

## Interview with Irina Schaad

- 44 Years old
- born in Kazakhstan
- has been living in Germany now for 19 years

### **Historical Background of Germans in Russia**

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century Catherine the Great needed more workers for her land in Russia. Catherine the Great had a German Background and the economic situation in Germany was not very good. Therefore many people from Germany moved to Russia to find jobs and to work on the fields.

For more than 100 years the immigrants from Germany lived and worked in Russia, but they still spoke German and lived in German communities where only Germans lived.

### **Beginning of World War II**

When Hitler invaded Russia, during Stalin's dictatorship, Stalin was afraid that the Germans who lived in Russia would assist the German troops. That is why he decided to make the Germans leave Russia and move to Siberia and Kazakhstan as a punishment where they were forced to work in labor camps.

Stalin was very cruel and arrested and murdered many people in Russia, too, when they seemed to be against the government. During this time Irina Schaad's grandparents were killed.

In the new countries where they were forced to live now, Germans did not use the German language in public anymore, because they were hated and mocked because of Hitler's politics.

Irina Schaad was born in Kazakhstan and learned the German language from her grandmother, who still spoke German as did many other older people.

When Stalin finally died, people got the opportunity to start a life in freedom and decide on their own. Unfortunately they did not know how to behave and how to use their newly earned freedom.

### **Irina's Arrival in Germany**

When Irina arrived in Germany she was 25 years old and already had a 3 months old child. Irina and her husband were both well qualified. Her husband couldn't find a job corresponding to his qualifications, so he worked in a factory. Today he is very happy in his job, but he has more problems speaking German. Irina herself worked for an insurance company and did a training course to do her new job. She stopped working for 3 years to have another baby and bring up her child. After 3 years of maternity leave she went back to her work. Now she is in charge of the new recruits and apprentices and has many responsibilities.

When she arrived in Germany she suffered a cultural shock, because many things were different. Her parents had brought her up in a very strict way, so she had always done what her parents told her to do. In Germany children are more free and talk back to their parents. In school they can eat and drink in the classroom. And young couples live together before getting married.

*Interview by Roxana Serba, Saskia Sack, Audrey Miege, Christiane Staub, Ibrahim Ozdemir, Lukas Thum, Sascha Remus, kayleigh Kirwan*

## **José Carrascosa**

We have interviewed José Carrascosa who has been living in Germany for almost 50 years. José was born in Barcelona, Spain, in 1933. His mother died when he was a baby, he only had a father and a sister. He emigrated because it was a difficult period for Spain because of the civil war from 1936 to 1939 which ended in Franco's dictatorship. Spain was isolated from the rest of Europe. The most important reason to leave Spain was that his personal freedom was restricted because of corruption in Franco's regime. After he finished his military service, he decided to emigrate. He chose Germany because of the propaganda in Franco's dictatorship. Due to the connection between Franco and Hitler during the Second World War, the image of Germany in Spain was a positive one. José thought that Germany had a great landscape with beautiful blond girls. Before leaving he prepared himself by studying German on his own. He had to decide whether to buy a dictionary or a coat and he chose the dictionary. That shows his will to integrate into German society even before he arrived in Germany.

He came to Germany by hitch-hiking and reached Frankfurt in one night. In Germany he got some problems, for example to find a flat or a job. At first he lived in a hostel and shared his room with other immigrants. Then it was easy to find a job because workforces were needed and Spanish people were well liked. While doing several jobs and traveling through Germany he got good impressions of the country. Germany was different than he had imagined. People were always on the run and the lifestyle was faster than in Spain.

In 1958 he came to Hanover where he wanted to work as surveyor but he only got a job as builder. He started working at Volkswagen in Stöcken in 1959.

José lived together with German workers to improve his language skills. In 1961 he married a German teacher. The only problem was his father-in-law because he had prejudices against foreigners. He has two children: a daughter and a son. The daughter is a German citizen and speaks Spanish, and the son is a Spanish citizen and doesn't speak Spanish.

José still has a Spanish citizenship but loves both Germany and Spain. He is well integrated in German society and he sings in the church choir and he knows almost everyone in the village he is living in.

*Interview by Boga Petruta, Christian Galert, Sarah Waldhauer, Christian Betke, Nils Düppers, Alice Arduini, Janina Babst, Halil Ibrahim Sunac*

## **Renata Kurowska**

Renata is an immigrant from Poland. She came here in April 1989. She used to live in Poznan, where she studied zoo technology. The reasons for her emigration were economical and personal. She traveled by car to Berlin before she moved to Hanover. At first she did many illegal jobs but she didn't want to work as a laborer so she started a course after which she had the opportunity to work in an old people's home, where she has been working for 12 years now. Her job is a pleasure for her because she always wanted to help other people. She is also very satisfied with the salary, which is very high in comparison with Poland.

When Renata first came to Germany she was very impressed by the beautiful landscape, nature and the infrastructure. She easily integrated into German society and always had a friendly relationship with other people. What she really liked was the anonymity in the big city and the way people behave. Despite of being away from her home country for many years she considers herself as Polish. As a result she refused to have a German passport. She visits Poland very often.

## **Piotr Kurowski**

Piotr is Renata's brother. He has left Poland when he was 17 years old. It was in 1977. He has emigrated because of economical reasons. Piotr has finished his studies in Berlin. Then, he wanted to start a political career. At first, he used to work in a German Embassy. Because of his marriage with a student, he couldn't continue working as a politician. As a result of this decision he has started to work as a construction supervisor. He was doing that job for about 20 years. Now, when he is retired he has the opportunity to travel all around the world.

Piotr's first impressions when he came to Germany were very positive. Germans treated him in a very respectful way and as an equal part of their society. So he thinks that Polish people are well integrated and accepted due to the similar cultures of both countries.

**All in all, we can say that both our guests are happy in Germany but they have never forgotten their Polish roots. For family reasons they are always looking forward to visiting their homeland but they are not planning to go back there for the rest of their lives.**

*Interview by Natalia Pawlik, Vanessa Seifert, Patryk Urbas, Markus Baumeister, Justine Laboret, Sarina Neumann, Claudia Fischer, Maria Frangou*

## **Lotte Henz**

During the Comenius project we interviewed five immigrants in mixed international groups in order to find out the specific experiences, motivation for immigration and their general views on integration.

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Our group, consisting of Armin Bernsee (Germany), Paul Craciun (Romania), Florina Fanea (Romania), Jan Helle (Germany), Huseyin Karagoz (Turkey), Esther Klann (Germany), Saskia Pabst (Germany) and Adelina Steer (Germany), interviewed Mrs Lotte Henz, an ethnic German from Romania who emigrated to Germany after about ten generations of her family had lived in Romania.

She was born in 1961, is married and the mother of two children.

Mrs Lotte Henz emigrated in 1985 at the age of 24. Her motivation for emigration was family reunion and she moved to Hanover because her husband was offered a job in this area. Actually the decision to emigrate to Germany was made by her parents when she was four years old, but it took them 20 years to receive the permission.

Regarding her family history, her ancestors were settled among with a group of Catholic Germans in the South-West of Romania in order to protect the borders from the Ottoman Empire in 1783. There they formed a German community with their own churches and schools. Within this community, the German minority preserved their culture, language and traditions.

Mrs Henz said that they had no problems integrating into German society due to the facts that she spoke the language and that she was introduced by friends and relatives. That is why she considers herself special and privileged.

Thinking of her home country, she only gets nostalgic during Christmas time. Though she keeps in touch with Romanian friends and she is still interested in local politics. Mrs Henz only uses Romanian to communicate via e-mail with one Romanian friend. Also, she did not teach her children Romanian, because she did not consider it necessary. Her children only know some Romanian songs and proverbs. Still she cooks Romanian food from time to time.

She does not want to return to Romania as changes took place and there are no more family members left to visit.

Mrs. Lotte Henz pointed out that she was raised with the belief that the German minority in Romania was better than other minorities which lead her to form prejudices. But by coming to Germany her mentality changed by integrating into German society.

**"I now look at the person and not at the place they come from."**

## Mr. Sahin

Kemal Sahin was born in 1947 in Germany. His father came from Yugoslavia and his mother was from Germany. After their marriage they lived in Germany for a few years. He passed most of his childhood in Turkey. In 1964, when he was 17 years old, he went back to Germany. Three years later he had to go back to Turkey for military service. In 1971 he married a Turkish woman and they went back to Germany together to get work. At the beginning he had many different jobs, for example as a technician. He has got two children and three grandchildren. Today he is working for a mosque and there, he guides some tours, for example for school classes. This organization is called "Sura". When he came to Germany he had many language problems and so it was difficult for him to integrate.

Here are some aspects which he thinks are important for a great integration:

1. to respect the foreigners
2. to socialise with other people so prejudices can be banned
3. to be able to speak the language

In his eyes the integration starts nowadays. When he came to Germany there was no real integration for immigrants. He also thinks that equality is one of the most important preconditions for integration. In our interview he said that the integration has to start early, for example at school or kindergarten. He thinks that teachers have an important role for the children during their integration. His point of view is that religion plays a big role but it's not everything for a great integration. He expects that language is the base for communication. Everyone should be able to speak to the foreigners. He mentioned the danger of a "parallel society". One reason for this is that the children only know their mother tongue because their families just watch the TV channels of their home countries.

**Jale Yasan, Farina Meyfarth, Cem Yada, Tobias Leidig, Cecilia Moratelli,  
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