term Programme in the French Zone of Occupation, undated, Autumn 1948

[160] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR55, French Military Government, Long-Term Programme Autumn 1948

[161] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR55, French Military Government, Long-Term Programme Autumn 1948

[162] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR76/1, DPOW/M(46)5, Minutes of the 17th Meeting of the Allied Control Authority, Prisoners of War and Displaced Persons Directorate, 25 February 1946

[163] MAE, AOFAA, GFCC23, Draft Decision of the Coordinating Committee CORC/P(46) 225, Annex 'A', 05 July 1946

[164] MAE, AOFAA, GFCC23, Briefing note 08 July 1946

hoped that confirming the priority of German nationals over non-national minorities would slow or limit the numbers of people from minority German populations arriving in the country. German minorities expelled into Germany, reasoned the French, are 'uprooted, and pose a resettlement challenge that is difficult to resolve under present circumstances.'[165] However German nationals displaced by the war and temporarily sheltered abroad 'are the uprooted ones abroad', creating an 'artificial minority problem' where none existed before.[166] The French were confident that the 30,000 Germans in Denmark who came from regions included in the current zones of occupation could be re-absorbed without difficulty.

Yet the French proposal, if executed as written, would not in fact have resolved the 'artificial minority problem', for the simple reason that it did not address the question of the 166,000 ethnic Germans whose original domicile was located in areas now under Polish administration.[167] It was in the French interest to have the 166,000 who came originally from east of the Oder-Neisse treated in the same way as the other German minorities in Polish-administered territories, as they would then fall under the provisions of the November 20 transfer plan and be divided between only the British and Soviet zones of occupation. Any other distribution would result in a bigger burden for the French zone than the mere 534 who had been domiciled in the French sector before the war.[168] It was clearly in the British interest, however, to avoid a transfer-plan-based distribution under which they risked having to take in over 80,000 additional refugees.[169]

**Table 3: Germans in Denmark, by Zone of Original Domicile, November 1946**

| Zone of Occupation | Number |
|---|---|
| **Soviet** | 11200 |
| **British** | 10300 |
| **French** | 500 |
| **American** | 1280 |
| **Greater Berlin** | 3700 |
| **Unknown** | 2000 |
| **Former German Territories and other** | 166,500 |
| **TOTAL** | **195,480** |

Source: MAE, AOFAA, GFCC23, Minutes of Discussion, 91st CORC Meeting, 26 November 1946

[165] MAE, AOFAA, GFCC23, Background note for 63rd Coordinating Committee Meeting, 08 July 1946

[166] MAE, AOFAA, GFCC23, Background note, 08 July 1946

[167] MAE, AOFAA, GFCC23, Background note, 08 July 1946

[168] MAE, AOFAA, GFCC23, Background paper 'Additional Notes', 7 July 1946

[169] MAE, AOFAA, GFCC23, Background paper 'Additional Notes', 7 July 1946

The French were aware that, as it became clearer that the number of Germans from Austria they had taken in as a result of the transfer plan never would amount to more than a few thousand, they would increasingly encounter pressure to accept more expellees into their zone. In August 1946, General Noiret warned that the US and UK might even propose that France take all 166,000 and that he was 'in no way disposed to receive these Germans from Denmark into the French zone, as they are Prussians, who would risk distorting the zone's character.'[170] However, the Danes made frequent representations, both to the ACC as a whole and bilaterally to its members. In the autumn of 1946, General Koenig visited Denmark and on his return ordered the rapid repatriation to the French zone of the Germans in Denmark who had previously been domiciled there, as well as an additional contingent of 11,500, and exhorted the other Allies to do the same. In an address to the 44th meeting of the Control Council he stressed 'how abnormal and unjust it was that the Control Council has still not freed countries like Denmark from the heavy burden of the care and shelter of these many refugees which the Germans had forcibly established on their territory.'[171]

Koenig's shift was due to a number of factors; first, it was the logical consequence of arguing for the return of German nationals before admitting any further *Volksdeutsche* populations. Second, it formed part of France's effort to create solidarity with and among western European partners; France was frequently the champion, within the Control Council, of the rights of Germany's other neighbours - to reparations, to involvement in Ruhr oversight or in an eventual peace settlement. Third, it was in keeping with the general practice to define and carry out a commitment rather than having a less-advantageous one imposed. In this case, it was clear that the Danes were prepared to offer significant material advantages in order to have the refugees transferred back to Germany; it was also clear that early movers would gain a head-start in selecting migrants for labour purposes.

An initial round of discussion led to agreement from the French and British to each take 12000, and from the Soviets to take 15000, according to Danish Foreign Minister Rasmussen, interviewed in the *New York Times*. He estimated the refugee cost as the equivalent of 40 percent of the pre-war Danish budget and exhorted the US to contribute as its Allies had done by taking refugees into its zone.[172] Despite the apparent Soviet offer to take in 15,000, the Soviets were, at the same time, insisting in the CORC that all movements foreseen under the Transfer Plan directly from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria and Hungary should be accomplished first before any other transfers from other countries be envisaged.[173]

First shipments of the 12,000 German refugees from Denmark to the French Zone began mid-December 1946; close to half either were originally from the zone or had family there. For the rest of the contingent, the French remained intent on obtaining those they believed would be most assimilable, 'chosen from those elements of the population having least been imprinted by Prussianism or National-Socialism and

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[170] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR97, Memorandum (Secret) General Noiret to the CGAAA, 03 August 1946

[171] MAE, AOFAA, GFCC24, Extract of minutes of 44th Control Council, 21 October 1946

[172] 'Refugee Problem Now Facing Danes', *The New York Times*, 28 November 1946, 12

[173] MAE, AOFAA, GFCC23, Minutes of discussion at 93rd CORC, 09 December 1946

whose mentality is as close as possible to that of the Badeners or Württembergers among whom they will be settled. The German populations originating from Upper Silesia would seem to offer in this respect a better guarantee than those…from the Prussian provinces.'[174] It was suggested that French negotiators could make 'ethnic and political arguments' that would produce the 'desired result'.[175] The small Catholic community in Denmark petitioned the French authorities to favour selecting refugees of Catholic origin for the majority-Catholic French zone, arguing that 'the Catholics from the east would be more easily assimilated by their Catholic compatriots than by their Protestant compatriots'. French officials were also of the view that 'these elements were less profoundly "nazified" and viewed France favourably as the most Catholic of the occupying powers'.[176]

The movement launched by France began to gather momentum in the spring of 1947. De Rosen reported a 'certain shift' in the position of the other Allies who in the winter had dismissed what they called the '"unilateral and premature" gesture of France'.[177] The UK had taken in more than foreseen, the US announced they would take in 12,000, the French had also received more than planned (15,219 rather than 12,000) and the Soviets had announced they would take in 36,000, as many as the other zones put together. 'Given the current state of affairs, it seems there is no reason for the French zone to accept a new contingent of Germans from Denmark,'[178] stated de Rosen, but if the decision were taken to do so 'any eventual increase in the number already accepted into the French Zone should only be negotiated with Denmark in exchange for very substantial advantages.'[179] General Koenig agreed to a further transfer of 15,000, but took to heart the advice to drive a hard bargain. French objectives consisted in getting the most productive potential labour still available - representatives of the French Labour Ministry travelled to Denmark to check the labour 'quality' of the refugees selected - and in obtaining significant material advantages in return for taking in the refugees, mostly in the form of foodstuffs. Denmark, long a food exporter, continued to be so even in the immediate post-war period. Sugar supplies in Denmark in 1947-48 amounted to 38 kilos per person, compared to 15.3 kilos in France and 5.2 in the French zone, while fats and oils were at 18.7 kilos versus 10.4 in France and 4.1 in the FZO.[180]

The exclusive preference given to Catholic refugees[181] met with objections from Protestant authorities in the zone. The Head of the Protestant Church Council in the Rhineland maintained it would be

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[174] MAE, AOFAA, ADM40/4, Memorandum Laffon to Political Counsellor, 12 December 1946

[175] MAE, AOFAA, ADM40/4, Letter Laffon to Capitaine Hausamann, Office of the French Military Attaché Copenhagen, 12 December 1946

[176] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR67, Letter of Captain Hausamann, Office of the French Military Attaché Copenhagen to Baden-Baden/PDR Section, 15 November 1946

[177] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR67, PDR/de Rosen Note for General Koenig, 21 April 1947

[178] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR67, PDR/de Rosen Note for General Koenig, 21 April 1947

[179] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR67, PDR/de Rosen Note for General Koenig, 21 April 1947

[180] Food and Agriculture Organisation, *The state of food and agriculture 1948: a survey of world conditions and prospects,* (Washington September 1948) 102-103

[181] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR67, de Rosen note to file on telephone call with Wiazemsky, 01 July 1947

eminently possible to accept Protestant refugees without altering the overall character or profile of the Zone. 'I can well understand that the Military Government attaches a price to attracting skilled workers into the French Zone. But your Excellency surely agrees with me that religion has no link to specialised labour and as such, the selection of refugees should be made purely on the basis of their professional capacities, not their religion.'[182] Koenig accepted the argument and allowed entry of a 'limited number' of Protestant families;[183] later, 400 Mennonites were transferred to Mennonite communities in the Palatinate at the request of German officials there.[184]

Labour requirements specified by zone authorities reflected the recognition that the Germans in Denmark were disproportionately female (in one camp 78 percent of the adult population were women[185]); categories sought included agricultural workers ('farm girls'), and domestic and textile workers, sectors likely to absorb more female labour. The Danes equipped each passenger with 3 days' rations and delivered food supplies amounting to 1850 calories per day and per refugee for ninety days.[186]

In addition to ample food provisions the Danes were also willing to offer other in-kind incentives, including establishing a fully equipped tuberculosis sanatorium and a home for the elderly in exchange for the French accepting 200 TB patients and a hundred elderly dependent refugees.[187]

By the end of 1947, the French had admitted 30,185 refugees from Denmark to their zone,[188] and by mid-1948 an additional 3,300, more than either the British (27,500) or the US (12,000). The Soviets had taken in 36,000 in early 1947, but then stopped, explicitly tying the completion of transfers to their zone to the return of 4,000 displaced persons of Baltic origin residing in Denmark. The Danish interpreted this new attitude of the Soviet authorities as a 'disguised refusal', and had no intention of repatriating the Baltic DPs.[189]

As accepting refugees from the Danes brought with it clear material advantages that internal redistribution within Germany never would, the French agreed to take in another 15,000 of the Germans on Danish territory in mid-1948, 86 percent of whom were women and children[190]. The price for this included a contribution to France of 1800 tonnes each of flour, cooking fats and sugar, and 900 tonnes each of condensed milk and noodles, to be supplied over the course of three years.[191] These goods would serve to

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[182] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR67, Letter Representative of the Evangelical Church Board, Church Councillor Lic. Sachsse to General Koenig, 27 August 1947

[183] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR67, Memorandum de Rosen to Koenig, 13 October 1947

[184] MAE, AOFAA, HC16, Minutes of a meeting with the Refugee Commissioners of the FZO, 15 September 1948

[185] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR67, Statistical Overview of the Oksbøl camp for German refugees in Denmark, 01 August 1947

[186] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR67, 'Repatriation Plan for German Refugees Currently in Denmark', undated but early July 1947

[187] MAE, AOFAA, HC16, Minutes of a meeting with the Refugee Commissioners of the FZO, 15 September 1948

[188] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR67, Note to file, 10 December 1947

[189] MAE, AOFAA, ADM41, Briefing Note for Political Counsellor Tarbé de Saint-Hardouin, 16 June 1948

[190] MAE, AOFAA, HC16, Minutes of a meeting with the Refugee Commissioners of the FZO, 15 September 1948

[191] MAE, AOFAA, ADM41, Briefing Note on Transfer of new contingent, 20 September 1948

make up the food packages that German workers in France would send back to their families in Germany; thus the Danes would subsidise German families in Germany through the intermediary of German breadwinners in France. The French could therefore offer a benefit to German workers in France that they did not in fact have to supply themselves, and because that benefit would mostly go to feed families in their zone (most German workers in France were from the French zone) the burden of feeding the zone population would also be lightened.

In addition, the Danish government agreed to provide a full six months' food rations for each of the 15,000 refugees to be transferred, and made a donation of foodstuffs - six months of oatmeal, cooking fats, sugar, powdered milk, malt extract and flour - in order to ensure communal teatime meals throughout the FZO for refugee and DP children, as well as the chronically ill.[192]

By the end of 1948, the French had accepted 47,500 German refugees from Denmark into their zone (a last 2,500 came in December, allowing the Danes to shut down their camps), at little direct cost to either themselves or the German authorities for the critical first six months of settlement and integration, given the abundant accompanying food supplies. They had proved a political point to the Soviets, that the repatriation of 'real Germans' should take place before any additional transfers of German minority populations, and had been able to demonstrate to the British and Americans that they were not entirely closed to refugee resettlement, while being able to stave off for some more months the redistribution of refugees from the Bizone, who would not be transferred under such favourable terms. Lastly, they were able to position themselves as champions of the Danish cause, important at a time when the structures of Western European cooperation were under construction and France was seeking to reassert its leading European role.

[192] MAE, AOFAA, HC16, Telegram Paris - Baden-Baden, 23 September 1948

# Chapter 6. 1949 - Sharing the Burden

## The Redistribution Challenge

From early 1947 the British had begun to seek agreement of the other Allies to redistribution of the refugees among the zones, with a view in particular to compelling the French zone to take in more, despite the pre-emptive gesture the latter had made in accepting German refugees from Denmark. In September 1947 they submitted a paper to the ACC asking it to 'approve the principle of a redistribution among the zones, before the winter, of the refugees whose numbers have increased the population of Germany so that the burden is equitably shared and the danger linked to overpopulation reduced to a minimum'[193]; they suggested that the CORC be tasked with drafting a redistribution plan for 20 October 1947.

As in the past, the French wished at best to avoid or at worst sharply limit, any intake. The economic cost and social, humanitarian and political challenge of integrating millions of refugees in the other zones was by now abundantly clear. The intake of the Denmark refugees had been possible as it had placed no additional strain on the finances of the FZO *Länder*; the initial critical six months of refugee integration had been eased by the accompanying material goods provided by the Danes. Yet by this time the French knew some redistribution was probably inevitable; the aim was to postpone such movements as long as possible and, above all, to minimise the economic impact. Terms such as those concluded with the Danes would clearly be out of the question, but at the very least the French wanted a better deal on both the sharing among zones of all costs linked to the war and its aftermath, as well as higher quotas of coal and construction materials.[194] Due to overt Soviet, and discreet French, opposition, this first British attempt failed in January 1948. The Soviets had linked their opposition to the western refusal to repatriate DPs, arguing if there was overcrowding, it was in no small measure due to the presence of thousands of foreign nationals in the western zones whom the western Allies refused to return.[195]

Two months later, in March 1948, the Soviets left the Control Council and quadripartite work came to an end. The US and UK continued to press for tripartite examination of a number of demographic questions; the US proposed striking a population and demography committee.[196] Again, the French sought to avoid, or at least delay, any demographic discussion not directly linked to their emigration proposal. Establishing commonly derived statistics, they feared 'will unavoidably shine a spotlight on the privileged demographic situation of our zone', and make further opposition to redistribution difficult.[197]

The French managed to draw out discussion on establishing a Working Party on demographic questions until late 1948. In November 1948, the British returned to the charge with a specific proposal to

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[193] MAE, AOFAA, 1GFCC24, British Memorandum on interzone redistribution of German refugees, 24 September 1947

[194] MAE, AOFAA, AP115, Instructions CGAAA to Berlin regarding British redistribution plan, 19 October 1947

[195] MAE, AOFAA, 1GFCC24, Minutes of the 77th CONL regarding British redistribution plan, 20 January 1948

[196] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR55, Letter US Deputy Military Governor Hays to General Noiret, 15 May 1948

[197] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR55, Memorandum Sabatier to the Civil Cabinet of the Commander-in-Chief, 31 May 1948

redistribute a quota of refugees from Schleswig-Holstein to the French zone. In writing to General Koenig, the British Commander-in-Chief General Robertson acknowledged the French preference for emigration but urged that the two solutions - emigration and redistribution - be treated separately, as one was a long-term problem while the other required prompt attention. As fuel for his argument, Robertson referred to the demographic provisions of the long-term programme the French had produced the month before [see chapter 5]: 'I very much hope that you will feel able to agree to this proposal [for a working party]. I understand that the long-term programme submitted on behalf of the French Zone to the OEEC envisages the admission of 300,000 refugees from other parts of Western Germany. I hope that this can be interpreted as a willingness on your part to start receiving these refugees at an early date.'[198] The imprudent forecasts the French had let slip into the long-term programme had caught up with them.

The French were aware their zone was in a position to contribute to easing overpopulation within western Germany. However, 'any concession on [redistribution] must in no case be envisaged without ensuring that the problem is examined as a whole while orienting the Allies towards a policy of emigration […] and that substantial counterparts in other areas are obtained for any contribution the French Zone might make towards redistribution or equalisation of the refugees.'[199] Moreover, for the French zone or government to extract political or practical benefits, any concession would have to be made before the constitution of a German Federal Government, as otherwise the latter would simply decree redistribution; the zone would have a better chance of selecting the refugees it took in, for instance to meet labour needs, if it agreed to act earlier.[200]

The demographic situation in Germany raised a series of considerations that the French thought should be kept in mind when contemplating solutions, and the British proposal in particular. First, there was the concern that any improvement in conditions in Western Germany would be followed by an increase in refugees trying to enter from eastern Europe, as well as new expulsion attempts on the part of the Soviets, in the interests of 'perpetuating poverty in western Germany'.[201] Politically, the French believed, the refugees were discontent, and prone to irredentism. Displacing them westward could risk directing their irredentism towards Alsace-Lorraine. Moreover, in the French view, unassimilated refugees undermined the foundations of federalism. Though their presence might encourage particularism in the native population, the refugees themselves would tend to vote for centralist solutions. Furthermore, redistribution, by lessening demographic pressure, also lessened the desire to emigrate and thus countered the French objective of seeking mass emigration.[202]

Gradually, though, the French position against any redistribution slowly began to shift; the question became not how to block transfers but how best to shape any commitment, limit harm and maximise benefit

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[198] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR55, Letter Robinson to Koenig regarding redistribution, 27 November 1948

[199] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR55, PDR/Meillon, Internal Minutes, 03 December 1948

[200] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR55, PDR/Meillon, Internal Minutes, 03 December 1948

[201] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR55, PDR/Meillon, Internal Minutes, 03 December 1948

[202] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR55, PDR/Meillon, Internal Minutes, 03 December 1948

in the form of shared costs and demographic balance. The French began to prepare the ground with the *Länder* of the zone, obtaining their agreement in principle to receiving a quota of refugees. Koenig informed Robertson of this agreement and of his own willingness to agree to a working party to examine population questions, but was clear that redistribution was not to be studied in isolation from other solutions, in particular emigration, and that any transfers would also require agreement on financial burden-sharing.[203]

Regarding the conditions of transfer to the zone, the French took the entry restrictions they had imposed in 1948, limiting admittance to cases of family reunification or employment on the basis of a firm job contract, and reframed them as opportunities; rather than limitations, they argued, these conditions were instead an example of liberalisation of entry that the other zones should in fact seek to emulate.[204] They hoped to limit organised transfers in favour of individual ones; individuals only moved, for the most part, when they were certain employment or housing was available, which made integration more likely and kept support costs low.

**Table 4: Refugee Population 01 October 1948**

| | Total population (excluding DPs in camps) | | Refugees | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 000's | As % of 1939 pop. | 000's | As % of population |
| **Schleswig-Holstein** | 2,712 | 171 | 1,034.4 | 38.2 |
| **Hamburg** | 1,503 | 88 | 125.7 | 8.3 |
| **Lower Saxony** | 6,745 | 149 | 2,017.2 | 30.0 |
| **North Rhine-Westphalia** | 12,609 | 106 | 1,111.4 | 8.8 |
| **Total British zone** | 23,569 | 119 | 4,288.7 | 18.2 |
| **Bremen** | 525 | 94 | 38.9 | 7.4 |
| **Hessen** | 4,214 | 121 | 736.6 | 17.4 |
| **Baden-Württemberg** | 3,811 | 119 | 728.1 | 19.2 |
| **Bavaria** | 9,141 | 130 | 2,086.1 | 22.8 |
| **Total US zone** | 17,692 | 124 | 3,589.7 | 20.3 |
| **Baden** | 1,246 | 102 | 48.2 | 3.8 |
| **Württemberg** | 1,153 | 107 | 62.1 | 5.4 |
| **Rhineland-Palatinate** | 2,844 | 96 | 78.2 | 2.8 |
| **Total French zone** | 5,243 | 100 | 188.5 | 3.6 |
| **Total Western Germany** | **46,504** | **118** | **8,066.9** | **17.4** |

Statistical Information on the Refugees in the Western Zones of Germany, prepared for the Tripartite Working Party on Refugees of the Allied Control Authority, TWPR/P(49)9, 7 March 1949

[203] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR55, Letter Koenig to Robertson regarding working party, 14 December 1948

[204] MAE, AOFAA, AP115, Telegram Contrôle Berlin/Meillon to Baden-Baden, Paris, Tripartite Working Party on Refugees meeting of 10 February, 12 February 1949

The survey of the Statistical Sub-Committee, released in March 1949 and based on uniform criteria, provided a snapshot of the western zones that, as the French had feared, revealed their relatively advantageous situation. The committee collated population figures across the three zones as of 01 October 1948.[205] They divided the refugee population into two categories: those coming from foreign countries or former German territories, and those coming from the Soviet zone or Berlin, which by late 1948 were by far the greater source of intake (and happened to be younger and more evenly gender-balanced than other refugees or the general population, making them a valuable addition in labour terms). For simplification, both categories have been combined in this chart, as their treatment was much the same by both Allied and German governments. In late 1948, refugees were still largely a rural population. 900,000 had settled in cities, but as the original urban population had been evacuated in large numbers, urban figures still had not attained their 1939 levels. Around 45,000 per month continued to arrive in the British and American zones.

The population of the Bizone was under-housed; a quarter of a million were still in camps. Living space per person amounted to less than 7m2 in the British zone (in Schleswig-Holstein 5.4 m2), and in the French Zone around 9m2. In January 1949, 7 percent of wage and salary earners were unemployed in the British Zone; 8.4 percent in the American Zone and only 1.8 percent in the French Zone; unemployment was higher among refugees than in the native population. The *Länder* with a high proportion of refugees (Bavaria, Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Saxony) also had high unemployment. [206]

Following continued exchanges on the question in the Control Council, in February 1949 Koenig gave more form to the policy shift he had begun to indicate three months before. In a letter to US General Clay, he observed 'no formal commitment was taken in my name concerning the 300,000 refugees that you mention'[207] but continued:

> I freely recognise that my *Länder* benefit from a privileged situation compared to those in the other two zones as far as the particular point of refugees is concerned, even if a large number of freed prisoners and of German refugees from Denmark were taken in in 1948. This is why I am entirely prepared to confirm to the German authorities, already consulted on this affair last November, the interest in a new redistribution of refugees in Western Germany. Instructions to this intent will be given to my representative to the Working Party in Berlin.
> All of these problems will naturally be resolved by the future federal government but as its creation does not appear imminent I would propose asking the Minister Presidents, meeting together, to study the question and recommend a solution. [208]

The redistribution solution therefore would be managed both among German and Allied authorities, at different levels - the principle and guidelines by the Allies, the details by the German officials. Koenig

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[205] All figures MAE, AOFAA, AP115, Statistical Information on the Refugees in the Western Zones of Germany, TWPR/P(49)9, 07 March 1949

[206] All figures MAE, AOFAA, AP115, Statistical Information on the Refugees in the Western Zones of Germany, TWPR/P(49)9, 07 March 1949

[207] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR55, Letter Koenig to US Commander-in-Chief Clay, 27 February 1949

[208] MAE, AOFAA, 7PDR55, Letter Koenig to US Commander-in-Chief Clay, 27 February 1949

pledged to accept any reasonable solution, provided it would not place the *Länder* of the French Zone in a more difficult financial situation than the other *Länder,* given that the question of refugees was not simply one of numbers, but also had an economic and financial dimension.

The French had now essentially agreed to the acceptance of 300,000 refugees into their zone, including all those who entered individually due to family reunification or employment. By so doing, they had made a gesture before the establishment of the Federal Republic of Germany, thereby ensuring more control over the process for the *Länder* of the French zone; furthermore, they had linked from an early stage the question of refugee burden-sharing to the larger question of burden-sharing of the costs of war among all the *Länder*.

As the negotiations for the mechanics of the redistribution would be handled by the German authorities of the *Länder*, a successful outcome from the French point of view would rely on a shared vision of interests between the French occupiers and the *Länder* under their control. The French had to ensure that the *Länder* both accepted, and were able to support, negotiate and implement, any redistribution agreement. Fortunately for the French authorities, the *Länder* of the FZO supported entirely the position the French had taken hitherto. In the interests of maintaining this policy cohesion, the French communicated regularly and at all levels with the German authorities in their zone. General Koenig, who met monthly with the three Ministers-President of the zone, briefed them on the redistribution agreement in April:

> Now that the economic conditions in the French zone have improved I could not avoid a concession on this question. After very heavy pressure from General Clay and General Robertson I agreed to take in a first contingent of 120,000 to 130,000, who have family members or a job offer in the zone. I have also committed to take an overall total of 300,000 […] In practical terms, the agreement depends on a solution of the financial problem, and this must be reached by the responsible German authorities.[209]

Koenig urged:

> in the next negotiations on the intake of expellees, the representatives of the French zone must be careful not just to accept a simple arithmetical payment but rather should fully make use of the condition I have striven for, that is, the financial indemnification of the French zone. It would be regrettable if this advantage were lost. I firmly believe that your representatives, in their negotiations with the Bizone, must accept no new burden without obtaining further concessions such as equalisation. If they do, all my efforts will have been in vain. This decision now lies in your hands and you must make sure you are not out-manoeuvred.[210]

Koenig warned further that the question of equalisation was 'extraordinarily complicated. The fact is, the Bizone has not even been able to come to agreement itself on equalisation, and the integration of the French zone will certainly not simplify matters.'[211]

French and German PDR officials in the zone were in constant contact during the period of the negotiation of the agreement among the *Länder*, and in entire agreement on a number of principles, ranging

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[209] Minutes of a meeting between General Koenig and the Ministers-President of the French Zone of Occupation in Baden-Baden, 22 April 1949, *Akten zur Vorgeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1945-1949*, Vol. 5, January-September 1949 (Munich 1981), 385-389

[210] Minutes of a meeting between General Koenig and the Ministers-President, *Akten zur Vorgeschichte*, 385-389

[211] Minutes of a meeting between General Koenig and the Ministers-President, *Akten zur Vorgeschichte*, 385-389

from the need to obtain early agreement and avoid a federally imposed solution[212] to a preference for refugees from the American zone - a preference couched in cultural terms about ease of assimilation, but clearly not dissociated from the superior American capacity to 'put a price on any concession'.[213] The German refugee commissioners fully agreed: 'Everything supports this solution: proximity, affinities, concurrence of interests, the encouragement of federalism, the closer ties of South Germans to Sudeten Germans or Germans from Hungary than with those from Poland or Prussians, balance of religions corresponding to that in the zone, not to mention the better health conditions and clothing rations in the US zone.'[214]

After arduous negotiations, the *Länder* of the French zone managed to obtain from their Bizone colleagues agreement that the sending *Land* would pay transport costs for the first contingent of refugees to their final destination. While there was general support for the idea of a broad financial equalisation agreement, there was recognition that this would take some time to achieve; there would thus be an up-front payment of DM200 per refugee to cover transition costs, to be paid as an interest-free loan to the receiving *Land*.[215] It was agreed that the transfer of the second contingent of 150,000 would be accompanied by more complex financial arrangements, including increases in raw materials to permit construction and industrial expansion. All the *Länder* of the Bizone were to finance this credit.

The German negotiators of the zone briefed the French on the agreement, observing that Bremen and Hamburg might not, in the end, agree to the deal, but in that case any impasse would be entirely on the side of the Bizone. There were indications that Bavaria would be prepared to pay the advance on its own, if necessary, 'which would not be displeasing either to the French authorities, or to the German'.[216] The weaker financial situation of Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Saxony would not permit them to do the same; the onus would thus be on them to convince Bremen, Hamburg and Rhineland-Westphalia to pay the necessary contributions - 'We will not have to beg.'[217]

In the end, the *Länder* of the Bizone indeed failed to come to a cost-sharing agreement on the financial arrangements; in turn, Rhineland-Palatinate and Baden announced they were unable to accept any refugees until the financial question had been settled. Württemberg-Hohenzollern, however, concluded separate agreements covering up to 5,400 workers who, together with their families numbered 20,000 persons.[218]

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[212] MAE, AOFAA, AP115, Report of meeting in Rhineland-Palatinate on refugee questions, 26 April 1949

[213] MAE, AOFAA, AP115, Report of meeting in Rhineland-Palatinate on refugee questions, 26 April 1949

[214] MAE, AOFAA, AP115, Report of meeting in Rhineland-Palatinate on refugee questions, 26 April 1949

[215] MAE, AOFAA, AP115, revised draft of Agreement on Admission into the French Zone, 27 April 1949

[216] MAE, AOFAA, AP115, Report of meeting Württemberg on Refugee Questions, 28 April 1949

[217] MAE, AOFAA, AP115, Meeting Württemberg on Refugee Questions, 28 April 1949. Meillon commented: 'Dr. Schäfer and Dr. Vohwinkel both seem to be extremely skilled negotiators and would even be somewhat dangerous partners if there were not such a complete identity of interests between the French and German authorities on this matter.'

[218] MAE, AOFAA, AP115, Minutes of Meeting between representatives of Bavaria, Lower Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein and the *Länder* of the FZO, 10 June 1949

The British and Americans were poorly informed about the agreement that had been reached among the German officials of their zone and the French zone,[219] and were taken by surprise by the outcome of negotiations: 'the British seem furious about the financial concessions that were made by the Bizone Germans to the French zone, essentially at the expense of Rhineland-Westphalia and Hamburg, while the Americans are furious that the British managed to obtain that 3 refugees out of 4 to be transferred to the French Zone come from the British zone.'[220] An internal memorandum from the US delegation gave further evidence of American dissatisfaction with the outcome and their impression that the French had obtained an excellent deal:

> The German representatives of the French Zone to these negotiations had not only been instructed by the French occupation authorities on the position they were meant to take, but they were also in possession of the Tripartite Working Party report to the Military Governors. The Bizone representatives, for their part, had not been entirely informed of recent developments and had also not received official knowledge of the decision taken by the Tripartite Board. These negotiations resulted in arrangements to resettle refugees from three *Länder* of the Bizone: Schleswig-Holstein, Lower Saxony and Bavaria, in proportions of 2:1:1.
> It is believed that if the negotiations had been more closely coordinated by the Occupation Authorities, they could have resulted in a more favourable arrangement concerning the transfer of refugees from the American Zone.[221]

By mid-1949, the French were thus in the advantageous position of having accepted the principle of redistribution on the basis of an agreement freely negotiated among the *Länder*, which was unable to be fully implemented due to shortcomings on the Bizone, not the French, side. Furthermore, their 'liberalised' policy of individual entries based on family reunification or job offers functioned - though not nearly to the extent they had predicted - and led to little or no strain on public finances. Yet the precarious fiscal situation in Baden and Rhineland-Palatinate made transfers to those *Länder* without the provision of the agreed-upon DM 200 credit impossible.

By October, the Federal Republic was in place, Military Governments had transformed into Allied High Commissions and the Statute of Occupation was in force. The Federal Government had its own Minister of Refugee Affairs, and a plan for larger-scale redistribution of 600,000 persons over two years was quickly agreed by the *Länder* and the federal authorities. The French were concerned that the shift would displace the centre of gravity of the population towards the south, which 'would present an indisputable

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[219] MAE, AOFAA, AP115, Internal report of a meeting of the Tripartite Committee, date - late May or June 1949

[220] MAE, AOFAA, AP115, Internal report of a meeting of the Tripartite Committee, date - late May or June 1949

[221] MAE, AOFAA, AP115, Letter Director Civil Administration Division to General Clay, US Military Governor, 23 April 1949

| Table 5: 12 October 1949 agreement between the Federal Minister for Refugees and the German *Länder* for redistribution of refugees, first contingent (300,000 persons; 01 April 1949-31 December 1950) | |
|---|---|
| **Sending Länder** | |
| Schleswig-Holstein | 150,000 |
| Lower Saxony | 75,000 |
| Bavaria | 75,000 |
| Total | 300,000 |
| **Destination Länder** | |
| Württemberg-Hohenzollern | 49,000 |
| South Baden | 48,000 |
| Rhineland Palatinate | 90,000 |
| North Rhine-Westphalia | 90,000 |
| Württemberg-North Baden | 8,000 |
| Hessen | 8,000 |
| Hamburg | 3,000 |
| Bremen | 2,000 |
| Total | 298,000 |

danger to France' but would be difficult to avoid until urban reconstruction in the north and the Ruhr was more advanced.[222]

The FRG plan agreed in principle that transfers would be voluntary, but did not spell out guarantees to this effect, and did not define the selection procedure for transferees. However federal equalisation of all

| Table 6: Transfers into French Zone of Occupation under Redistribution Plan, June 1949 to May 1950 | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Source | | | |
| | Schleswig-Holstein | Lower Saxony | Bavaria | Total |
| **Destination** | | | | |
| Württemberg | 11,212 | 7,880 | 13,882 | 32,974 |
| Baden | 12,598 | 4,424 | 959 | 17,981 |
| Rhineland-Palatinate | 5,485 | 4,123 | 3,860 | 13,468 |
| Total | 29,295 | 16,427 | 18,701 | **64,423** |
| Note: no transfers took place in January or February 1950. 5,408 were individual transfers; the rest were organised convoys. | | | | |

Source: MAE, AOFAA, HC16, Note on the Refugee Problem, 23 June 1950

[222] MAE, AOFAA, AP115, PDR Note for the High Commissioner on Redistribution, 15 October 1949

costs related to the war was granted as a precondition for transfers,[223] cementing the principle the French had pushed for during the redistribution debate.

A further update in 1950 observed that the French zone was a 'model of successful redistribution and integration', while Hamburg, Bremen and North Rhine Westphalia had inherited its former obstructionist reputation. Transfers to the French zone 'have taken place at a perfectly satisfactory pace, both in line with the program and with the possibilities for absorption'[224]

As a post-script the French observed:

> The Occupying Powers should ensure that certain *Länder*, notably Rhineland-Westphalia, do not continue to obstruct the implementation of the redistribution plan, whose own moderation is a sign of success.
> But a redistribution of refugees is not enough to resolve the problem, and social peace among refugees cannot be guaranteed until an equalisation of the financial burden spreads among the entire population of Western Germany the sacrifices of a lost war. […] The future of Germany depends a great deal on keeping the refugees patient.[225]

[223] MAE, AOFAA, AP115, PDR Note for the High Commissioner on Redistribution, 15 October 1949

[224] MAE, AOFAA, HC16, Note on the Refugee Problem, 23 June 1950

[225] MAE, AOFAA, HC16, Note on the Refugee Problem, 23 June 1950

# Conclusion

France's policy concerning the German refugees and expellees, in both its zone of occupation and Germany as a whole, was one element in its broader Germany policy; one that sprang from a number of sources and gave rise to a number of connected associated policies and positions. As any public policy, it was not immutable; the French authorities were obliged to adjust and recalibrate their stance in response to the rapid developments in and highly complex decision-making environment of post-war Germany.

The objective of this paper is not to judge whether the French zone's policy was successful. Policy 'success' and 'failure' can be difficult to assess; they depend on whether clear definitions of what success or failure might look like have been determined and, as normative judgements, are not independent of social or even moral considerations. Policy success can look very different over the short or long term, or depending on the perspective of the subject or object of the policy in question.

Instead, it is the evolution of the policy that is of interest; the adjustments that were made were done so in pursuit of coherent, and largely unchanging, objectives, which themselves were hierarchically situated at different levels. At the French national level, the objectives were the recovery of France in political and economic terms and the hindrance of the resurgence of a centralised, powerful Germany. At the zone of occupation level, the aim was to protect the zone from social and economic disruption, in order to ensure that it could best contribute to France's national goals and fulfil France's objectives related to the overall Germany policy. Within the level of the Allied Control structures, the French policy became an instrument, one more means of exchange in the complex negotiations among occupying powers.

In tracing continuity and change, it can be argued that the broad principles underlying the French policy remained largely unaltered. The motivations behind each principle were the same: maximising security and minimising economic competition. These principles included:

- the structure of Germany: there was to be no restoration of a strongly centralised German state; centralisation, centralising structures and influences were to be prevented at all costs. Some of the policy impacts included preventing influx of refugees in order not to water down regionalist tendencies, avoiding centralised German-wide structures to deal with refugees and expellees, refugee selection according to (often racialising) categories in order not to alter perceived regional social or confessional structures, preventing the extension of civic rights for possibly centralist minded refugees.
- the demographic threat: this held that the quantity of the refugees was the threat, not whether integration was possible or not, as Germany's war and economic potential derived from its strength in numbers. Policy measures adopted to address this included the efforts to slow down or stop approved transfers and prevent new transfers at all costs, including through categorising - and then excluding - different groups, such as the *Volksdeutsche*; preventing 'accidental' population growth by restricting nationality, and removing potential German citizens through adoption. Emigration, however, was the keystone of the policy approach to the demographic threat: labour emigration, including to France, but above all mass emigration overseas.

- economic indemnity: no shift of population could be permitted that would entail any additional financial burden. France began occupation in a far weaker economic position than the other allies, and recovery and economic modernisation required all available resources, above all German coal. Economic recovery of the zone was also essential. The impact of this principle meant, at its most basic, that no population transfers should be permitted unless there was a direct economic benefit in either labour terms or through compensation. Policy measures included liberalisation of entry to the zone for specialised labour or people with firm job offers, labour emigration (of POWs, DPs and German civilians) to France and, towards the end of the occupation period, the push for equalisation among zones and *Länder* of all war-related costs.

Quite a few of the measures the French pressed for did not meet with either agreement of the allies or indeed enjoy any significant impact. For example, neither the western powers nor the German authorities were in favour of mass emigration; moreover, the conditions were not in place. Few receiving countries were prepared to admit German nationals and none at the scale envisaged; shipping shortages and a lack of funds were another obstacle. However, the French focus on emigration did have some effects: it provoked broader allied reflection on demographic questions as a whole, which in turn revealed inequalities within as well as among zones, the need for equalisation, the lag in housing construction and the urgency of economic restructuring in rural areas to support refugee integration. Other policy initiatives had similar mixed records, a further illustration of why defining policy success or failure is inevitably complicated.

As occupation progressed, and the creation of the Federal Republic of Germany approached, it also became difficult on the precise issue of migration management to distinguish, within the zone, between French and German authorities, given the commonality of interests between the two, as the redistribution question illustrated. (It is important to underline this was not the case on all policy issues by any means). By the time of the transition from Military Government to High Commission, the overlap was such that it constituted an important element of continuity in the governance of population movements in the French zone.

The aim of the French policy regarding the refugee and expellee crisis, therefore, was to contribute in as coherent a way as possible to France's overall attempt to shape the evolution of Germany's future, and therefore France's and Europe's future, at a volatile time of change, rupture and dislocation. The overarching framework of France's Germany policy, and its own policy of national renewal, laid down guidelines which shaped the necessary adjustments and concessions to the zone refugee policy over the four years of occupation.

# Annex A - Original Versions of Translated Citations

**Chapter 1. Context**

12 *Etablir la France ici, cela veut dire d'abord donner à la France la disposition des territoires qui, de par leur nature, font corps avec elle. J'entends par là ceux de la rive gauche du Rhin, le Palatinat, la Hesse, la Prusse Rhénane et la Sarre […] ces pays doivent, comme je viens de le dire, faire corps avec la France. S'agit-il d'une annexion? Non pas; du reste, je ne veux pas jouer sur les mots. Ce doit être une union économique et morale, une présence, un contrôle indéfini.*

13 […] *Il n'y a qu'a regarder la carte pour que cette vérité éclate. Si ces Etats de l'Allemagne Rhénane viennent à participer vraiment à l'esprit occidental, je crois qu'ils abandonneront l'idée d'une Allemagne groupée autour de la Prusse maintenant écroulée pour se retourner vers l'horizon qui leur apportera le plus d'espoir, vers l'Europe Occidentale et avant tout vers la France.*

**Chapter 2. 1945**

21 *Or, quelques limitations qui soient apportées au rôle qu'auraient à jouer les administrations centrales projetées, le principe même de leur création préjuge le statut des régions en question.*

23 *La conception consistant à les faire immigrer en bloc en France ou dans l'Empire Français est évidemment souhaitable, mais la réalisation en est actuellement impossible, car ce serait aller au devant des pires complications diplomatiques, en particulier du côté de l'URSS et de la Pologne. Quant à leur rapatriement de force, il constitue une solution anti-libérale à laquelle répugnent tous les Français et, à leur tête, le Gouvernement.*

24 *En dépit de l'acuité des problèmes de la nourriture et du logement, communs à toutes les zônes, les réfugiés allemands seront mieux entretenus dans leur district d'origine que partout ailleurs où ils se trouvent […]En conséquence, il est recommandé que le rapatriement de ces allemands soit entrepris partout où il sera practicable.*

33 *le droit pour l'Etat tchécoslovaque de prendre les mesures indispensables au maintien de son existence et de son intégrité ne peut aujourd'hui être contesté. C'est ce qu'ont reconnu, en principe, les chefs des Gouvernements des Trois Puissances réunis à Potsdam en juillet dernier. C'est également ce qu'a admis dès à présent implicitement sinon expressément, le gouvernement français.*
34 *Le Gouvernement français n'a pas encore pris position sur la question.*

36 *On conçoit difficilement, en effet, que la France puisse accepter d'absorber dans sa zone 500.000 individus qui, de tous temps, ont été pour la République Tchécoslovaque des éléments dangereux, invivables et inassimilables.*

37 *Au point de vue ethnique d'abord, les Allemands des Sudètes différent totalement des Allemands qui habitent la zone française. Ce sont des* Grenzdeutsche*, des Allemands de bordure, des Silésiens ou des Bajuvares qui, par leur race comme par leur civilisation, n'ont rien de commun avec les Badois, les Wurtembourgeois ou les Rhénans.*

40 *charge insupportable*

42 *Les uns ont un toit, les autres n'en ont pas.*

45 *De plus, nous avons évité ce qui me paraît particulièrement important étant donné la politique suivi dans la zone, de prendre des minoritaires de l'est […] j'estime que nous n'aurons aucune difficulté à faire assimiler les 150.000 minoritaires allemands d'Autriche, étant donné les affinités qui ont toujours existé entre l'Allemagne du sud et l'Autriche.*

46 *Etant donné les positions qui avaient été initialement prises et les termes de l'accord de Potsdam, il représente un gros succès […] Il représente aussi de la part des Délégués alliés un sincère effort pour régler cette question particulièrement grave et […] tenant compte, dans la pratique, du fait que notre responsabilité n'était pas engagée dans cette affaire. On ne nous demande, en effet, de recevoir qu'un peu plus de 2% du total des populations à recaser, c'est-à-dire simplement de faire un geste de bonne volonté.*
*Devons-nous nous refuser à ce geste? En droit strict, nous n'y sommes pas tenus puisque nous ne sommes pas signataires de Potsdam, mais nous ne devons pas nous dissimuler que si nous n'arrivons pas sur ce point à un accord avec nos Alliés, nous ne pourrons pas grand chose pour empêcher les infiltrations, qu'eux-mêmes favoriseront peut-être, vers notre zone. L'autre part, étant donné le caractère angoissant de ce*

*problème sur le plan purement humanitaire, la presse anglo-saxonne ne manquera pas de dénoncer avec violence notre égoïsme et se fera une joie de faire retomber sur nous seuls la responsabilité de toutes les misères et de toutes les pertes de vies humaines qui, de manière inévitable, accableront cet hiver ces populations expulsées de leurs foyers.*
*[…] en nous associant à ce projet nous enlevons leur argument à ceux qui, ici même, essaient de prétendre que l'action quadripartite s'est révélée impossible par suite de l'"obstruction" de la France […] Nous renforcerions ainsi considérablement notre position qu'il deviendrait plus aisé de soutenir, aux yeux de tous, sur son véritable terrain, c'est-a-dire que nous ne pouvons accepter rien qui préjuge l'avenir des territoires visés par notre mémorandum du 12 septembre tant que nous n'aurons pas reçu de réponse à ce mémorandum.*

**Chapter 3. 1946**

49 *Nous n'avons aucune instruction pour obliger les réfractaires au départ à moins que BERLIN n'ait qualité pour donner l'ordre que le rapatriement des réfractaires se fasse 'manu militari' au besoin.*

52 *d'un accord dont eux sont les victimes*

55 *La cadence des transferts prévus par l'accord du 20 Novembre était très forte et pratiquement irréalisable. Il n'en reste pas moins que le retard sur le plan initialement envisagé est une indication très nette de la tendance des anglo-saxons à freiner l'exécution du plan, pour autant qu'ils se sont rendus compte de l'erreur qu'ils on commise, et du marché de dupes qu'ils ont conclu, en acceptant ces transferts.*

56 *La surpopulation des zones Ouest de l'Allemagne, et le déséquilibre économique qui en résulte, présentent pour les soviétiques un intérêt politique qui ne leur a nullement échappé.*

*57 58 Les Autorités Françaises avaient prévu, dès l'abord, le grave inconvénient du transfert en Allemagne des minorités allemandes, à maintes reprises, les représentants français, au sein de l'Autorité Alliée de Contrôle, ont signalé le danger d'une telle politique; leur constante opposition n'aura pas été inutile, puisqu'elle aura servi:*
- *à ramener de 12.000.000 à 6.650.000 le chiffre des minorités allemandes à transférer en Allemagne,*
- *à limiter à un maximum de 150.000 la part de la zone française*
- *à augmenter la part (théorique) de la zone soviétique, de façon à alléger d'autant la part des zones ouest,*
- *à convaincre les anglo-saxons de l'erreur commise.*

59 *Au Directoire PDR, le représentant français, qui assiste en spectateur, ou en arbitre, aux controverses passionnées entre les anglo-saxons et les soviétiques sur les chiffres des transferts en cours, est souvent gratifié de remarques légèrement envieuses, sinon acides, sur la faible participation de la zone française. Il en résulte que dans tous les cas de transferts éventuels […] un effort tout particulier pourrait être demandé à la zone française.*

62 *l'envoi fragmentaire et chaotique de quelque 768 expulsés […] eût été un fiasco complet, sans l'appoint d'environ 20.000 Reichs- et Volksdeutsche, arrivés individuellement.*

69 *Ils ne sont pas plus allemands que les Autrichiens qui étaient en Autriche.*
*Il n'y aura pas plus de raison de les grouper sur le territoire allemand que sur le territoire autrichien.*
*Les Gouvernements alliés n'ont jamais pris de décision à ce sujet, il n'y a pas de raison que le Conseil de Contrôle en prenne.*

72 *Dans le mesure où ce qui précède peut donner une idée de l'excellente opération réalisée par la zone française d'occupation en ce qui concerne le partage des minorités, il y a lieu, toutefois, de recommander la plus grande discretion, de façon à ne pas trop alerter la jalousie des Américains, Britanniques et Soviétiques qui reçoivent plusieurs MILLIONS d'Allemands expulsés de Pologne, Tchécoslovaquie et Hongrie.*

74 *L'introduction en Allemagne de 6.650.000 allemands minoritaires de Pologne, Tchécoslovaquie et Autriche est déjà, à certains points de vue, catastrophique à cet égard.*

75 *les accords de Potsdam […] ont trait aux minorités allemandes de Pologne, Tchécoslovaquie et Autriche, mais nullement à celles de Yougoslavie, Roumanie et Bulgarie.*

76 *la Délégation française s'oppose à toute introduction nouvelle en Allemagne de populations allemandes autres que celles prévues*

77 *Le but que nous poursuivons est de maintenir ces minorités linguistiques dans leur pays de domicile. Toute exception que nous pourrions faire à ce sujet risquerait de faire échec à cette politique.*

*80-84 Le problème des minorités allemandes de Pologne, de Tchécoslovaquie et de Hongrie n'est devenu un problème allemand que parce que les trois signataires des Accords de Potsdam (auxquels la France n'a, ni participé, ni souscrit), ont décidé que ces minorités seraient expulsés et devraient être réinstallées sur le territoire de l'Allemagne occupée. En soi, le problème des minorités nationales ne peut intéresser que le pays où elles sont fixées ou l'organisation des Nations-Unies.*
*[…]on peut estimer que le problème des minorités de Yougoslavie, Roumanie et Bulgarie est un problème autrichien, du fait qu'une fraction notable de ces minorités est réfugiée en Autriche.*
*[…]d'autant que ce même Gouvernement [de Yougoslavie] s'est toujours opposé […] à accorder à cette catégorie de réfugiés la protection de l'organisme spécialisé qui, dans un proche avenir, doit avoir la charge des réfugiés et personnes déplacées.*

*[…] Deux solutions restent possibles:*
*a) soit d'engager des pourparlers avec les pays dont ces réfugiés allemands sont originaires et ressortissants, en vue de les inviter à modifier leur politique à cet égard. Il est, malheureusement, probable qu'une telle solution n'aurait que peu de résultats positifs,*
*b) soit de transmettre la question au Conseil Economique et Social de l'ONU pour lui demander de modifier la décision prise par le Comité des Réfugiés en ce qui concerne les réfugiés allemandes. [L'OIR] pourrait alors organiser l'émigration de ces minorités allemandes*

86 *véritables allemands*

**Chapter 4. 1947**

89 *se fait formellement sans considération de origine nationale*

96 *En cette manière la délégation française, guidée principalement, comme pour tous les autres problèmes allemands, par la notion de sécurité […] Il est incontestable que le potentiel humain dont l'Allemagne a jusqu'ici disposé a constitué un puissant élément de son potentiel de guerre, élément pour le moins comparable à celui représenté par la puissance de son industrie.*
*Une Allemagne dont la démographie ne serait pas équilibrée, renfermera toujours un danger latent de guerre et ce danger sera plus net encore si cette population éprouve des difficultés à vivre sur le sol à sa disposition.*

97 *dans l'intérêt de la paix et pour élever le niveau d'existence des Allemands eux-mêmes*

114 *La France conserve des P.G. parce qu'il s'agit pour elle d'une nécessité vitale: la reconstruction de son économie, ruinée par quatre ans d'occupation. C'est une réparation qui lui est accordée dans un strict esprit de justice, pour les dévastations qu'elle a subies du fait de l'ennemi. […] Les P.G. constituent une main-d'oeuvre accordée à la France […] qui est l'élément initial et immédiat de la contribution de l'Allemagne au relèvement de la France.*

118 *en tenant compte évidemment des besoins de main d'oeuvre en France et des nécessités de sécurité en zone française d'occupation en Allemagne.*

123 *un élément clé du succès du redressement français*

127 and 128 *Peut-être y aurait-il intérêt à laisser ces gens sans nationalité. Plus tard, les Länder pourront décider de l'opportunité, chacun en ce qui le concerne, de leur octroyer la nationalité allemands. La décision des Länder donnera lieu à des oppositions d'ordre politique (certains partis ne souhaiteront pas voir donner des droits civiques à des personnes qu'ils sauront être des adversaires) et d'ordre démographique (les Länder surpeuplés ne souhaiteront sans doute pas fixer chez eux une population qui sera une charge). Finalement; il n'est pas certain que les Länder soient aussi généreux que les Puissances Occupantes se proposent de l'être.*
*Ceci serait intéressant du point de vue français car nous n'avons pas intérêt, en accordant la nationalité allemande à une population, de la fixer presque irrémédiablement en Allemagne.*

128 *Il est bien entendu que dans notre esprit ces personnes seront, le moment venu, intégrées définitivement parmi les nationaux allemands mais nous désirons que cette intégration se fasse dans les conditions que nous proposons.*

131 *La notion de 'Volksdeutsche' est en effet imprécise et peut ouvrir la voie à toutes sortes d'interprétations (tendances pangermanistes).*

132 *Toutes les personnes qui ne possèdent pas la nationalité allemande, mais qui ont été expulsées de leurs foyers (ou ne peuvent y retourner), en qualité d'Allemands seront assimilées, pour l'application des alinéas a, b, aux ressortissants allemands.*

136 *Délégation soviétique s'intéresse vivement aux enfants soviétiques qui sont nombreux dans le même cas que les nôtres…semble désireuse de récupérer non seulement les enfants dont les deux parents sont soviétiques, mais également ceux dont un seul des parents l'est.*

*[la délégation américaine] ne semble pas désireuse de se créer la moindre difficulté avec les Allemands dans le cas où l'un des parents est Allemand, ce qui est souvent le cas. Ne semble pas non plus désireuse d'engager l'avenir en ce qui concerne les enfants des GI*
*Est préoccupée de ne pas déclarer enfin les enfants de réfugiés polonais, yougoslaves ou baltes qui…sont réclamés par les gouvernements communisants de ces pays.*

138 *la Délégation française s'est efforcée de minimiser ses intentions réelles en protestant qu'il s'agissait simplement d'un recensement innocent des enfants, et non point d'en disposer ou de changer d'un trait de plume leur nationalité.*

139 *Le Commandant de Rosen estime qu'il y aurait plus de 100.000 (sinon 300.000) enfants abandonnés et regroupés par les Kinderheime. […]* la France ne peut renoncer à retrouver, à *reprendre les enfants arrachés par les Allemands à leurs parents. Les sondages faits par ses services font apparaître que les autorités allemandes avouent difficilement la présence de ces enfants et ne les rendent que contraintes. Deux raisons pourraient justifier cette attitude:*
- *persistance du désir de développer le potentiel humain allemand*
- *désir de dissimuler les rapts dont les Allemands se sont rendus coupables.*

140 *Il convient de noter à ce sujet que la solution idéale consisterait à introduire, en France, non pas des jeunes gens déjà formés (ou plutôt déformés) mais bien des enfants, voire même des bébés, facilement assimilables. A titre indicatif, il y a en Allemagne, des milliers d'enfants de souche française, nés au cours des années de guerre.*

141 *le Gouvernement Provisoire de la République a décidé de son côté…de faire transférer en France tous les enfants nés ou arrivés en Allemagne depuis le 1er octobre 1938 légitimes ou naturels et dont l'un des auteurs connus ou inconnus est ressortissant Français ou supposé l'être. […]*
*L'intérêt national commande que cette récupération d'enfants de sang français puisse être assurée avec le maximum de succès.*

142 *Il m'est apparu préférable que les enfants, et éventuellement les personnes qui les reçoivent, ignorent leur origine étrangère et que dans l'avenir, toute trace de leur extranéité disparaisse.*

143 *Il serait de plus haut intérêt que cette tâche puisse être accomplie aussi rapidement que possible, pour remédier aux effets du temps qui travaille contre nous. En effet les enfants sont de plus en plus difficiles à retrouver, ils se germanisent de langue et de moeurs, ils oublient de plus en plus leurs parents dont ils continuent à être séparés, enfin les preuves de paternité deviennent de plus en plus difficiles à établir.*

148 *Il est à signaler que l'expérience a montré que le nombre d'enfants susceptibles d'être recueillis en France, est très faible et va en s'amenuisant; par contre, les inconvénients d'ordre politique vont, du côté allemand, en augmentant et, à mon avis, il n'y a pas lieu de poursuivre cette opération.*

**Chapter 5. 1948**

157 *Les Commissaires aux Réfugiés tiennent à remercier les Autorités françaises d'avoir su, jusqu'à présent, éviter à leurs provinces l'afflux des réfugiés et l'agitation sociale […]Les Commissaires des Réfugiés comptent sur les autorités françaises pour qu'elles continuent à observer la même politique de fermeté en évitant à la zone française d'avoir à recevoir des réfugiés qui ne manquerait pas de bouleverser l'homogénéité de la zone.*

158 *il n'y a pas de raison de croire que les autorités françaises de la zone modifient la politique qu'elles ont suivi jusqu'à ce jour…[y compris] à trouver la solution du problème de la surpopulation allemande dans l'organisation de l'émigration, hors d'Allemagne, de la population excédentaire.*

164 *Par contre, la Délégation soviétique est très intéressée par le problème des minorités allemandes puisque la presque totalité des minorités à transférer est localisée dans les pays placés sous contrôle ou sous influence soviétique*

165 166 *C'est à l'étranger que ces Allemands sont des déracinés…les laisser au Danemark reviendrait à créer, là où il n'en existe pas, un problème de minorité purement artificiel*

170 *je suis nullement disposé à recevoir en ZFO ces allemands de Danemark, pour autant qu'il s'agit de Prussiens, qui risqueraient de déformer la physionomie de la ZFO*

171 *combien il est anormal et même injuste que le Conseil de Contrôle n'ait pas encore libéré des pays tel que le Danemark de la lourde charge de continuer à héberger et entretenir les très nombreux réfugiés que les Allemands ont, par la force, établis sur leur territoire.*

174 *choisi parmi les elements de population ayant le moins subi l'empreinte du prussianisme ou du national socialisme et dont la mentalité est aussi apparentée que possible à celle des Badois ou Wurtembergeois, chez lesquels ils sont appelés à s'installer. Les populations allemandes originaires de Haute Silésie me paraissent offrir à cet égard beaucoup plus de garantie que celles originaires des provinces prussiennes.*

175 *des arguments ethniques et politiques […] le résultat souhaité*

176 *Les catholiques ressortissants de la zone Est d'Allemagne seront plus facilement assimilés par leurs compatriotes catholiques que par leur compatriotes protestants au milieu desquels ils formeraient des ilots. …les éléments qui ont été le moins profondément 'nazifiés' et qui voient la France comme la plus catholique des puissances occupantes, donc d'un oeil plus favorable*

177 *Il semble qu'il y ait un certain revirement de la part des Alliés, qui, en décembre dernier, feignaient d'ignorer le geste 'unilatéral et prématuré' de la France.*

178 *Dans l'état actuel des choses, il semble qu'il n'y ait aucune raison pour la zone française d'accepter un nouveau contingent d'Allemands du Danemark.*

179 *En tout état de cause, tout accroissement éventuel du chiffre déjà accepté en zone française ne devrait être négocié, avec le Danemark, que contre de très substantiels avantages.*

182 *Je comprends fort bien si le Gouvernement Militaire attache du prix à attirer des ouvrier spécialistes en Zone Française. Mais Votre Excellence est surement en accord avec moi que la religion n'a aucun rapport avec une spécialité d'un métier et qu'en conséquence, le triage des réfugiés doit être fait seulement en considération de leurs capacités professionnelles et non en considération de leur religion.*

**Chapter 6. 1949**

199 *Toutefois, une concession sur ce point ne doit en aucun cas être envisagée sans que le problème soit étudié dans son ensemble en orientant les Alliés vers une politique d'émigration […] et en monnayant de contreparties substantielles sur d'autres plans toute contribution de la Zone française en matière de redistribution out de péréquation des réfugiés*

201 *perpétuer le paupérisme dans l'Allemagne occidentale*

207 208 *Il m'apparaît qu'aucun engagement formel n'a été pris en mon nom quant à l'accueil des 300.000 réfugiés évoqués par vous.*
*Certes, je reconnais volontiers que mes Länder bénéficient d'une situation privilégiée par rapport à celle des deux autres zones sur le point particulier des réfugiés, bien qu'un grand nombre de prisonniers libérés et de réfugiés allemands du Danemark aient été accueillis en 1948. C'est pourquoi je suis tout disposé à confirmer aux Autorités Allemandes, déjà saisies de cette affaires en novembre dernier, l'intérêt d'une nouvelle répartition des réfugiés dans l'Allemagne Occidentale. Des instructions seront donnés dans ce sens à mon représentant au Groupe de travail tripartite de Berlin.*
*Tous ces problèmes se trouveraient naturellement résolus par le futur Gouvernement du Bund mais sa création ne paraissant pas immédiate, je vous propose de demander aux Ministres-Présidents, réunis en collège, d'étudier la question qui nous intéresse et de nous proposer une solution.*

213 *sont probablement mieux en mesure de mettre le prix à une concession de notre part*

214 *Tout milite en faveur de cette solution: la proximité, les affinités, l'identité d'intérêt l'encouragement au fédéralisme, la parenté beaucoup plus proche entre Allemands du Sud-Ouest et Hongrois ou Sudètes qu'elle ne le serait avec les Allemands de Pologne ou des Prussiens, équilibre entre confessions, correspondant à celui de la zone, sans compter les conditions de santé et d'habillement meilleures en zone américaine qu'en zone britannique.*

254 *l'attitude du Gouvernement Militaire Français au cours des épineuses négociations qui se sont déroulées jusqu'à présent a réussi à préserver la Zone Française d'un afflux trop grand de réfugiés et a probablement évité un catastrophe.*

216 *Ceci ne serait pas pour déplaire ni aux autorités françaises, ni aux autorités allemandes.*

217 *ce ne sera pas à nos Länder à quémander*

220 *Les Britanniques semblent furieux des concessions d'ordre financier qui ont été faites par les Allemands de la Bizone à la zone française, c'est-à-dire essentiellement aux dépends de la Rhénanie-Westphalie et de Hambourg, tandis que les Américains sont furieux de ce que la zone britannique ait tirés les marrons du feu en obtenant que 3 réfugiés sur 4 transférés en zone française proviennent de zone britannique.*

222 *qui présenterait pour la France un incontestable danger*

224 *se produisent à une cadence qui est parfaitement satisfaisante, étant à la fois conforme au programme et aux possibilités d'absorption*

225 *Il est certain néanmoins, que les Puissances Occupantes devraient veiller à ce que certains Länder et, en tout premier lieu la Rhénanie-Westphalie, ne mettent plus d'obstacles à la réalisation du plan de redistribution en cours, dont la modération même est un gage de réussite.*

*Mais une redistribution des réfugiés ne suffit pas à résoudre le problème, et la paix sociale parmi les réfugiés ne pourra être garantie avant qu'une égalisation des charges (Lastenausgleich) n'ait réparti, de façon plus équitable, entre tous les habitants actuels de l'Allemagne Occidentale, les sacrifices d'une guerre perdue […]l'avenir de l'Allemagne dépendra pour beaucoup de la manière dont on parviendra à faire garder patience aux réfugiés.*

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Dossier 284
AP - Direction générale des Affairs politiques
Dossiers 17, 115, 169 (Réfugiés, Personnes Déplacées)
GFCC - Groupe français du conseil de Contrôle
Dossiers 20, 23, 24, 35, 38 (Réfugiés, Personnes Déplacées, Questions Démographiques)
HC - Cabinet et services rattachés
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