CHAPTER IX

THE SWABIANS AND THE THIRD REICH - NAZIFIED AND "CO-ORDINATED" - RECRUITED FOR THE WAFFEN SS

It must be remembered that contact between the Germans abroad and the German mother country did not originate with the coming of Hitler, but had existed from the very beginning. Though these contacts appeared mostly on the cultural plane, it is also clear that they were never completely free from political undertones. The intensity of the latter varied according to the trends and political climate which prevailed in the Reich. It goes without saying that politics and ideology gained in this field, as in all others, an unparalleled upper hand during the Nazi era. However, it would be inaccurate to maintain that this new emphasis came as a surprise, since the ground was well broken long before the Machtübernahme.

With the coming of the Nazi stewardship a "scientific" frame was given to the handling of the German folk groups outside the Reich,¹ a process which formed a pivotal part of the new Be-

¹ Lammers, chief of the Reich's Chancellery, on January 25, 1938, under file number Rk. 1355 B, notified all supreme agencies of the Reich about Hitler's new, official definition of the concepts "Deutschum im Ausland" (Germans abroad), "Auslandsdeutscher" (German abroad or foreign-country-German) and "Volksdeutscher" (ethnic German) as follows: "If we speak in general terms about the Deutschum im Ausland we understand that in this concept both the Auslandsdeutschen and the Volksdeutschen are included. However, we know how to distinguish quite clearly between the Auslandsdeutschen, i.e., the Germans of the Reich in foreign countries, and the Volksdeutschen who are of German stock in language and culture yet not citizens of the German Reich." R 43 II-1408 a.

Himmler too made an attempt to clarify the definition of the Volksdeutsche. In his order of November 27, 1943, to all the supreme leaders of the SS and police, he declared: "The term Volksdeutsche is often used by Germans in the Reich with a certain undertone of degradation. If there is a necessity to distinguish between Reichs- and Volksdeutsche then we have to speak about 'Germans inside and outside the Reich's boundaries' or about 'Germans of the Reich' and 'Germans of the folk groups (Volksgruppen).' In most cases the definition 'he is a German' is preferable and to be used." Sig. Schumacher 1 345.

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G. C. Paikert, The Danube Swabians
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völkerungspolitik (population policy). We find the first but already rather striking allusions to this scheme in Hitler’s Mein Kampf and in the twenty-five point program of the early National Socialists in 1920. The raw essence of these thoughts, which later underwent a series of changes and modifications, was this: 1) all the German-speaking areas of Europe must be united in a German national state; 2) in support of this super state a Lebensraum (living space) must be secured, primarily in the eastern half of Europe; 3) all the Germans, wherever they might be scattered around the globe, must be settled in the new acquisitions, which would first be “cleansed” of the (inferior) natives by means of population transfers and expulsions.¹

The moral and ethical justification of this astonishingly frank and cynical program – and the Nazis were always very keen to employ lofty justifications for the lowliest of their ulterior schemes – was based on two concepts, neither of them new, just drastically remodelled by Hitler. The essence of the first was the restoration of the old Teutonic glory, the establishment of a modern version of the ancient Holy Roman Empire, the latter so deplorably de-Germanized and destroyed throughout the centuries by the enemies of Germandom. Mutilated and overcrowded Versailles-Germany should be replaced with an imperium worthy to house the mightiest and fittest of all the nations, the great German Volk,² which had been denied for only


² The president of the Academy for German Law submitted on June 29, 1938, a memorandum to Lammers, chief of the Reich’s Chancellery, in which he summarized the work of the Academy on the clarification of the concepts and terminologies of race, folk, state and space (Rasse, Volk, Staat und Raum). In the field of this study’s interest the following are the most important parts of this memorandum, which was approved by the chancellery. “Volk (folk) is not the totality of all persons possessing the same citizenship, but the totality of all persons belonging to the same Volksstum (folkdom). Therefore, one must never identify the notion ‘a German’ with ‘a citizen of the German Reich’ and it is incorrect to define parts of the German Volk in other states as ‘brother-folk.’ There is only one, sole German Volk. The notion ‘of German stock’ (deutschstämmig) is to be replaced with ‘of German folk’ or ‘of German folkdom’ (deutschvolkisch or deutschen Volksstums). Instead of ‘minority’ and ‘minorities right’ one has to speak of ‘folk group’ (Volksgruppe) and ‘folk group rights’ (Volksgruppenrecht) and instead of ‘state nation’ (majority nation) of ‘state-leading nation’ (Staatsführendes Volk)”.

“In the case of the geographic belonging of a person or folk group we should speak not about a ‘host,’ ‘receiving’ or ‘haboring’ state, but of ‘residence,’ ‘habitat’ or ‘land of habitat.’ ‘Motherland’ is the closer homestead (geschlossener Siedlungsboden) of a folk from which the individual folk member or a whole folk group immigrated, whereas the word ‘Vaterland’ implies strong undertones related to public law. Therefore, it is not incorrect if Germans call the non-German state in which they have their