

German Settlements in the Dnjepropetrowsk General Region

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[Translation Begins]

Comprehensive Report Concerning the 10 German Settlements in the Districts of Dnjepropetrowsk, Petrikowka and Werchnje-Dnjeprowsk, in the Dnjepropetrowsk General Region

by Dr. Karl Stumpp

At the same time as the first Mennonites (compare Chortitza District) left the Danzig area in 1789 and established themselves in the district near Saporoshje (formerly Alexandrowsk), 100 families of the evangelical faith also emigrated to Russia from Danzig. Originally, they wanted to settle near Nikopol. However, in 1789 they founded the **Josefstal** Colony, 13 km north northeast of Dnjepropetrowsk (formerly Jekaterinoslaw). On the journey, 10 families died and so another 22 families came from Wuerttemberg in 1801 who, in transition, had lived in Poland. In 1791, some of the immigrant colonists from Josefstal founded the **Fischersdorf** settlement (formerly Rybalsk: Rybe=fish) 12 km from Dnjepropetrowsk. It was here that 17 Wuerttemberg families settled down while 5 remained in Josefstal. Whereas pure Low-German (*plattdeutsch*) was spoken in Josefstal, in Fischersdorf there is no uniform dialect. Moreover, it is in Josefstal that Samuel Kontenius (Centsenius) was buried. He died 30 May, 1830 and a memorial was put up there for him which was damaged during the Bolshevik times and has now again been restored. S. Kontenius was renowned among the German colonists for his invaluable service to the area of agriculture and animal breeding development.

In that same year, 1789, the settlement of **Jamburg** was established 25 km south southeast of Dnjepropetrowsk. Even today, the inhabitants speak a Bavarian-Austrian dialect. Besides farming, many of the colonists are involved in the building of wagons.

In 1798, the community of Josefstal was partitioned and Mennonites established the settlement of **Kronsgarten**. The name refers to the good condition of the land for cultivating. Later, the colonists also purchased some more land from land-owners Kirylow and Bytkow. The Mennonites left the village in 1928/29 and immigrated to America. When collectivization was introduced, Kronsgarten was again populated predominantly by German farmers from Josefstal and other settlements in the surrounding area.

Billersfeld was founded in 1860 as a daughter colony of Josefstal and in part of Fischersdorf. The land was at first rented from landowner Biehler (thereby the name) and then purchased.

1. Murdered	24
2. Starved 1921-22 & 1933/34	245
3. Banished 1929-41	668
4. Deported in this war	438
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Total	1375

52.5% of the German families are without a head of the household. The percentage in Fischersdorf is even higher at 78%.

The segment in the list of inhabitants with percentages of age groups within the population (Table G) for the years 1921/22 and 1933/34, as also the revolutionary years, are especially terribly large in comparison to that of the other districts.

Compared to the former German landowners with 12,598 hectares of land in 1918, only 8,965 hectares were being worked during the collectivization of the Bolshevik era. Add to that another 721 hectares for farm yards.

Dnjepropetrowsk, in February, 1943

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