

German Settlements in the Kronau-Orloff District

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[Words in square brackets indicate translator's comments]

[Translation Begins]

Comprehensive Report Concerning the 26 German Settlements of Kronau- Orloff (now Marienburg) District on the Ingulets River, South of Kriwoj-Rog

The German villages of this District are daughter colonies of the established and familiar district on the Molotschna River: Prischib – Halbstadt. East of the little river Ingulets there are 8 Evangelical and 3 Catholic settlements (in Sandfeld, which is missing in the diagram, even today there are still 9 German families). West of the river are the Mennonite settlements. With the immigration to America in 1926, the communities of Reinfeld and Gnadenfeld broke up. Later, Germans from Volhynia (Karlswalde) settled here.

The 27 mother colonies from the Prischib District founded 41 daughter colonies (3 near Nikopol, 11 in the Kannkrin area, 4 in the Poltawa Gouvernement, and 11 in the Ufa Gouvernement), and 12 villages in the Kronau District in 1869.

In time, the German communities (Mennonite) of the Halbstadt and Gnadenfeld *Volosti* [local self-governing organs] purchased land from Count (*Grafen*) Kotschobej and founded the 16 settlements which are identified in the drawing (see map Table J).

The Germans of the Mennonite faith all came out of the Danzig Low-lands and even today continue to speak the Low-German (*plattdeutsche*) dialect. The Germans of the Evangelical [Lutheran] faith came from the colonies of the Prischib District and immigrated there from Baden and Wuerttemberg.

Table A presents an overview of the situation of the inhabitants, the changes during the rule of the Bolshevik government and of the present war. Then attention is drawn (Column 4-8) to the fact that the German inhabitants in the 26 colonies, despite Bolshevism, starvation and banishment, increased in number from 8,101 in 1919 to 11,313 just before the outbreak of the present war.

While these settlements were pure German before the world war, in the last few years always more Ukrainian families have been settled on the German farm-yards. This holds true especially for the larger villages and above all the major center (Kronau). It is noteworthy and gratifying to

see that these German settlements remained free of Jews, with the exception of Kronau where some Jewish commissars and civil servants live.

The numbers on mixed marriages (Column 27) is gratifyingly small. Of the 2,857 families, there are only 65 mixed marriages, which amounts to **2.2%**. The number of wives of foreign origin (35) is insignificantly higher than that of the husbands of foreign origin (30). There are really no **mixed marriages with Jews**.

The casualties on the Germans in these 26 settlements, during the time of the Bolsheviks, are considerable and present themselves as follows:

I. **Those Murdered due to the Machno Bandits in 1919** (see Column 45-48 in Table A):
 Men-125 Women-20 Youths-25 Total: 170

To this is to be added the murders at Muensterberg, which by itself should come to over 200. To come up with the exact number is not possible because the whole village was liquidated at that time. Only a few were able to escape. 17 were murdered in the Kronau District and another 153 in Orloff. Muensterberg is part of that last district.

II. **Those who Starved to Death** (see Column 36-44 Table A):

1921/22	Men- 77	Women-56	Youths-199	Total: 332
1933/34	Men-133	Women-33	Youths-157	Total: 323
	=====	=====	=====	=====
	210	89	356	655

Noticeable is the fact that more men than women starved, but among the youth even more. 426 starved in the Kronau District and 229 in the better situated farms of Orloff (see Table F).

III. **Those who were Banished 1929-41** (see Column 50-53 in Table A)
 Men-789 Women-37 Youths-26 Total: 852

The banishment, to a greater degree, started with the introduction of the collective in 1929.

From 1929-1933, it was primarily the wealthy farmers "*Kulaki*" that were banished. In 1936, but especially in 1937 and in the following years, banishment was based on political motives, that is to say, everyone was under suspicion, especially those who had relatives or friends in Germany and corresponded with them or received care packages from Germany during the years of starvation. These were the ones most ruthlessly dragged off. The number of banished peaked in 1937 under Interior Minister Jeshow ("Jeshowschtschina" is a word which still causes fear today)...see Table D. All who were banished in these and the following years were not allowed to have any contact with their relatives. So no one knew where they were or whether they were even still alive. Something like 210 regions of banishment are known: further east, Siberian, the Urals, Khazakhstan, way up north, central Russia, the Black Sea area, the Caucasus (see Table E).

IV. **Dragged Off [Deported] in this Present War**

Men-512 Women-16 Youths-85 Total: 613

The Soviet administration publicly decreed that all men between 16-60 years of age had to leave their home villages and move eastward over the Dnjepr River. This decree was carried out in various ways, according to the situation, the civil servants and also the fitness and the spirit of the ethnic Germans themselves. Of the 1,356 who were deported in this present war, 743 returned and 613 are still missing as of today (see Table D).

Total casualties of the German folks in the Kronau-Orloff District amounts to this:

	<u>Kronau</u>	<u>Orloff</u>	<u>Totals</u>
1. Murdered in 1919	17	153	170 *
2. Starved 1921-22 & 1933/34	426	229	655
3. Banished 1929-41	404	448	852
4. Deported in this war	312	301	613
	=====	=====	=====
	1375	1131	2290

(* The about 200 people murdered in Muensterberg should be added to this. Compare Columns 36-65 in Table A)

These colossal casualties make a noticeable impression in the list of inhabitants with percentages of age groups within the population. Table G shows the list of inhabitants with percentages of age groups within the population from all 26 villages. The age of those who experienced the destruction by starvation, banishment, etc., cannot be computed exactly today, that is, we get a picture of how it would be represented if the casualties were not entered. The diagram reveals above all the two sections of age group from 5-10 and 20-25, chiefly for the years of starvation in 1921 and 1933 and, to a lesser degree, attributable to the banishments. In the deported category, the numbers are lower for those aged 16-60. In the area of banishment, the best male age is 20-55. Those murdered were predominantly men. If one makes allowances for the casualties in diagram (G), in the 18th year of one's life, you get the picture that the males are missing. 53% of the German families are without a male head of the house, without a provider (see Table H). It is blatantly manifested in some of the heaviest affected villages such as Fuerstental, friedensfeld, Altonau....(see Table I). In Altonau it stand like this: 31 men, 164 women, 325 youths up to the age of 18.

Despite these difficult blows of fate, Chart H indicates, in its age group up to 15 and in part 20 years, an absolutely favorable picture – a picture which is exhibited neither in the Reich nor in other ethnic groups.

The following tabulation presents the information concerning the number of children born per family in the time period of 1880-1922 in unbroken marriages, that is, where the birth count can be determined, and 1880 to 1939, that is, where the last age category where children are still expected.

A. Year of Marriage 1880-1922

Kronau Area				
# of Families	# Children born	# Children that died	Deaths in %	# Children per family
560	3,599	1,337	37.1	6.4
Orloff Area				
# of Families	# Children born	# Children that died	Deaths in %	# Children per family
519	3,515	1,039	29.5	6.7
====	====	====	====	====
1,079	7,114	2,376	33.4	6.5

B. Year of Marriage 1880-1939

Kronau Area				
# of Families	# Children born	# Children that died	Deaths in %	# Children per family
1,302	6,128	1,980	32.3	4.7
Orloff Area				
# of Families	# Children born	# Children that died	Deaths in %	# Children per family
1,203	5,720	1,452	4.8	4.8
====	====	====	====	====
2,505	11,848	3,432	29.5	4.7

During the time period of 1880-1922, we also arrive at an average figure of 6.5 children born per family in those marriages that are unbroken and no more children are anticipated. 33.4% of the children born died without being able to establish their own families. In the time period of 1880-1939, the numbers are 4.7 and 29.5%. If in the last age category, despite the banishments, especially with young marriages, more children are anticipated, then Table H confirms that the number of children born to Germans in Russia was considered to be in decline. Still, when it comes to having a lot of children, the Germans in Russia exceeded the average of the Reich or all other ethnic groups.

Table B portrays the economic conditions, land management, animal husbandry, crops and collective output. Compared to the existing German property in 1918, the land worked by the Germans in the collectives is considerably less.

Table C has statements concerning the founding year of the colony, the arrival of the ethnic Germans and the teachers and student statistics. In addition, the Table preserves an overview of the available church material, of which a greater portion of it, unfortunately, was destroyed.

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