



German History in Documents and Images

Volume 8. Occupation and the Emergence of Two States, 1945-1961
Request for Permission to Move In (1948)

This request illustrates both the social difficulties and the bureaucratic obstacles faced by refugees from the East.

Bielefeld-Schildesche, April 27, 1948

To the Housing Office of the City of Bielefeld,

By an order of the local office on August 26, 1946 (No. 13361-V 20/VIII), I myself received permission to move to Bielefeld-Schildesche. My wife and our four children, age four to eleven, as well as my wife's foster-sister, who is part of our household, have had to remain to this day in emergency quarters in Balderschwang-Hirschgrund, County Sonthofen/Allgäu.

As is generally known, there is no possibility for me, as an East Prussian by birth, to find employment in Bavaria. Given the Bavarians' well-known attitude toward us northern Germans, my wife has to constantly wrestle with the greatest difficulties as well. Additionally, our emergency quarters, a guest house in the high Alps, are so remote that our school-age children have been unable to participate in any regular schooling for three years. The closest place with a school, a grocery store, and so on is more than fifteen kilometers away. Finally, the local weather conditions are such that the roads are completely impassable, sometimes for 6-8 weeks, during the change of seasons. These conditions, which are intolerable over the long run, require that my family be moved to different quarters.

Considering these conditions, and to do justice to the principle – recognized also in the Housing Emergency Law – that families must be reunited, my employer, the Protestant Relief Organization [*Evangelisches Hilfswerk*] of Westphalia in Bielefeld, has agreed to provide my family and me with company housing.

I therefore ask that my family's move to Bielefeld be authorized.

[Name]

Source: Stadtarchiv Bielefeld, Bestand 250,2/SPD-OWL, Nr. 1059; reprinted in Christoph Kleßmann and Georg Wagner, *Das gespaltene Land. Leben in Deutschland 1945-1990. Texte*

und Dokumente zur Sozialgeschichte [The Divided Land. Life in Germany 1945-1990. Texts and Documents on Social History]. Munich: C.H. Beck, 1993, pp. 87-88.

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