

*Neue Heimat im Westen: Vertriebene, Flüchtlinge, Aussiedler*, edited by Klaus J. Bade. Münster, Westfälischer Heimatbund, 1990. 160 pp. DM 14.60.

Since World War II about fifteen million expellees, refugees, and immigrants of German stock from eastern European countries and the former German Democratic Republic have come to western Germany. Their number amounts to over 25 per cent of the present population of western Germany, excluding the 4.6 million guest workers and asylum-seekers who also live there. The six contributors to *Neue Heimat im Westen* deal with various socio-economic, intellectual, political, and cultural aspects of the integration process. Klaus J. Bade's introduction presents the basic facts and provides a helpful framework by categorizing the three major waves of immigration. He also contributes a pioneering piece on the recent *Aussiedler* phenomenon, that is, the voluntary immigration of people of German descent from the non-German countries behind the former Iron Curtain. By giving the historical background and some welcome detail regarding the reasons of emigration as well as the reception in the west, he succeeds in showing that the problem has many more facets than are generally discerned.

Of the various articles those by Uwe Kleinert, Rainer Schulze, and Ulrich Tolksdorf deserve specific mention. Kleinert uses the example of North Rhine-Westfalia to demonstrate how the expellees from the formerly German districts east of the Oder-Neisse line integrated into the work environment. In the beginning acceptance was very slow in the country-side, and even in urban,

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industrial regions the newcomers encountered considerable resistance. Over time, however, the persistent demand for workers softened the attitude of employers as well as of colleagues at the workplace. Official regulations gave the expellees security regarding their political and social status. When government implemented plans to regulate the labour market to suit the needs of reconstruction, their mobility rendered the new workers especially useful. Integration was, of course, also helped by the fact that they shared with the established population the basic ethical standards and moral values which were the legacy of a common past. The younger generation in particular showed a remarkable will to conform to the new environment and to succeed in it. This development occurred despite the fact that for many years most of the expellees harboured hopes of returning to their home regions. Rather than impeding their will to adapt, this expectation seems to have given them the necessary mental strength to persist in a not too friendly environment.

If Kleinert focuses his attention mostly on the newcomers, Schulze concentrates upon the impact which their arrival had upon the life of the receiving society. His examination of the postwar years in the district of Celle in Lower Saxony reveals that the traditional rural patterns of living and thinking were thoroughly altered. Material changes included the mechanization and, indeed, in given instances the industrialization of production methods as well as the construction of new urban quarters in a country-side formerly almost exclusively dedicated to agriculture. The intermingling of different creeds and dialects removed, or at least flattened, previously solid religious and linguistic barriers. Altogether the contrast between city and country lost much of its sharpness, and horizons widened considerably. Schulze realizes that this modernization trend did not start with the arrival of the expellees, but had started already during the war and would have continued in any event. He convincingly shows, however, that it was greatly accelerated by their coming and because of it in certain regards took unexpected directions.

Arguably, the most interesting among the various contributions is Tolksdorf's study of the cultural assimilation process. Whereas the social sciences have some reliable instruments at their disposal to determine degrees of integration, in the cultural sphere measurement is more elusive. The author's solution is the long-range look. As his investigation spans the four and a half decades since the end of the war, he is able to discern changes which otherwise might have escaped attention. Tolksdorf distinguishes six major phases. The first was that of cultural shock, at which no meaningful contact occurred with the new environment. Isolation, however, was not equivalent to mental torpor, as it was characterized by some creative scrutiny of the individuals' own fate and of the menacing present. During the second phase (early 1950s), which coincided with the loss of hope for return to the home regions, the newcomers began to become thoroughly conscious of the customs and values of the receiving environment. As a consequence they organized locally in order to preserve their own cultural identity. The late 1950s and early 1960s were a phase of cultural conflict, as a more assertive and militant stand resulted in confrontation with the natives. On the more positive side there were

endeavours to revive old traditions and customs, but a lot of name-calling and vilification from both quarters poisoned the atmosphere. As a result the newcomers during the ensuing fourth phase sought to further their interests through regional and national, rather than local, association. More sophisticated efforts at self-assertion included the appointment of cultural "functionaries," the replacement of literary efforts with political and publicity endeavours, and at the philosophical level attempts to find valid definitions of *Heimat* and culture. During the fifth phase acculturation finally reached the point where the individuals felt securely ensconced in their environment. By the 1970s most expellees and refugees, and even more so their children and grandchildren, had attained this stage. The last phase, stretching into the present, witnesses a renaissance of cultural manifestations, though not any more with the goal of self-assertion, but rather only for purposes of cultural enrichment or entertainment.

Tolksdorf's study is useful not only because it pulls together most of the literature that has appeared on the subject, but also because his attempt at interpreting the German experience will be of much value to anthropologists, sociologists, and historians who wish to compare it to the developments in other immigration countries. Most of the other contributions in this outwardly modest book, of course, can serve this purpose in their own way. The European migrations of this century have certainly not yet received the attention they deserve. For this reason the present collection has to be welcomed.