

Volksdeutsche

Nazi term, literally meaning "German-folk," used to refer to ethnic Germans living outside of Germany. *Volksdeutsche* did not hold German or Austrian citizenship, but the Nazis felt it important to strengthen their communities throughout east-central Europe.

In 1936 the Nazis set up an office to act as a contact for the *Volksdeutsche*. After the Germans occupied Poland in September 1939, they established a central registration bureau, called the German Folk List (*Deutsche Volksliste*, DVL), where they registered Polish citizens of German origin as *Volksdeutsche*. Poles were greatly encouraged to register themselves, and were sometimes forced to do so. Those who joined this group were given benefits, including better food, and were accorded a special status. They were given apartments, farms, workshops, furniture, and clothing - all stolen from Jews and Poles sent to Nazi camps.

In early 1940, the Nazis divided the *Volksdeutsche* into four categories: ethnic Germans who supported the Third Reich; other ethnic Germans; Poles who had German ancestors; and Poles who were related to Germans.

After the Nazis occupied Yugoslavia, they introduced the *Volksliste* there; they also registered ethnic Germans living in the Soviet Union. Many were resettled in the Generalgouvernement or in parts of Poland occupied by the Nazis, and many served in the German army.