

Chaos, Challenge, and Cooperation:
An Inquiry into Post-War Ethnic German Migration and Resettlement in Canada

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Post-Second World War ethnic German migration to Canada is a history marked by hardships, challenges, and a seemingly endless number of hurdles that people faced in the Old World, in transit, and upon arrival to Canada. Having been displaced by the war, many ethnic Germans made their way to Canada for a chance at a fresh start, far away from the devastation and suffering in Europe, especially in Eastern Europe. Before diving into the oral history material collected by Ambrose University History department's project, "Refugee Stories: The Immigration and Resettlement of Germans in Western Canada, 1947-1960," a brief look at one important organization is necessary.

Canadian Lutheran World Relief

Although there were many religious organizations that helped ethnic Germans come to Canada after the Second World War, the most important one was the Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR). As Ronald Schmalz claimed, the CLWR was "arguably the most active, best funded and well connected."¹ Schmalz goes on to detail that:

from 1951 to 1957, it assisted in the movement to Canada of some 18,500, overwhelmingly German Lutherans. This figure surpassed the achievements of all other Canadian agencies in this period. In fact, from 1952 to 1954, the CLWR settled more migrants abroad than any other voluntary agency in the world. The CLWR's resettlement program peaked in 1952-55, accounting for 13% of Canada's total intake of Germans.²

¹ Ronald E. Schmalz, "Former Enemies Come to Canada: Ottawa and the Postwar German Immigration Boom, 1951-57" (University of Ottawa (Canada), 2000), 206-07, <http://www.ruor.uottawa.ca/handle/10393/9430>.

² Schmalz, 206-07.

