

CHAPTER XXVII

WARTIME IDENTITY DOCUMENTS IN GERMANY

A. INTRODUCTION

1. The displaced persons and refugee problem (aside from pre-war refugees) in Germany, Austria and Italy, which is now the subject of international action, has arisen mainly because of the activities of the Nazi Government from 1933 to 1945.

Non Germans who came to the German Reich and its satellite Governments generally belonged to one of the eight following groups :

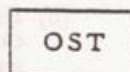
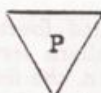
- (1) Slave labourers
- (2) Concentration Camp Victims
- (3) Volksdeutsche
- (4) Resettlers not of German origin
- (5) Collaborators
- (6) Volunteer workers and opportunists
- (7) Conscripts in German armed forces
- (8) Volunteers in German armed forces.

2. In a totalitarian country, such as Germany before and during the war, the number of controls established by it made it necessary for the average person to carry a number of identity documents. In such a state where activities not specifically forbidden were compulsory, people were invariably called upon to prove their identity and to show documents establishing their right to perform certain functions. Such documents took the form of Identity Certificates (Ausweis) and many certificates (Bescheinigungen). Documents in Germany, and of interest to field eligibility personnel, may be classified into approximately six groups :

- (a) Military Service Identity Documents
- (b) Para-Military Service Documents
- (c) Nazi Party Documents
- (d) Civilian Documents
- (e) Aliens and Alien Labour Documents
- (f) Friendly Aliens in Germany.

3. A careful examination of these documents may provide valuable clues to the corroboration of the stories of displaced persons and refugees. It should be borne in mind that to move about Germany, to exist in Germany and to even walk the street during the War it was a matter of real importance to have papers—if people lost documents they soon saw to it that they reported for the issue of duplicates—so beware of the person who can produce no documents. However, many people who were sent to Germany as forced labourers have very few documents, sometimes merely Work Cards (Arbeitskarte) and such documents were carefully preserved by the holders as their only proof of identity.

Many of these labourers were compelled to wear badges instead of being issued with documents such as those shown below for Polish, Ukrainian and Eastern Workers :



These persons were issued with temporary documents such as those mentioned in Sub-Section B para. 8 (d). Such persons were discriminated against to the extent that they were not permitted to enter places of amusement, to hold food cards (they were communally fed), to hold travel permits, to enter German stores and they were not paid a salary, merely a nominal wage.

B. INDIVIDUAL IDENTITY DOCUMENTS

4. MILITARY SERVICE IDENTITY DOCUMENTS.

(a) *Soldbuch (Army Book).*

(i) *Purpose.* This document was not properly a paybook as its name implies, because it contained only the rate of pay of the holder and not the amounts paid, excepting such payments that were made outside of his unit.

(ii) *Description.* This booklet contained twenty-four pages and was bound in light cardboard and was the most important document carried by German soldiers. On the cover appears the eagle and swastika emblem (Hoheitsabzeichen) and the words "Soldbuch zugleich Personalausweis" (Pay book and Identity Card). Variations of this document existed for the Air Force, Navy and Waffen SS; these are described under the items below. The contents of this book, in addition to showing rates of pay, showed all particulars of the soldier's service such as Units served in, inoculations, personal equipment issued, identity, rank, promotions with dates and a variety of other data pertinent to the soldier's services.

Note: Generally speaking the German Soldbuch was also issued to Poles serving in the Wehrmacht. Such persons were almost invariably on the Volkslisten. Those who voluntarily served in the Wehrmacht are excluded from IRO care, under Part II (b) of the Constitution.

(b) *Kennkarte nur für Fronteinsatz (statt Soldbuch).*

(i) *Purpose.* This document was an Identity Card replacing the Soldbuch referred to in (a) above and was only to be used in the front line. Its purpose was purely identification.

(ii) *Description and Regulations.* Printed on card, this document was issued in the place of the Soldbuch for reasons of security in the event of capture. The Soldbuch was withdrawn when a soldier was sent to the front line, and this card issued in its place. The front of the card bears the eagle and swastika emblem with the words "Kennkarte"—"nur für Fronteinsatz—statt Soldbuch—Nr. ". The inside of the card shows the identification particulars of the bearer, next of kin and blood group. It also bears the stamp of the Field Command Unit (Feld Stempel). It may be expected that deserters from the WEHRMACHT would only possess this card—particularly if they deserted from the front line.

(c) *Soldbuch Libretto Personale.*

(i) *Purpose.* This document was not properly a paybook because it showed only the rate of pay of the bearer and contained no records of individual payments. It was actually a record and identity book.

- (ii) *Description.* This booklet contained fourteen pages, was bound in light cardboard and was issued to Italians serving in the German Army. It was printed in German and Italian, the front cover did *not* show the eagle and swastika emblem but merely the words "SOLDBUCH zugleich Personalausweis Libreto Personale". This document was similar in other respects to that described in (a) above excepting that it contained less detail.
- (d) *Kennbuch (Army Pay Book).*
- (i) *Purpose.* This document has the same purpose as the Italian Soldbuch described in item (c) above.
- (ii) *Description and Regulations.* Bound in light cardboard, these booklets contained only eight pages which were not numbered.
- (e) *Kennbuch (Russian).* Issued to Russians serving in the Wehrmacht (such as Vlassov's Russian Liberation Army). The cover was blue-green in colour and endorsed in the top right hand corner with the word *RUSSE* and in the centre "KENNBUCH" with a printed translation in the Russian language. The size of the book was 11 × 15 cm and it was printed in German and Russian.
- (f) *Kennbuch (Ukrainian).* This book is similar to the Russian book, excepting that in the right hand corner of the front cover is printed "UKRAINIAN" and the translation of "KENNBUCH" in the centre is printed in Ukrainian. The book is printed in German and Ukrainian, and was issued to Ukrainians serving in the Wehrmacht.
- (g) *Kennbuch (Cossack).* Issued to certain of the old Russian cossacks drafted into the Wehrmacht, the cover was light brown in colour. In the top right hand corner was printed the word "KOSAK" and in the centre the word "KENNBUCH" with a Russian translation underneath. The book is printed in German and Russian and was the same size as item (e) above.
- (h) *Ausweis (Legitimaciya).* Issued to old Russian émigrés living in Serbia and elsewhere. The majority of the Rogozhin corps was in possession of these documents in 1941 and 1942. The Ausweis, printed on white paper, is of four pages 10³/₄ × 13¹/₂ cm in size, signed by SKORODUMOV as President and LANIN as Secretary of the "Vertrauenstelle für die Russische Emigration in Serbien" Belgrad, Kr. Natalie 33. The front page centre contains "Ausweis" in German and Russian. Second page is printed in Russian with the personal description of the holder and signature of issuing officials. The third page is printed in German, and contains a photograph of the holder together with his personal description, etc.
- (i) *Soldbuch—Kriegsmarine (Naval Pay Book).* This book is the same as the SOLDBUCH described in item (a) above, excepting that on the front cover the word "KRIEGSMARINE" is printed in addition. There are minor differences in the interior of the book which relates to Naval Service. The same purpose and regulations apply to this document as to the Soldbuch.
- (j) *Soldbuch Luftwaffe (Luftwaffe Pay Book).*
- (i) *Purpose.* The same as for SOLDBUCH shown in item (a) above.
- (ii) *Description and Regulations.* The cover was blue but occasionally brown and the corners rounded. On the cover, printed in black ink, the Albatross in flight holding the swastika in its claws (the Luftwaffe emblem) and the words "SOLDBUCH - ZUGLEICH PERSONAL AUSWEIS — LUFTWAFFE". Inside the cover was printed the "Ten Commandments for the Conduct of War" (10 Gebete für die KRIEGSFÜHRUNG). There were minor differences in the interior contents from the Army Soldbuch, relating to Air Force Service. The same conditions and regulations apply to this book as to the Soldbuch in item (a).

5. PARA-MILITARY SERVICE DOCUMENTS.

(a) *Soldbuch SS (SS Pay Book).*

(i) *Purpose.* As in item (a) of para. 1 above.

(ii) *Description and Regulations.* This book was bound in light cardboard and was light grey in colour, and there was a flap at the back of the book. The two outer corners were rounded and it was 11 x 14 cm in size. The front cover bears the runic SS emblem and the title is printed "Soldbuch—zugleich Personalausweis". The interior contents vary with the Wehrmacht Soldbuch as related to SS Service, and on page 1 was a Box Stamp space for quarterly checking.

(b) *Dienstbuch (Service Booklet).*

(i) *Purpose.* During the war this book acted as personal identification document for members of the Organisation Todt.

(ii) *Description and Regulations.* Bound in cardboard this booklet contains forty pages, the outer covers have a dark blackish background with brown lettering, the book's size is approximately 11 x 15 cm. On the outside of the cover is printed in light brown lettering the words "Organisation Todt" and underneath in jet black lettering a letter G, underneath this letter, printed in light brown colouring the emblem of the eagle and swastika and underneath that, the word "Dienstbuch". On the inside of the cover is printed an exhortation to the German worker headed "An die deutsche Frontarbeiter" (To the German Front Worker) and the signature of Dr. Todt. The contents of this book show the personal identity particulars of the individual together with a photograph, it also shows particulars of service, wounds received in action, decorations, pay bonuses, special training, hospitalization, membership of NSDAP or DAF and other service particulars. Each page bears the words "ORGANISATION TODT", the eagle and swastika and "Dienstbuch" which appears in a white pattern. The inside back cover consists of regulations and the outside shows the holder's name in a white space provided on the dark background.

Note: Only German nationals (Reichsdeutsche) were entitled to a Dienstbuch, they were even officially withdrawn in 1942 from Volksdeutsche citizens but certain aliens—looked upon favourably—and collaborators may have been issued with one. To check Volksdeutsche, bear this in mind in association with item (c) below.

(c) *Ersatzkarte für Dienstbuch (Substitute Card for Service Booklet).*

(i) *Purpose.* Issued to members of the Organisation Todt and recognised as an Identity Document.

(ii) *Description and Regulations.* Printed on thin card in a light grey colour, this document is folded horizontally and vertically forming four panels. The front page gives the bearer's particulars and family status, the other pages medical details, together with specifications of the contractors who have employed him. A photograph of the bearer is stapled on the card. Stapled to the interior of this document there is often a booklet entitled "Nachtrag" in which entries which did not find space on the "Ersatzkarte" proper were made. The heading on the front of this card bears the eagle and swastika emblem in the top left hand corner and the words "Organisation Todt" in the right hand corner and underneath the legend "Ersatzkarte für Dienstbuch Nr. " and is over-written with the signature of the Oberfrontführer issuing the card. Only aliens who were "in the good graces" of the O.T. were issued with this card and the word "Ausländer" was stamped on the foot of the card. Volksdeutsche members were issued with this card after 1942. Some cards were issued in 1945 with the word

Hundertschaft stamped thereon. This indicated that the person had been called before a Wehrmacht recruiting commission and had been considered as not worthy material for the Wehrmacht (*Wehrunwürdig*). In addition to foreign personnel, some German criminals and ex-concentration camp inmates were given the card when they became members of the Organisation.

- (d) *Dienstbuch—Festungsbau W. H.* (*Service Record Book—Fortification Construction*).
- (i) *Purpose.* As for the *Dienstbuch* referred to in item (b) above this served as an identity document.
 - (ii) *Description and Regulations.* This book is the same size and type as the *Dienstbuch* referred to in item (b), excepting that in the outer corner is printed "W.H. Festungsbau Dienstbuch". In spite of the W.H. on the outer cover the holders of this book were O.T. workers engaged on fortification constructions for the "Wehrmacht Heer" and the document is, therefore, not a military one. Each page bears the watermark of the title of the book. The conditions of issue were the same as in item (b).

6. N.S.D.A.P. NAZI PARTY DOCUMENTS.

- (a) *Rückwanderer Ausweis—Auslands Organisation (Returning Emigrants Certificate)*.
- (i) *Purpose.* This document certified the return to the Reich of a German emigrant.
 - (ii) *Description and Regulations.* Bound in a thin card, green in colour, this booklet contains eight pages (pink in colour) and was approximately 11 x 14 cm in size. Pages 1 and 2 gave particulars of the holder and the remaining pages showed records of assistance given to the bearer. On the front cover, in black lettering is printed "N.S.D.A.P.—Auslands Organisation"—Rückwanderer-Amt Berlin, W.9.—Potsdamer Str. 22—and in large case letters: "Rückwanderer—Ausweis Nr.".

Note: The Auslandsbüro für Deutschland was an organisation formed to unite persons of ethnic German origin who were living outside of Germany, it was known in Germany as the "43rd GAU"; this organisation was an integral part of the N.S.D.A.P. abroad.

- (b) *Deutsche Arbeitsfront—D.A.F. (German Labour Front)*.
- Identity documents were usually confined in the case of aliens to National Committee Certificates (see Section C of Chapter XXIV), and membership cards indicating the voluntary enlistment of the holder for employment in Germany or the subjugated countries. The Deutsche Arbeitsfront emblem consisted of the swastika surrounded by a cogged wheel outline, and therefore any identity documents bearing this emblem should be considered as issued under the auspices of this organisation.

7. CIVILIAN DOCUMENTS.

- (a) *Kennkarte (Identity Card)*.
- (i) *Purpose.* To establish the identity of civilians in Germany.
 - (ii) *Description and Regulations.* Printed on grey coloured linen, the first inside page shows the name of the town where bearer is registered, the service number of the document, its validity, bearer's name, date and place of birth, profession, immutable distinctive signs, mutable distinctive signs, and remarks. An adhesive administrative stamp value 1 R.M. appears stuck and stapled in the left hand bottom corner. On the opposite page appears the bearer's photograph, stapled on, cancelled on two corners by a stamp of the Polizeipräsident, and the fingerprints of both index fingers. Below is the holder's signature followed by the stamps and signature of the issuing

authority. The front cover page shows printed in block lettering "Deutsches Reich" followed by the eagle and swastika emblem and below the word "Kennkarte". This was the most important German Identity Document, and all Germans not in the fighting services were obliged to carry one from the age of 15 years. This document was issued to all German civilians and civilians of ethnic German origin residing in Germany. All aliens who resided in German-occupied territory held a similar document issued by the Gouvernement General authorities. This was usually printed on grey cardboard and the cover headed "Gouvernement General" at the top right hand corner with the prefix letter of their nationality, e.g. "U" for Ukrainian. The stamps on other pages and the issuing authority was the Gouvernement General for the occupied territory.

(b) *Ausweise der Deutschen Volksliste (Certificate of German National Registration).*

(i) *Purpose.* To show membership of the German state and the granting of so-called "Volksdeutsche" citizenship.

(ii) *Description and Regulations.* These certificates were printed on thin card and were issued to persons of German descent who were subjects of another state, e.g. a person of German blood who was born in Estonia, etc. The cards were blue in the case of persons on Volksliste I and II, green in respect of persons who were on Volksliste III and red for those persons who were on Volksliste IV.

It stated on the blue documents that the possessor was entered on Deutsche Volksliste Nr. and possessed German citizenship ("Der Inhaber dieses Ausweises ist in die Deutsche Volksliste unter Nr. aufgenommen worden und besitzt die Deutsche Staatsangehörigkeit"). The front of the cover shows the wording "Ausweis der Deutschen Volksliste" and underneath the eagle and swastika emblem. These cards were issued to some persons who emigrated to Germany and who wished to acquire German citizenship. The inside of the card shows personal particulars and a photograph of the holder, underneath which is written the bearer's signature.

(c) *Wehrpass.*

(i) *Purpose.* Indicated that the bearer was registered as a German subject with the Wehrmeldeamt and was liable to military service.

(ii) *Description and Regulations.*

The Wehrpass was a grey booklet similar to the Soldbuch in format, which contained a photograph and personal data of the bearer. Possession of this document generally indicates that the person is a German citizen and that he was not in military service. It should be noted here that some half-Jews, Czechs from the Sudetenland and some Poles on Volksliste III were issued with this document.

(d) *Wehrunwürdigkeit—Schein.*

(i) *Purpose.* Persons who were considered as not worthy of military service in the German Army were issued this document.

(ii) *Description and Regulations.*

This certificate was generally printed on red paper and showed the name and birthdate of the bearer. It was issued by the Wehrmeldeamt. As it was issued to German ex-criminals, ex-concentration camp inmates and foreigners, it only indicates that the person was not considered qualified for military service because of citizenship, age or mental outlook (i.e. lack of Nazi ideology). After 1940, however, the issuance of this certificate was abolished and instead appropriate remarks were made in the Wehrpass since most of the persons concerned were turned over to the Organisation Todt.

(e) *Arbeitsbuch (Work Book)*.

- (i) *Purpose.* This book records the worker's service.
- (ii) *Description and Regulations.*

Bound in light card, this booklet contains 38 pages of which Page I shows the bearer's name, "Wehrnummer" and signature. Page 2 shows bearer's particulars, nationality, family status, Page 2a changes of address, Page 2b service in the R.A.D. and in the armed forces. Page 3 professional training, Page 4 previous employment and Pages 5-31, name and addresses of firms by whom bearer was employed. Pages 32-36 show rules and regulations covering employment. On each page appears the eagle and swastika emblem and the word "Arbeitsbuch" in a sort of watermark. The front cover of this book is coloured grey and dark brown with the words "Deutsches Reich" followed by the eagle and swastika emblem, and underneath the word "Arbeitsbuch". When this book was issued to aliens the words "Nicht Reichsdeutscher" were stamped across Page I. After 1941, a special *Arbeitsbuch* was issued to foreign workers. This was similar to the German *Arbeitsbuch* excepting that the outer cover was brown and green colouring and the words "Für Ausländer" added.

Note: The *Arbeitsbuch* is useful for clarifying date and places of residence in Germany and for corroborating stories of Displaced Persons and refugees interviewed for eligibility. It should be borne in mind that the *Arbeitsbuch* was not generally issued to a compulsory foreign worker, although after 1941 some compulsory workers may be found in possession of both an *Arbeitsbuch* and an *Arbeitskarte* of the type described in para. 8 (d) below.

(f) *Ersatzkarte für Arbeitsbuch.*

- (i) *Purpose.* This card took the place of a workbook in case of loss of same or where the book has been sent in to an office for additional entries and control.
- (ii) *Description and Regulations.* Printed on light card, this document gives a resume of the important entries in the work book, it is light buff in colour and approximately 11 x 15 cm in size. When issued to an alien it is endorsed "Nicht Reichsdeutscher" at the top of the front page. The lower part of the front cover bears the "Arbeitsamt" stamp in the right hand corner with the signature of the issuing authority.

8. *Aliens and Alien Labour.*

(a) *Ausweiskarte (Arbeitsamt Worker's Certificate)*.

- (i) *Purpose.* This card certified that the bearer was registered with the *Arbeitsamt* and was entitled to Health Insurance benefits.
- (ii) *Description and Regulations.* Printed on light yellow coloured card with rounded corners vertically folded in two. The cover was endorsed "Ausweiskarte" and gives particulars of the bearer, and regulations governing the issue of the card. The inside of the card shows employment particulars of the bearer, food entitlements and sick benefits. This document was only issued to volunteer workers.

(b) *Anwerbebestätigung (Certificate of Enrolment)*.

- (i) *Purpose.* Certifies the enrolment of bearer for labour.
- (ii) *Description and Regulations.* Printed on white paper, this document gives bearer's name, date and place of birth, address and family status (children under and over 21, dependants, etc.). In the lower half is stated where and to which firm the holder is to be directed and also in what capacity, duration of contract, hours to be worked, etc. On the back are shown

billeting and rationing conditions. The stamps on this form are those of the local labour office. Careful scrutiny of the document can show the conditions under which bearer was employed and hence enable an accurate decision to be reached as to whether the holder was a voluntary labourer. Almost invariably the holder of such a document would be a voluntary labourer. In this connection it must be remembered that a person coming voluntarily to Germany is not outside the mandate in the absence of other facts.

(c) *Arbeitskarte—Polnische Arbeitskarte (Work Card for Polish Labour)*.

(i) *Purpose.* This document certifies how and where the bearer was employed.

(ii) *Description and Regulations.* Printed on a light cream coloured cardboard, the outside corner of this card shows the heading "Arbeitskarte für Polnische Arbeitskräfte" and below on the left side a fingerprint of the holder, and his photograph on the right side. On the inside is stuck the "Arbeitskarte" proper, and the heading of this card is printed in Polish and German. This card was issued to Polish Labourers. The size of the card is 14 x 21 cm.

(d) *Arbeitskarte (Work Card)*.

(i) *Purpose.* Certified how and where the bearer was employed.

(ii) *Description and Regulations.* Printed on white paper and folded vertically, this card was headed on the front cover "Arbeitskarte für Arbeitskarte aus " and "Bescheinigung über Eingezahlte Lohnersparnisse" and underneath on the left side a space for the fingerprints and on the right side for a photograph. On Page 2 inside was stuck the "Arbeitskarte" proper printed only in German. On Page 3 appears a statement in twelve languages to the effect that bearer is only allowed to work for the employer specified on the card, which loses its validity if the worker left his post. This card was usually issued to Compulsory Foreign Labourers.

Bescheinigung (Certificate). In some cases prisoners of war were released from custody of a prisoner of war camp provided they accepted "free" employment. This usually took the form of a "roneo-ed" slip of paper approximately 15 x 21 cm. issued by the local Arbeitsamt. This particularly applied to so-called "Free" Polish agricultural workers. In addition such persons were often issued with a printed certificate on white paper with the text on the front in German and on the back in Polish. Such documents may indicate collaboration but should not be taken as definite proof that the holder collaborated. The certificate should be considered as evidence in the light of all the facts elicited from the interview.

(e) *Vorläufiger Fremden Pass (Aliens temporary Passport)*.

(i) *Purpose.* This document enabled the bearer to be moved from country to country as requisite.

(ii) *Description and Regulations.* Bound in cardboard this booklet contains eight sheets—sixteen pages—the cover is red and the pages light red or pink bearing a wavy design in crimson with a pale green diagonal lattice design. A serial number is perforated clear through the book at the lower edge. The cover bears the lettering "Deutsches Reich" and underneath the eagle and swastika emblem followed by "Vorläufiger Fremden Pass". Page 1 shows the holder's name, states that the holder is not a German national, and contains the number of the passport. The legend on this page "Der Passinhaber besitzt nicht die deutsche Reichsangehörigkeit" indicates that the holder does not have German citizenship. Page 2 describes the holder's nationality, profession, birthplace and date, address, figure, face, colour of eyes, and hair, and distinguishing features. Page 3 bears the holder's photograph and signature. Page 4—the top half shows until

what date the passport is valid. The lower half certifies that the owner of the passport is the person shown in the photograph and that the signature is his own. Pages 5 and 6 provide spaces for prolongation of validity. The other few pages are blank and are used for stamps at frontier crossings or to show issue of travel warrants, food cards, etc. This document was usually issued to foreign nationals as a temporary document to enable them to travel outside Germany. It is of little value unless accompanied by travel authority papers to indicate the status of the bearer. Towards the end of the war these documents could be purchased illegally and many Nazi officials were bribed to issue them to nationals who normally would not have been entitled to hold them. However, this document is useful for checking dates of entry and places resident, for each person was compelled to have the book endorsed to enable them to reside in any community. It can be assumed that Volksdeutsche citizens would NOT possess this document.

9. *Friendly Aliens in Germany.*

(a) *Fremdenpass (Passport for Foreigners).*

(i) *Purpose.* Identification of a foreign national residing in Germany.

(ii) *Description.* Bound in grey coloured linen with stiff board covers this booklet contains 28 pages and is similar to an ordinary German passport in appearance and contents. The pages are a light beige in colour, printed in black ink. The outer cover bears a black line diagonally across the top left hand corner, the eagle and swastika emblem, followed by the word "Fremdenpass". It is printed on the inside in both the French and German language, although in some instances the book was printed in German only. Page 1 shows the name of the holder, followed by the statement that the bearer is not a German national; the serial number of the passport, and in the bottom right hand corner a number prefixed by a letter and an oblique stroke. Other pages show the personal particulars of the bearer, his photograph and his signature, and the remaining pages are for renewals and visas, etc.

This passport was issued by the German authorities to a neutral or stateless person or a national of the occupied territories (usually a collaborator) in special circumstances, when for some reason it was impossible for such persons to obtain a passport from their own national authorities. It was given a validity sufficiently long for the holder to perform his business outside Germany. This passport was not issued to foreign workers who were compulsorily sent to Germany. Stateless persons when issued with this document usually surrendered their Nansen passport, this would be fairly conclusive proof of their residence in Germany. Persons in possession of the *Fremdenpass* should be closely interviewed to ensure that they are not excluded from IRO assistance by any clause of Part II of the Constitution. Persons who are in possession of this document are not outside the mandate of IRO for this reason alone.

(b) *Umsiedler Ausweis (Certificate of resettlement) and Rückkehrer Ausweis (Certificate for returning emigrant).*

(i) *Purpose.* Certifies that the bearer has returned to the German Reich.

(ii) *Description and Regulations.* Printed on grey and/or green linen, this document gives the bearer's particulars, his father's nationality and domicile together with his physical description, but does not make any statement. The front cover of this document showed in the top right hand corner a number followed by a star emblem, and underneath the work "Umsiedleraus-

weis". Except for its title the "Rückkehrer Ausweis" was identical with this document.

The Umsiedler Ausweis and Rückkehrer Ausweis were issued by the E.W.Z. or Einwandererzentralstelle (Central Immigration Office). The Umsiedler Ausweis (certificate of returning immigrant) was introduced by a decree dated the 13th February, 1941, and replaced the Rückkehrer Ausweis (certificate of repatriation) which had been issued until this date, and in some cases later. They were stamped by the "Chef der Sicherheitspolizei und des S.D.". On the back a mention is made to the effect that the bearer received a sum of money on taking up residence in Germany. They were originally intended for issue to persons of German ethnic origin from other countries who were eligible for the acquisition of German citizenship and who wished to return to the German Reich. This primary intention was not followed, since many persons who were clearly not of German ethnic origin received them when applying for entry into Germany. Thus many Latvians, Estonians and Lithuanians were able to reach Germany through the acquisition of these documents after the Russian Occupation of the Baltic States.

It is known that possession of these documents granted the concomitant privilege of undergoing a simplified German naturalisation procedure. Applications for naturalisation from resettlers from Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania and Eastern Poland were handled and decided by a special delegate of the Reichsminister for the Interior. The certificate of naturalisation was issued either by the special delegate in case the conditions for naturalisation were fulfilled or in the event of a doubt (because of racial impurity, etc.) against the immediate naturalisation of the resettler, the applicant was issued with a "Reference Letter" whereby he was advised to submit a new application for naturalisation to the Naturalisation Office at the place of his future residence.

From the above it is obvious that :

- (a) Persons in possession of these documents come to Germany voluntarily.
- (b) In some cases they acquired German citizenship.
- (c) They may or may not be of German ethnic origin.

It is therefore considered that while mere possession of these documents does not exclude the possessor from falling within the mandate of the Organisation, each applicant for IRO assistance will have to be carefully interviewed, bearing in mind the considerations set out herein. In particular it should always be remembered that voluntary entry into Germany does not, as such, cause exclusion from the mandate. In many individual cases the Review Board has determined that the possession of the documents did not exclude the applicant as there were other circumstances, such as fear of persecution, or political objections to remaining at home, with no evidence of German ethnic origin or voluntary assistance to the enemy forces.

In general it can be stated that holders of Umsiedler Ausweise or Rückkehrer Ausweise are not *ipso facto* excluded from the mandate unless they also either are of German ethnic origin or have become German citizens or have voluntarily assisted the enemy forces.