

Expellees in the Federal States of West Germany (1950 and 1961)

Abstract

This table documents population movement out of the East and into the Federal Republic. In 1950, expellees from various Eastern European countries accounted for one third of the population of Schleswig-Holstein and more than one quarter of the population of Lower Saxony. (Both of these states had suffered comparably little wartime destruction.) On Federal territory of as a whole, expellees made up 16.1% of the population in 1950. That percentage changed very little over the course of the decade – in 1961, expellees accounted for 15.9% of the population. (Please note: the term “expellee” does not include individuals who fled to Federal territory from the Soviet Occupation Zone/GDR. They are defined as refugees.)

Source

States	1950		1961	
	Expellees in thousands	%	Expellees in thousands	%
Schleswig-Holstein	857	33.0	630	27.2
Hamburg	116	7.2	206	11.3
Lower Saxony	1,852	27.2	1,612	24.3
Bremen	48	8.6	98	13.9
North Rhine-Westphalia	1,332	10.1	2,298	14.5
Hesse	721	16.7	818	17.0
Rhineland-Palatinate	152	5.1	276	8.1
Baden-Württemberg	862	13.4	1,205	15.5
Bavaria	1,937	21.1	1,645	17.3
Saarland	–	–	18	1.7
Berlin (West)	148	6.9	151	6.9
Federal territory	8,025	16.1	8,956	15.9

Expellees are persons of German nationality or ethnicity who, on September 1, 1939, were permanently domiciled abroad or in the eastern territories of Germany that are currently under foreign administration (territorial borders as of December 31, 1937). This category also includes any children born to them after this time. Any persons from abroad who wanted to be recognized as expellees needed to prove that German was their mother tongue. The classification of children followed that of the father; the classification of children born out of wedlock, or those whose fathers had died, followed that of the mother. For the 1950 census, the category expellees also included Germans living in the Saarland as of September 1, 1939. For the 1961 census, however, the only persons counted as expellees were those who had applied for a Federal Expellee Identification Card (A or B). This did not include all those who were eligible. Because of this difference in counting methods, official estimates suggest that the *increase* in refugee and expellee numbers was actually twice as high as reported.

Source: Gerhard A. Ritter and Merith Niehuss, *Wahlen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Bundestags- und Landtagswahlen 1946–1987*. Munich: Beck, 1987, p. 31.

Recommended Citation: Expellees in the Federal States of West Germany (1950 and 1961), published in: German History in Documents and Images, <<https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/occupation-and-the-emergence-of-two-states-1945-1961/ghdi:document-2301>> [May 19, 2024].