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GERMANS, POLAND, AND COLONIAL EXPANSION TO THE EAST

1850 Through the Present

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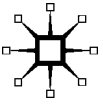

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Contents

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Introduction

Colonialism in Europe? The Case against Salt Water

Robert L. Nelson

The so-called salt water thesis contends that "colonialism," properly speaking, involves both "Western" metropole, a colony, and a large body of water in between.[1] Hence, the wealth of scholarship on colonialism has focused on such tried and true themes as the British in India, the Germans in Namibia, the Spanish in the Americas, as well as America in the Philippines, and a "modernized" Japan in Korea. The studies that have resulted from such foci have been incredibly rich, and make quite plain the degree to which our modern world and the fundamental relationships between the developed and the developing world can only be understood as a function of the continuing history of colonialism, or imperialism.[2] In this seemingly all-encompassing history of metropoles and peripheries, of the colonizers and the colonized, of the powerful and the weak, there have always been uncomfortable bedfellows, rude guests who have no proper place in this paradigm. These are the people from the "borderlands," the "in between" places. These are the Welsh, Bretons, Tibetans, Plains Cree, and Poles.

"Adjacent colonization," or "inner colonization," is a surprisingly undertheorized concept, especially since it has existed (and exists) all over the world. "Inner" or "internal" colonization has been in play in the English language since the 1960s, used both to describe the situation of Quebec, as well as, and even more problematically, the "place" of African Americans.[3] The concept gained some sociological cache in the 1970s with the publication of Michael Hechter's eponymously titled study of English colonialism in Scotland and Wales, the so-called *Celtic Fringe*.[4] The looseness with which this moniker was often used, however, quickly led to its being shelved by the early 1980s, where it has largely remained.[5] Although the concepts of inner or adjacent colonialism persist, appearing in the occasional study, there continues to be much resistance to the idea that there is a definite and serious link between the practices of overseas colonialism and adjacent colonialism, the notion that both cases contain colonized populations, and create colonial mindsets among the occupiers. It is the intent of this volume therefore to analyze a particular scene of adjacent colonialism, the case of Germany and its neighbors to the immediate East, through the lenses of various interdisciplinary and historically themed approaches.

What is to be gained by such a project? Would it shed light on both overseas German colonial history, as well as the history of Germany in Eastern Europe? As of late, the link between German imperialism and the Holocaust has gained significant attention and provides a strong impetus for the current volume. The idea that a hidden and profound legacy of worldwide colonialism manifested itself in the racism, forced population transfers, and genocide of twentieth-century Eastern Europe was first voiced by Hannah Arendt in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951).[6] Nevertheless, it is only recently that German actions in the East during World War II have been clearly labeled colonial, such as in Wendy Lower's fascinating *Nazi Empire-Building and the Holocaust in Ukraine* (2005). The debate over the establishment of a center for the history of forced population transfers has further pushed the idea that the practice of forcibly moving entire ethnic groups came to Europe

directly from the colonies, arriving first with the Treaty of Bucharest (1913), continuing on to Smyrna (1922), and eventually to the Poles of 1939 and the ghettos of the Holocaust.[7] Ultimately, so the argument goes, the frustrating task of continually moving unwanted populations around, originally in the colonies but later in occupied Europe, was solved through genocide. The road to Auschwitz is incredibly complicated, but there does seem to be a growing acceptance that one of the many paths can be found in the world of overlord and subject, of race and space, that was nineteenth-century imperialism.

It is time, however, to expand the focus of this "colonial" history beyond the Holocaust, for a German colonial mindset toward the East did not suddenly arrive with Hitler. It was with this intent that I brought together the authors included in this volume and harnessed their various approaches to Germany's role in Poland and East Central Europe during the modern period, from the 1850s to the present. Specialists in "German (overseas) colonialism" were avoided, and contributors were not asked to address the question as to whether or not we are talking about colonialism. Instead, the contributions chronologically trace Germany in the East, through various subdisciplines of history, in order to see if taken together one could indeed extract colonialism, or colonial themes, from the chapters of this book. Some of the authors clearly already see colonialism in their projects, and make this explicit. Others are not so sure, and avoid such terms.

With German literature as the background, Kristin Kopp is perhaps most explicit in her use of colonialism to explain her findings. She opens the volume with her analysis of Gustav Freytag's *Soll und Haben*. Kopp is able to locate the tropes of colonial literature in this novel of German pioneers on the Polish frontier in the 1850s. We then move forward to the two chapters that investigate the German program of inner colonization in Poland, from 1886 to 1918. Economic historian Scott M. Eddie provides us with the rich details of this ambitious endeavor that saw the German government spend millions in its attempt to settle Germans in West Prussia and Posen, in order to win the demographic war against the ever-rising Slavic Flood.

Robert L. Nelson then provides the more abstract level at which this battle was fought by tracing the intellectual debates in the journal *Archiv für innere Kolonisation*. Here the story is taken into and through World War I, the moment at which the Rubicon was crossed when it came to what was possible to "think" about the East. Eduard Mühle picks up this radicalized shift in thinking about the East as he outlines the intellectual journey of the *Ostforscher* Hermann Aubin, from the Weimar period into the era of Nazism. Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius investigates an imperialist and racist vocabulary through his comparison of the German languages of occupation in both world wars. Through the lens of environmental history and the organization of colonized space, David Blackbourn further identifies the colonial gaze of the Germans in the occupied East with his analysis of Nazi projects of drainage and landscape "rationalization" in and around the Pripet marshes. Finally, political scientist Oliver Schmidtke explores German attitudes toward Poles today and finds uncomfortable continuities in the long history of Germany and the East. Indeed, the European Union "expansion to the East" of 2003, accompanied as it was with all the old stereotypes of the threatening Slavic Flood, formed a powerful contemporary backdrop to the conference that brought these scholars together in February of 2004.[8]

At the outset then, I would like to identify the three broad colonial themes that form a pattern throughout these works: the pioneer engagement with the frontier, and the concomitant notion of "emptiness"; the slow but sure evolution from cultural chauvinism to biological racism, that is, the steady encroachment of overseas White/Not White "race thinking" into the heart of the West/East divide in Europe; and finally the notion of the colonial laboratory, the idea that massive projects of social engineering could take place with little restraint in the nonmetropole space.

The unquestionable power of the trope of the American pioneer was consistently invoked to indicate the courage and hardiness of all Germans willing to make the sacrifice of venturing East. Freytag's characters were clearly involved in this "Cooperesque" adventure, as Kopp calls it, and there is an

unquestioning respect for those willing to participate in the great program of inner colonization. Throughout the Nazi project the notion that soldiers and scientists were boldly wading into a morass of *Unkultur*, that they were undertaking a dangerous and highly exciting colonial endeavor, was never far from the surface. At the same time, we can recognize in many of the contributions here the appearance of a fundamental component of any colonial project: the concept of "emptiness." Haunting many of these German visions of the East is the Lockean idea of the *vacuum domicillem*. Founded in the era of natural law, and used by Locke specifically to justify English colonialism in the Americas, is the notion that land that was not "worked" was no one's property. An extension of this was the idea that those who did not work the land, that is, "Indians", were just a part of the natural, "un-owned" landscape. Hence, land unworked by "advanced" human beings was "empty," the vacuum. Further, land (and people) outside the fully civilized (worked) space (*ius gentium*), was a land without law, where people could act without fear of legal retribution. This powerful vision, theorized in the 1600s, influenced Thomas Jefferson's notions of Native Americans, and can be traced down through the centuries in the manner with which colonial lands were conceived by colonizing powers. Thus, one can begin to explain the powerful paradox one encounters repeatedly when Germans view Eastern Europe: a land full of people is seen as empty.[9]

Of course, this "colonial gaze" passed through the prism that was the "race thinking" of the worldwide imperial period. Again, it is Arendt who details for us the important shift from nineteenth-century race thinking to the biological racism we associate with Hitler's regime.[10] We can trace this very shift in German attitudes toward Poles. Pre-1914, Freytag likens them to "Red Indians," and the inner colonial thinkers see them much like the Métis of the North American Prairies. They are a "race" less cultured than the German, yet not so fundamentally different that they cannot one day join the ranks of the dominant peoples. Indeed, 1914 plans for the Prussian Poles involved their being "surrounded" by German culture and practices to the extent that they would one day merely assimilate into the

greater German nation.[11] This was still a nineteenth-century cultural chauvinism as opposed to the biological racism of the 1920s and 1930s. By this later period, however, Arendt's shift had occurred, and no longer was there talk of assimilation. The truly racist language of blood exclusion won out, and plans were made for the elimination of non-Germanic peoples. In the wake of the Holocaust, such racism has been forever tainted, but what remains of race thinking? What is the language of the Slavic Flood today? In fascinating ways, the vocabulary, though often clothed in weak attempts at political correctness, does echo much of the anti-Polish rhetoric of a century before.

Finally, there is the notion of the colonial space as a laboratory, a realm wherein the colonizer may act with little restraint when conducting "experiments." These experiments may range from population politics and so-called social colonization, to massive rationalizing projects, from agrarian reform to draining swamps. In the work of James Scott, the ultra-rationalizing, "high modernist" gaze applies within the metropole of imperial states, and indeed within Germany itself these experiments were taking place.[12] However, there is little question that when given a chance, German "scientists" eagerly indulged in the freedom granted by the Eastern European colonial space to take their schemes to ever grander heights, free from the bureaucratic, legal, and moral obstacles of the high modern state (fascinatingly, in German history these obstacles are often the very pillars of the political Right, the *Junker*). Thus scientists became among the most numerous and vocal proponents of expansion to the East, the creation of space sans *Junker*, sans citizens with rights. The story of this space for experimentation runs right through the chapters in this volume, and indeed continues to play out with the massive experiments in free market capitalism and deregulation currently underway as the European Union moves ever more firmly into its new realm in Eastern Europe.

For as long as colonialism has existed, it has existed in Europe. All the hallmarks of the new imperialism of the nineteenth century, as well as both its more murderous and more informal manifestations in the twentieth century, exist in the history of

Germany and Eastern Europe. We do not require a salted sea between Berlin and Warsaw to understand and name what these chapters describe. The frontier, the "emptiness," the racism, the laboratory: all point toward another chapter in the history of colonialism. The German patterns of understanding and control over their Eastern neighbors, since at least the 1850s, fit neatly into European global understandings of colonizer/colonized relationships.[13] Acceptance of such an argument should lead both to a further problematization of theories of colonialism, while at the same time, firmly and clearly pull Europe into "world history," as a major site of "European" colonial practices. It is our hope that this volume, with its many approaches to, and examples of German colonialism in Eastern Europe, will spur further research into this growing and exciting field.

Notes

1. The reification of "salt water" colonialism as the only "legitimate" form is often traced to Resolution 637 (VII) of the United Nations General Assembly of 1952 that recommended "States Members of the United Nations shall recognize and promote the realization of the right of self-determination of the peoples of Non-Self-Governing and Trust Territories who are under their administration" and that "States Members of the UN shall uphold the principle of self-determination of all peoples and nations." Thus, subjects of "internal colonialism" who nevertheless were citizens of an autonomous state were to be ignored in the discussion surrounding legitimate "self-determination." See A. Rigo Sureda, *The Evolution of the Right of Self-Determination: A Study of United Nations Practice* (Leiden: A.W. Sijthoff, 1973).
2. I have yet to find a rigorous and useful distinction between the two terms, and thus they are used here interchangeably.
3. See James H. Cone, *Martin & Malcolm & America: A Dream or a Nightmare* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991). See also the 1979 special issue of Ethnic and Racial Studies, which included an article on Quebec: Kenneth McRoberts, "Internal Colonialism: The Case of Québec," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 2 (1979), pp. 293–318.

4. Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536–1966* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975).
5. One must pay close attention to Hind's criticism. He dismissed these various studies as "offer[ing] too many explanations, and mak[ing] too many deductions in an ad hoc or an ex post facto manner.... [They] imply an improbable degree of cohesion and identity amongst specific social groups, and they oversimplify complex social structures and relationships.... Their nature is such that they tend to assert or assume that which they are endeavouring to demonstrate or prove, a practice which leads to intellectual incoherence and a distortion of historical processes." Robert J. Hind, "The Internal Colonial Concept," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 26 (1984), p. 553.
6. In fact, a successful conference entitled "German Imperial Biographies: Soldiers, Scientists, and Officials and the 'Arendt Thesis,'" was held at the German Historical Institute, Washington DC, on May 4, 2006.
7. This debate is central to the recent volume: Dieter Bingen, Wlodzimierz Borodziej, and Stefan Troebst, eds., *Vertreibungen europäisch erinnern?: historische Erfahrungen, Vergangenheitspolitik, Zukunftskonzeptionen* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003).
8. *(Neo-)Colonialism in Europe? The Presence of the Past in Europe's Expansion to the East: The Case of Germany and Poland,* 3-day Symposium. St. John's College, University of British Columbia. February 27–29, 2004.
9. This aspect of Locke's thought is best analyzed in Barbara Arneil, *John Locke and America: The Defence of English Colonialism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).
10. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 3rd ed. (New York: Harcourt, 1966), Chs. 6–8.
11. Fritz Fischer, *Germany's Aims in the First World War* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1967), pp. 115–117. See also Immanuel Geiss, *Der polnische Grenzstreifen 1914–1918. Ein Beitrag zur deutschen Kriegszielpolitik im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Hamburg: Matthiesen, 1960). One can trace the evolution from cultural chauvinism to race thinking in these very discussions, from 1914 to 1918, concerning the surrounding, then shifting, of the Polish population.

12. James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press, 1998).
13. Of course, the history of colonialism in Eastern Europe is much older than 150 years. However, the specific colonialism referenced in this volume, that which appeared during the new imperialism of the latter half of the nineteenth century, is our focus.

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Chapter 1

Reinventing Poland as German Colonial Territory in the Nineteenth Century: Gustav Freytag's *Soll und Haben* as Colonial Novel

Kristin Kopp

> *I stand here now as one of the conquerors who, in the name of free labor and human culture, have taken control of this land from a weaker race. We and the Slavs: it is an old struggle; and with pride, we find that cultural development (Bildung), industriousness, and financial credit are on our side.*[1]

The protagonist speaking these lines stands before a freshly plowed field with his arms outstretched as if to encompass the entire expanse of the surrounding landscape under the dominion of his heroic declaration. With this performance of the "colonial conqueror," the protagonist is positioned within a tradition familiar to readers from the popular narratives of Spanish Conquistadors in South America, of the great

surveying expeditions of the North American frontier, or of Victorian cartographers charting the interior of the African "dark continent." Labeled by Mary Louise Pratt as "The Monarch of All I Survey," this person identifies his power to see and visually organize a landscape with a legitimate, divine right to ownership and control.[2]

Unspoken in Pratt's definition is the colonizer's assumption that the landscape in question is available to such claims; it is somehow understood as not only undeveloped, but also ownerless and *distant*. In our case, however, the person exhibiting such enormous colonial pathos stands less than one hundred miles from the German village into which he was born. For this is Anton Wohlfart, the central hero of Gustav Freytag's once enormously popular novel *Soll und Haben* of 1855,[3] and Anton Wohlfart is standing in Poland.[4]

If it were not for this seemingly European location (and the "Europeanness" of Poland will be strongly contested in the text), Freytag's novel would easily find its place in the canon of European colonial literature, for it is a text replete with the figures and tropes characteristic of the genre: self-proclaimed "colonists" travel into wild, empty landscapes and bring them into fruition through their hard labor and advanced technical know-how. Primitive natives, meanwhile, are disciplined, tamed, and brought into the time of European modernity through the civilizing undertakings of these colonists.

Anton's location in adjacent Polish space renders the success of the novel's representational strategies more intriguing; as read through the lens of colonial ideology, *Soll und Haben* offers new insights into mid-nineteenth-century German political and colonial concerns, and allows one to better appreciate the work performed by the text in shaping German imaginations of the East.

LOCATING "POLAND"

> *Ostrau is a small town not far from the Oder, celebrated—even into Poland—for its secondary school and its sweet gingerbread…*[5]

With its opening sentence, *Soll und Haben* positions the reader's imagination in the Silesian region between the Oder river and the former Polish border. In so doing, it presents the nineteenth-century German reader with a slight provocation. For while this passage functions to locate *Bildung* and *Gemütlichkeit* in Ostrau (and to gently imply a certain lack of these elements across the border), it also invokes an imaginary geography that insists upon the existence of "Poland," a country that did not exist as such at the time. In 1795, Prussia, Russia, and Austria had completed their trilateral divisions and annexation of Poland—and as a result of these Polish Partitions, this once-powerful country had been erased from the European map.[6] For over a century, "Poland" existed as a set of three occupied territories, and would not reappear as an independent nation until after World War I.

In the course of the partitionings, Prussia took possession of the region of Posen, as well as large portions of East and West Prussia. This territory included the urban centers of towns then known as Posen, Thorn, Danzig, and Bromberg, an extensive stretch of the Vistula river, and vast regions of the surrounding arable farmland. Although Friedrich Wilhelm II had strongly desired possession of Cracow, this city fell to Austria, and Prussia gained Warsaw instead. Border shuffling under Napoleon reassigned this city to Russia, where it became the center of the so-called Congress Kingdom of Poland under Russian control.

Freytag's text visits all three of these "Polands" (and in this opening passage, the reference is to the Russian-ruled Congress Kingdom of Poland) without any perceivable differentiation; not only the Russian partition, but the eastern territories of Prussia are referred to as "Polen" as too is Cracow. *Soll und Haben* thus provocatively reunites Poland in its geographic imaginary. In so doing, it removes Poland from any really existing political considerations, thereby allowing it to function as an abstract, imagined terrain of Otherness.

In Freytag's novel, the reader follows Anton Wohlfart's path of development as he finds his way into a solid, middle-class German identity, a process in which his experiences in Polish

space play a major role. Anton leaves the rural village of Ostrau behind him and sets out for the Silesian capital of Breslau, where he enters into an apprenticeship at a large import/export firm. Beginning as a lower-level clerk, his ability to quickly conform to the culture of the business leads to advancement up the company's hierarchical ladder. At the end of the novel, Wohlfart (*nomen est omen*)[7] will have achieved the position of a successful businessman, engagement to his employer's sister, and partnership in the firm. But this narrative closure is only achieved after Anton embarks upon a series of adventures, during which his German, middle-class identity becomes constituted in opposition to three main adversarial Others: German aristocrats, Jews, and Poles. While members of each of these groups exhibit various unattractive social behaviors, it is ultimately through their collective economic practices that they play a role in Anton's identity formation. Anton will accordingly grow to understand the aristocrats as a class clinging to the last vestiges of an outdated feudalist system—and as such destined for financial and social decline. While in time, with the emergent capitalist system, the Jews manifest its malicious and destructive potential.[8] Finally, there are the Poles, a race of people rendered so primitive and backward in the text that they appear to lack the ability to participate at all in the emerging modern economic world.

The representation of the Poles as inherently unable to achieve developmental progress without the aid of external intervention, paired with Anton's ability to provide such intervention (see below), places the novel's depiction of German-Polish relations squarely into a colonialist framework. A useful model for understanding this dynamic is provided by J.M. Blaut in his study of *The Colonizer's Model of the World: Geographical Diffusionism and Eurocentric History*, in which he identifies the colonial ideology of "diffusionism":

> This belief is the notion that European civilization—"The West"—has had some unique historical advantage, some special quality of race or culture or environment or mind or spirit, which gives this human community a permanent superiority

> over all other communities. [. . .] The belief is both historical and geographical. Europeans are seen as the "makers of history." Europe eternally advances, progresses, modernizes. The rest of the world advances more sluggishly, or stagnates: it is "traditional society." Therefore, the world has a permanent geographical center and a permanent periphery: an Inside and an Outside. Inside leads, Outside lags. Inside innovates, Outside imitates.

This belief is *diffusionism*, or more precisely *Eurocentric diffusionism*. It is a theory about the way cultural processes tend to move over the surface of the world as a whole. They tend to flow out of the European sector and toward the non-European sector. Europe is the source of most diffusions; non-Europe is the recipient.[9]

Blaut's model is extremely useful in identifying colonial ideology in narrative discourse. We see its signposts in situations depicting importations of innovation into innovationless vacuums. Given the assumption of an endemic quality allowing (only) Europeans to innovate, colonization would be presented as the primary vector through which their advancements could be brought to the rest of the world.

Discursive Reinventions

The Polish territories present a unique case within the history of European colonialism. While similar to early English interventions in Ireland, the German relationship with Poland distinguishes itself in its geographic, cultural, and demographic adjacency. In the centuries of shared German-Polish contact, the border between these two nations, both real and imaginary, has migrated east and west, north and south, while their populations have intermingled and intermarried.

For Germans, this adjacency meant that Poland was not a distantly located, recently discovered land of which they suddenly had to make cultural sense. Instead, Germans and Poles had shared centuries of a common European cultural context, involving shared medieval trade routes, a common set

of religious traditions, and mutually recognized monarchical governmental structures. Indeed, prior to the mid-nineteenth century, colonialism did not shape the German understanding of the relationship with this neighboring space. Despite the fact that colonial narratives were already in wide circulation in the late eighteenth-century German tradition,[10] Prussia did not appeal to this discourse in legitimating its participation in the Partitions, but instead presented its arguments in military-strategic terms.[11] The Polish territories would only become "colonial" after a process of discursive reinvention that took place in the 1840s.

Indeed the derogatory representation exemplified by Freytag's novel represents a steep fall in sentiment following a period in which Poland was held in lofty heights of esteem. During the decade preceding the appearance of the colonial Polonist discourse, German support and admiration of the Poles was at its highest. German reactions to the first of the Polish Partitions (1772) were quite subdued and transpired with almost no public comment,[12] but criticism of Prussia's involvement grew steadily over the course of the final two Partitions (1793, 1795) and then came into full blossom in the early 1830s, when Friedrich Wilhelm III supported Russia in the crushing of the Polish November Uprising of 1830/1831.[13] Across the German states, Germans responded with outrage, expressing great sympathy and identification with the Poles. For in the period leading up to the events of 1848, the major revolutionary tensions were directed against a continental absolutism perceived as largely Russian in force, and Prussian in effect. Germans hailed the November Uprising as the Poles' noble and righteous struggle for their national freedom against monolithic, oppressive Russian tyranny. In this period of oppressive censorship, speech in favor of the Poles (and particularly the *Polenlieder* penned by many a German liberal) became a way of giving expression to one's own national aspirations.[14]

In the face of this widespread *Polenbegeisterung*, conservative Prussian apologists generally kept a subdued silence. One outstanding exception was Ernst Moritz Arndt, who was one of the first public figures to counter German liberal *Polenbegeisterung*

by evoking the potential consequences should their demands for a reinstated Poland be met. In his 1832 essay "Polen, ein Spiegel der Warnung für uns," Arndt addresses the fate of German territory on a European map redrawn to include a Polish state.

Arndt's attempt was to concretely spatialize the demands of the Poles and their German supporters. For while the national consciousnesses of both Germans and Poles had been mobilized around amorphous conceptualizations of cultural and ethnic ties, any realization of these desires in the creation of actual states would have obviously had territorial ramifications.[15] Arndt, therefore, concentrated his critique on the threat of Prussian territorial loss. Regardless of what held of Arndt's views, in the discussions and debates of the 1840s, politicians and citizens alike began to pull out their maps of Europe, finally addressing the pragmatic question of what the aspired unified German nation might look like. In the process, a previously abstract imagination of the German nation was territorialized, and the last vestiges of a lofty, idealistic *Polenschwärmerei* finally gave way to a troublesome, mundane *Polenproblem*.

Convening on May 18, 1848, the German National Assembly not only had to reach decisions concerning the constitution of the future state, its laws and political structures—its members also had to decide *where* this state would be located. The proposed border was contested at several points, but the demarcations were the most problematic in the Polish territories, where population distribution patterns belied the model of an ethnic German state. In Prussia, 1 out of every 10 inhabitants spoke Polish as their primary language, and, in the Posener province, there were only 500,000 Germans and Jews living amongst some 800,000 Poles. In other words, it was not just the outlying border areas of Prussia, but its very center whose identity was contested.[16]

The *Polendebatte* of the German National Assembly in the Frankfurter Paulskirche took place on July 24–27, 1848. Over the course of these four days, support for the reinstatement of Poland collapsed, particularly after the speech of Wilhelm Jordan, a left-wing delegate from Berlin who evoked the image

of the Germans living in the Polish regions, and demanded that these territories be maintained in the name of a "gesunden Volksegoismus."[17]

Yet given the self-understanding of an ethnically defined German nation, the conflicting desire to keep the Polish territories brought forth a new discourse of justification. Such egalitarian understandings of the Pole as that of European neighbor or hero of romantic nationalism introduced a moral dilemma into Germany's territorial plans. And thus the discourse shifted. The annexation of the Polish territories found legitimacy in an insistence upon German superiority, not only in terms of historical strength, but more importantly, in terms of cultural development.[18] Through a conceptual positioning of the Poles as a "weaker race," and thus as the dependent recipients of German innovation and stewardship, the Polish demand for an independent state could be delegitimized; the Poles, according to this argument, would be unable to bring a stable and successful state into existence, and would thus fare better under German control.

There were two additional factors that favored the discursive reinvention of Poland within a colonial frame. The first involved a growing desire in the 1840s to imagine the aspired German nation as one that would take its place alongside other strong and modern European nations. In the mid-nineteenth century, such an identity necessitated the possession of colonies.[19] Colonies were desired not only as sources of raw material, or as captive markets for exports; the possession of colonies also meant participating in what was perceived to be the grand European mission of bringing civilization to the rest of the world.

In this respect, the Polish territories came to serve a compensatory function. They lacked the aura of exotic Otherness associated with overseas colonies, but could nonetheless provide Germans with a landscape into which they could imagine the diffusion of their creative potential.

A second factor favoring a colonial Poland involved the crisis of German emigration. Massive emigration had accelerated in

the 1840s in response to changing economic conditions and resulting populational shifts. In 1846, some 70,000 Germans emigrated to America, and in the following year, this number rose to 100,000.[20] Initially, guide books and advice manuals sought to *facilitate* this emigration of the displaced and unemployed—to such popular destinations as Texas. Yet this support was soon reversed by the argument that the sum of individual relocations resulted in a collective national loss. The diffusion of Germans into foreign-controlled territory (mainly the North American colonies) meant that they were devoting their colonial labor to benefit other nations and not serving as the economic base for German overseas trade. Lamenting that there was as of yet no united German nation with the strength to support settlement colonies abroad, no "German Reich to take this matter into its own hands,"[21] several publicists (most notably Friedrich List[22]) attempted to reroute the emigration flow to land already under German control—the Prussian Polish territories. They argued that potential colonists should be sent to

> the immense stretches of land in Pomerania, and even more in East and West Prussia, that await the plow and the sower, partly as heath, partly as unserviceable forest, partly as moorland or abandoned settlement areas. These are the areas that should be taken into consideration first and foremost in discussions about colonization.[23]

Not only was the land in the East much more sparsely populated than in the western German states, and therefore potentially attractive for the agrarian settler, but given the struggle to legitimate continued German control over this region, it was possible to imagine that an increase in the German population would have the effect of displacing the ethnic Polish majority—and with it, any legitimate Polish claim to the territories.

There was one significant obstacle to this plan—how could the Polish territories ever be made attractive to potential colonists, given the sense of freedom and adventure promised by tales of life in the North American "Wild West"?

The Wild East

One strategy was to map iconographic aspects of the Wild West onto the eastern territories, in the creation of a "Wild East" on the Polish plains. Accordingly, a vast and empty prairie landscape was imagined, replete with nomadic Polish "Indians." In the German press, one encounters such descriptions as that of an anonymous journalist in the *Grenzboten*, who takes on the persona of an American cowboy recounting his adventures in the Polish territories:

> In the light of the setting sun, they looked like a beautiful painting executed by the hand of a master. But may I never again shake the hand of an honest man if in this moment they didn't appear to me as a tribe of wild Indians, as a herd of Pawnee Loupes out on the grassy plains of the Missouri, good for border skirmishes, for novels and tragedies, but unfit for survival.[24]

The prevalence of these images is reflected in the ease with which they are worked into Freytag's novel. As Anton prepares to head into the Polish territories for the first time, he imagines himself behaving like a cowboy, and seems to expect the Poles to act the part of the Indians. He has been reading James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826, translated by Heinrich Döring in the same year), and internalizing its images of the Wild West. Anton's employer, Schröter, asks Anton to accompany him on a trip into the Polish territories, where a Polish uprising has threatened the safe passage of a shipment of goods. Anton is thrilled, and gears up for a Cooperesque adventure:

> [Anton] went to his room, silently packed his travel bag, took out his damascened pistols [. . .] and threw himself half-dressed onto his bed. [. . .] "Good" thought Anton. We are going to travel into enemy territory, we'll have a fight with the scythemen, and we'll force them to give up our wares. [. . .] He was going on an adventure. [. . .] He was happy.[25]

Anton's fantasy easily adapts a Wild West iconography to fit his Eastern destination, and even inflects his perceptions of his surroundings upon arrival at the Polish border. There, he sees a band of "savages" who have captured Schröter's "caravan." Their leader was "a brown fellow with a dangerous appearance."[26] The phenotypical darkness of this figure—his brown skin and black hair—will be repeatedly referenced in the text and generalized upon the Poles as a group, which renders them visually identifiable as members of another race, iconographically linked with the American "Indian," and semiotically linked with the colonized subjects of worldwide European imperialism.

In the events that follow, Anton and his employer regain control of the goods shipment, but Anton must remain in Cracow to address the aftereffects of the debacle. Armed with tales of his encounter with "saber-swinging" Slavs, Anton returns to Breslau with narratives of dangerous adventure and an improved assessment of his manliness: "since the swing of the Slavic saber (. . .) [Anton realized] that he had become a man, well worthy of a woman's trust in his strength and composure."[27]

While Poland was able to provide Anton with the setting for this personal development, the American Wild West is significantly denied this potential. While Anton has "become a man" in Poland, his friend and former co-worker, von Fink, has become a self-proclaimed criminal in America. In a letter that awaits Anton when he returns from his Polish adventures, Fink reveals that he has become involved in a land speculation scheme, and that he feels trapped in a shady business that has him preying upon incoming settlers. His moral despair contrasts greatly with Anton's radiant countenance—and the message is clear: for Germans, the Polish territories provide the opportunity for self-development, not America.

In Freytag's text, issues beyond the question of individual identity and personal growth ultimately prove to be of greater importance: a further trip to Poland sets the stage for a consolidation of Anton's self-fashioning as a member of both the German nation and of the ascending middle class.

Landscapes of Diffusion

Anton's second journey to the East is undertaken at the behest of the Baron von Rothsattel, a German aristocrat who has fallen victim to a combination of Jewish financial intrigue and his own sheer lack of business sense, and who has lost his estate and sense of social identity as a result. A run-down estate in the Polish territories is all that the Rothsattels have left; Anton's mandate is to take this property into possession and bring it into order.

> On a cold October day two men rode…onto the plain, which stretched out before them in unvaried endlessness. […] The wind, like an enormous broom, swept sand and scraps of straw across the stubble fields, the street was a wide path through the field without ditches or rows of trees. Sometimes the horses waded through rutty puddles of water, sometimes through deep sand.
>
> […] In the lower areas there was slimy water […] No house was to be seen by the side of the street, no wayfarers, and no carts.[28]

The Polish landscape is depicted as a vast, barren "wasteland" (*Wüstenei*), lacking any sign of modern human intervention: the roads have not been paved, nor have drainage ditches been excavated, nor have trees been planted to tame the sandy topsoil. The area appears devoid of human presence and agency.

The situation is not any better on the Rothsattels' new estate in Rosmin. Here, the previous Polish owners allowed the house, the fields, and the economic infrastructure to languish under the forces of crime and "Polish enterprise" (*Polnische Wirtschaft*)[29]:

> Finally, Anton entered the abandoned steps of the tower and climbed onto the platform. From there he looked over the edge of the wall into the depths and out over the expanse. […] The sky was gray, the earth was ill-colored, the trees and the bushes at the side of the stream lacked any green and the forest with its jutting edges was like a rampart that separated this patch of earth from all humanity, from all *Bildung*, from every joy and beauty of life.[30]

Standing on the tower of the Rosminer castle, Anton organizes the vast surrounding landscape in the scope of his gaze. The text attributes to him not only the ability to pass judgment on what he determines to be the underdevelopment of the fields and the ugliness of the cottages in the village; Anton is also able to "read" the state of humanity from these visible signs. And here too, he finds a state of lack that seems to beseech his intervention. *Soll und Haben* thus mobilizes a standard colonial trope of "chaos that calls for restoration of order, of absence that calls for affirming presence, of natural abundance that awaits the creative hand of technology. Colonial discourse . . . transfers the locus of desire onto the colonized object itself."[31]

In the face of this wild landscape found on the Polish frontier, Anton must again prove himself. If his first journey led to a personal establishment of masculine agency, this time, Anton must show that this masculinity is strong enough to allow him to serve as a conduit for the diffusion of German cultural advancement into this space of lack. His task is to render this Polish chaos orderly, to make this barren landscape fertile and profitable, and to create an isolated island of German space within the surrounding sea of *Polnische Wirtschaft*. Anton will prove himself able to impose these cultural advancements and bring progress to the Poles—while the text reinforces their own inability to bring about developmental progress of their own accord.

This inability is first introduced in an early didactic passage of the text, when Anton entered Polish space for the first time with his mentoring employer, the businessman T.O. Schröter. Here, the inability to innovate that is so central to Blaut's diffusionist model is clearly articulated, and rendered inherent through a direct appeal to race:

> "There is no race that has less of that which is necessary to progress and to gain in humanity and cultivation than the Slavs. That which the people there have managed to bring together in idleness by sheer force of the brute mass, they squander in fantastical shenanigans. With us it's only a few favored classes that engage in such behavior, and the nation can bear it if need

> be. Over there the privileged claim to represent the people (das Volk). As if nobles and serfs could constitute a state! They don't have any more right to do so than this group (das Volk) of sparrows in the trees. The bad thing is that we have to use our money to pay for their failed experiments."
>
> "They don't have a middle class," Anton eagerly concurred.
>
> "That means that they don't have any culture," the businessman continued. "It is remarkable how unable they are to produce from their midst the class that represents civilization and progress, that would be able to elevate this heap of scattered farmers into a state."[32]

Schröter locates Poles in time according to an evolutionary logic of diffusionist historical progress, which allows for the application of a colonial paradigm—according to which the non-European colonized are incapable of innovation—in the context of spatial adjacency. The Poles do not exist out of time, but are instead portrayed as having benefited from the steady infiltration of advancements from Europe; they are developing at a retarded rate, and thus lag in the time of absolutism and serfdom while Europe advances into a modern capitalist paradigm. Through narratives of their direct dependence upon the diffusion of German influence, the text stresses that the Poles are attached to the trajectory of European civilizational progress. As the narrator of *Soll und Haben* relates, the town closest to Rothsattel's estate first came into existence due to medieval German efforts. Through the introduction of their economic developments (such as scattered trade, established markets, permanent mercantile establishments), and under German political control, the town met with prosperity.

In explaining the stages of this progress to Anton, Schröter appeals to a three-phase model of human history similar to that introduced by the Scottish Enlightenment figure Adam Ferguson earlier in the century.[33] In primitive times, the individual was free and essentially equal. Then came the early barbarism of privileged freemen and the bondmen who labored for them. Only after our cities grew large did civilized states come into existence, only after the secret was revealed that free

labor alone makes the lives of peoples grand and secure and enduring.[34]

Within this trajectory of *Urzeit*, barbarism, and modern civilization, the Poles have not advanced beyond the second stage. They might not exist in the radical timelessness that the European colonialist claimed to reign in the case of overseas colonial subjects—but they were no less dependent on European intervention to bring progress.

The Threat of Counterdiffusion

In imagining the role for themselves of spatial developers in the East, Germans could reaffirm their membership inside a civilization-generating "Europe." Their position on the border separating this Europe from non-Europe provided a further legitimating mandate not shared by other colonial nations: staving off the threat of counterdiffusion, of regressive tendencies trickling back into the European core from outside. "Since Europe is advanced and non-Europe is backward," according to Blaut's depiction of the colonizer's model of the world, "any ideas that diffuse into Europe must be ancient, savage, atavistic, uncivilized, evil—black magic, vampires, plagues, 'the bogeyman' and the like."[35] To the same extent that adjacency allowed Poles to benefit from a closer proximity to progressive European influence, Germans were at potential risk of the countermovement of atavistic elements entering their space. Freytag's text, indeed, highlights this threat through a depiction of German-Polish contact as a source of potential contamination.

Upon taking possession of Rothsattel's Polish estate, Anton undertakes measures to strengthen the structural cohesion of the estate and to minimize contact between its residents and the surrounding population. Forces portrayed as atavistic—criminality and armed uprising—are thereby banished from this isolated island of ordered German space. The Rothsattels, however, fail to comprehend the logic of Anton's exclusionary practices, and when they arrive at the estate, they continue to operate (and exclude) along class, and not racial lines.

When business matters force Anton to make a trip to the Tarowski residence—local Polish aristocrats of whose illicit enterprising Anton is certain—the Rothsattels demand to accompany him so that they might pay a social call to local members of their class. The ensuing encounter will bring Anton's final inner distancing from his nostalgic reverence for the German aristocracy—he will see for himself that the obsoleteness of the Rothsattels' class places them closer to the delayed historical time of the Tarowskis, and thus leaves the German aristocrats more susceptible to the dangerous influence of Polish counterdiffusions.

At the Tarowski residence, the Rothsattels fluidly integrate themselves into the Polish aristocratic social circle, engaging in lively discussion and exchanging "dainty French bons mots."[36] Anton, meanwhile, continues his practice of segregation, isolating himself on the periphery of the gathering. From this position, he commands a privileged, scrutinizing view over the scene; the narrator follows Anton's gaze as it pierces through the aristocratic veneer of his surroundings to perceive the degenerate reality existing underneath:

> Now Anton had a moment to look around the room. A Viennese grand piano stood amongst coarse furniture made by the village carpenter, the windowpanes were patched, a tattered carpet lay on the black floor near the sofa. The women sat on velvet chairs around a battered table. The lady of the house and her eldest daughters wore elegant Parisian fashions, but when a side door opened to reveal a drab room off to the side, Anton saw children scampering about who were so poorly dressed that he felt bad for them in the winter cold. They didn't seem to care very much, however, for they tussled and brawled like beasts.[37]

Although the Tarowskis attempt to present themselves as European aristocrats complete with Parisian fashions and a Viennese grand piano, this passage reveals their performance as mimicry. In Homi Bhabha's schema, "mimicry is a flawed identity imposed on colonized people who are obliged to mirror back an image of the colonials but in imperfect form."[38] Yet we can also consider this mimicry as a manifestation of

diffusion: goods and practices that were the authentic products of authentic identities in the European space of their origins lose their authenticity and become artificial when they are transferred to non-European space. In the case of Poland, we must critically consider Bhabha's rendering of this mimicry trope in the racialized terms of "almost the same, but not white."[39] The Polish case shows a more nuanced model—"almost the same, but not *European*."

Try as hard as they might to pass as civilized Europeans, Anton's careful eye is able to detect the inauthenticity of the Poles. This is a powerful mechanism for textually producing a colonial subjectivity for Anton. For he is now positioned as both a representative of the European core that produced the authentic "European aristocratic" identity that the non-European periphery imitates, as well as the bearer of the gaze that sees through the inadequacy of the Polish masquerade. Anton is endowed with the power to see through the veneer of adopted finery to detect the wild and primitive "truth" underneath. The text establishes that the Rothsattels do not share Anton's ability to discern this difference; their aristocratic class is no longer the source of European progress and innovation, but has instead been superceded by the ascending bourgeoisie. The Rothsattels cannot read the inauthenticity of the Polish aristocrats because they too engage in mimicry—of their past socioeconomic hegemony.

The class masquerade at the Tarowski residence sets the scene for the final break in Anton's inner ties to the Rothsattels and their daughter, Lenore. The hosts announce a round of the Mazurka, and hanging laundry and cobwebs are pushed aside to make room for the dancing. Anton is appalled by the filth and sense of undignified improvisation, but he faces his real crisis as he watches Lenore dance with Tarowski: "That which came naturally to the Polish girls—the rapid movements, the intense stimulation—made Lenore wild and—as Anton realized with dismay—unfeminine."[40] Lenore has fallen victim to the influence of her atavistic environment in a familiar trope of "going native." She has become "wild," and in this moment, becomes unattractive to Anton.

Gail Chin-Liang Low, recalling the work of Edward Said and Homi Bhabha, argues that colonial discourse "delivers an Other which is both an object of knowledge and surveillance and an object of libidinous impulses." This "ambivalent vacillation between pleasure and unpleasure" is the source of anxiety in the body of English colonial literature Low investigates.[41] In *Soll und Haben*, this anxiety is resolved by dividing the ambivalence along German class lines. For Anton, the Poles remain colonial subjects to be disciplined and contained, while for the aristocratic Rothsattels, they are the objects of flirtation and libidinous release. In mapping colonial desire onto the Rothsattels, the text masterfully produces an unequivocal colonial subjectivity for Anton, consolidating his ascendant bourgeois identity on the plains of the German eastern frontier.

Regressive Heimat

Having squandered his wealth and productive energies in America, Anton's aristocratic friend, von Fink, has failed not only to find personal fortune and happiness, but also to allocate his economic resources and industrial energies in a way that would benefit the German nation. Fink will redeem his American transgressions by joining the ranks of the German colonists in the East.

After taking Anton's advice to extricate himself from his shady business dealings on the North American frontier, Fink arrives unexpectedly at the Rothsattels' Polish estate in Rosmin. As he surveys his new surroundings, Fink "sees" the Wild West: "I was halfway around the world in the log cabin of an American set on the barren plain. It wasn't any different than here."[42] Yet this eastern landscape is different in that it is coming under German control. Fink is full of praise for all that he sees in Rosmin, and is particularly impressed with the rational ordering of space on the previously so mismanaged estate: "No American could have achieved this, nor any man from any other nation. Under such desperate conditions, I commend the German."[43] Seeing a positive role for himself and the chance to turn his life around, Fink joins the effort to Germanize this Polish space.

Indeed, despite his praise for Anton's accomplishments in Rosmin, Fink soon begins to replace Anton's role as manager of the Rothsattel estate, which introduces a shift in authority supported by all involved. As an aristocrat, the Baron von Rothsattel had found it humiliating to seek assistance from Anton, as a person below his social rank, and finds it less threatening to entrust such matters to a fellow "aristocrat." Anton accepts his usurption without comment, perhaps because he—having molded the Polish landscape according to the bourgeois principles of order, honest work, and profitability—has consolidated his identity as a proud representative of the German middle class, is ready to return home to enter the inner sanctum of Schröter's firm, marry Schröter's sister, and live "happily ever after."

The ensuing narrative also affirms Fink's takeover: within his first days in Rosmin, Fink makes the major discovery that the stream on the property has been routed outside of its natural banks. Restoring it to its original path will greatly increase the fertility of the surrounding land, thereby economically rescuing the struggling estate. Although Anton and his assistant have spent months developing the estate, they failed to notice this abnormality in the landscape. The legitimacy of Fink's authority is solidly established in his superior ability to survey the land.

Poland thus emerges as the site of Fink's rehabilitation. As an aristocrat who, while working for Schröter, underwent the same training in capitalist values as Anton, he brings together those aspects of feudal administration and modern economic practice necessary for the successful management of agricultural property. Marrying the Rothsattels' daughter Lenore, Fink ushers in the dawn of a new German regime in the Polish territories:

> His life will be an unceasing victorious battle against the dark spirits of the landscape; and a troop of strong, vigorous boys will spring forth from the Slavic castle, and a new German lineage, enduring in body and soul, will spread over the land, a lineage of colonists and conquerors.[44]

While the text claims that this will be a "new lineage," it promises to be one based upon a feudal agrarian system that was steadily being rendered obsolete by capitalist advances in the German heartland. Following diffusionary logic, adjacent Polish space becomes the belated recipient of an exterritorialized, European aristocratic order. There may no longer be a place for German aristocrats in the rising urban space of European business, but in the non-European East, which exists in the lagging time of feudalistic development, they still have positive contributions to make. Fink recuperates both himself and his class in Polish space, and *Soll und Haben* thereby imagines a regressive *Heimat* in the East.[45]

Gustav Freytag's *Soll und Haben* reveals itself to be a German colonial novel par excellence, a test case for the flexible adaptability of colonial constructions of Self and Other. It is not only on a superficial thematic level that the text renders Anton a "German colonist." Instead, the text is structured through an organizing poetics of race and space rooted in European colonial, diffusionist discourse.

The depiction of the Polish plains as a conceptual "Wild East" was a nineteenth-century practice aiming to impute to the Eastern Territories the potential for manly adventure. Gustav Freytag takes this petition a step further in rendering this "Wild East" as the concomitant site of national duty, set in direct opposition to wasteful and purposeless emigration to America. *Soll und Haben* stands as an early landmark text in the consolidation and dissemination of a colonial Polonist discourse.

Yet at the same time, *Soll und Haben* also creates a recuperative space for the feudal society it displaces. In constructing Poland as German colonial territory, a regressive utopian "Heimat" in the East is established, a nostalgic space in which a traditional agrarian social order can retain its structure and function.

NOTES

This chapter was originally published in an abbreviated form (Kopp).

1. [I]ch stehe jetzt hier als einer von den Eroberern, welche für freie Arbeit und menschliche Cultur einer schwächern Race die

Herrschaft über diesen Boden abgenommen haben. Wir und die Slaven, es ist ein alter Kampf. Und mit Stolz empfinden wir: auf unserer Seite ist die Bildung, die Arbeitslust, der Credit (Freytag 2, p. 155).

2. Pratt, pp. 201–208.
3. *Soll und Haben* was one of the best-selling German novels of all time. Selling over 100,000 copies by the end of the nineteenth century, its popularity continued to increase through the first half of the twentieth century, particularly in the decades of social instability immediately following each of the two world wars. Its publication figures reached 500,000 in 1925 (Steinecke, p. 145), and 1 million just prior to 1960 (p. 138). *Soll und Haben* was thus a German bestseller for over one hundred years (Carter). As such, it is an important text to consider in any investigation of German constructions of national selves and colonial others.
4. The term "Poland" is problematic, but my usage, albeit ironic, reflects that found in Freytag's text.
5. Ostrau ist eine kleine Kreisstadt unweit der Oder, bis nach Polen hinein berühmt durch ihr Gymnasium und süße Pfefferkuchen (Freytag 1, p. 5).
6. The nineteenth century saw the creation of a variety of different "states" within the territory of former Poland, but as Norman Davies argues, none of these were more than nominal entities, which were all immediately dismantled as soon as they attempted to exert any degree of autonomy. See Davies 2, p. 6.
7. Améry, p. 84.
8. Freytag's text is perhaps best known for the antisemitic discourse it so strongly served to propagate. See, for example, Burdekin, Gelber, and Lorenz.
9. Blaut, p. 1.
10. There may not have been any overseas German colonies, but as Susanne Zantop has shown, individual Germans nonetheless participated in the colonial ventures of other European countries while others generated an extensive body of German colonial fiction (Zantop).
11. Broszat, pp. 47–51.
12. Kozielek, p. 74.
13. Broszat, pp. 94–95.
14. Grabski, p. 42.

15. Rothfels, p. 6.
16. Rothfels, p. 9.
17. Müller et al., 9.
18. Rothfels, p. 10.
19. Blaut.
20. *Stenographischer Bericht* 2, p. 1059 (Ziegert).
21. Wigard 2, p. 1059.
22. See List's 1842 essay "Die Ackerverfassung, die Zwergwirtschaft und die Auswanderung" in which he outlines his proposed settlement colonization in Eastern Europe. In Salin et al., pp. 418–548, esp. p. 499ff.
23. "Auswanderung und Colonisation," p. 53: den ungeheuren Strecken, welche in Pommern, mehr aber in Ost—und Westpreußen, theils als Haideland, theils als unnützer, sich gar nicht rentirender Wald, theils als Moore oder Wüstungen des Pfluges und Säemanns harren. Dort ist der Punkt, welcher vor Allem in's Auge gefaßt werden muß, wenn von Colonisation die Rede ist.
24. Sie sahen im Licht der untergehenden Sonne aus, wie ein schönes Bild von Meisterhand, wenn sie mir aber in diesem Augenblick anders vorkamen, als eine Bande roher Indianer, ale eine Herde Pawnee Loups in den Grasebenen des Missouri, gut für Grenzkriege, für Romane und Trauerspiele, aber unbrauchbar für das Leben, so will ich nie wieder einem freien Mann die Hand schütteln (Rogers, p. 39).
25. As cited in Feindt, p. 21. [Anton] ging nach seinem Zimmer, packte geräuschlos eine Reisetasche, holte die damaszierten Pistolen heraus [. . .] und warf sich halbentkleidet auf das Bett. [. . .] "Gut," dachte Anton. "Wir reisen in Feindesland, wir schlagen uns mit den Sensenmännern und wir zwingen sie unsere Waren herauszugeben." [. . .] Er zog auf Abenteuer. [. . .] Er war glücklich. (Freytag 1, p. 380f.)
26. im ganzen betrachtet ein brauner Kerl von gefährlichem Aussehen (Freytag 1, p. 388). See also p. 413.
27. seit jenem Streich des slawischen Säbels (. . .) [erkannte er,] daß er selbst in dieser Zeit ein Mann geworden war, wohl werth, daß ein Weib seiner Kraft und Ruhe vertraute (Freytag 1, p. 491).
28. An einem kalten Octobertage fuhren zwei Männer . . . in die Ebene, welche sich einförmig und endlos vor ihnen ausbreitete. (. . .) Der Wind fegte mit seinem riesigen Besen Sand und

Strohhalme über die Stoppelfelder, die Straße war ein breiter Feldweg, ohne Gräben und Baumreihen, die Pferde wateten bald durch ausgefahrene Wasserpfützen, bald durch tiefen Sand. (. . .) In den Senkungen des Bodens stand schlammiges Wasser (. . .) Kein Haus war zu sehen an der Straße, kein Wanderer und kein Fuhrwerk (Freytag 2, p. 1).

29. This term appears frequently in the text: 1, pp. 246, 375; 2, pp. 17, 215. For a history of the discourse of this term, see Orlowski.
30. Endlich betrat Anton die verlassene Treppe des Thurmes und stieg auf die Plattform. Dort sah er über den Mauerrand in die Tiefe und hinaus in die Ebene. (. . .) Der Himmel grau, der Boden mißfarbig, die Bäume und Sträucher am Bach ohne Grün, und der Wald mit seinen Vorsprüngen und Buchten einem Walle gleich, welcher diesen Erdfleck abschied von allen Menschen, von aller Bildung, von jeder Freude und Schönheit des Lebens (Freytag 2, p. 13f.).
31. Spurr, p. 28.
32. The inscription of the Poles as an inferior race delivered in this passage was to receive wide circulation, for Grimm's *Wörterbuch* would later use Freytag's text to exemplify the meanings and usages of the word *Rasse* [Race]:

    mit wissenschaftlichem klange: rassen der menschen, der völker: es gibt keine race, welche so wenig das zeug hat, vorwärts zu kommen . . . als die slavische. (Grimm)

    "Es gibt keine Race, welche so wenig das Zeug hat, vorwärts zu kommen und sich durch ihre Capitalien Menschlichkeit und Bildung zu erwerben, als die slawische. Was die Leute dort im Müßiggang durch den Druck der rohen Masse zusammengebracht haben, vergeuden sie in phantastischen Spielereien. Bei uns thun so etwas doch nur einzelne bevorzugte Klassen, und die Nation kann es zur Noth ertragen. Dort drüben erheben die Priviligierten den Anspruch, das Volk darzustellen. Als wenn Edelleute und leibeigene Bauern einen Staat bilden könnten! Sie haben nicht mehr Berechtigung dazu als dieses Volk Sperlinge auf den Bäumen. Das Schlimme ist nur, daß wir ihre unglücklichen Versuche auch mit unserem Gelde bezahlen müssen."

    "Sie haben keinen Bürgerstand," sagte Anton eifrig beistimmend.

> "Das heißt, sie haben keine Cultur" fuhr der Kaufmann fort; "es ist merkwürdig, wie unfähig sie sind, den Stand, welcher Civilisation und Fortschritt darstellt, und welcher einen Haufen zerstreuter Ackerbauer zu einem Staate erhebt, aus sich heraus zu schaffen." (Freytag 1, p. 382–383)

33. Wiener, pp. 40–42.
34. Freytag, *Soll und Haben* 1, pp. 348, 383.

> "[D]ie Urzeit sah die Einzelnen frei und in der Hauptsache gleich, dann kam die halbe Barbarei der priviligirten Freien und der leibeigenen Arbeiter, erst seit unsere Städte groß wuchsen, sind civilisirte Staaten in der Welt, erst seit der Zeit ist das Geheimnis offenbar geworden, daß die freie Arbeit allein das Leben der Völker groß und sicher und dauerhaft macht."

35. Blaut, p. 16.
36. Leichte französische Bonmots. Freytag 2, p. 66.
37. Jetzt hatte Anton Muße, sich im Zimmer umzusehen. Unter den rohen Möbeln des Dorftischlers stand ein Wiener Flügel, die Fensterscheiben waren geflickt, auf dem schwarzen Fußboden lag in der Nähe des Sophas ein zerrissener Teppich. Die Damen saßen auf Samtsesseln um einen abgenutzten Tisch. Die Frau vom Hause und ihre erwachsenen Töchter waren in eleganter Pariser Toilette, aber als sich eine Seitenthür öffnete, sah Anton in dem grauen Nebenzimmer einige Kinder mit so mangelhafter Garderobe umherlaufen, daß sie ihn bei der Winterkälte herzlich dauerten. Sie selbst machten sich jedenfalls nicht viel daraus, denn sie balgten sich und lärmten wie Unholde (Freytag 2, p. 65).
38. McClintock, p. 62.
39. Bhabha, p. 130.
40. Was den polnischen Mädchen natürlich stand, die schnellen Bewegungen, die starke Erregung, das machte Lenoren wild und, wie Anton sich mit Mißfallen sagte, unweiblich (Freytag 2, p. 68).
41. Low, p. 3.
42. "[D]a war ich eine halbe Erde von hier entfernt in der Holzhütte eines Amerikaners auf öder Grassteppe. Es war nicht anders als hier" (Freytag 2, p. 172).
43. "Das hätte kein Amerikaner und kein anderer Landsmann durchgesetzt, in so verzweifelter Lage lobe ich mir den Deutschen" (Freytag 2, p. 163).

44. Sein Leben wird ein unaufhörlicher siegreicher Kampf sein gegen die finstern Geister der Landschaft; und aus dem Slavenschloß wird eine Schar kraftvoller Knaben herausspringen, und ein neues deutsches Geschlecht, dauerhaft an Leib und Seele, wird sich über das Land verbreiten, ein Geschlecht von Colonisten und Eroberern (Freytag 2, p. 398).
45. As such, the novel anticipates the German colonial novel and its strong connections to the Heimatbewegung. The colony was the site of German Heimat removed from the degenerate influences introduced by urban industrialization. See Zimmermann.

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Chapter 2

The Prussian Settlement Commission and Its Activities in the Land Market, 1886–1918

Scott M. Eddie

Inner colonization, as is clear from the chapters in this volume, can take many forms. The farther back one goes in history, the more likely it is that the colonization effort was directed at populating empty lands. This was the case, for example, in the efforts of the Habsburgs to attract settlers to the Southeastern areas of their Empire in the eighteenth century, after expulsion of the Turks. Even schemes in modern times, such as Nikita Khrushchev's virgin lands scheme in the Soviet Union, or the settlement schemes in Sri Lanka in the 1960s, were primarily aimed at bringing new land, or underused land, into cultivation. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, however, there existed an official government settlement scheme that was unusual in that it was directly aimed at changing the ethnic balance of population in an already settled region,[1] and undertaken primarily for political, rather than economic, ends.

The Prussian government established the Königlich Preussische Ansiedlungskommission in den Provinzen West Preussen und

Posen (Royal Prussian Settlement Commission[2] in the Provinces of West Prussia and Posen, hereafter SC) in 1886 with a very explicit mandate: In these two provinces it was to buy up mainly Polish-owned land, subdivide it into small farms, and sell these small farms to German settlers from other parts of Germany. The avowed aim was to change the demographic balance—to create a German majority in districts where it did not yet exist, or to strengthen such a majority if it were threatened—in order to ensure the political upper hand to Germans, at the expense of the Poles.[3] The headquarters of the SC was to be in the city of Posen (Poznań), and it began life with an allocation of 100 million marks[4] (approximately $24 million or £4.9 million in the currency of the time, a very handsome sum indeed).

If we look at the population distribution of Germans and Poles in the four easternmost provinces of Prussia, it becomes clear why the SC—with its explicitly demographic mandate—was to operate in the provinces of West Prussia and Posen, with concentration on the latter (chart 1).

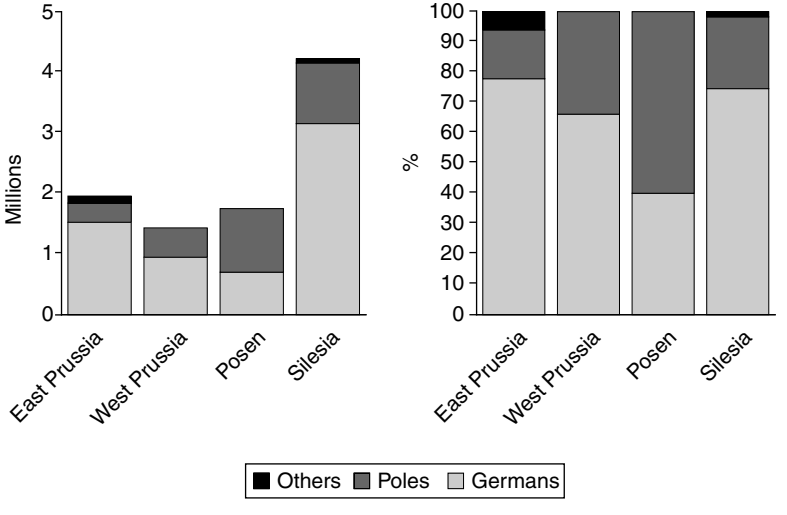

Chart 1 Population by mother tongue, 1890.

Note: I chose to use the 1890 census rather than the 1885 census because of the later year's more satisfactory definition of "mother tongue."

Source: Statistisches Handbuch des Preussischen Staates, vol. 2 (Berlin, 1898), pp. 99, 118–119.

During its active life, 1886–1918,[5] to fulfill its primary mandate, the SC

- made total outlays of 955 million marks, almost exactly half of that for land purchase.
- bought 828 "estates" (ca. 430,000 hectares) for 443 million marks.
- bought 631 "peasant farms"[6] (ca. 30,000 hectares) for 44.5 million marks.
- settled approximately 22,000 German families[7] on the land.

This chapter will focus on the activities of the SC in the land market. Besides the land purchases mentioned above, this consideration will also include secondary assignments, later made to the SC, that were related to, but not part of, its primary mandate. First and foremost, however, let us examine the SC's land purchases.

The Land Purchase Strategy of the Settlement Commission[8]

The total area of the two provinces in question was nearly 5½ million hectares. Taking a relatively modest figure of 500 marks per hectare[9] as a representative price of farm land with buildings and inventory in these two provinces in the late 1880s, it is immediately obvious that the SC, even with a generous initial allocation of 100 million marks to spend over several years, could not just set about willy-nilly buying up whatever land came on the market. It had to devise a strategy to make most effective use of the funds at its disposal.

The strategy was simple, logical, and straightforward: The SC would not attempt to settle Germans in districts where (1) it was hopeless because the Polish majority was simply too large, or (2) it was pointless, because the district already had a large German majority. The SC would therefore concentrate its activities in areas where there was hope of turning a substantial German minority into a majority, or where a relatively

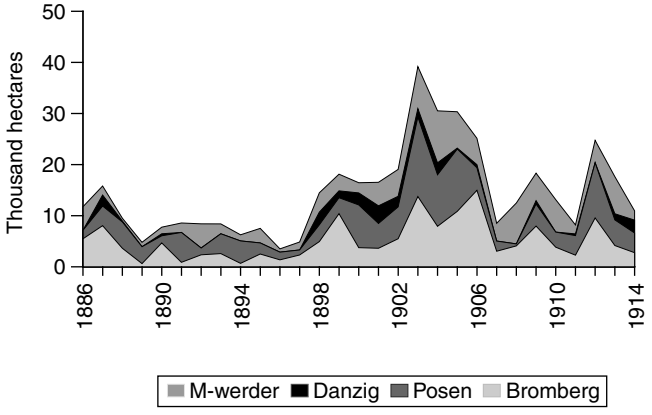

Chart 2 SC land purchases by Regierungsbezirk.

Note: Marienwerder and Danzig in West Prussia; Posen and Bromberg in Posen.

modest German majority was threatened by Polish settlement or simply by the higher natural rates of increase of the Polish population, compared to the German.

Chart 2 shows the broad outlines of this strategy in action: The SC concentrated its purchases in the province of Posen, and within that in the Regierungsbezirk (administrative region[10]) of Bromberg (Bydgoszcz). In the province of West Prussia there was very little land purchased in the administrative region of Danzig (Gdańsk); such purchases as were made were mostly in the eastern half of the province, the region of Marienwerder (Kwidzyn).

Typically, the German share in land ownership in a district exceeded—sometimes by a substantial margin—the German share of population in that district. This was a reflection of the Germans' dominant position in the economy, and also of the fact that a typical estate, whether German- or Polish-owned, usually operated primarily with Polish labor.

Chart 3 shows the total cumulative land purchases of the SC and total German land ownership by district as of the end of

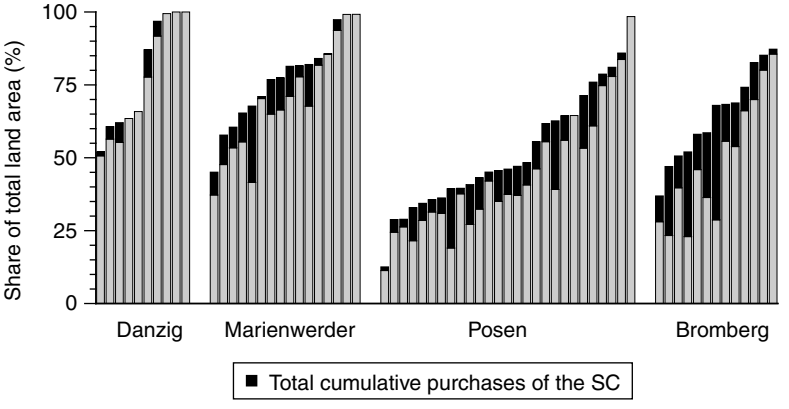

Chart 3 Cumulative SC purchases of land compared to German share of land ownership, end of 1913, by district.

Note: Districts in ascending order of German share of ownership within each Regierungsbezirk.

1913. In chart 3, the concentration of the SC's land purchases in the two administrative regions of the province of Posen is clear, as is its relative inactivity in the region of Danzig. It should be emphasized that the SC purchases do not necessarily represent a net addition to the stock of German-owned land in any district, since—as a later section will make clear—most of the land purchased by the SC, especially after the turn of the century, came from German owners. An SC purchase from a German owner would of course have no effect on the total land owned by Germans in a district.

Because the German population censuses after 1880 did not report population by mother tongue for any unit smaller than the administrative region, we cannot compare the share of German land ownership to the share of German population by district. Nevertheless, chart 3 appears to be broadly consistent with the overall strategy of the SC, showing almost no purchases where Germans owned nearly all the land, but substantial purchases in those districts where the German share of land ownership fell between 40 and 65 percent.

LAND PURCHASES: WHEN, FROM WHOM, AND FOR HOW MUCH

In the introduction, we saw that nearly 90 percent of the SC's expenditures on land purchases and over 90 percent of the acreage purchased were "estate" lands. Although not strictly a division by size, these estates were, on average, very much larger than the "peasant farms" purchased by the SC (over 500 hectares and less than 50 hectares, respectively). Such concentration of purchases was, of course, defined by the mandate of the SC to purchase estates (preferably from Poles) to subdivide for sale as small farms to German settlers. The SC purchased peasant farms primarily to round out existing settlement areas or as a defensive measure, to prevent their falling into the hands of Poles.[11]

Chart 4 shows the distribution over time of the purchase of estates and peasant farms by the SC.

The purchase of peasant farms was heavily concentrated in the period 1902–1910, whereas the estate purchases show a more mixed pattern, although the increase in purchases after the major budget infusion of 1901 shows up quite clearly. The rate of purchase of larger properties was not simply governed by budget considerations, however; it also depended on when

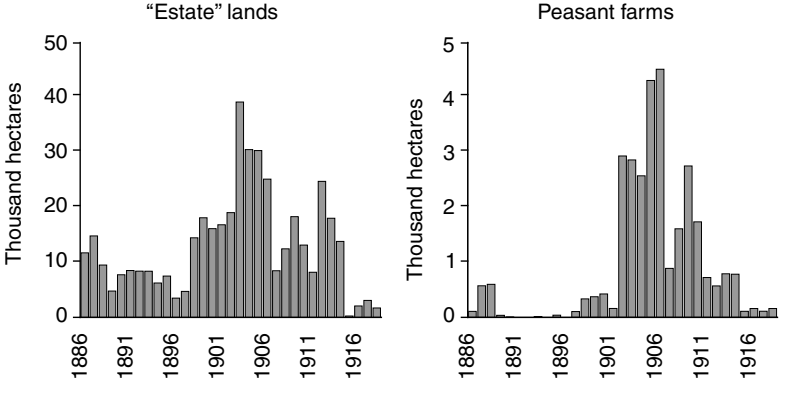

Chart 4 Land purchases by the SC.

suitable properties were offered on the market, the degree of competition for those properties from other would-be owners, and the SC's policy decision never to outbid a German buyer in any forced auction (*Zwangsversteigerung*), such as a foreclosure sale.[12]

With regard to the ethnicity of those from whom it purchased land, the contrast is quite striking: After 1897 there was not a single year in which the majority of estate land purchased came from the hands of Polish owners, and by 1902 the effectiveness of the Polish boycott[13] of sales to the SC shows quite clearly in chart 5 below: In 15 of the 17 years after 1901, more than 80 percent of all estate land was purchased from Germans. If there was any attempt to influence Polish peasants who wished to sell their land to join the boycott on sales to the SC, its effectiveness would appear to have been relatively brief: Only in the years when the SC bought the most peasant land did it buy most of that land from Germans; this may merely reflect that Germans made up the majority of land owners, even of "peasant farms."

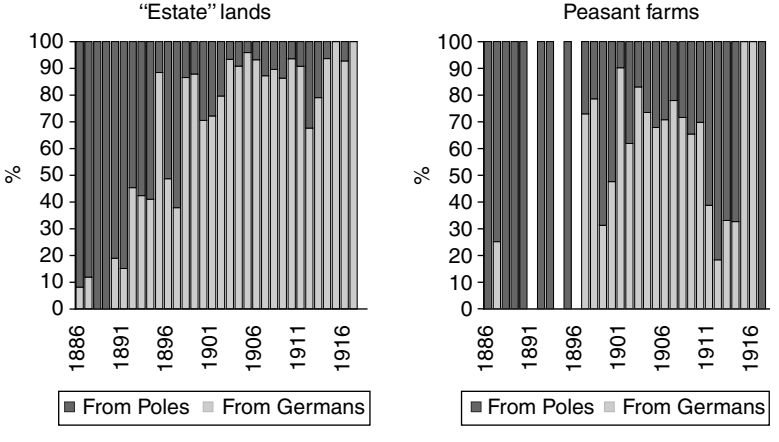

Chart 5 Purchases of land by ethnicity of seller.

OTHER INTERVENTIONS OF THE SETTLEMENT COMMISSION IN THE LAND MARKET

The SC either received as a "benefit," or was charged with the administration of, a number of other measures enacted to favor Germans and hinder Poles in their efforts to settle or keep small farmers on the land:

- A form of quasi-entail was established for settlement properties after 1896.
- The rules for issuing building permits and "settlement permits" were tightened from 1904 onward, with blatant discrimination against Poles in awarding these permits.
- A "consolidation" program to help debt-ridden German landowners was established in 1900, but not implemented until 1906.
- A law of 1908 permitted the SC to expropriate land for settlement purposes.

Quasi-Entail

The rules for inheritance and sale of settler farms were changed by a law of July 8, 1896. A settler farm set up by the SC could be freely sold only as an intact unit and only to the owner's next of kin; a sale to any other person, whether in whole or in part, required approval of the SC. This effectively entailed the properties; moreover, given that the SC had to approve any sale not to the next of kin, it also shut out Poles from purchase of any of these properties.[14]

Permissions

In Prussian law there had existed a difference between "colony" and "settlement," at least since these two terms were defined by a law of August 25, 1876. A settlement could be a collection of farms, but might be only a single farm or even a single

building, whereas a colony had the obligation to contribute to local school and church authorities. Failure to make this contribution would delay issuance of the colony's building permits. The Polish settlement banks and agencies therefore chose to establish settlements of individuals, and in response to this, the Prussian government enacted a new law on August 10, 1904, amending the old law in the following ways, among others:

1. Anyone wishing to erect a house or convert an existing building for housing outside the area of a built-up community requires a "settlement permit" (*Ansiedlungsgenehmigung*) (I, § 13).
2. Without the settlement permit, a building permit cannot be issued (I, § 13).
3. The settlement permit cannot be given if the settlement would conflict with the goals of the Settlement Commission (I, § 13b).
4. If the place of settlement is not accessible by road, or the building of a road has not been secured, the settlement permit is to be denied, except in cases of a one-time division of a property among heirs or children of the owner (I, § 14).
5. If the settlement would require any change or reorganization of the local community, school, or church conditions, the permit will be denied unless the requester provides within 21 days, to the satisfaction of the authorities, evidence of concrete means to accomplish the change or reorganization (I, § 17).[15]

These sections gave the district officials manifold reasons to deny settlement permits to Poles, which they then did routinely.[16] In the first year and a half of the operation of this new law, the authorities in the administrative region of Posen gave only 44 building permits to Poles, while denying 322 applications.[17] This new law so severely hindered Polish

settlement activity that the "battle for the land" was much reduced in intensity, especially in the last five years preceding the outbreak of the Great War.[18]

The arbitrariness of this law and its implementation led to a famous incident that even today is taught in history classes in Polish schools: An ingenious settler, Michal Drzymała, first tried living in a shed, without converting it, to avoid having to request a settlement permit. This, the authorities ruled, contravened the goals of the Settlement Act, so Drzymała purchased a circus trailer and lived in that, which landed him in court. The ruling eventually went against Drzymała, whose living in a trailer on his land was deemed to be the same as founding a new settlement.[19] He was forced to move, but he became a folk hero to all Polish nationalists, and his story later became a standard part of the school curriculum in Poland.

The "Consolidation" of German Land Ownership

Worried by the frequency of sales of German peasant farms to Poles or even to the SC, Finance Minister Miquel set aside 2 million marks in 1900[20] to use for clearing debt on peasant farms threatened by sale to a Pole, and to convert these farms into *Rentengüter*[21] (annuity properties). These would then be sold, to Germans of course, and usually sold back to the original owner. The SC would administer this program and a special bank, the Deutsche Mittelstandskasse (German Middle Class Fund) was founded in 1904 to finance the program in the province of Posen. Another new institution, the Bauernbank (Peasants' Bank, or Farmers' Bank) handled the financing in West Prussia.[22]

The program began small, and only in 1906, as chart 6 shows.

However, it quickly expanded, so that two years later, the SC consolidated nearly a thousand properties in a single year, a number that peaked at 1348 in 1912. Once war had broken out, the number of consolidations quickly fell, but there continued to be some, even in 1918 (156 instances).

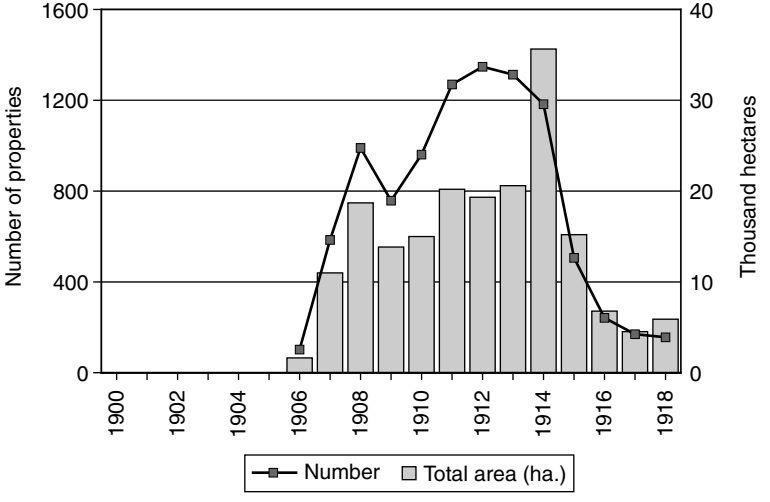

Chart 6 "Consolidation" of German land ownership properties "consolidated" by the SC, by number and area.

Source: SC annual reports to the Prussian parliament.

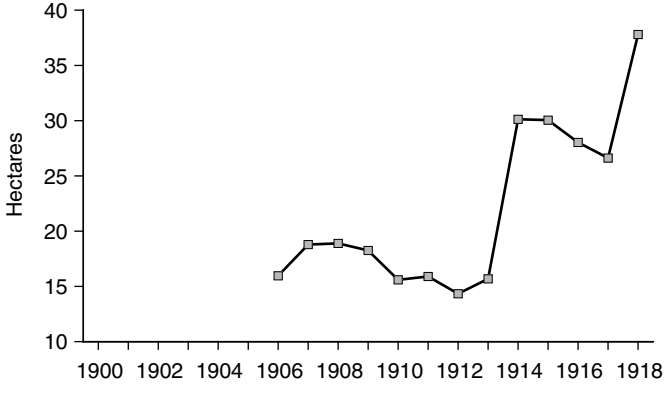

Chart 7 "Consolidation" of German land ownership average size of "consolidated" properties in hectares.

Source: SC annual reports to the Prussian parliament.

As war approached, the average size of consolidated property rose. Having been between 15 and 20 hectares from 1906 to 1913, the average rose to 30 in 1914 and 1915, and reached 37.8 hectares in 1918 (chart 7).

The consolidation program was, in its essence, a credit subsidy scheme. The SC would buy a debt-laden property, pay off the debt, and then turn the farm over—in the overwhelming majority of cases back to the original owner—as a *Rentengut*, on which the annual payments were less, and at a lower interest rate, than the owner had paid on the previous debt. The SC used a standard ownership contract that reserved 1 mark of ownership to the SC. By so doing, the SC had to agree to any subsequent sale of the property to someone else, allowing it to veto any "undesirable" (read "Polish") potential new owner.

If we compare chart 6 with chart 4, we can see that the upsurge in the consolidation program after 1906 corresponded to a diminution of land purchase on the part of the SC. While this may have been simply an issue of budget for the two activities, the consolidation program must have taken up a very large fraction of the administrative resources of the SC. Indeed, per mark spent on the program in total, the administrative work necessary for the consolidation program must have been a substantial multiple of that for the land purchase program. The consolidation program could not have but diverted attention and effort (and some budget, too) from the land purchase program; in that sense it worked against the primary mandate of the SC.

The Expropriation Act of 1908

The SC, from the outset, was controversial, and aroused staunch opposition from the Poles in Prussia. But nothing attracted both international opprobrium and internal protest like the Expropriation Act of 1908. Market conditions for agriculture had improved markedly since the low point of the mid-1890s; as a result, credit was readily available, private buyers plentiful, and parcellization through private means both possible and encouraged. Both Polish and German landowners could take advantage of these conditions, and the SC complained that it was having difficulty finding landowners of any nationality willing to sell to it.[23]

Bowing to the political pressures which these conditions engendered, the Prussian government enacted the law of March 20, 1908, which permitted the SC to expropriate up to 70,000 hectares of land for settlement.[24] Henryk Sienkiewicz, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1905, organized an international petition against this act.[25] Even the Austro-Hungarian government joined, and in fact led, the international protest. Inside the Polish provinces of Prussia, rallies and demonstrations occurred in many areas.[26] These protests helped to delay implementation of the Act.[27]

In the end, the Act was used only once: In 1912, the SC expropriated 1656 hectares in four properties; it is interesting to note that the SC paid more per hectare for these four properties than it paid on average for all the properties it bought in the free market that year.[28]

SC Purchases and Land Prices

Prussia carried out a land tax assessment in 1860–1864. For each piece of land, the assessors determined its type (e.g., plow-land, meadow, forest, etc.) and quality grade (there were typically eight quality grades for each land type). This in turn determined the official "land tax net yield" (*Grundsteuerreinertrag*, hereafter GSRE) of that plot of land from a set of tables that summarized the annual net income that land of that type and quality could be expected to produce in the locality where the land was located, given local farm-gate prices.[29] By the time the SC began its work, it had become common practice all over Prussia to quote prices paid for landed properties in terms of marks per mark of GSRE.

Chart 8 summarizes the SC's purchases of estates both by average size of property and by what it paid per mark of GSRE, on average, through 1913. To correct for inflation or deflation over the period, the prices have been deflated by the Jacobs-Richter general wholesale price index for Germany at the time.[30]

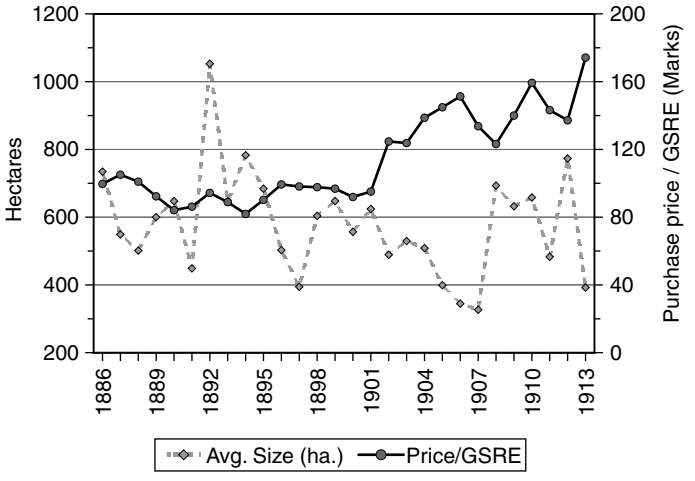

Chart 8 SC purchases of estates by average size in hectares and by relative price (= Average deflated price/land tax assessment [GSRE]).

What is very clear from the chart is that the average price paid per mark of GSRE exhibited a level trend up to about 1901, then a rising trend thereafter.[31] This rising trend is usually taken as evidence that the "battle for the land" (*Kampf um den Boden*)[32] between the SC and the Polish settlement agencies drove prices up beyond all reason in the areas where the SC operated. Even the SC itself was a party to the propagation of this notion, alleging in their jubilee volume of 1907 that the main cause of the rise in price of landed properties was their competition with Polish parcellers.[33]

In previous publications[34] I have argued that, when confronted with the evidence, this thesis cannot stand. There is simply no evidence to support the argument that land prices *in general* were driven up to "uneconomic" levels in the areas where the SC operated; moreover, there is not even any evidence to support a contention (not made directly in the literature, but sometimes implied) that even if the general level of land prices was not "too high," the SC nevertheless paid "too much" for the properties it purchased.

The arguments made in the cited papers can be summarized as follows.

With Regard to the General Level of Land Prices

- Potential buyers were not bound to a single riding; there were always properties for sale in neighboring areas, or even in other provinces, where the SC did not operate.
- Private land buyers would not be permanently seized by economic irrationality, especially when there was a supply of properties for sale in many other areas of the country.
- Throughout the period, private buyers remained active in those areas where the SC did operate, and in many instances they were prepared to pay more, and outbid the SC for properties that it also wanted.[35]
- The SC was, in any year, only a small buyer of land, and the Polish settlement agencies only a small fraction of that.[36]
- Thus land prices in general could not have been—for whatever reason—unrealistically high in those areas in which the SC was active.

These contentions were supported by data comparing private purchases to SC purchases, based on data on land prices collected after 1893 by the cadastral offices in connection with the imposition of a wealth tax that fell on land as well as on other assets.[37] It was much more reasonable to conclude, as did the two most careful contemporary scholars who studied land prices in these areas,[38] that the increase in land prices relative to the general price level was the result of major increases in crop yields, a shift toward higher-value crops, new rotations which reduced the share of fallow land, improvements in technology and transport that lowered costs, investments in drainage to bring previously marginal land into production, more and cheaper credit for land purchase, an improvement in agriculture's terms of trade vis-à-vis nonagriculture after the mid-1890s, and increasing tariffs on agricultural goods in Germany.[39]

Did the SC Overpay for the Properties It Bought?

Governments are often accused of overpaying for the goods and services that they purchase. Thus, through some sort of

generalized favoritism to landowners, particularly German landowners, or perhaps because of corruption, it might have been the case that the SC paid above-market prices for the properties it purchased. This point has also been treated in detail in the above-referenced papers, so only a summary of the argument will be offered here.

The analysis of SC purchases took two forms:

1. Using data for private land purchases gathered for the wealth tax, I calculated what each of the properties purchased by the SC would have commanded in the private market, in the district in which data on both private purchases and purchases by the SC were available.[40]
2. Using a multiple linear regression, I estimated the coefficients for each potential determinant of the prices of a set of properties that included purchases by both the SC and private buyers. Included in those potential determinants was a dummy variable to indicate whether or not the property had been purchased by the SC.

The first argument showed that, for the properties purchased in Wirsitz district between 1901 and 1910, the SC paid more for some, and less for others, than the predicted private market price. Overall, for the group of properties as a whole, the SC paid a small fraction (2.6 percent) *less* than the predicted prices. In these data, therefore, there was no evidence that the SC tended to pay any more than private buyers would have paid for the properties that it bought.[41]

In the regression argument, I found that, indeed, the SC tended to pay a higher price per mark of tax assessment (GSRE) than the average paid by private buyers, but the explanation lay in the presence of *industrial establishments*[42] on some of the large properties purchased by the SC. These, of course, raised the price of the property, but had no effect on GSRE, which was entirely a measure of the productivity of the land alone. Such establishments did not exist on the properties purchased by private buyers. When the presence or absence of such an industrial establishment was included as an explanatory variable

Table 1 Results of combined regression. Dependent variable: Deflated purchase price

Independent variable	Coefficient	Standard error	T-value	Significance level
Plough and garden area (hectares)	1,625	419	3.88	0.05%
Plough and garden trend	34.6	63.6	0.54	—
Meadow area (hectares)	2,071	1,281	1.62	10%
Meadow trend	246	202	1.22	15%
Wood and pasture area (hectares)	–2,672	400	–6.68	0.05%
Wood and pasture trend	–494	61.3	–8.06	0.05%
Buyer was a relative (Thaler)	–156	80.7	–1.94	5%
Buyer was a relative trend	–20.1	18.5	–1.09	15%
Property > 100 hectares	357	331	1.08	15%
Property > 100 hectares trend	162	51.5	3.14	0.25%
Number of nonagricultural enterprises	111,116	27,254	4.08	0.05%
Number of nonagricultural enterprises trend	13,630	4,291	3.18	0.1%
Purchaser was the SC (Thaler)	9.14	62	0.15	—
Purchaser was the SC trend	–28.1	10.7	–2.62	0.5%
Standard error of estimate (marks)		31,510		
Mean deflated purchase price (1913 marks)	92,035			
R2 (Coefficient of determination)	0.986			
Number of observations	176			
Degrees of freedom	162			

in the regression, the coefficient for the "SC Buys" dummy variable became, effectively, zero.[43] Table 1 above shows the detailed results of this regression for the 176 properties in the data set.

So far as I know, the presence of these nonagricultural enterprises has never previously been linked in any way to the "price was too high" argument, yet the size of the coefficient of "number of non-agricultural enterprises,"[44] being larger than the mean of the prices paid for all of the properties in the data set used in the regression, indicates what a powerful effect it could have. No regression to estimate the determinants of price, particularly of large properties, should be without this variable.

While data limitations—the survival of the land price data collected by the cadastral offices only for the district of Wirsitz in the archives of the two provinces in question—limited the analysis to that single district, Wirsitz was fortunately very representative of its region as a whole. Moreover, since that was the region where the SC was most active, that is the region in which it should have had the greatest effect on land prices, under the conventional wisdom. That the evidence showed the conventional argument to be untenable in the area examined seems, therefore, to be reasonable grounds on which to argue that the "prices were too high" thesis is untenable for the entire area in which the SC operated.

The Ultimate Failure of the Settlement Scheme

Although World War I doomed the project—more than 96 percent of all land purchased by the SC wound up inside newly reconstituted Poland after 1919—it was fatally flawed from the outset: Irrespective of the moral objections to the scheme, the Prussian government simply did not have the means to buy its way to a German population majority in this way. We have seen that an expenditure of 955 million marks resulted in the settlement of about 22,000 German families on the land. If we take the intermediate estimate of 5 persons per family, that is roughly 110,000 new German settlers, or on the order of 8700 marks per German added to the population. Taking the 1890 population of the province of Posen alone, there were about 350,000 more Poles than Germans at that date. Thus, even if the Polish population had stayed static, at 8700 marks per head it would have taken around *three billion marks* just for the Germans to draw even with the Poles in that province.

Even that kind of "back of the envelope" calculation is likely to be an underestimate, perhaps a very great underestimate, of the ultimate cost of buying a German population majority. Poles had a much higher birthrate than the Germans, land prices were rising, it was becoming more difficult to attract settlers from other parts of Germany[45] (so the cost of recruitment was

rising), and resident Germans in the province of Posen, which was the linchpin of the scheme, had been *emigrating* from the province since about 1867.[46] The SC's program was clearly on the rising portion of its cost curve, with no relief in sight.

The Prussian government seemed to realize, or was on the brink of realizing, that this was the case. As I pointed out in an earlier paper,

> The increasing activity in the peasant land market, both purchases and "consolidating" of peasant holdings, likely represents an increasing recognition by the Prussian government that their settlement policy was not achieving its goal. The great offensive push of 1902–06, when both estate purchases and the purchase of peasant properties peaked, apparently did not significantly alter the situation, and preceded a more defensive posture in the years just before the Great War.[47]

This "offensive push" was clearly the result of Chancellor von Bülow's making the settlement of Germans in the East the mainstay of the Germanization policy after 1900.[48] But within a very few years they were put more and more on the defensive, as even a greatly intensified level of effort fell way short of the desired results. It could never have succeeded, since there simply were not sufficient resources—financial and human—to bring the program to the outcome desired by the Prussian government. Therefore, even if the Great War had never happened, this settlement policy would have failed. In this sense, the sudden truncation of the settlement program by World War I could be seen as something of a mercy killing.

To accomplish their goal, the Prussians would have had to find a different way to attract large numbers of German settlers, and particularly to the province of Posen. Perhaps a program of state-financed industrial investment to lure German urban workers to the East could have been tried. It was not, and had it been, it, too, would likely have failed. Governments are notoriously bad at picking profitable industrial investments, the policy would have been costly, it would have gone against comparative advantage, and it would have had little or no demographic effect outside of the cities in which it was applied. Any

tax relief or subsidy scheme that favored industrial investors would have stirred up resentments that the existing policy of replacing landlords and their large estates with solid peasant smallholders did not.[49] Moreover, the new settlers in the cities would have been more subject to unemployment in downturns of the business cycle than were peasant farmers. If the lack of a serious stake in the means of earning their livelihood, or the possession of more portable skills, compared to a land-owning farmer, made this group more mobile, their continuing presence in the East would have been more uncertain. Meanwhile, the population balance in rural districts would have continued to move in favor of the Poles.

Thus it seems fair to conclude that the Germanization program carried out by Bismarck and his successors was predestined to fail, and that therefore—from the German point of view—the settlement scheme was a waste of money, even without the forced termination brought about by the German losses in World War I.

NOTES

1. Because of this characteristic, it is often alleged that the Prussian scheme served as the model for the Settlement Agency in Israel.
2. There are two common translations for this term in the Polish literature; the more frequent is *Komisja Kolonizacynja* [Colonization Commission] and the less frequent is *Komisja Osadnicza* [Settlement Commission]. The choice of term often indicates a political stance toward the activities of the SC, although it may also be a result of the 1904 abolition of the difference between "settlement" and "colony" in Prussian law. See item 2 (Permissions) of the section on "Other interventions."
3. Christa Kouschil, "Die Ansiedlungskommission. Zur Rolle Bismarcks bei ihrer Entstehung und Installation," unpublished MS, typescript, March/April 2002, p. 5.
4. Augmented in 1898, and then more frequently thereafter.
5. Although it existed in some form until legally terminated by the Prussian Parliament as of April 1, 1924, the end of the Great War and the award of most of the area of SC operation to the newly reconstituted country of Poland effectively terminated all its activities.

6. The distinction between an estate [*Gut*] and a peasant farm [*Bauernwirtschaft*], common in the German of the time, seems to have been determined by the social position of the owner of the land, not necessarily by the size of the property itself, since the smallest "estate" purchased by the SC was 45 hectares, the largest "peasant farm" over 300 hectares.
7. This number of families is commonly taken to have represented about 150,000 people, assuming an average family size of 7 persons. See, for example, Bolesław Grześ, Jerzy Kozłowski, and Aleksander Kramski, *Niemcy w Poznańskiem wobec polityki germanizacyjnej 1815–1920* (The Germans in Posen and the Politics of Germanization 1815–1920), Studium Niemcoznawcze Instytutu Zachodniego (German Department of the Western Institute) no. 29 (Poznań: Instytut Zachodni [Western Institute], 1976), p. 268. Thomas Nipperdey (*Deutsche Geschichte, 1866–1918*, vol. 2 [Munich: C.H. Beck, 1992], p. 276) disputes this assumption, putting the total number of persons in these 22,000 families at about 81,000. Thomas Gey, in his *Die preussiche Verwaltung des Regierungsbezirks Bromberg 1871–1914* ("Studien zur Geschichte Preussens," vol. 21 [Cologne: Grote, 1976], p. 269), takes a middle position, assuming a family size of five persons.
8. In this section and those that follow, all data—unless otherwise indicated—are taken from the annual reports of the SC to the Prussian Parliament. A list of precise references to each of these annual reports is available from the author on request.
9. For 24 properties purchased in 1886 and 1887, the SC paid on average about 540 marks per hectare. According to its own reckoning, the value of the land alone, without buildings or inventory, for these 24 properties was just over 350 marks per hectare. Calculated from data appearing in Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz (hereafter GStPK), Rep. 90a, H.II.3.d., Nr. 19, vol. 5, sheets 451–452, and vol. 6, unpaged.
10. A note on translation: Prussian provinces were made up of either two or three *Regierungsbezirke*, the direct translation of which would be "administrative (or government) districts." A *Regierungsbezirk* was, in turn, made up of—typically—from a half-dozen to 20 *Kreise*, the direct translation of which would be "circles." But the usual translation of Kreis is "county," which I believe to be wrong on several counts: there exists

in German an exact equivalent of the English term "county," which is *Grafschaft*. Moreover, a typical *Kreis* was much smaller than an English or American county, and the *Kreisstadt* (typically translated as "county seat") could lie outside the *Kreis*; moreover, one city could be the *Kreisstadt* of more than one *Kreis*, one of which might be the city itself. For these reasons I have chosen to translate *Kreis* as "district" and therefore translate *Regierungsbezirk* as "administrative region."

11. This latter justification appears often in the communications to and from ministers. For example, in a secret memo to the president of the SC in Posen dated October 10, 1900, the Cabinet [*Staatsministerium*] communicated its decision to make 2 million marks available for the purchase of peasant properties from Poles or "in case the transfer [*Übergang*] to Poles were to be feared," from Germans as well. GStA, I Rep 87B (Ministry of Agriculture, Domains, and Forests), Nr. 9950, sheet 39.
12. Scott M. Eddie, "Ethno-Nationality and Property Rights in Land in Prussian Poland, 1886–1918: Buying the Land from under the Poles' Feet?" In *Land Rights, Ethno-Nationality and Sovereignty in History*, ed. Stanley Engerman and Jacob Metzer (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 94.
13. In its jubilee report Ansiedlungskommission, *20 Jahre deutscher Kulturarbeit* (Denkschrift, Haus der Abgeordneten, 20. Legislaturperiode, III. Session 1907, Posen: 1907, hereafter Ansiedlungskommission 1907), the SC complained that after 1902 Polish-owned estates could be purchased "only rarely and only through a middleman" (p. 24).
14. Jozef Buzek, *Historia polityki narodowosciowej rzadu pruskiego wobec Polakow. Od traktatow wiedenskich do ustaw z r. 1908* [History of Nationalistic Politics of the Prussian Government towards the Poles. From the Treaties of Vienna to the Special Acts from Year 1908], Wiedza i Zycie, Wydawnictwo Zwiazku Naukowo-Literackiego we Lwowie, Seryl IV, Tom III [Knowledge and Life, Publishers of the Scientific-Literary Association in Lwow, Series IV. Volume III] (Lwow: Naklad Ksiegarni H. Altenberga [H. Altenberg Booksellers], 1909), p. 245.
15. This provision effectively erased the difference between "colony" and "settlement" in the law.
16. Kazimierz Wajda, "Działanie pruskiej ustawy o osadach z 1904 roku na Pomorzu Gdańskim i w Wielkopolsce w latach

1904–1913" [The Functioning of the Settlement Amendment of 1904 in West Prussia and Poznania in the Years 1904–1914], *Zapiski Historyczne* [Historical Review] 29 (3) (1964), pp. 44–47.

17. Witold Jakóbczyk, *Pruska Komisja Osadnicza, 1886–1919* [The Prussian Settlement Commission, 1886–1919] (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie [Poznań Publishers]: 1976), p. 140.
18. Kazimierz Wajda, "Przemiany w polskim stanie posiadania ziemi na Pomorzu Gdańskim w drugiej polowie XIX i na początku XX w" [The Changes in Polish Land Ownership in West Prussia in the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries], *Zapiski Historyczne* 37 (4) (1972), p. 131.
19. Ibid., pp. 58–60.
20. A sum that was substantially augmented in 1908.
21. A *Rentengut* was a special German form of property ownership, in which the owner acquired and protected his ownership by a series of annual payments, which could even be perpetual.
22. Jakóbczyk, *Komisja*, pp. 174–176.
23. Ibid., p. 163.
24. Zdzislaw Kaczmarczyk, *Kolonizacja niemiecka na wschod od Odry* [German colonization East of the Oder] (Poznan: Wydawnictwo Instytutu Zachodniego [The Western Institute Publishers], 1945), p. 271.
25. Jacek Banach, *Niemiecka polityka narodowosciowa w Prusch Zachodnich w latach 1900–1914 w swietle polskiej prasy pomorskiej* [German Nationality Policy in West Prussia in the Years 1900–1914 in the Light of the Polish Pomeranian Press], p. 115.
26. See Christa Kouschil, "Die preußische Ansiedlungskommission in den Provinzen Westpreußen und Posen (1886–1918): Zur Polenpolitik des deutschen Kaiserreiches," unpublished MS (Berlin, 2002) for an account of these rallies and demonstrations, based on police reports from the archives.
27. Lech Trzeciakowski, *Pod pruskim zaborem 1850–1918* [Under the Prussian Partition 1850–1918] (Warsaw: Wiedza Powszechna, 1973), p. 299.
28. Scott M. Eddie, "The Distribution of Landed Properties by Value and Area: A Methodological Essay Based on Prussian Data, 1886–1913," *Journal of Income Distribution* 3 (1) (Summer 1993), p. 109.
29. The results were published in a 25-volume series, one for each administrative region: Prussia. Kgl. Finanzministerium,

Ergebnisse der Grund- und Gebäudesteuerveranlagung im Regierungsbezirk ___ (25 vols., Berlin: 1866ff.).

30. Alfred Jacobs and Hans Richter, *Die Grosshandelspreise in Deutschland von 1792 bis 1934* (Berlin: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt Hamburg, "Sonderhefte des Instituts für Konjunkturforschung," Nr. 37, 1935).
31. An alternative interpretation would have a slightly declining trend to 1894, followed by a rising trend.
32. See, for example, W. Wendorff, *Der Kampf der Deutschen und Polen um die Provinz Posen* (Posen: Friedrich Ebbecke, 1904).
33. Ansiedlungskommission 1907, p. 37.
34. See Scott M. Eddie and Christa Kouschil, *The Ethnopolitics of Land Ownership in Prussian Poland, 1886–1918: The Land Purchases of the Ansiedlungskommission*. (Trondheim, NtNu, 2002), pp. 20–27, and especially Eddie, "Ethno-Nationality and Property Rights," pp. 96–108.
35. Indeed, in a memo of March 9, 1907 to the minister of the interior, the *Oberpräsident* (provincial governor) of Posen complained that the officials who bought land on behalf of the SC did not pay enough attention to the political reasons for buying land, and let economic considerations decide too often. GstA, I Rep. 77, Ministry of the Interior, Tit. 94, Nr. 157, vol. 2, sheet 161.
36. Sigismund von Chłapowski, "Der wirtschaftliche Wert der bäuerlichen Kolonisation im Osten," *Preussische Jahrbücher* 51 (2) (February 1913), p. 274.
37. The wealth tax was introduced as part of a comprehensive tax reform in 1893. It was called the "supplementary (or complementary) tax" [*Ergänzungsteuer*] because it was to round out or complete the earnings tax [*Erwerbsteuer*].
38. Chłapowski, "Der wirtschaftliche Wert…"; Bohdan von Chrzanowski, *Die Preisbewegung landwirtschaftlicher Güter in der Provinz Posen in den Jahren 1895–1912 und die Begründung der Preissteigerungen* (Posen: Praca, 1914); For the earlier period, see Hermann Sarrazin, "Die Entwicklung der Preise des Grund und Bodens in der Provinz Posen," *Landwirtschaftliche Jahrbücher,* 27 (1897), pp. 825–968.
39. Chłapowski went even further, arguing that for many properties the rise in land prices had not even matched the increase in the profitability of land (p. 290).

40. This was the riding of Wirsitz (Wyrzysk) in the province of Posen. Fortunately, for the comparison, this riding could be taken as being representative of the administrative region (Bromberg) in which it was located, in that the SC ultimately purchased 14.5 percent of the land in Wirsitz, compared to 15 percent in the region as a whole. See Eddie, "Ethno-Nationality and Property Rights," p. 99.
41. See Table 3 in Eddie and Kouschil, p. 26.
42. Brewery, distillery, brickworks, for example.
43. Eddie, "Ethno-Nationality and Property Rights," pp. 106–108.
44. The data source for the existence of the enterprises on several large properties listed only their number and type, but not their size.
45. The government first had to relax its preference for Protestant Germans, then even allow settlers to come in from other parts of West Prussia and Posen, in order to find enough people to take up the places it was providing. Ansiedlungskommission 1907, p. 68.
46. After the partition of Poland at the end of the eighteenth century, there was net German immigration into the province of Posen, accompanied by considerable buying up of land, which Buzek tells us reached "mass scale" in 1848–1860. But Germans then began to emigrate after 1867. Buzek, *Historia*, pp. 293–294.
47. Eddie, "Ethno-Nationality and Property Rights," p. 113.
48. Brigitte Balzer, *Die preußische Polenpolitik 1894–1908 und die Haltung der deutschen konservativen und liberalen Parteien* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1990), p. 15.
49. The eminent agrarian historian Theodor von der Goltz, in his *Vorlesungen über Agrarwesen und Agrarpolitik* (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1904), even argued that the *principal* motive of the settlement scheme was to change the distribution of land, to reduce the preponderance of large estates and increase the share of smaller properties (p. 94). This, to my eyes, must have been simply wishful thinking on his part, since the evidence for the primacy of the political and demographic motive is so strong.

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Chapter 3

The *Archive for Inner Colonization*, the German East, and World War I

Robert L. Nelson

It was while researching the "frontier" settlements of North America in 1883 that the young agrarian economist Max Sering first envisioned "inner colonization" as key to Germany's salvation. With the publication of his work *The Inner Colonization of Eastern Germany*, Sering was bound to become the leader of a growing number of academics and politicians in favor of the "recolonization" of agrarian land in Germany's "threatened East" through the settlement of hearty, robust German colonist farmers. By 1908, this cohort had founded a journal, the *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* (AfiK) and in 1912 the Society for the Advancement of Inner Colonization (Gesellschaft zur Förderung der inneren Kolonisation, hereafter GFK) met for the first time. I attempt below to trace both the most important pre-1914 themes of this group, as well as how these relatively "moderate" thinkers came to be radicalized by the events in the East during the war. Most notably

I analyze the way in which their plans for inner colonization within Germany expanded beyond the eastern border and, following on the heels of the troops, evolved into vast schemata for the reordering and colonization of Eastern Europe. In this brief sketch, I will focus my analysis upon the articles of their house journal, AfiK, from 1908 to 1918.

In the growing literature that attempts to place Germany's views of the East into a colonial framework, examples of which can be found in many of the contributions to this volume, it is the metaphor of the frontier, almost always the American frontier, that is consistently invoked, both by the scholar as well as by many of the characters involved, from Anton in Freytag's *Soll und Haben* to Hitler's fantasies of Red Indian round ups. Yet, in virtually every case, German reference to the Wild West is only a metaphor. It is the fantasy of the West, such as that envisioned in Karl May's novels, to which the German Wild East is compared. As such, comparing these two frontiers, although a worthy endeavor, is deeply problematic. Thus, one should recognize the importance of Max Sering as perhaps the most direct transporter of "vision" from the North American frontier to the Eastern European frontier of Germany. In 1883, this 26-year-old student of Gustav Schmoller was charged by the Prussian government with the task of directly investigating the American and Canadian frontier, the land and settlements to which Germans were migrating in great numbers. During his six-month journey, what Sering saw was Germany's future.[1]

While being toured around by German immigrant farmers and politicians in both the American Midwest and the Canadian Prairies, Sering "gazed" upon a utopian fantasy: a centrally organized, government-controlled program of inner colonization, the settlement of metropole (East Coast) citizens upon "empty" land at the Western frontier. This removal of citizens from the dirty, overcrowded cities of the East, to the healthy, food-providing, strength-giving world of the farmer in the West, embodied a powerful Romantic vision. Such a program further strengthened the nation by filling the

emptiness against enemy encroachment, that is, preventing either Americans or Canadians from taking land north or south of the forty-ninth parallel.[2] An excited Sering returned to inform his peers of the need to rejuvenate and strengthen the German nation through the pursuit of exactly the same kind program in Prussian Poland. The vacuum in Germany's East needed to be filled, dammed against the Slavic Flood. His moment was opportune, for in 1884 and 1885, Bismarck was both solidifying and ending German overseas colonial expansion, as well as increasing in severity his "war" with the Polish elements of Germany's eastern provinces.[3] Within two years of Sering's North American journey the Settlement Commission was set up, and the practice of using government funds and organizations to Germanize key areas in West Prussia and Posen began. Over the next two decades, as laid out in Scott Eddie's contribution to this volume, the *Bodenkampf* (war over soil) was fought, as Germans and Poles attempted to outbid each other for real estate. Over Eddie's thorough economic analysis of what was happening on the ground and in the pocketbooks of those involved, I would like to layer on the colonial fantasies that surrounded, at perhaps a more abstract level, the very real daily struggle for land in Prussian Poland. Also, I will pick up the story where Eddie leaves it, in the chaos of 1914. In prefacing the content of the journal, however, I will first provide a brief word about the ideological battle that was central to our main characters' approach to German national and agrarian politics, followed by an overview of who was involved in the inner colonization cohort.

The *Bodenfrage* (the land question) was a central and often vitriolic debate in Germany, beginning in the 1870s, but reaching a fever pitch at the close of the 1890s. There were many aspects to this debate but at its heart was the question of modernity: just how far and how fast was Germany going to change, and was such change a good thing? The two extremes of the debate were promoted by those in favor of an "Agrarstaat" versus those who wanted

an "Industriestaat." This debate was actually an impassioned negotiation concerning how much of each was going to exist in a realistic "Agrar-Industriestaat." All the tropes of classic agrarian Romanticism were present, from the idea that peasants were healthier, sturdier stock for the future of the nation, to autarkic demands, such as food security (including the fear of reliance on imported food in time of war).[4] All those involved in inner colonization were deeply affected by this debate and possessed strong notions about the value of moving people out of modernity (cities) and onto the land. Many key issues coming out of this debate continued to be central to the discussion in 1914 such as the need for safe and steady food production within Germany's borders; the ability of farmer families to be large and produce many healthy workers and soldiers for the nation; and finally, the idea that agricultural land abhors a vacuum. In other words, on the national-political front, the fear existed that land bereft of Germans would be filled by foreign elements, mainly Poles to the East, but also French and Danes to the West and North respectively. Empty land represented at best missed opportunities, at worst a threat to national security.

The members of the head committee of the Society for the Advancement of Inner Colonization (GFK) nicely balanced the various influences upon the program. Max Sering reflected the strongly academic slant of the inner colonizers, while also representing the moderately conservative elements of the bourgeoisie. Alfred Hugenberg, who had been involved with the Settlement Commission in Posen since the 1890s, represented heavy industry. Friedrich von Schwerin, President of Brandenburg, stood for the old Prussian landowners. Only Sering's portion of the population, however, could be counted on for relatively uncomplicated enthusiasm. Hugenberg's constituency was much more difficult, as the moguls of big business did not easily accept the national-political goals of a program that was profoundly anti-industrial. But the most troublesome constituents in the population were the members of Schwerin's social class. Central to the philosophy of inner colonization was the accusation that the *Junker* ran

huge, inefficient parcels of land that required the influx annually of hundreds of thousands of Poles to farm them. If Sering (and fellow thinkers like Max Weber) got their way, these estates would be broken up and filled with a "wall" of efficient German "yeoman" families, tilling the soil, raising healthy children, and keeping out the Slavs. Thus Schwerin performed a delicate balancing act, attempting to assuage a powerful Prussian lobby that had much to fear from inner colonization.[5]

In its opening edition the AfiK directly stated that it was to be an organ where politicians and scientists could come together to further the goals of inner colonization.[6] Indeed, the pages were filled mainly by the professors and politicians concerned. The background of those involved with inner colonization can be seen by glancing at the list of attendees for the opening conference of the newly formed GFK, on December 7, 1912. The academic interest in the Eastern question was represented by the doyen of German-Polish history, Manfred Laubert, as well as Dr Zechlin of Posen, Bredt of Marburg, Professor Fritz Curschmann of Greifswald, a specialist in early modern colonization of the East, and the eminent Professor Heinrich Sohnrey, for many the true guardian of the romantic dream of a better, agrarian Germany.

Representing the media, Breslauer of the *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, Heinrich Rippler, the editor of the *Tägliche Rundschau*, and, of a decidedly more polemical bent, Cleinow, from the *Grenzbote*, as well as Hunkel, editor of *Ostmark*. Along with these last two editors, representing the more radically right-wing section of the population, were Ludwig, business director of the *Reich Alliance against Social Democracy* and Schoultz, the general secretary of the Eastern Marches Society. Another participant worth noting was General Von Beseler, soon to be the commander of occupied Poland.[7] These various groups and actors, often attending the same meetings and dinners around the capital, may have had many differences, but they all shared a vision of Prussian Poland as a colonial space, a frontier that had to be both "cleared" of undesirable elements and filled

with Germans. The Slavic Flood had to be first drained, then dammed.

PREWAR VISIONS

The contributors to the AfiK saw Prussian Poland as a "colonial" space, and not just a "region" that had an undesirable ethnic population. To Max Sering, and inner colonial thinkers, "Kolonisation" was indeed a vast concept. Colonization meant the movement of citizens from cities to the countryside, to settle upon and work empty agrarian land. This could mean movement from Leipzig (1) onto adjacent Saxon land, (2) onto land in threatened Posen, or (3) onto a farm in Cameroon. It was all a part of the same process, a process to strengthen the people and the empire of Germany. Not only was colonization in Posen and West Prussia directly compared to overseas colonization in the pages of the AfiK, but more broadly, we can detect a "colonial language," or "gaze," in the manner with which this land was referenced. This we will see in our discussion of "space," or "Raum," as well as in the notion of colonial space as an experimental field, a somewhat utopian laboratory where vast social experiments can take place. But let's turn first to the language that directly placed German inner colonization in the context both of a worldwide movement of inner colonizations, as well as German overseas colonialism.

Considering that the concept of inner colonization was originally brought from North America to Germany, it was surely with a strong sense of self-satisfaction that the 1913 edition of AfiK noted that the recent visit by a Mr. Butterfield, president of the Agricultural School of Amherst, to the new Prussian colony Eigene Scholle (Our Clod of Earth) had been a tremendous success. Butterfield remarked: "this idealism, to strengthen the German people on the land, to make them sedentary on their own clod of earth, to raise up their position in life, make them happy, faithful to their home, for themselves and for their whole community, such idealism

fills us with wonder and envy. We want to attempt to follow such an example back in America, for the health of our own people."[8] The father had acknowledged the son. However, the journal expressed a certain envy for countries that seemed to have the luxury of colonizing "truly" empty land. "The Inner Colonization of Sweden," an article from early 1914, argued that massive emigration had simply left large swathes of Swedish land empty, thus allowing for settlement without the resistance Germans faced with their local Polish populations.[9] The same was said of central and southern Spain. Here, however, a fascinating link was made to the history of land appropriation: this same area of southern Spain had once, long ago, been conquered and colonized by the Castillians, just as Prussian Poland was cleared and settled by the Teutonic Knights of the thirteenth century.[10]

England and Russia were also of great interest to the readers of the journal. The first represented the greatest empire in the world, while the second was Germany's most comparable continental colonial power. The 1912 volume included a collection of articles on England, and the story of inner colonial struggles there. In his two-part article "Settlement Efforts in England," B. Skalweit, working in the London embassy, detailed how England's "flight from the land" since 1870 had been even more radical in nature than Germany's. He went on to discuss the many new laws surrounding the distribution and protection of allotments and small holdings in the government's efforts since the 1880s to get families out of the dirty cities and back onto the land.[11] Skalweit indicated that inner colonization was an utter failure in England when left in the hands of the local lords, but that with serious state intervention, things were now going smoothly. This seems to be a direct plea for the responsibility of inner colonization in Germany to be placed in the hands of the specialists, and not the land-owning elite.

Though rarely directly stated, Russia was recognized to be the empire most like Germany, both in terms of being a "continental" power and as a colonial nation that had little in the

way of overseas colonial subjects, while continuously having to deal with "non-," or "semi-European" colonial subjects in its borderlands. With respect to the overall German imagination of a colonial empire in the Eastern border regions, it is fascinating to note the interest in Russia's eastern inner colonization. As Mark Bassin has recently shown, the Russian empire has had a fascination with eastern Siberia and the Amur region since at least the 1840s. Sure enough, the pages of AfiK document the eastern migration of tens of thousands of Russian families, moving to the edge of the empire, and strengthening the nation.[12] Continuing with this theme, and foreshadowing a later development in German inner colonization, another article detailed how veterans of the Russo-Japanese War were given land in Eastern Siberia.[13] This imagery of soldiers and farmers marching to the Eastern frontier, then settling in the borderlands to strengthen the empire would soon find much attention in the wartime AfiK. The same article jealously claimed that to the west and east of Russia the land was vast and empty of people, making for a largely frictionless inner colonization. This was of course a colonial fantasy of virgin land, the *vacuum domicillium* that the colonial gaze always seeks, and a vision constantly spoiled by the restless Poles moving throughout the German colonial landscape. It is indeed incredible that this writer, Charles de Beaulieu, seated as he was in the borderlands, in Frankfurt an der Oder, did not realize that Germany's "full" East was Russia's so-called "empty" West; both empires were struggling with "natives" who were in fact the same people. There was some recognition, however, that East Central Europe was the playground of both powers, and that Russia was aping Germany in profound ways. This was especially the case in the German acknowledgment of the Stolypin reforms. In "Agrarian Reform and Inner Colonization in Russia," it was argued that the Russians were realizing that "progress" was not easy, but that they seemed to be emerging from the dark ages when it came to rationalized schemes for land use.[14] Indeed, Max Sering took several students on an extended journey throughout agricultural western Russia, in 1912, to study these great changes.[15]

Further, and in keeping with the vast concept of "colonization" employed in the pages of the AfiK, the authors compared the project of inner colonization to the progress of their own overseas colonialism, specifically, Germans in Africa. In 1911, an article by the famous journalist Paul Rohrbach appeared in the AfiK, entitled "Settlement Efforts in Our African Colonies." He acknowledged the strong desire that his compatriots should go abroad, but reminded his audience that Germans going to North America or Australia soon lost their Germanness. Thus, if one were to support overseas colonialism, it must be to outposts of *Deutschtum* in East Africa, Cameroon, and Southwest Africa. While Rohrbach, a Baltic German from the "German East," never mentions inner colonization in this article, it is striking how desolately he depicts these German colonies, with poor soil and too much rain. Although he finishes the piece arguing that immigrants in the colonies should strive to make the land German, there can be little doubt as to what space his audience believed was more deserving of "German work."[16]

The special 1912 "Kolonialnummer" of the AfiK directly addressed the connection between overseas and inner colonialism. The editorial began by asking why this journal should be interested in overseas (*ausser*) colonization at all. Especially, continued the author, when 1000 farmers in the East were worth so much more to the Fatherland than even 5000 in East Africa. He lamented the reality, however, that funds crucial to inner colonization were being routed instead to the African colonies, that many Germans placed greater importance on overseas colonies, and that success was perhaps more easily found in Africa, due to the lack of competition from local farmers. Alas, he opined, if only the situation in Germany's East was more akin to that in Africa, where the land was "truly" empty. In the end, the journal had to acknowledge overseas colonization, and to realize that, although inner colonization was vastly more important to Germany, Germans could learn much from the study of life in the African colonies. The editorial ends on the note that the journal may as well embrace the motto: "A Bigger Germany It Must Be!" (Das grössere Deutschland soll es sein!).[17]

In the *Kolonialnummer* articles that followed, one could trace two underlying themes: First, that overseas colonies were simply not as important for Germany as was Central Europe, and second, that the German declaration that Africans were not fit to look after themselves closely paralleled how Germans believed Poles were to be seen. In one article, Professor Kurt Weidenfeld pointed out that due to an economic boom, Germany no longer needed to export its population overseas, for in fact, emigration in 1912 was only 10 percent of what it was in 1885.[18] In other words, Germany definitely did not need any more overseas colonies. Two articles discussed the climate of Germany's African colonies, and while it was stated that life overseas could be very dangerous, ultimately Germans could adapt and acclimatize wherever they saw fit, and had indeed done so in Cameroon and East Africa. In fact, an article focused on the hill station at Moschi claimed that at the higher altitudes, the climate was just like Central Europe. The author then made the argument that only Whites could found a real colony, for Africans simply were not the "bearers of culture." Africans, he claimed, lacked "progress" and continued to farm exactly as they had done so one thousand years earlier.[19] The colonial comparison to Poland was more obvious in the article "The Settlement of the German Colonies," in which the author complained that the obstacle to progress and future security in most African situations was that the blacks far outnumbered the Germans. The audience knew this to be akin to a perceived similar German problem with Prussian Poles. Colonizations ran into the same problems everywhere, and were here discussed in the same breath.[20] To finally and clearly make the connection, the special number finished with the bibliography, "Overview of publications in the area of inner colonization of domestic and overseas areas in 1911."[21]

This colonial paradox, the realization that land was both empty and full at the same time, empty for colonizers, but full of "problem" populations, was at the heart of inner colonization. Although all involved knew that there was a constant

struggle over land, with Poles and Germans attempting to outbid each other when property became available, the tone of the inner colonizers was nevertheless that Germany contained empty space that needed to be filled. One of the key figures in inner colonization, the president of Brandenburg, Friedrich von Schwerin, gave a wide-ranging speech on this issue in February 1911, which soon appeared in the AfiK. In laying out the benefits of what Schwerin claimed was an old Prussian project that had been on hold for a hundred years, he saw an increase in the health of the nation by getting people back on the land. He then further echoed the old idea that these same new farmers would produce more and better soldiers for the nation's future, and finally, he outlined the idea of the vacuum, that any land left empty of Germans would surely be filled by Poles. The Slavic Flood, which arrived every year to work on *Junker* farms, he argued, was jeopardizing the country's security. The whole nation would starve, he complained, if a war began and only Poles were responsible for bringing in the harvest. Indeed, Athens defeated Sparta due to inner colonization, and further, Schwerin reminded, none other than Frederick the Great began the great German project of inner colonization in the East.[22]

This stemming of the Slavic Flood was also applied to eastern cities. An article of 1910 provided the scheme: First, get Germans onto the land in Posen and West Prussia; second, this new German agrarian class will migrate into cities to replace the Polish underclass. It was paradoxes like these, that the AfiK could include articles both on getting people out of cities, as well as getting them back into cities, as long as all the while Germans were chasing out Poles, that the deeply anti-Polish character of this otherwise high modern project was exposed.[23] Overall there were many instances in which Polish attempts at "counter" inner colonization were framed as military attacks against Germany, such as a 1910 article referencing the "Feldzug," the "military campaign," of the Poles, or the 1911 piece that claimed that Polish "fanaticism" was to blame for the rise in land prices.[24] In the end, however, despite this clear

recognition that there was a struggle with the Poles, and that Poles were numerous, what is crucial to note is that, on the eve of war, in the pages of the AfiK, there was "space," *Lebensraum* if you will, inside Germany. Nowhere in the pages of the AfiK could one find the expansionist, or annexationist language of the Pan-Germans.

In keeping with the prewar history of the colonial gaze of the inner colonizers it is crucial to highlight one more facet of their project, a theme central to their development, and the overall development of the German view of the East. These same thinkers of space and modernity in the East were also big backers of "social colonization," the "colonial laboratory" concept of using modern science with big state power to utilize inner colonization in a utopian manner, to "improve" in a variety of ways both those who took part in the great undertaking, as well as the overall welfare of the state overseeing the colonization. In the article "Soziale Kolonisation," Hans Ostwald put forward the idea of getting the unemployed out of the city and onto the land. After all, he claimed, this had been done with prisoners, so why not the unemployed. If "we" are going to help the unemployed, he argued, they will get a job and they can contribute to the great project at the same time. Removing the unemployed from cities would solve the health problems associated with overcrowding, he proffered, and strengthen the nation through their contribution to healthy life on the land. Again, the trope of providing future soldiers was invoked. In an interesting twist, Ostwald argued that, through the draining of swamps and tilling of the soil, these men could win land for Germany in peace that earlier it had paid for with blood.[25]

The discussion of giving land to workers and under what circumstances led to a lively exchange in the AfiK. The central problem was whether or not these new farmers should be "tied" to the land. Entailment was offered as the only sure way to prevent land speculation, the quick selling for profit of land given to these colonists. It is over such questions that one sees the fine balancing act between two groups. On the one hand, there were those who prized an individualist ethos,

who hoped both that farmers would be left free, and that those free farmers would stay due to their love of the land and the farming lifestyle. On the other hand, one can trace a kind of "totalitarianism creep" among the high modernist thinkers who believed in the sacrifice of individual rights, that is, the freedom to sell one's property and move away, upon the alter of the greater good of the health of the state and its agriculture. Indeed, it was over this exact question of entailment versus freedom that Sering had his falling out with the National Socialists in 1934. Thus, from the earliest days, one of the most vociferous voices against entailment was that of Sering. In his speech at the inauguration of the GFK in 1912, Sering made reference to something he had been arguing since at least 1887, that slavery and indentured labor in the American South was the clearest model of how not to conduct inner colonization. Add to this the huge gains being made in Russia, under the Stolypin reforms, and one quickly sees, he argued, that free and independent farmers who own their land are by far the strongest yeomen to be found.[26] Committed to the other side of the argument was Professor Pagenkopf who complained that without entailment, these recently industrial workers had nothing to tie them to the land, for they possessed no history of working with soil. While a crisis in industry would flood the land with new farmers, he argued, as soon as industry picked up again, the same new farmers would abandon their plots to return to the cities. Thus, Pagenkopf pushed for a 10-year entailment to the plot received by the new farmer. To press the point, the Notes section of the same issue described a social colonization scheme in Queensland that, five years later, had not a soul left working the land.[27]

The discussion of the employment of women also appeared in the pages of the AfiK as a further contribution to the social fabric of Germany enhanced by inner colonization. An article by L. Maass described the recent Berlin "Exhibition of Women in the Home and at Work," and chortled that the stand set up by the East Prussian Association had shamed the locals by laying bare the truth that *Berlinerinnen* were

"consumers" while ladies on the land were "producers." Maass called for further research into the neglected topic of women in inner colonization, in order to better understand how they added to and completed the "manly" work of settlement.[28] In a later article, the same author gave a detailed account of life at the first "worker settlement," at Zabikowo. Here again he rejoiced at how inner colonization kept women at home instead of packing them off to factories. Further, he emphasized the trope that rural women had more children, and thus inner colonizing women contributed to the military strength of the nation and fulfilled fundamental national-political goals.[29]

Thus, with discussions linking inner colonization to huge social engineering projects, such as finding space and work for the unemployed, and directly dealing with the demographic problem through the encouragement of a rural, child-rearing lifestyle, inner colonization thinkers were well prepared by 1914 for the massive upsurge in fundamental social engineering planning that was to be the hallmark of World War I. The settling of the unemployed would easily transform into the settling of war invalids. Issues of space and settlement would smoothly pass from Prussian Poland to Lithuania. However, until 1914, such modernizing forces were bound to run up against the intransigence of the *Junker*, the large landowners thoroughly at odds with inner colonial dreams of small, yeoman farmers. While there were a few articles occasionally mentioning this conflict, along with quick denials that there was any conflict at all, it is clear that the rift was very great, and that the editors decided it was best just to avoid mentioning. This was one of the main struggles of inner colonization, the lack of support from what would normally be a solid agrarian, conservative ally. Other obvious struggles, such as the very real difficulties of being a pioneer, were also muted. A lone article by Arnold Gaede, framed as part of the anti-entailment argument, painted an uninspiring picture when he pointed out that heavy debts and high interest often made life very difficult for

new arrivals, and thus they must be allowed to retreat from the frontier if they have to.[30] By the summer of 1914, inner colonization was full of frustration and only mediocre gains. The time was ripe for a change of scenery, and when it came along, it would be fully embraced for all its new and exciting potentialities.

World War I

The first wartime number of the AfiK, in August 1914, contained the article "Inner Colonization and the War," by the editor Erich Keup. For now, explained Keup, the work of inner colonization had been "laid still." Yet, inner colonizers could be proud that they had already provided Germany with many new "diligent farmers" (*kernige Bauern*), "first class material for hard war work." Crucially, with an eye toward picking up where they left off when this short war was over, Keup described German land as "somewhat still thinly settled" (teilweise noch duenn besiedelte). That is, *Lebensraum* within Germany still clearly existed for these thinkers. Keup went on to boost the inner colonization argument by indicating how "lucky" Germany was that the 300,000 Russians and 200,000 Galicians upon whom they still depended for farm labor had already brought in most of the harvest by the outbreak of war, thus highlighting how dangerous it was to rely on foreign labor. This sobering fact, along with the current, but surely not last, Slavic storming of Germany, led Keup to demand that efforts be stepped up postwar to thicken Germany's East with more German farmers. He was sure, however, that the experience of the war would place inner colonization front and center in postwar politics.[31]

As late as the January 1915 edition of the AfiK there continued to be serious talk of inner colonization inside the German borders. One author demanded that reparations after the war be used to help settlers, and he then continued to vent against the *Junker*, naming them as the chief reason for

peasant flight from the land. The author invoked Sering who had argued continually that wherever there are *Junker*, there is flight from the land, wherever small holdings, one finds an increase in population. Thus, it was still recognized that a colonial future in the East inevitably meant negotiating with German land holders, the ultimate goal being the filling of space inside Germany.[32] In the latter vein, Keup this time wrote about the recently liberated areas of East Prussia, and argued that because the land there was so thinly settled, it had been that much easier for the Russians to completely "desertify" (*verwüsten*) the land. The province, however, was now ready for intensive settlement, and in a slightly biological turn in Keup's language, he argued that a "new race" was to be "planted on the *verwüstet* soil," and that only this new "wall" of farmers could save Germany from a future Slavic invasion.[33]

Indeed, the idea of a future buffer zone, the emptying of the eastern borderlands of Poles and Jews and filling it with Germans, was famously discussed at the highest levels of government, beginning in late 1914. As Fritz Fischer and Immanuel Geiss explained some 40 years ago, Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg under the cover of war sought radical solutions to the Polish problem, and secretly contacted several thinkers about their ideas concerning the creation of *Grenzstreifen*, or "frontier strips," cleansed of undesirable populations. The idea to be developed was the creation of a stretch of land just east of West Prussia and Posen, which would be denuded of its Polish and Jewish populations, and filled with *Reich* Germans as well as Germans returning from the East (*Deutsch-Russen*). By creating a ring of Germanness around the Prussian Poles, cutting them off from their eastern neighbors, it was believed that they would eventually fully assimilate. What is so crucial is to whom Bethmann-Hollweg turned, who exactly the chancellor of Germany considered to be the "experts" for such thinking, who he considered his *Ostexperten*. He asked the "thinkers" of inner colonization, the authors who often appeared in the pages of the AfiK.

A frequent contributor to the AfiK, the *Oberpräsident* of East Prussia, Batocki, indicated he somewhat liked the idea, but balked at the removal of all Poles (a realistic nod to his *Junker* backers). A key member of the GFK, Alfred Hugenberg was the most extreme in his views, desiring a cleared racial space, and pressing home the older inner colonization argument that only through such a clearing would Germans be "forced" back onto the land, and by doing so, would save the fatherland from becoming a weak, urban people with a low birthrate. The president of the GFK, Friedrich von Schwerin, was very keen, encouraging the chancellor to kick out every last Pole and bring in the Germans. And according to Geiss, Schwerin's two elaborate proposals, cowritten by the AfiK editor Keup, in March and December 1915, became the basic documents upon which all further discussion of eastern settlement at the highest levels was discussed.[34] As for the godfather of the movement, Max Sering, his mission for the government was to be much more concrete and substantial. First, though, the colonial space of the East had to be captured and secured, and it was.

During the Great Advance of 1915, beginning in May and only petering out in late September, the German Army captured a vast new empire in Eastern Europe. Shortly before the massive offensive began, though, a crucial shift occurred in the articles of the AfiK. The February 1915 edition contained the article "New Paths of German Colonial Politics." Over the past several years, the author argued, Germany had increasingly become a colonial power, but it had been a colonialism that sought worldwide influence instead of territory. This focus was deemed incorrect by the author, for among other things, such a business-oriented policy created an industry-heavy, and thus weaker German people. Further, this colonial policy forced Germany to rely on other nations, and it had done nothing to alleviate the problem of overpopulation in Germany. Then came the key shift in inner colonial thinking: the author stated "even if all the swamps in Germany were drained, there wouldn't

be enough land in the Reich to grow all the food we need, and to settle all the people we must settle in order to have a healthy mix of both an industrial and farmer state" (gesunde Mischung von Industrie- und Bauernstaat).[35] Quite suddenly then, in the early 1915 editions of the AfiK, Germany transformed from a land still empty, to a land now full. The author then introduced the idea of "Aussiedlung," settlement outside the Reich, in the pages of this "inner colonial" journal. The Romans did it, he claimed, as did the Franks. But in an example of racial thinking beginning to enter the discourse of the AfiK, he pointed out that while the Teutons practiced *Aussiedlung* right in the same area now under discussion, their "national" feelings were on the wane in that period and they indulged in intermarriage with the Slavs. Thus, and clearly picking up on the "border strip" discussions going on, the author stated that, if Germany won new land in the East, it was to be emptied of all "inferior" (*minderwertig*), untrustworthy populations. Allowing them to stay would lead to an "unhealthiness" (*Unheil*) and a mixing that would result in racial "deterioration" (*Verschlechterung*). The author stated that other great powers did such things, and that, in fact, forced transfers of population had now been rendered internationally legal due to the peace of Bucharest in 1913.[36] The author admitted that while the reader might ask, "is this fair," he responded, was it fair what the Russians did in East Prussia? In other words, here in the radicalized moment of war, anything could be rationalized. Finally, the author claimed that the implementation of such a program of settlement had now been made much easier due to all of the tools provided by the program of inner colonization.[37]

This same article contained a long footnote by the editorial board claiming that such language was not unacceptable, and that it had indeed appeared in other publications in Germany. As further proof, in the very same edition, for the first time AfiK printed an article from the Pan-German *Alldeutsche Blätter*. In "Russians on Northwest Russia as a German Settlement Territory," the author stated that many Russians already

understand that Western Russia is the proper German colonial area. Further, once the area is controlled by Germany, 100,000 Ruthenians a year will be shipped from there to Siberia. The AfiK editorial team then simply added that they hoped this article was correct.[38] In the April 1915 issue, Keup provided a list of all the important people and publications that were now calling for "new land." In this same piece, he alluded to what was surely on the minds of the veteran inner colonization thinkers: the acquisition of new land in the East would finally transcend the endless and frustrating battle with the *Junker*.[39] Much more direct articles discussing exactly how and where to begin this "outer" colonization, namely, in the Baltics, were put forward in pieces by the Baltic German Silvio Broedrich.[40] By January 1916, none other than Ludendorff was consulting with Schwerin about German settlement opportunities in his military colony, *Ober Ost*, in Lithuania.[41] Finally, it was throughout this period that, under the radar, the doyen of inner colonization was sent on a mission to the East. Traveling through Poland in September 1915, Sering decided that that entire country was also too full for settlement. It was only in Lithuania and Courland that Sering, the "moderate" inner colonial thinker, saw Germany's future, and there drew up plans for the eventual settlement of 1.5 million German colonists in that "empty" land.[42]

Running in tandem with this radicalization of the idea of legitimate colonial space in the AfiK, the earlier social colonization theme took flight. Referring to the earlier work of inner colonization in getting workers onto the land, a series of articles in mid-1915 came out in favor of using those same organizational skills to provide land for, and help settle, war invalids. "All that we've learned will help Germany in this endeavor" claimed Keup, and obviously, "the land is the best place for them, for their health, and for Germany."[43] Here, and in proceeding articles, inner colonial thinkers made clear their expertise, as they easily waded through the vast legal and monetary issues that would accompany such a program. And they could move quickly: on May 7, 1915, a request to settle war invalids was officially

made to the Reichstag, signed by many of the inner colonial gang. For the latter half of 1915, this theme dominated the AfiK.[44]

"Inner Colonization and Soldier Homes," appearing in early 1916, reviewed the importance of settling invalids, highlighting the plight of the veterans of 1871 who had found such a proposition personally too costly. This time, argued the author, those involved in inner colonization were going to make such settlement cheaper and easier. However, stated the author, it was fascinating that until this war people like him never even thought of the land to the east of the German border. They had been happy with their piece of the planet, he continued, but now that so much German blood had been spilt, returning warriors would find lots of room in the land Germany was now securing in the East.[45] Indeed, Sering's findings with regard to settlement in Courland were published in October 1916, and Broedrich pushed this plan in the AfiK throughout the year. Specifically, Broedrich emphasized how "cheap" the land was for settlers in the Baltic region, clearly an appeal to those who were sick of the ever-rising price of land in West Prussia and Posen. In an article asking for more money from the government to facilitate settlement, Schwerin argued that settling "war cripples" in the East was not going to result in any great empire. It was time to move well past war invalid settling, he declared, and instead talk about getting Germans in toto to start heading east.[46] Couching these straightforwardly imperialistic calls were a steady stream of atrocity articles going on about how the Russians treated so-called *Deutsch-Russen*, Germans who had lived for many years in Russia. This was obviously an attempt to justify Germany as the only correct imperial power for East Central Europe.[47]

These themes continued throughout 1917 and 1918, with Schwerin morphing the original idea of war invalid settling into the development of "warrior colonies" in the East, an idea he took from the Romans, and a dream that of

course was to be a favorite of Himmler's.[48] In 1918, Keup published the article in which he announced the foundation of the *Landgesellschaft Kurland mbH* and the *Neuland Aktiengesellschaft*. In recognition of the expertise that only inner colonial thinkers could provide in this endeavor, these two official societies had been set up to facilitate the settlement of invalids and veterans on the new eastern frontier. In the wake of Brest-Litovsk, Keup could now claim that victory in the East had brought Germany what it had always desired, land for settlement. The establishment of these colonies in the East, Keup argued, would make Germany a world power. Thus, the war had completely radicalized the way in which the relatively moderate inner colonial thinkers of 1913 viewed Germany's colonial mission in the East. In fact, the very *Neuland AG* set up by Keup would become one of the main organizations for the settling of *Freikorps* soldiers in the postwar chaos.[49]

Postwar and Beyond

While the experience of the war altered the gaze of inner colonizers, the postwar era saw many in German society view inner colonization with a new respect. Versailles was bitter, but also very sweet, for the steady proponents of inner colonization. The provinces of Posen and West Prussia, over which they had worked so long and hard to save, were gone. Yet, in their minds, and in the minds of those newly in power, inner colonization had been the right idea. Germany did not have enough food, and thus lost the war to a great extent due to the British naval blockade. And, had Posen and West Prussia been more thickly settled with Germans, would the Allies have been able to steal them away? It was this recognition on the part of a defeated Germany that led President Friedrich Ebert to appoint Sering to write the new German Reich Settlement Law in 1919, in the hopes that proper inner colonization would prevent future annexation, and strengthen

Germany's food production. Sering had lost much, but now he was a star.

In the pages of the AfiK, the first several years of the postwar period were spent dealing with the shock of the great loss of territory. By 1925, the focus was again on thickening the land in Germany's East, this time with the program of *West-Ost Siedlung*, the recruitment of Germans in the West to come and settle along Germany's current Eastern frontier. Although the volkish elements detected earlier continued to appear in the journal, with some rather "biological" interventions by the rising star and future Reich Minister of Food and Agriculture, R. Walther Darré, the overall tone of inner colonization was still the relatively moderate stance taken by its internationally recognized doyen, Max Sering. The catastrophe of 1933, however, spelled the end of such an approach, as Sering was "retired" by Konrad Meyer and Darré. The journal was then taken over by "biological" thinkers, and had its name changed to *Neues Bauerntum*.[50]

In closing, I want to make a larger point, to strengthen a hypothesis about the revision of our understanding of the place of World War I in Germany's understanding of the East. Although I'm brushing with broad strokes, for the most part, to this day there still exists the following understanding in the historiography: extreme right-wing, volkish organizations, like the Pan-Germans, and the Eastern Marches Society, as well as a handful of academics, possessed the kernels of the idea of radical expansion and occupation in the East. This "prewar" idea was then picked up by some elite members of German society during World War I, such as Ludendorff, and then in the postwar era this radical opinion was passed on to Hitler and the Nazis. From this point on, the mass of the German population had to be convinced of the need for racist, radical occupation, colonialism, and annexation in Eastern Europe. Vejas Liulevicius, who appears in this volume, has made a powerful argument that it was in fact the experience of colonial, aggressive occupation on the part

of 2–3 million Germans of all social ranks, in the occupied East, in World War I, which created a large and profound pool of thought in the Weimar era upon which Hitler could draw. Most importantly, these were colonial administrators who began the occupation with the "moderate" approach of attempting to deal with the locals, sort out the various nationalities and languages, and "rationalize" these peoples. But it didn't work. It was terribly frustrating. And with the bitter defeat, and subsequent loss of all that had been won in the East, a paradigmatic shift in mindset was put in motion: next time, the Germans wouldn't deal with notions of countries and peoples. Instead, the focus would be the more freeing concepts of Race and Space.[51]

As Scott Eddie has shown, the project of inner colonization was not some irrational spending of money at all costs to prevent Poles from getting into Germany. Money was spent, carefully, to transform the German nation into a more agrarian economy, and yes, to stem the flow of Poles into Posen and West Prussia.[52] But the Poles were depicted as frustratingly worthy adversaries, capable of setting up their own banks, and even buying land from Germans now and again. Inner colonization was a struggle, but it was to safeguard Germany *within* its borders, and it was a process that accepted that (1) one had to deal with Poles, and (2) one had to deal with German aristocrats. Just as experience in the East in World War I changed the mindset of so many German soldiers, so the thrill and freedom of violent expansion in that war changed the minds of moderate agrarian reformers. Aggressive war and annexation freed one from having to "deal" with Poles, Poles who had members of Parliament sitting in Berlin. Further, it freed one from having to deal with stubborn, age-old, land-owning aristocrats. To the advocates of inner colonization in 1913, *Lebensraum* existed aplenty on the failing estates of bankrupt *Junker*. By 1915, *Lebensraum* meant something very different. A concept, inner colonization, that was firmly placed alongside all forms of colonization, had already, prewar, been applied to

the people and space of Prussian Poland. Those very same concepts were then radicalized as Germans came to the realization that the true German colonial empire lay not in the corners of Africa or islands of the Pacific, but right next door in the lands of Eastern Europe.

NOTES

1. The details of this trip can be found in Sering's report, later published as his *Habilitation*: Max Sering, *Die landwirthschaftliche Konkurrenz Nordamerikas in Gegenwart und Zukunft. Landwirthschaft, Kolonisation und Verkehrswesen in den Vereinigten Staaten und in Britisch-Nordamerika* (Leipzig: Duncker and Humbolt, 1887).
2. Ibid.
3. William W. Hagen, *Germans, Poles, and Jews: The Nationality Conflict in the Prussian East, 1772–1914* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), Ch. 4.
4. Kenneth D. Barkin, *The Controversy over German Industrialization, 1890–1902* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970). Barkin is still the best account of this important debate.
5. An excellent, if biased history of inner colonization, from a longtime acolyte, is Wilhelm Friedrich Boyens, *Die Geschichte der ländlichen Siedlung* (Berlin: Landschriften-Verlag, 1959).
6. "Programm," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 1 (1909), pp. 1–5.
7. "Liste der Teilnehmer an der Konferenz der Gesellschaft zur Förderung der inneren Kolonisation," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 6 (1914), pp. 253–257. A total of 232 attendees are listed.
8. "Diesen Idealismus, der nur im Auge hat, das deutsche Volk auf dem platten Lande zu stärken, es sesshaft zu machen auf eigener Scholle, seine Lebensstellung zu heben und es zufrieden und heimtreu zu erhalten zum Segen der einzelnen Personen wie zum Nutzen des ganzen Volkstums, diesen Idealismus mussen wir aufrichtig bewundern und Sie darum beneiden. Wir wollen versuchen, zum Heile auch unseres Volkes Ihrem Beispiel in unserer Heimat zu folgen." In "Urteil der amerikanischen Studienkommission über

unsere innere Kolonisation," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 5 (1913), p. 358.

9. D.J. Frost, "Die innere Kolonisation in Schweden," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 6 (1914), pp. 69–80.
10. R. Leonhard, "Innere Kolonisation in Spanien," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 4 (1912), pp. 113–126.
11. In England, Skalweit argued, experiments in "social colonization" were much more in evidence than in Germany, where the nationalities struggle was prevalent. *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 4 (1912), pp. 53–72.
12. Though, as detailed in Bassin, it was also admitted that many returned. Mark Bassin, *Imperial Visions: Nationalist Imagination and Geographical Expansion in the Russian Far East, 1840–1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
13. Charles de Beaulieu, "Gemeinheitsteilung und innere Kolonisation in Russland," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 2 (1910), pp. 293–303.
14. Hollmann, "Die Agrarreform und innere Kolonisation in Russland," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 5 (1913), pp. 313–344.
15. Max Sering, ed., *Westrussland in seiner Bedeutung für die Entwicklung Mitteleuropas* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1917).
16. Paul Rohrbach, "Siedlungsbestrebungen in unseren afrikanischen Kolonien," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 3 (1911), pp. 71–86.
17. "Besiedlung im Inlande und in den Kolonien," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 4 (1912), pp. 145–147.
18. The Society for German Colonization was founded in 1885 (the same year that Bismarck founded the Settlement Commission in Posen and West Prussia). Kurt Weidenfeld, "Volkswirtschaftliche Betrachtungen über die Besiedlung der deutsche Kolonien," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 4 (1912), pp. 148–154.
19. L. Külz, "Ist eine Akklimatisierung des Europäers in den Tropenländern möglich?" *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 4 (1912), pp. 165–174. Moschi is described in D.A. Leue, "Die Siedlungen am Meru (Deutsch-Ostafrika)," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 4 (1912), pp. 175–184.
20. D.C. Winkler, "Die Besiedlung der deutschen Kolonien," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 4 (1912), pp. 155–164.

21. "Uebersicht der Veröffentlichungen auf dem Gebiete der inneren Kolonisation des In- und Auslandes im Jahre 1911," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 4 (1912), pp. 214–219.
22. "Die Förderung der inneren Kolonisation in der Provinz Brandenburg, insbesondere durch Ausdehnung der Tätigkeit der 'Landgesellschaft Eigene Scholle' auf den Bezirk Potsdam," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 3 (1911), pp. 223–238.
23. "Ansiedlungspolitik und Städteentwicklung," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 2 (1910), pp. 85–107.
24. "Feldzug" in "Polnische Kleinarbeit in Westpreussen," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 2 (1910), pp. 80–84. "Fanaticism" in "Die polnische Parzellierungs-Genossenschaft," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 3 (1911), pp. 65–68. Another article referred to Polish "Kampfinstituten." See Schilling, "Die polnische Parzellierungsbanken im Jahre 1909," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 3 (1911), pp. 87–99. On the controversy as to whether or not the battle for the land led to an increase in property value, see Eddie's contribution to this volume.
25. Hans Ostwald, "Soziale Kolonisation," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 3 (1911), pp. 161–174.
26. He contrasted the Stolypin reforms to what he called the "Agrarkommunismus" found in Siberia. Max Sering, "Das Gesetz über das Fideikommisswesen und die Interessen der inneren Kolonisation," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 6 (1914), pp. 260–287.
27. Pagenkopf, "Die Arbeiteransiedlung in Preussen," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 3 (1911), pp. 287–304. "Queensland" in "Rundschau," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 3 (1911), p. 317.
28. L. Maass, "Wirtschaftliche Frauenaufgaben in der inneren Kolonisation," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 4 (1912), pp. 410–416.
29. L. Maass, "Das ostmärkische Kleinsiedlungsdorf Zabikowo," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 5 (1913), pp. 391–421.
30. Arnold Gaede, "Der Besitzwechsel in den Ansiedlungen der Provinzen Westpreussen und Posen," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 5 (1913), pp. 181–192.
31. Erich Keup, "Die innere Kolonisation und der Krieg," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 6 (1914), pp. 391–394.

32. Nagel, "Die innere Kolonisation- die Aufgabe des kommenden Friedens," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 7 (1915), pp. 57–62.
33. Erich Keup, "Zur Frage der inneren Kolonisation in Ostpreussen," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 7 (1915), pp. 21–23.
34. Imanuel Geiss, *Der polnische Grenzstreifen, 1914–1918. Ein Beitrag zur deutschen Kriegszielpolitik im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Lübeck: Matthiesen, 1960); Fritz Fischer, *Germany's Aims in the First World War* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1967).
35. Sonntag, "Neue Wege deutscher Kolonialpolitik," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 7 (1915), pp. 117–129.
36. Indeed, this is exactly where some historians place the modern history of forced population transfers in Europe that led, eventually to the Holocaust. See the recent volume Dieter Bingen, Wlodzimierz Borodziej, and Stefan Troebst, eds., *Vertreibungen europäisch erinnern?: historische Erfahrungen, Vergangenheitspolitik, Zukunftskonzeptionen* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003).
37. Sonntag, "Neue Wege deutscher Kolonialpolitik." This article closely follows the arguments of Friedrich von Schwerin and the *Denkschrift* he was currently writing for the Chancellor. By July 1915, Schwerin was so closely associated with Bethmann-Hollweg that he was asked not to speak at a major frontier strip conference in the Chancellery, for fear his words would be taken as the Chancellor's. Geiss, *Der polnische Grenzstreifen,* p. 90.
38. "Russen über Nordwest-Russland als Deutsches Siedlungsland," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 7 (1915), pp. 130–134. Near the end of the war, Schwerin became editor of the radically volkish *Deutschlands Erneuerung*, and both he and Keup were members of the nationalistic fraternity *Kyffhäuserbund*.
39. Erich Keup, "Aushungerungsplan und innere Kolonisation," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 7 (1915), pp. 152–162.
40. Silvio Broedrich, "Kolonisationsmöglichkeiten im Ostseegebiete Russlands und in Litauen," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 7 (1915), pp. 276–284: Silvio Broedrich, "Gründung der deutschen Bauerngemeinden Kurmahlen-Planetzen in Kurland, Kreis Goldingen," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 8 (1916), pp. 73–84.

41. Vejas G. Liulevicius, *War Land on the Eastern Front: Culture, National Identity and German Occupation in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 96.
42. Max Sering, "Ansiedlungsverhältnisse und Siedlungsmöglichkeiten in den besetzten Gebieten des Ostens," *Der Panther* 4 (10) (1916), pp. 1265–1276.
43. Erich Keup, "Invalidenansiedlung- Voraussetzungen und Wege," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 7 (1915), pp. 189–198.
44. "Eingabe an den Reichstag, zur Frage der Invalidensiedlung," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 7 (1915), pp. 250–254. Examples include Alfred Mayer, "Die ländlichen Invaliden zurück auf das Land," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 7 (1915), pp. 199–224; Delius, "Zur Fürsorge für Kriegsinvalide auf dem Lande," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 7 (1915), pp. 225–239.
45. D. Börchert, "Innere Kolonisation und Kriegerheimstätten," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 8 (1916), pp. 11–19.
46. Sering, "Ansiedlungsverhältnisse." Broedrich, "Gründung." Friedrich von Schwerin, "Besteht in Deutschland ein Mangel an Ansiedlungslustigen?" *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 8 (1916), pp. 105–118.
47. For example, Richard Pohle, "Russland im Kampf gegen Deutschland und das Deutschtum," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 8 (1916), pp. 171–180.
48. "Über Kriegeransiedlung vergangener Zeiten," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 9 (1917), pp. 282–285 listed the articles Schwerin and others had published on this theme, many in *Der Panther*.
49. Erich Keup, "Landgesellschaft Kurland mbH und Neuland Aktiengesellschaft. Die ersten Träger der Siedlungstätigkeit im neuen Ostland," *Archiv für innere Kolonisation* 10 (1918), pp. 218–224. On the importance of Neuland AG in the postwar period, see Boyens, *Die Geschichte der ländlichen Siedlung*.
50. On the history of inner colonization during the interwar years, see Boyens, *Die Geschichte der ländlichen Siedlung*. Also, Claudia-Yvonne Ludwig, *Die nationalpolitische Bedeutung der Ostsiedlung in der Weimarer Republik und die öffentliche Meinung* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2004). On the Nazi takeover of inner colonization, see Irene Stoehr,

"Von Max Sering zu Konrad Meyer- ein 'machtergreifender' Generationswechsel in der Agrar- und Siedlungswissenschaft," in *Autarkie und Ostexpansion. Pflanzenzucht und Agrarforschung im Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Suzanne Heim (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2002), pp. 57–90.

51. Liulevicius, *War Land on the Eastern Front*.
52. See Eddie's contribution to this volume.

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Chapter 4

Putting the East in Order: German Historians and Their Attempts to Rationalize German Eastward Expansion during the 1930s and 1940s

Eduard Mühle

Ian Kershaw in his landmark biography of Adolf Hitler coined an interesting phrase when he put in a nutshell what made National Socialism function: "Working towards the *Führer*." Hitler, once in power, did not—as Kershaw argues—have to give orders to let National Socialism take shape. The deeds and actions that made up the Third Reich were to a large extent performed voluntarily, on their instigator's initiative. Hundreds of thousands if not millions of Germans tried to anticipate what they expected the *Führer* would wish without awaiting instructions from above. Hitler's power, therefore, has to be understood as a social product, a creation of social and—we may add to Kershaw—national-patriotic motivations

vested in Hitler by his followers. They hoped that their own interests and aspirations, which they pursued in their respective spheres of life, would be identical with those of the *Führer*. By trying to realize their own political and social hopes they translated the Dictator's loosely framed ideological goals into reality by initiatives focused on working toward the fulfilment of Hitler's visionary aims.[1] Another leading specialist in the field, Hans Mommsen, recently claimed that one should not speak of *affinity* when talking about people who shared only certain aspects of National Socialist politics and ideology, since this would unduly distance them from National Socialism. Instead, Mommsen contends, it was this very affinity of a broad range of societal milieus and their own moral concepts and ideas of order, national ambitions and political expectations, their opportunistic convergence with the regime and their calculating compromises with its officials, that *was* "the real National Socialism," indeed, it was what made the system work.[2] In what follows, I try to put these interesting contentions to the test by looking at a particular segment of German society: German professional historians. I ask to what extent these interpreters of the past did work toward the *Führer* and in what sense their particular closeness or affinity to National Socialism may be regarded as "the real National Socialism."

Professional historians in late Weimar Germany formed a comparatively small group. In 1931, 238 individuals were teaching history at the then 23 universities; only 91 of them held a full professorship (*Ordinariat*).[3] A few hundred more worked in archives and extra-university research institutes. Nevertheless they constituted an intellectually influential group. By tradition they were regarded as masters (*Lehrmeister*) of the nation feeling a particular obligation to promote their nation's interests by interpreting the past in order to show that Germany deserved a very special, elevated place in Europe's history and also in its current and future development.[4] This self-perception, which was already enforced during World War I, gained even more momentum after Versailles. In defeated

Germany the Peace Treaty was regarded as humiliating and unjust by practically the whole society. But it was the historians, who since 1919 felt a particularly strong urge to help fight the "*Diktat* of Versailles," help revise the unjust, the "bleeding"—as they were called—borderlines and help to eventually regain those German territories that were lost in the West and the East from 1919 to 1921.[5]

Revisionism, in fact, was one of the key elements keeping Weimar society, fragmented and torn as it was, together. There was a broad consensus reaching from the far left to the far right, that Germany had the legitimate right to be politically resurrected as a European power and that at least her eastern borders sooner or later should be adjusted to this status. The "East," however, was a rather ambivalent category on the mental map of the Germans. For many, if not the majority, it was of no real personal interest; it was too far away and too darkly perceived to stimulate any closer affection. Propagating the East as a historian, therefore, in the 1920s and 1930s first of all meant to draw the attention of German society to this region and to explain why and how the existing eastern provinces of the *Reich* should be politically, economically, and culturally helped and developed and why those parts added to Poland in 1919/1921 should to be returned to the *Reich.*

In the effort to disseminate information, knowledge, and understanding of the "German East" universities and academics certainly played an important role. They were supposed to train the elites of the nation, moulding those men who would form the nation's future and thus also decide on the political, economic, and cultural fate of the German East. First of all, it was the universities of Königsberg and Breslau, the so-called universities of the Eastern mark or borderlands, (*Ost-* or *Grenzland-Universitäten*), that were expected to push this propaganda of the East. But universities in the western parts of Germany—though to a lesser extent—also felt the obligation of contributing to these efforts and helping to "defend" the East. Thus, for example, in the early 1930s the

University of Göttingen developed a systematic approach to *Ostaufklärung* and initiated a propaganda campaign on the East addressed at vice chancellors, professors, and students of universities in western Germany. It was the historian Karl Brandi, prominent biographer of Emperor Charles V, and his younger colleague, the medievalist Percy Ernst Schramm, who were the driving forces behind theses efforts. On behalf of their university they organized both lecture series, so-called *Ostmark-Hochschulwochen,* dedicated to the "burning problems of the East," as well as *Ostmarkfahrten*, excursions bringing vice chancellors, professors, and students into the eastern provinces, confronting them there with the "bleeding borders" and the problems caused by them. On the opening of one of the *Ostmark-Hochschulwochen* held in Göttingen in February 1931, Karl Brandi emphasized, "that it is absolutely necessary, that all who are aware of the situation of the German East are prepared to explain the facts to the public. History may not be a servant to politics, but she has to fulfil her national task." In concluding the lecture he made an appeal to his audience to leave all internal disagreement aside in order to save the German East for Germandom (damit der deutsche Osten dem Deutschtum erhalten bleibe).[6]

Brandi was also the organizer and chairman of the eighteenth German *Historikertag* held in Göttingen in August 1932. This national convention of the German historians explicitly called for more actively addressing the problems of the East in German history writing. As nearly all of the participants of the convention agreed, scholarly interpretation of the past had to provide "mental weapons" to effectively advocate the "legitimate" cause of the German nation in order to promote a future revision of the Versailles Peace Treaty.[7] To this aim, already since the mid-1920s innovative research projects were designed and new institutions set up. Eventually a whole new paradigm—German *Volksgeschichte* (history of the nation or folk)—was developed to adjust professional history writing to the nation's need for new arguments in its struggle for revision.[8] The Göttingen national convention, in fact,

meant a breakthrough of this new paradigm. Seven of the nine keynote speeches were on national problems of the East, five of them given by historians representing the German intellectual centres of this East and the new paradigm. These historians—Hans Rothfels and Erich Maschke from Königsberg, Walter Recke from Danzig, Josef Pfitzner from Prague and Hermann Aubin from Breslau—once more advocated a particular obligation and responsibility of German historiography. Studying the past with careful craftsmanship, and utmost objectivity, as they claimed, the historian would necessarily produce convincing scholarly arguments that would help to defend the German East, supposedly endangered by Polish and Czech expansion. These arguments would, they hoped, eventually force European politicians and the public to undo the "injustice of Versailles." Furthermore, the aforementioned and many other historians—as for example the Austrian Heinrich Ritter von Srbik—combined their hope of German political resurrection with the idea of replacing the order of Versailles by a new political system that would put the East in—as they saw it—a truly just and peaceful order giving each nation of the region the rights and recognition it deserved.

In 1933, each of the historians mentioned welcomed National Socialism, expecting that the new regime would turn into reality what they envisioned as a just and peaceful order for Germany and the European East. They all, of course, developed their own individual relationship with National Socialism and that in practice could take on quite different forms showing varying degrees of adherence, closeness, or affinity. Though research on German historians and National Socialism has advanced considerably over the past years,[9] we do not yet know enough of the individual responses in order to precisely characterize and define the relationship of each of these historians with the regime.[10] From what we do already know, however, we can get the impression that all of those historians particularly interested in the German East by and large followed a common pattern: they represented a rather homogenous social, academic milieu, and mental tradition, shared the political and psychological experience of World War I and the

turbulent years of defeat and revolution and advocated by and large the same political goals. One of them was the Breslau historian Hermann Aubin, who with his mentality and political views seemed to have been representative of many, if not the majority of German historians of his generation, at least of those who stayed in office after 1933.

In fact, Hermann Aubin from the 1920s until the 1960s was one of the most influential academic teachers and organizers of German historical scholarship.[11] He was born in 1885 as a citizen of the Habsburg Empire in North Bohemian Reichenberg (today's Liberec); he died in 1969 as a citizen of the Federal Republic of Germany in Freiburg. He studied in late Wilhelmine Munich, Freiburg, and Bonn and participated in World War I as an Austrian officer in the artillery on the Eastern Front in Galicia and later in the Alps. In 1919 he became a citizen of the German *Reich* and pursued the typical career of a German professor. Starting as *Privatdozent* in Bonn he gained his first full professorship in Gießen by 1925, followed by a second one in 1929 that led him to the Silesian capital of Breslau. In Breslau he witnessed National Socialism, World War II and the breakdown of the Third Reich. During the final days of German Breslau he was drafted into the *Volkssturm*, soon wounded and then flown out to Berlin from where he eventually reached the West. Already in Autumn 1945 he again was holding a full professorship, first in Göttingen then in Hamburg, where he taught until his retirement in 1954, then continued teaching thereafter in Freiburg where he had already taken his first domicile in the spring of 1945.

Already in Bonn Aubin initiated a powerful school of *Kulturraumforschung,* an innovative form of historical research into cultural regions; in 1927 he became editor of the *Quarterly Journal for Social and Economic History* through which he influenced the course of German economic history for nearly four decades. Until his move to Breslau as a professional historian he dealt almost exclusively with historical problems of the German West. Only in Breslau did he turn to problems

of the East. In fact, a decisive motivation for him to take up the new post in Silesia was exactly this already mentioned sense of national duty, the feeling that he too carried a particular political responsibility for his nation. Turning to the East Aubin, due to his strong character and organizational skills, soon became a leading figure within the milieu of German historical research on the German and European East, which became known as *Ostforschung*. In December 1933 he was elected vice president to the North- and East German Research Society, the most important and influential association of German *Ostforschung* during the Third Reich, chaired by the Director General of the Prussian State Archives in Berlin, the medievalist Albert Brackmann.[12] At the same time he became Chairman of the Silesian Historical Commission. Hence, he represented German *Ostforschung* during National Socialism in a rather exposed position. In both and additional offices he not only consequently worked at organizing and promoting German historical research on the East but also attempted to bring it in line with his and Albert Brackmann's political or *völkisch* program.[13]

Aubin and Brackmann, as well as many of their colleagues, took the national agenda as a basis for their *Ostforschung*, their historical interpretation of the German East and Eastern Europe, especially once Hitler's seizure of power seemed to be successfully turning this agenda into reality. Like the majority of his compatriots Aubin observed with growing admiration how the *Führer*, step by step, restored the "power" and "greatness" of the German national state. Already in October 1933 he had greeted Hitler as the "renewer of our people in the joyful certainty that there will be German what is German without boundaries and limits."[14] With satisfaction he followed how Germany regained the *Saargebiet* in 1935, occupied the Rhineland in 1936, and how Hitler eventually formed a *Großdeutsches Reich* by incorporating Austria and the Czechoslovak regions of German settlement (the so-called *Sudetenland*) in 1938 as well as the former Prussian parts of Lithuania (the so-called *Memelgebiet*) in spring 1939, while

at the same time crushing the Czechoslovak Republic by erecting the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.

When in September 1939 Aubin was invited to give lectures at the university of Leipzig during the forthcoming winter term he wrote to the Dean of the Leipzig Faculty of Philosophy that he would not be able to accept this invitation. He had, as he argued, to weigh his strong interest in the Leipzig position against his duties at—as he called it—the spiritual eastern front in Breslau. In the present hour, he continued, while German troops were occupying Poland, "I have to give preference to my assignments in the 'East,' all the more as just now the returns of a ten-year work are to be applied to the new ordering of the eastern space."[15] As this quotation clearly shows, Hermann Aubin in September 1939 not only accepted Germany's military attack on her eastern neighbors, but he regarded it as a sort of harvest of his own work of many years.

What sort of work then had he developed since he turned to the "assignments of the East" in 1929? There were four main directions to his activities. First, he tried to extend and improve the undergraduate study in "Eastern affairs" (*Ostfragen*) at Breslau University. This effort aimed at two groups of students: (1) those who came from Western Germany and would only stay for one or two terms in Breslau and who had to be sensitized to the problems of the East so that they, having returned to the German West, would be alerted and able to get support there for the "East"; (2) those who came from and would stay within the Silesian or East Central European region and devote substantial parts of their studies to the problems of the East in order to later advocate, as teachers or officers of relevant public institutions, the interests of the East. By educating students Aubin wanted to provide the German administration and army with "men of German blood, who would be linguistically and politically well enough versed with the problems of the 'East' so that they would in every moment—in war and peace—be unconditionally ready for action in the interest of state or military authorities."[16]

Second, Aubin gathered a small group of graduate students and younger scholars forming what was later called the "Silesian Research School of *Ostforschung*."[17] In this circle Aubin's students not only produced scholarly works on various aspects of Silesian, Polish, Czech, and East Central European history but also developed a strong effort to propagate the results of their work and debates in the Silesian and German public. In fact, the popularization of the images and notions produced by Aubin's and his disciples' *Ostforschung* made up a central—the third—element of his Breslau activities. This included efforts to give political advice on the grounds of historical expertise to political and administrative authorities. The fourth field of Aubin's Breslau activities, of course, was his own historical writing. And, obviously, for the historian it was his interpretation of the German and East European past that defined and shaped the way he acted in the aforementioned other fields.

Aubin's view of the East was a rather static one. It was fixed early and rested to a large extent on established interpretations and perceptions going well back into the nineteenth century. The East to him—like to the majority of German historians—appeared as divided into two parts: those areas settled and civilized by Germans, called "German national and cultural soil" (deutscher Volks- und Kulturboden), and those areas left to alleged Slavic backwardness if not barbarism.[18] Only the former part of the East was of any real historiographical and political interest to Aubin and his fellow *Ostforscher*, while the other part was discerned as a fundamentally alien zone, as the Bolshevik and half-Asian, thus essentially dangerous part of Europe. There existed, however, a particular zone in between, which Aubin called sub-Germanic, while others described it as *Zwischeneuropa*. This area—the territories of genuine Polish, Czech or Slovak, Hungarian, Lithuanian, Latvian or Estonian settlement—could not be described as areas of German settlement (as *deutscher Volksboden*). Nevertheless they were regarded as areas of a profound German cultural influence (as *deutscher Kulturboden*) and as such they were regarded as an appendix

of the German-Germanic cultural space.[19] This appendix could either become fully integrated into the German sphere or be left to the influence and reign of the uncivilized Russian part of Europe.

As the history of the East in the eyes of Aubin showed, *Zwischeneuropa*, the zone of "little peoples" and "splitters of peoples" (as he called it elsewhere), had always proved unable to develop itself from within, on the basis of its own genuine Slavic-Baltic-Magyar character. Therefore, the problems posed by this zone, characterized by numerous internal nationality and border conflicts, could—as Aubin saw it—not be solved from within this region, because "the forces of the little peoples (*Kleinvölker*) even today are not capable of giving [this region] a lasting order." Therefore, in the future the smaller Eastern neighbors of the Germans would "not be able to reach full independence in their economic and cultural existence." From this "fact" for Aubin there followed a particular task, which concerned the Germans more than anybody else. Since the German borderline, with this zone in between, was not only the longest but also "of a very peculiar character," it was, as Aubin put it, in the end not a real homogenous border of nationalities. There existed, moreover, a historically "profound and spacious dovetailing of German *Lebensraum* with the regions of the Eastern peoples." As long as this dovetailing existed, the existence of the *Völkchen* and *Volkssplitter* "could not be separated in the simple form of a state borderline" from the existence of the Germans and their nation-state.

The history of the East and of the German East Central European relationship, constructed by Aubin in his essays and articles published during the 1930s and early 1940s, was essentially meant to give evidence to this contention. A central element in this attempt was to explain to a broader public why the Germans rose to a great, homogeneous nation, while the Slavs remained separated into small nations, unable to develop their own strong polities. Reaching far back into prehistoric and medieval times he, for that purpose, hinted to the fact that the Germans already at the time of Caesar were organized in tribal units, which by the year 500AD

had developed into five or six great tribes and which by the seventh to eighth century voluntarily united in a common state. The Slavs for their part, Aubin claimed, experienced only in the tenth century a development toward greater tribal organization, which found its expression only in the Czech and Polish case in the rule of the Piasts (whom Aubin incidentally regarded as of Nordic origin) and of the Przemyslides. Other western Slavic peoples did not even reach this level, but "in their inability to create a competitive constitution and due to the primitiveness of their cultural life [. . .] succumbed to the overwhelming weight of the Germans." Further, Aubin regarded the Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians in 1939 as "young nations, hardly yet stepped into history, whose own cultural property does not allow for a fully fledged European existence," while the Magyars and Bulgarians were seen as "odd elements alien to Europe."

The large distance between Germans and Slavs in the way the state was organized over the course of history, for Aubin "naturally" was accompanied by a similar distance "in the general level of cultural life." Due to this distance, the Germans over centuries not only could offer the Eastern peoples protection against "Asiatic enemies," but lent them also "the help of their labour force, of their spirit, their economy and ingenuity." By this process the "Eastern space" (*Ostraum*) in its whole existence was—as Aubin put it—economically, culturally, even biologically elevated to a higher level. Whether in the form of a spontaneous medieval movement of large portions of the German populace or of an organized early modern and modern colonization by the Hohenzollerns and Habsburgs—in all cases the Germans in the East became "the master of the indigenous population." From agriculture to mining, settlement, or building techniques, trade and crafts, urban development and self-governance or the judiciary, the forms of administration under absolute states or the sense of order—always it was the Germans who taught the Eastern peoples. For Aubin, however, the German eastward movement not only resulted in cultural transfer, but also in "an exchange of blood." On the one hand, the "attracting force" of the German ethos (*Gesinnung*) had

led to "a mass transition of parts of the Eastern peoples to the German people." On the other hand, the German people, in the form of the most easterly exposed parts of Germany, has given away "blood from its blood to the neighbouring people," thus creating to a considerable extent "the preconditions for the impact of the cultural transfer."

Thus in Aubin's view, Germans since medieval times have again and again contributed to shaping the cultural structure of the Eastern peoples. The priests of Christianization, the preachers of Reformation, the representatives of German romanticism and the classical period of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as well as the teachers of modern techniques and the natural sciences—all were put in "one long and dignified line" of "upholders of German *Geist* in the East." And Aubin, in 1940, talking in front of the Governor General Hans Frank on the Wawel in Kraków, did not hesitate to also put the German occupational forces in Poland in this line, regarding National Socialism as yet another wave of German fertile spiritual influence on the East. History, as Aubin claimed, after all has shown that the East has never been able to evade the great German cultural movements. Through a new German East Central European community, which might spring out of a mental affinity he observed "in the field of National Socialism," Aubin in the end was hoping to overcome the political tensions between Germany and the Eastern nations.

For Aubin, the tensions and conflicts throughout history had never ended. Because, as he put it, "what the Germans in all fields have done for them" has been regarded not only "as fertilization, stimulation, promotion and elevation of their own existence," but to no lesser extent also "as hindering, confinement and oppression." German activities in the East, therefore, have met the appreciation of their Eastern neighbors "only to a small extent." Under such auspices, Aubin could look at the political, economic, and cultural development of early modern East Central Europe as well as at the East Central European nationality movements of the nineteenth century and the creation of newly independent states after World War

I only in terms of "counterattacks" of ungrateful neighbors, as an "advancement of the Eastern *Volkstümer*." Regardless of temporary successes, they might have gained from time to time and in particular after 1918, in the end to Aubin "the inability of the small peoples" has always shown that they cannot exist on their own, but need leadership. In the early modern period it was the onslaught of the Turks and the lack of discipline of the Polish nobility that again demanded, for Aubin, German "leadership in the Eastern space." Similarly, to Aubin the recent failure of the political emancipation after Versailles had proved that "a lasting order" may be given to the region only from outside. Only when they join one of the great world powers could the East Central European small nations sustain themselves. Faced with the choice between the two great nations of the Russians and the Germans, all historical evidence pointed, for Aubin, toward letting the small Eastern nations join the Germans, who had stood beside them "in a century old tradition, which beyond all struggling offers the richest examples of the forms of outward and inner cohabitation."[20]

In another text of 1940 Aubin was somewhat more precise about what he meant by this rather vague formulation. Supposing again that the Eastern zone in its ethnic-national fragmentation did not allow for strong, self-sustaining Slavic or Baltic nation states, he suggested the creation of a German order that "in strength and justice" would bridge the antagonism between Germany and East Central Europe, securing Central Europe—this time he used the term *Mitteleuropa*—against the destructive forces of the more distant East. Such a new order, though declared to be of a supranational and federalist character and allegedly also supposed to recognize the individuality and the rights of the smaller nations, could, according to Aubin, due to the political and cultural superiority of the Germans, only be a German order.[21] To non-German inhabitants of East Central Europe confronted with the simple but murderous distinction of *Herrenmenschen* and *Untermenschen* and the brutal everyday reality of German occupation, such a concept could be regarded only as cynical.

In the subjective perspective of the historian Aubin, it was, however, an analysis derived from history and as such not simply a piece of National Socialist propaganda, but the result of "objective scholarship."

It was this naive belief in an alleged objectivity of academic insight that motivated Aubin in the end to also engage in politics. When in 1938/39 the National Socialist regime started its military offensive Aubin and his colleagues not only welcomed this step as an effort to restore Germany's "might and honor"; they also began an attempt to influence the National Socialist decision makers by advising them on the basis of their historical expertise. As Aubin put it in September 1939, "Scholarship cannot simply wait until being asked, but has to raise its voice by its own."[22] The "restructuring of the East," for which Germany's war on Poland was providing new perspectives, could—as Aubin saw it—only be successful when the particular historical circumstances of the region were taken into account and when for this purpose the experience and knowledge of the *Ostforscher* would be applied.[23] Only when the decision makers were aware "of the historical preconditions of the present situation" as explained to them by academic experts, would there be a guarantee, "that on occasion of the re-establishment of German administration in Poland the issues of nationality [would] be set on the right track."[24] Hence, in the eyes of Aubin the National Socialist politicians were expected to accept the suggestions of the *Ostforscher*, while the latter were obliged to actively contribute with their academic insight to the National Socialist policy of conquest and occupation. From this Aubin derived a series of practical assignments that he and his Breslau study group as well as his German *Ostforscher* colleagues would have to fulfil during the course of the war.

Already in autumn 1938 Aubin and his students—as Ernst Birke, a leading member of his study group reported—were completely preoccupied by giving advice and drafting memoranda with respect to the *sudetendeutsche Frage*, the problem of the ethnic Germans in Northern Bohemia.[25] "We observe with great satisfaction," Aubin wrote to Brackmann on September 29, 1938, "that we are prepared to give solutions to

a number of problems, which will be posed by the next future of *Sudetendeutschland*."[26] The statistical data and maps that were used on the same day for drafting the Treaty of Munich and for implementing the respective changes in the German-Czech borderline were first of all provided by the *Publikationsstelle*, a special research unit promoting historical research on the East attached to the Prussian State Archives in Berlin. But as Ludwig Petry—another Breslau student of Aubin—remembers, Aubin and his staff, too, made "with good conscience proposals for drawing up borders with respect to Eastern and Northern Bohemia."[27]

"Plenty of official requests to give advice" followed—as Aubin proudly reported—with the preparations and the realization of the military attack on Poland. In early summer 1939 he and his team were continuously preoccupied with the problem of restructuring Silesia and in addition with the problems of Poland.[28] By August 1 he had completed a number of reports and memoranda on behalf of various political authorities and continued to be busy with this kind of work during the months to follow. The memoranda, maps and reports Aubin and his study group had produced since Autumn 1938 on behalf of the Silesian provincial governor have not as yet been identified in the archives. As far as we know from other sources they described and analysed the ethnic and linguistic composition, the administrative structure and historical and current economic development of Northern Bohemia and, foremost, of Upper Silesia. According to the annual report of the Institut für geschichtliche Landeskunde, established by Aubin at Breslau University in 1936, between autumn 1938 and spring 1940 his study group drafted more than a dozen memoranda for the Silesian *Oberpräsident* alone. Most of them were equipped with extensive cartographical and statistical materials.[29] But Aubin was not content with addressing the provincial authorities only. He also wanted to reach higher levels of political decision making, especially those involved in the new ordering of the East. In September 1939 he turned to high officials in Berlin trying to convince them that he and his *Ostforscher* colleagues could contribute to the reorganizing of the East and the "solving" of

the East Central European nationality problems by means of their scholarly analyses. In the end he and Albert Brackmann only succeeded in meeting with a subordinate official of the Ministry of the Interior who had but little political influence. They, however, eagerly received his commission to provide the ministry with additional statistical data on the population of the Polish territories occupied in the meantime by German military forces and to draft another memorandum.[30]

The new memorandum, of which the first outline was drafted on September 28 by Aubin's Breslau study group and was finalized in early October by the Berlin team of Albert Brackmann involving among others the historian Theodor Schieder, was meant to make "a well-founded proposal for the drawing up of the borderline" between the Reich and occupied Poland.[31] Two solutions were discussed by Aubin and his team: first, a delimitation along the linguistic border as derived from the 1910 census and second the restoration of the pre–World War I borderline between Prussia-Germany and the Russian part of partitioned Poland, which was running further to the East. In both cases the new borderline was planned to incorporate occupied Polish territory into the Reich that depicted as high as possible a percentage of ethnic Germans, thus enabling full germanisation. As the Breslau *Ostforscher* openly discussed, this necessarily implied extensive forced transfers of population. Poles and Jews would have to be deported from the territories incorporated into the Reich to Poland and ethnic Germans living in those parts of occupied Poland that would not be incorporated would have to be resettled into the germanized territories attached to the Reich. The final version of the memorandum was sent to officials of the Ministry of the Interior, the Foreign Office and the Supreme Command of the *Wehrmacht* on October 11.[32] By then the proposals of the *Ostforscher* were already outdated by the swiftness of events and the crucial decisions on how to proceed with the occupied territories taken long since at other places. Though Aubin's and his colleagues' suggestions thus ended up in the drawers of low-profile officials they are a bewildering testimony of an astounding willingness to actively advocate and rationalize large-scale deportations and

a violent restructuring of historically developed demographic, social, and political conditions in order to put—as they saw it—"the East in order."

With such attempts to give academic advice to decision makers of the National Socialist regime, which Aubin continued to offer later, as well as with his scholarly work and his public lectures—which he delivered not only to his Breslau students, but on numerous occasions also to members of various branches of the NSDAP and to officials of the occupation forces in the Government General or to soldiers on the Eastern front—he deliberately rationalized and thereby legitimized the program of military conquest of large parts of East Central Europe by means of historical arguments. He was, however, not a National Socialist in the narrow sense of the term. He had not joined the National Socialist Party and did not apply the aggressive vocabulary and racist thinking of National Socialism in his writings. Nevertheless, to apply the formulation of Ian Kershaw, in his individual sphere, as a historian and German professor, he did "work towards the *Führer*." He did so on his own initiative, driven by his own motivation, following his own *völkisch*-nationalist world view and political aims. These aims and this view were not identical with National Socialism but they were close enough to it to give Hermann Aubin and his fellow historians the illusion that Hitler's national and Eastern agenda would follow the very same goal they themselves were hoping to accomplish: to put the East in a supranational, federalist, and peaceful order, an order, that due to the lessons of history, would have to be an order of German political hegemony and cultural domination.

In this, Aubin and the majority of the German historians active during the Third Reich essentially agreed with National Socialism. They in most cases did not base the alleged German superiority on the racial doctrine of National Socialism, but on a concept of cultural distinction rooted in the process of history. Aubin very clearly differentiated between "old" and "young" nations, between peoples able to create political order and to advance civilization and those unable to do so. As far as he, occasionally, also referred to the "talents" of the German

and the East Central European peoples and spoke—though in passing—of a "transfer of German blood" as a precondition of the cultural transfer from West to East, one may argue that Aubin's cultural foundation of German superiority was not that far away from the racial approach of National Socialism. At least he left a certain vagueness that allowed for proving complaisance with National Socialist expectations also in this respect.

Whether based on racial or cultural grounds, National Socialism and Hermann Aubin did in practice fully agree on a German superiority vis-à-vis their Slavic, Baltic, and Magyar neighbors. This superiority in the eyes of Aubin and his fellow historians invested the Germans with the right to put the East in a German, allegedly just and peaceful order. And they obviously saw no contradiction that, in order to achieve this supposedly positive goal, Germany would be allowed to use military action, occupy the East, enlarge her territory, and establish satellite states on different levels. Aubin and his colleagues deliberately accepted and supported the German oppression of East Central Europe, that is, the establishment of a brutal and murderous occupation regime. There is, however, no evidence that they also supported the systematic annihilation of the Polish intelligentsia or the Jews. Aubin, at least, lent his support to the German occupation and military efforts not in order to systematically annihilate the Slavic and Jewish neighbors but to organize—as he naively thought—a peaceful cohabitation. What he was aiming at was the integration of the "small or young, not fully developed nations" of East Central Europe into a supranational *Reich,* which would give these peoples and nations the position they politically and culturally deserved. That this in practice meant brutal oppression and a murderous occupation regime, Aubin and his fellow *Ostforscher* obviously accepted as unavoidable, since in their eyes the East never had been capable of developing a "just and stable order" of its own.[33] But this did not necessarily imply accepting systematic annihilation. At this point, no doubt, there existed a gulf between National Socialist radicals and *Ostforscher* like Hermann Aubin. But how narrow a gulf in practice this was! Which soldier or SS-man, in the end, did care about whether

the Pole or Jew in front of him should be regarded as culturally or racially inferior? Either way he was told—be it by the German professor of history or the SS-leader—that he, the German, was superior, and his opposite inferior. As we know from recent research, the options taken from that lesson, in each individual case did take on quite different forms and consequences.[34] And it seems far from being clear, whether it was the deeply rooted concept of a profound German cultural superiority allowing for putting things in order in a supposedly chaotic East, or the excessive and extreme racist ideology, that was more important in the individual's decision to actively take part in the murder or not.

German occupation and oppression, and thus in the end also annihilation and the Holocaust, being the result of a process of cumulative radicalisation, did not work only on the basis of an extreme racist National Socialist vision of military conquest and Aryan world domination. It was also made possible, after all, by historians like Hermann Aubin, advocating an alleged German political and cultural superiority that allowed for military action in the East, be it in order to establish a new political order or—as was propagated from 1941/1942—to defend European civilization against an alien Asiatic and Bolshevik enemy. Looking at the potential impact and mental effects of the intellectual concepts of the East produced by historians like Aubin we may conclude that there indeed existed not only a closeness, an affinity of *Ostforscher* and historians like Aubin to National Socialism, but that this affinity *was* part of the "real National Socialism." Historians like Aubin did, in fact, work toward the *Führer*.

Notes

1. Ian Kershaw, *Hitler 1889–1936. Hubris* (London: Lane, 1999), pp. xxvi, xxix.
2. Hans Mommsen, "Der faustische Pakt der Ostforschung mit dem NS-Regime. Anmerkungen zur Historikerdebatte," in *Deutsche Historiker im Nationalsozialismus,* ed. Winfried Schulze and Otto Gerhard Oexle (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1999), pp. 265–273, here p. 271.

3. Bernd Faulenbach, "Die Historiker und die 'Massengesellschaft' der Weimarer Republik," in *Deutsche Hochschullehrer als Elite 1815–1945*, ed. Klaus Schwabe (Boppard: Boldt, 1988), pp. 225–246, here p. 228; Jürgen Elvert, "Geschichtswissenschaft," in *Die Rolle der Geisteswissenschaften im Dritten Reich 1933–1945*, ed. Frank-Rutger Hausmann (München: Oldenbourg, 2002), pp. 87–135, here pp. 98–108.
4. Bernd Faulenbach, *Ideologie des deutschen Weges. Die deutsche Geschichte in der Historiographie zwischen Kaiserreich und Nationalsozialismus* (München: Beck, 1980).
5. Christoph Cornelißen, "'Schuld am Weltfrieden' Politische Kommentare und Deutungsversuche deutscher Historiker zum Versailler Vertrag 1919–1933," in *Versailles 1919. Ziele—Wirkung—Wahrnehmung*, ed. Gerd Krumeich (Essen: Klartext, 2001), pp. 237–257.
6. *Göttinger Tageblatt* Nr. 36, February 12, 1931, Staats - und Universitätsbibliothek Göttingen, Cod. Ms. K. Brandi 74, Nr. 2; cf. also Karl Brandi, "Unser Recht auf den Osten," unpublished lecture held at Braunschweig September 24, 1927, ibid.
7. *Bericht über die 18. Versammlung deutscher Historiker in Göttingen 2. - 5. August 1932*, Munich and Leipzig, 1933; Peter Schumann, "Die deutschen Historikertage von 1893 bis 1937. Die Geschichte einer fachhistorischen Institution im Spiegel der Presse" (Marburg: Phil. Diss. 1974), pp. 397–400.
8. Willi Oberkrome, *Volksgeschichte. Methodische Innovation und völkische Ideologisierung in der deutschen Geschichtswissenschaft 1918–1945* (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 1993).
9. Cf. Karen Schönwälder, *Historiker und Politiker. Geschichtswissenschaft im Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt: Campus, 1992); Winfried Schulze, "German Historiography from the 1930s to the 1950s," in *Paths of Continuity. Central European Historiography from the 1930s to the 1960s*, ed. Hartmut Lehmann and James Horn van Melton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 19–42; Hans-Erich Volkmann, "Deutsche Historiker im Umgang mit Drittem Reich und Zweitem Weltkrieg 1939–1949," in *Ende des Dritten Reiches - Ende des Zweiten Weltkriegs. Eine perspektivische Rückschau*, ed. Hans-Erich Volkmann (Munich, Zürich: Piper, 1995), pp. 861–911; Wolf Ursula, *Litteris et Patriae. Das Janusgesicht der Historie* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1996); Götz Aly, "Rückwärtsgewandte Propheten. Willige

Historiker - Bemerkung in eigener Sache," in Götz Aly, *Macht, Geist, Wahn. Kontinuitäten deutschen Denkens* (Berlin: Argon, 1997), pp. 153–183; Ursula Wiggershaus-Müller, *Nationalsozialismus und Geschichtswissenschaft. Die Geschichte der Historischen Zeitschrift und des Historischen Jahrbuchs von 1933–1945* (Hamburg: Kovač, 1998); Hans-Erich Volkmann, "Deutsche Historiker im Banne des Nationalsozialismus," in *Verwandlungspolitik. NS-Eliten in der Nachkriegszeit*, ed. Wilfried Loth and Bernd Russinek (Frankfurt am Main and New York: Campus, 1998), pp. 285–311; *Deutsche Historiker im Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Winfried Schulze and Otto Gerhard Oexle (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1999); Willi Oberkrome, "Historiker im 'Dritten Reich'. Zum Stellenwert volkshistorischer Ansätze zwischen klassischer Politik und neuerer Sozialgeschichte," *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 50 (1999), pp. 74–98; Bernd Faulenbach, "Tendenzen der Geschichtswissenschaft im 'Dritten Reich,'" in *Berater der braunen Macht. Wissenschaft und Wissenschaftler im NS-Staat*, ed. Renate Knigge-Tesche (Frankfurt am Main: Anabas, 1999), pp. 26–52; Otto Gerhard Oexle, "'Zusammenarbeit mit Baal.' Über die Mentalitäten deutscher Geisteswissenschaftler 1933 - und nach 1945," *Historische Anthropologie* 8 (2000), pp. 1–27; Ingo Haar, *Historiker im Nationalsozialismus. Deutsche Geschichtswissenschaft und der "Volkstumskampf" im Osten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 2000); Joachim Lerchenmueller, *Die Geschichtswissenschaft in den Planungen des Sicherheitsdienstes der SS. Der SD-Historiker Hermann Löffler und seine "Gedenkschrift Entwicklung und Aufgaben der Geschichtswissenschaft in Deutschland"* (Bonn: Dietz, 2001); Elvert, *Geschichtswissenschaft* (footnote 3); *Südostforschung im Schatten des Dritten Reiches. Institutionen - Inhalte - Personen*, ed. Mathias Beer and Gerhard Seewann (München: Oldenbourg, 2004); *Nationalsozialismus in den Kulturwissenschaften*. Vol. 1: *Fächer - Milieus - Karrieren*, ed. Hartmut Lehmann and Otto Gerhard Oexle (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 2004); Gordon Wolnik, *Mittelalter und NS-Propaganda. Mittelalterbilder in den Print - Ton - und Bildmedien des Dritten Reiches* (Münster: Lit, 2004).

10. Though there are a number of articles available on most of the mentioned historians modern comprehensive biographies with the exception of Hermann Aubin (cf. footnote 11)

and Hans Rothfels are still missing. On Hans Rothfels see Jan Eckel and Hans Rothfels. *Eine intellektuelle Biographie im 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2005); Wolfgang Neugebauer, "Hans Rothfels' Weg zur vergleichenden Geschichte Ostmitteleuropas, besonders im Übergang von früher Neuzeit zur Moderne," *Berliner Jahrbücher für osteuropäische Geschichte* 1 (1996), pp. 333–378; Karl Heinz Roth, "Hans Rothfels. Geschichtspolitische Doktrinen im Wandel der Zeiten. Weimar—NS-Diktatur—Bundesrepublik," *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 49 (2001), pp. 1061–73; "on Maschke, Marian Biskup, "Erich Maschke - ein Vertreter der Königsberger Geschichtswissenschaft aus polnischer Sicht," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Mittel - und Ostdeutschlands* 41 (1993), pp. 91–107; on Pfitzner, Vojtěch Šustek, "Die nationalsozialistische Karriere eines sudetendeutschen Historikers," in *Josef Pfitzner a protektorátní Praha v letech 1939–1945. Svazek 1. Deník Josefa Pfitznera. Úředni koresüpondence Josefa Pfitznera s Karlem Hermanem Frankem*, Alena Miškova and Vojtěch Šustek (Praha: Scriptorum, 2000), pp. 71–109; Frank Hadler and Vojtěch Šustek, "Josef Pfitzner (1901–1945). Historiker, Geschichtsprofessor und Geschichtspolitiker," in *Prager Professoren 1938–1948 zwischen Wissenschaft und Politik*, ed. Monika Glettler and Alena Miškova (Essen: Klartext, 2001), pp. 105–135; on Srbik, Karen Schönwälder, "Heinrich von Srbik, 'Gesamtdeutscher' Historiker und 'Vertrauensmann' des nationalsozialistischen Deutschland," in *Geschichte der Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gesellschaft im Nationalsozialismus. Bestandsaufnahmen und Perspektiven der Forschung*, vols. 1 and 2, ed. Doris Kaufmann and Susanne Heim (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2000), pp. 528–544; Michael Derndarsky, "Zwischen 'Idee' und 'Wirklichkeit.' Das alte Reich in der Sicht Heinrich von Srbiks," in *Imperium Romanum - Irregulare Corpus - Teutscher Reichsrat. Das alte Reich im Verständnis der Zeitgenossen und der Historiker*, ed. Matthias Schnettger (Mainz: von Zabern, 2002), pp. 189–205; on Brandi, Wolfgang Petke, "Karl Brandi und die Geschichtswissenschaft," in *Geschichtswissenschaft in Göttingen. Eine Vorlesungsreihe*, ed. Hartmut Boockmann and Hermann Wellenreuther (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 1987), pp. 287–320.

11. On Aubin in greater detail see Eduard Mühle, *Für Volk und deutschen Osten. Der Historiker Hermann Aubin und die deutsche Ostforschung* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 2005).

12. On the North and East German Research Society and German *Ostforschung* cf. Michael Burleigh, *Germany Turns Eastwards. A Study of* Ostforschung *in the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Eduard Mühle, "'Ostforschung.' Beobachtungen zu Aufstieg und Niedergang eines geschichtswissenschaftlichen Paradigmas," *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung* 46 (1997), pp. 317–349; Michael Fahlbusch, *Wissenschaft im Dienst der nationalsozialistischen Politik? Die "Volksdeutschen Forschungsgemeinschaften" von 1931–1945*, (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1999); Martin Burkert, *Die Ostwissenschaften im Dritten Reich. Teil 1: Zwischen Verbot und Duldung. Die schwierige Gratwanderung der Ostwissenschaften zwischen 1933 und 1939*, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2000); Jörg Hackmann, "Deutsche Ostforschung und Geschichtswissenschaft," in *Deutsche Ostforschung und polnische Westforschung im Spannungsfeld von Wissenschaft und Politik. Disziplinen im Vergleich*, ed. Jan M. Piskorski, Jörg Hackmann and Rudolf Jaworski (Osnabrück and Poznań: Fibre/PTPN, 2002), pp. 25–45.
13. On Brackmann cf. Adam Kosiński, "Polityczny profesor," *Przegląd Zachodni* 3 (1947), pp. 980–992; Michael Burleigh, "Albert Brackmann. 'Ostforscher' (1871–1952): The Years of Retirement," *Journal of Contemporary History* 23 (1988), pp. 573–578; Haar (cf. footnote 9), pp. 106–124.
14. Letter of the Board of the Saarforschungsgemeinschaft (Hermann Aubin, Friedrich Schmitt-Ott, Gräfin von Sierstorpff) to Chancellor Hitler, October 2, 1933, Landesarchiv Saarbrücken La Sb, SM 12, quoted after Haar (cf. footnote 9), p. 192.
15. Letter of Aubin to the Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Leipzig, September 23, 1939, Universitätsarchiv Leipzig, B 2/20:31, Bl. 41–42.
16. Petition of the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Breslau, on the Education of Students in Matters of the East, June 9, 1937, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Berlin, HA I, Rep. 76, Nr. 449, Bl. 2–12.
17. The term was coined by one of Aubin's students, namely Herbert Schlenger, "Deutsche Ostraumforschung. Ein problemgeschichtlicher Überblick," in *Deutscher Osten. Erbe und Aufgaben* (Düsseldorf and Cologne: Diederichs, 1951), pp. 19–34, here p. 27; for a more detailed account cf. Eduard Mühle, "Die 'schlesische Schule der Ostforschung.'

Hermann Aubin und sein Breslauer Arbeitskreis in den Jahren des Nationalsozialismus," in *Śląska republika uczonych/ Schlesische Gelehrtenrepublik/Slezká vědecká obec*, ed. Marek Hałub and Anna Mańko-Matysiak (Wrocław: Atut, 2004), pp. 568–607.

18. The following interpretation of Aubin's view on the East is based mainly on Hermann Aubin, "Der deutsche Osten und das deutsche Volk," *Deutsche Rundschau* 56 (1930), pp. 95–109; Hermann Aubin, "Wege kulturgeschichtlicher Erforschung des deutschen Ostens," *Mitteilungen der schlesischen Gesellschaft für Volkskunde* 31 (1930), pp. 1–31; Hermann Aubin, "Das Deutsche Reich und die Völker des Ostens," *Die Burg. Vierteljahresschrift des Instituts für Deutsche Ostarbeit* 1 (1940), pp. 7–20; Hermann Aubin, "Deutschland und der Osten," *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Staatswissenschaft* 100 (1940), pp. 385–411.
19. The notion of *deutscher Volks - und Kulturboden*, though already known in the nineteenth century, became a central concept of interpreting the "East" only with Albrecht Penck, "Deutscher Volks - und Kulturboden," in *Volk unter Völkern. Bücher des Deutschtums*, vol. 1, ed. Karl Christian Loesch (Breslau: Hirt, 1925), pp. 62–73, map between pp. 72 and 73.
20. All preceding quotes from Aubin, *Das Deutsche Reich und die Völker des Ostens* (cf. footnote 18).
21. Aubin, *Deutschland und der Osten* (cf. footnote 18), pp. 409, 411.
22. Aubin in a letter to Brackmann, September 18, 1939, Bundesarchiv Berlin R 153/291; published in Angelika Ebbinghaus and Karl Heinz Rot, *Vorläufer des 'Generalplans Ost.' Eine Dokumentation über Theodor Schieders Polendenkschrift vom 7.10.1939*, in *1999. Zeitschrift für Sozialgeschichte des 20. und 21. Jahrhunderts,* 1 (1992), pp. 62–94, esp. 78–79.
23. Aubin, *Deutschland und der Osten* (cf. footnote 18), p. 385; Hermann Aubin, *Geschichtlicher Aufriß des Ostraumes* (Berlin: Hugo, 1940), p. 5.
24. "...dass die Volkstumsfragen bei der Neueinrichtung der deutschen Verwaltung in Polen in das richtige Geleise gebracht werden," Aubin in his letter to Brackmann (cf. footnote 22).

25. Birke in a letter to Siegfried A. Kaehler, March 15, 1944, Staats - und Universitätsbibliothek Göttingen, Cod. Ms. S.A. Kaehler 1, 14, nr. 76.
26. Aubin in a letter to Johannes Papritz, September 29, 1938, Bundesarchiv Berlin R 153/1355.
27. Ludwig Petry, "Zur Rolle der Universität Breslau in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus. Aus Erinnerungen, Aufzeichnungen und Korrespondenzen eines Habilitanden und Dozenten der Philosophischen Fakultät," in *Nationalsozialismus und Widerstand in Schlesien*, ed. Lothar Bossle (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1989), pp. 79–102, here p. 96–97.
28. Aubin in a letter to his editor Kirchgarber, January 19, 1940, Oddział Rękopisów Biblioteki Uniwersyteckiej Wrocław, Akc. 1949/1622 and Aubin in a letter to Brackmann, July 26, 1939, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Berlin, HA I, Rep. 92, NL Brackmann Nr. 1, Bl. 104.
29. *Jahresbericht des Instituts für Geschichtliche Landeskunde der Universität Breslau für das Jahr 1938/39* (Breslau, 1939), p. 7; *Jahresbericht des Instituts für Geschichtliche Landeskunde der Universität Breslau für das Jahr 1939/40* (Breslau, 1940), pp. 3, 6, 7–8.
30. Publikationsstelle in a letter to the Ministry of the Interior, September 29, 1939, Bundesarchiv Berlin, R 153/287; Brackmann in a letter to the Chief Minister of Prussia, November 1, 1939, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Berlin, HA I, Rep. 178 B, Paket 9074, Bl. 150–152.
31. The outline to be found under the title "Arbeitsplan für die Denkschrift über die ostdeutsche Reichs - und Volksgrenze. Protokoll der Sitzung vom 28.9.1939," in Bundesarchiv Berlin, R 153/291; published in Ebbinghaus and Roth (cf. footnote 22), pp. 80–82.
32. The final version of the memorandum under the title "Aufzeichnung über die Fragen der Eindeutschung Posens und Westpreussens und der damit zusammenhängenden Umsiedlungen," in Politisches Archiv des auswärtigen Amtes Berlin R 104208, Bl. 21–28.
33. Cf. Albert Brackmann, "Das Wesen der polnischen Geschichte," in *Unser Kampf in Polen. Die Vorgeschichte - strategische Einführung—politische und kriegerische Dokumente* (München: Bruckmann, 1939), pp. 5–12, here p. 5: "The Poles [. . .] are

without staying power and hence without strong leadership incapable of political and economic organization."

34. Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men. Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1998); *Genesis des Genozids. Polen 1939–1941*, ed. Klaus-Michael Mallmann and Bogdan Musial (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2004).

Chapter 5

The Languages of Occupation: Vocabularies of German Rule in Eastern Europe in the World Wars

Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius

The aim of this chapter, which is part of a larger project on German stereotypes of Eastern European lands and peoples during the modern period, is to discuss key terms in the vocabulary of German administration and occupation in Eastern Europe in both world wars. Examined and compared here are the vocabularies of *Ober Ost* (the German occupation regime in the Baltic during World War I) and the Nazi *Ostland*.

By "language" I mean to designate both the terms themselves to be explored here as well as the general style of usage characteristic of the occupation regimes, giving an overview of their inner logic as well as notable contradictions or hidden tensions and telling ambiguities. The Dresden linguist and famous diarist Victor Klemperer's study of Nazi vocabulary, entitled *LTI* (an acronym he created for "the language of the Third Reich")

made clear how fascinating such an approach could be. Indeed, at the same time, Heinz Paechter and his associates working for the Allies, collected what he called a "glossary of contemporary German usage," titling it *Nazi-Deutsch*. It was published in English in the United States in 1944.[1] All this predated any linguistic turn in historiography. Klemperer, like Paechter, intuited that there was much at stake in the Nazi conquest of German. To explain why, he adapted Friedrich Schiller's maxim on "language which composes and thinks for you" (Sprache, die für dich dichtet und denkt), steering the convictions and actions of individuals and masses alike.[2] The Nazi ideology had been absorbed by the German people not through argument or conversion, Klemperer concluded, but rather "Nazism glided over into the flesh and blood of the masses through the single words, the turns of phrase, the syntax, which it imposed through millions of repetitions and which were mechanically and unconsciously taken up."[3] For Klemperer, the disturbing proof of this was near at hand: he caught himself using some of these terms, and recorded many instances of victims and opponents of the regime falling back on its vocabulary as well.[4] He insisted that the Nazis had not so much created new terms (perhaps in fact none at all) but rather gave new meaning and currency to earlier ones.

Of course, there is an enormous range of words that might be considered, but here only a small number of them will be illuminated for a first view of the problem: a range of collective terms for referring to native peoples, *Kultur*, *Deutsche Arbeit*, and *Aufbau*. These are terms and usages accompanying a colonial imagination, creating what might be called a mindscape, a comprehensive view of the occupied territory, its current state, and its future potential. A key dynamic at work in the changing languages of occupation (anticipated by Klemperer's suspicion that the Nazis had invented no new forms in the German language) is that clearly older terms can be put to new uses, with nearly identical formulations in fact carrying entirely different charges.

Some of the terms and the ideological messages that were attached to them actually had older pedigrees, reflecting

varieties of German "orientalism" in thinking about Eastern Europe, legacies of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[5] So-called philosophical geographies of Enlightenment thinkers, including Germans, had postulated Eastern Europe as a realm outside of the civilized Western Europe, but perhaps still "redeemable" through the spread of their doctrines.[6] German Romantic thinkers and historians of the nineteenth century also evolved a contradictory set of ideas about the East, either idealizing its possibilities and authenticity (in the tradition of Johann Gottfried Herder) or seeing it as the mere object of German expansion in a supposedly elemental *Drang nach Osten* or manifest destiny of a "drive to the East" and a German cultural mission there. Parallel to high intellectual renderings of Eastern Europe ran more basic common prejudices and older stereotypes of this region as characterized by disorder, reflected in the dismissive imprecation *polnische Wirtschaft* (Polish management) and a supposed "cultural gradient" (*Kulturgefälle*) sloping further down into primitive abysses the further east one went (notions that had also been used to justify the partitions of Poland in the eighteenth century).[7] Yet even such images of the East tended to emphasize a monolithic unity of the subjects of the Tsar in a dynastic, despotic empire somehow overarchingly Russian. These views would be challenged and transformed or elaborated upon as a result of the concrete encounters and actual practices of occupation in Eastern Europe during both world wars in the twentieth century, the "discovery" of differentiated "Land und Leute," distinct "lands and peoples."

With the outbreak of World War I, such images were put to the test, confronted with the reality of Eastern Europe for invading German armies on enemy soil. The East would in many respects represent a surprise. The opening drama of the war, however, was first an incursion by Russian armies into East Prussia in 1914. This trauma was carefully, indeed lovingly, cultivated by German propaganda in the war, as the Russian invasion, eventually turned back by Generals Hindenburg and Ludendorff, was presented as exhibit A for the crucial assertion that Germany was fighting a defensive war, and cemented the

internal truce of the *Burgfrieden*. Then, from 1915 on, German armies occupied vast areas of the Northwestern Territories of the Russian Empire along the Baltic and established a military state there named *Ober Ost* (after the title of the Supreme Commander in the East, *Der Oberbefehlshaber Ost*). Just like the invasion of East Prussia, the Great Advance of 1915 left strong impressions on the soldiers. Over the course of the war, some 2–3 million German soldiers participated in the experience of the Eastern Front.

The *Ober Ost* state, in present-day Lithuania, Latvia, northern Poland, Belarus (and later Estonia), ruled over a striking ethnic mixture of some 3 million people. The improvised military utopia pursued two contradictory lines of policy. On the one hand, in the area of politics and economics, the state insisted as a military necessity on a monopoly of German military rule, preparing for the integration of these territories into the sphere of German influence in whatever form (direct annexation or indirect rule), while also striving for economic autarky. This last was to be achieved by a policy of "Verkehrspolitik," with the aim of controlling all movement in the territory and channelling economic activity to the uses of the state and the German war effort. Its measures involved censuses, strict limitations on movement through the use of passes and administrative borders, intensive requisitioning and exploitation of the area's natural resources, and forced labor. On the other hand, in the cultural realm, *Ober Ost* officials initiated programs that were intended to win the nationalities of the area for a future of German-sponsored tutelage or control. To this end, *Ober Ost* devoted a surprising amount of resources and attention to cultural programs.[8] These were ostensibly intended for the benefit and advancement of the subject native populations, even though the masses of ordinary people experienced little of these initiatives, their lives instead influenced much more by the physical privations of the wartime economy and the army's requisitions. In fact, such cultural policies also seemed to promise a great prize for the occupier: a strengthened German identity, transcending the many divisions and fragmentations of the *Kaiserreich*

period, and given direction and purpose by a cultural mission in the East.

The views of the lands and peoples of Eastern Europe, and particularly of the occupied area, oscillated between an appreciation of the great diversity of ethnic identities revealed by real contact with the area and the contrary impulse of seeing an undifferentiated foreign mass. The first important feature to mention in this context was the psychologically crucial moment of Russian invasion of East Prussia. Although more recent studies argue that the invasion was in fact not marked by systematic brutality on the part of Russian troops, the question is how this episode was depicted and instrumentalized by German propaganda, creating an important and durable "memory" of violation and incursion. From the beginning, the Russian attack was ethnically encoded as a deluge of barbaric Slavic masses, an elemental catastrophe, not a "civilized war" on the model of the nineteenth century's understandings. The feared archetypal figure embodying alleged Russian cruelties was that of the Cossack, and the cry *Kosaken kommen* carried an enormous emotional charge. The Russian forces were stamped as barbaric. In the Declaration of the 93 German intellectuals, of October 4, 1914, the "Aufruf an die Kulturwelt," this was made clear, as the writers of the manifesto charged that "in the East, the blood of women and children slaughtered by the Russian hordes soaks the ground."[9] The manifesto announced German identity as that of a *Kulturvolk*, struggling against barbaric forces (an irony given that German propagandists would struggle against the label of "German barbarians" themselves all through the war).

With the victories of the battles of Tannenberg and the Masurian Lakes, expelling Russian forces, and as German armies passed over to the attack and advanced into the Russian Northwest Territories in 1915, the terms of the encounter with the ethnic groups of the enemy lands changed. Though many Germans had prior experience with and views of Poles as a minority, the other native peoples found here in dizzying array were unfamiliar: Lithuanians, Latvians, Livonians, Belarusians,

Baltic Germans, Tatars, Eastern Jews. There was much fascinated discussion of each foreign *Antlitz* (visage) or *Eigenart* (unique character). Indeed, for the administrators of *Ober Ost*, this very array seemed to offer tantalizing future political possibilities—given the diversity of these borderlands, they might just as well be ordered by a German Great Power as a Muscovite one, the reasoning went. In line with this consideration, a difficulty arose in terms of nomenclature: how were these groups to be called? With a seeming nod to colonial rhetoric of tribalism, they were variously referred to as *Stämme* (tribes), *Völkerschaften* (people-groups), or, most bizarrely, *Fremdvölker* or *Fremdstämmigen* (foreign peoples or tribes). When the effort of differentiation became too great for ordinary soldiers, they could fall back on a general stereotype, that of the *Panje*. This mildly derisive term was taken from Polish, the vocative of "sir," and was applied indiscriminately to people of different Slavic or non-Slavic ethnicities alike, as well as to physical objects: thus, Panje-horses, Panje-huts, Panje-villages. The stereotypical *Panje* also had a supposedly typical Slavic word in his mouth, one that expressed his alleged essential fatalistic passivity and shiftlessness: *Nichevo* ("nothing" or essentially "never mind").

When the effort was made to understand the lines of ethnic division, separate nationalities were valued differently by German soldier newspapers, as Robert Nelson has shown.[10] In defining different subject peoples further complications arose, especially in the case of the Jews (whose dialect was sometimes labeled "Jiddisch-Deutsch" to stress the linguistic proximity) and Belarusians (Germans debated whether they were to be called *Weissrussen* or *Weissruthenen*, White Russians or White Ruthenes, where the latter term seemed to stress the distance between this group and the Great Russians). In terms of the physical state of the lands, often devastated by combat or by concerted Russian scorched earth policy (which entailed the forced evacuation of some million people), soldiers and administrators alike spoke of "Russian conditions," of a landscape of emptiness, and remarked on the filth and infestation of the area and its populations. Paul Weindling has suggestively argued how the obsession with Russian lice could

lead to the stereotype of an essentially diseased non-German population.[11] Finally, in the later stages of the war, something that yet needs to be further explored by historians, the fight against motley bandit groups, *Bandenunwesen*, began to add a further element of generalization to stereotypes of natives.

Two cardinal ideological terms stand out in the vocabulary of occupation in World War I: *Kultur* and *Deutsche Arbeit*. It is necessary to situate them in their larger ideological and political context, in some sense also running counter to commonplaces about World War I being less ideological than World War II.

To justify its ambitions for the *Ober Ost* territory, the administration's official statements, military newspapers, and guidebooks published for soldiers and visitors presented the army's work as part of a German cultural mission of bringing *Kultur* and *Bildung* (education and cultivation) to the East. The immediate context for such pronouncements was the evolving complex of what came to be called the "Ideas of 1914."[12] From the outbreak of the war, German intellectuals, including Thomas Mann, had expanded on the opposition of German *Kultur*, supposedly rooted, organic, and authentic, in opposition to the *Zivilisation* of the Anglo-Saxons and French, supposedly artificial, technological, and soullessly materialistic. But the same opposition of culture and civilization as was postulated in the West did not seem to work here in the putative wastelands of the East, however. In the occupied territories of the East, the Germans supposedly confronted only sheer *Unkultur*, the stark negation of their attainments and values. Such views about Eastern Europe were not original to World War I, but built on older stereotypes of this region.

In formulating explanations for their presence and undertaking, the administrators brought together in *Ober Ost* seized on the idea of "Deutsche Arbeit," "German Work," which claimed that German national identity was marked by a genius for organization and a specific style of work that ordered and shaped, free from the alienation of the industrial age, but rather somehow authentic and organic. The term itself and the basic concept originated with a Romantic thinker of the nineteenth century, Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl (the "father of

Volkskunde"). He had published a book in 1861 entitled *Die deutsche Arbeit*, as a contribution to a larger nineteenth-century debate on work in Germany. Fascinating in our context is how this phrase then came to be used in German colonial discourses of the nineteenth century, for African holdings, but also for German South American diasporas. But this slogan was now put to other uses, as it was instrumentalized as an explanation for German presence and action in the East. Indeed, the propaganda volume published by the administration in 1917, which represented a kind of "owner's manual" to the territory, bore the evocative subtitle: "German Work in the Administrative Areas of Kurland, Lithuania, and Bialystok-Grodno." Often, the term *Kulturarbeit*, cultural work, was used as a synonym, linking it firmly to the complex of ideas about the value of *Kultur*. German Work would take the area in hand, making it over and harnessing the scattered immature energies of the natives, under the direction of hard masters from outside.

Ober Ost sought to control the subject peoples through its cultural program, which would define the ethnic identities of the native peoples, under German custodianship. Ludendorff declared confidently that on its own, "the motley population cannot create any *Kultur*."[13] The army would cultivate the different ethnic groups, through different cultural initiatives. The military published newspapers in native languages. Native schools were regulated, their subjects dictated, especially the teaching of the German language, which was to eventually bring natives into the sphere of German culture. Army scholars investigated the histories of the native peoples in archives and through archeological excavations. Army reviewers assessed and criticized native theater performances, and German military theaters were urged to stage uplifting plays that showed German drama at its best and would impress natives, rather than light entertainments. Censorship offices sought to suppress books or literature that might engender political passions in the occupied territories. Authentic native folk arts and trades were to be preserved and practiced by craftsmen in living museums called Work Rooms (*Arbeitsstuben*).

In sum, a remarkable level of effort and attention was directed toward cultural programs in this time of war. As was announced at a conference held in 1916 at the headquarters of *Ober Ost* (as recalled by Captain Friedrich Bertkau, who headed the press section), the press and censorship policies were to present the clear message that "we are the ones who bring education [*Bildung*], and no one else."[14]

The native peoples, under the cultural tutelage of the German army, would supposedly slowly rise to the level of full nations. Their physical labor would be coordinated by German Work from above. Further, the authorities observed that national identity was malleable in this area (with notoriously shifting self-identifications, and some families breaking down along different ethnic planes of fracture). This led them to calculate that economic well-being would bring sympathy for German rule and pliant national identities dependent on that sponsorship. In the euphoria after the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, the expectation was that this laid the foundations for a German area of political and cultural control in the East, under the capacious slogan of *Mitteleuropa*, all the more popular as it united very contradictory visions of the future.[15] In fact, these measures, along with the severities of *Verkehrspolitik*, actually worked at cross-purposes and produced in native populations a dull resentment and inner reserve, not a grateful acceptance.

With the German collapse in the West in 1918, these plans also broke down with great speed. Conclusions were drawn from those failures, formed in the violent aftermath of the war. These conclusions formed a hidden legacy of World War I. One of the essential lessons that those who had worked in *Ober Ost* took back with them was that the East was intractable and not to be reformed. Even though it seemed to many that with the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk half the war had been won, as Golo Mann perceptively noted, this victory came to naught and seemed to underline the treacherous nature of the East.[16] More vaguely, there was also the sentiment that the outcome of the war and the Versailles Treaty had reversed natural hierarchies of peoples. Such obsessions with the reversal of hierarchies are obviously

familiar from the context of European colonial and postcolonial experience, but now were transposed to Eastern Europe. This anxiety and antipathy was expressed especially toward Poland, which had gained territory at Germany's "bleeding borders." The resurrected Polish state was condemned as an unnatural construct, as a *Raubstaat* or *Saisonstaat*. Such anger was common among the German officer class in the interwar period, and produced an anti-Polish consensus as Hitler readied for his assault on Poland in 1939. On the level of popular literature, the genre of *Freikorps* memoirs and novels, especially the enormously popular works of Edwin Erich Dwinger, reinforced these themes and fused them with anti-Bolshevism, presenting communism as a further symptom of Eastern Europe's dangerous essence. In general, also under the influence of geopolitical concepts during and especially after World War I, thinking of the East in terms of *Raum* (space), rather than *Land und Leute* (lands and peoples) grew apace. Along with the racialization of ethnic differences that was so markedly furthered in this postwar turmoil, a true hinge of violence and brutalization, the categories *Raum und Volk* now came into common usage.

Since, by contrast with the episode of *Ober Ost* in World War I, the Nazis' plans and actions in Eastern Europe are far better known, it will suffice here just to highlight several episodes in a far more complex historical scene. The Nazi movement made expansion into Eastern Europe and the conquest of *Lebensraum* one of its cardinal ideas and it was the furthering of this long-term goal that led to Hitler's unleashing of World War II with the attack on Poland in 1939. As the recent work by Alexander Rossino has compellingly stated, Nazi ideological warfare, including its genocidal element, began here, in 1939, not only later in 1941, when of course it rose to its horrific crescendo.[17]

Later, in further pursuit of *Lebensraum*, in June 1941, Hitler turned on his former ally, the Soviet Union, and invaded its territories, including the areas Stalin had annexed in the Baltic region and Poland as a result of the earlier Nazi-Soviet partition of Eastern Europe. Shortly before the attack on the Soviet

Union, Alfred Rosenberg, a veteran Nazi whose Baltic German background gave him a reputation for mastery (albeit of a muddled sort) of the realities of Eastern Europe and Russia, was put in charge of the future administration of the East. He was to lead the Reich Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories (Reichsministerium für die besetzten Ostgebiete), also commonly referred to as the East Ministry (Ostministerium). In August 1941, territories that had been administered by the German armies now passed to civil administration. These were to be divided into two Reich Commissariats, the Reichskommissariat Ukraine (under Erich Koch) and the Reichskommissariat Ostland (under Hinrich Lohse), which were put into operation on September 1, 1941. The Reichskommissariat Ostland (RKO) was an anomalous creation in that it included the Baltic Republics of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, as well as Belarus, very different areas brought under one heading.[18]

Beyond the broad currents of Nazi propaganda, Hitler's own private conceptions of Eastern Europe were unequivocal and brutal. These areas were to be regarded as space for the taking for his future *Herrenvolk*. Internal consolidation within Germany would be followed by imperialist expansion. The spaces of Eastern Europe were to be cleared and cleansed of the "subhuman" populations inhabiting them, in Hitler's conception. The Jewish communities were slated for immediate destruction. For the rest, there was to be no question of cultural edification of the native populations, for in Hitler's racial worldview this would only produce problems for the future by giving the future helot populations political leadership. Hitler insisted that "above all, nobody must let loose the German schoolmaster on the Eastern territories!" for "nothing could be a worse mistake on our part than to seek to educate the masses there. It is in our interest that the people should know just enough to recognize the signs on the roads."[19] Hitler's private conversations expanded on his ideas of the future development of the East as colonial territory for the Germans, as a field of experiment and labor.

Alfred Rosenberg's view of Eastern Europe and Russia, while in agreement with Hitler on the fundamentals, urged

a "differentiated policy towards the Eastern nationalities."[20] While the non-Russian peoples of Eastern Europe were not to be allowed self-determination as such, they were nevertheless to be recruited into a live wall directed against a revival of Russia. Rosenberg's own weaknesses as an administrator and his unfailing deference to the ideological primacy of Hitler's conception when challenged, meant that little of this proposal could be put into practice. Piled on top of these internal contradictions was the further reality that the policies followed in the RKO and the other occupied areas of the East were not only the products of ideological imperatives or independent ministerial decisions, but were also affected by the institutional rivalries and struggles between different offices and bureaucracies seeking to carve out spheres of action in the East. The East Ministry had institutional rivals in the expanding SS empire, the Propaganda Ministry, the army administrations, and other offices, not least its own Reichskommissars. The ministry itself was so disorganized and fragmented that it was mockingly referred to as the *Chaosministerium*.[21] Alexander Dallin summed up the general situation as "authoritarian anarchy."[22] The "institutional Darwinism" that historians have used to describe the radicalizing dynamics of the Nazi government machine here had free play.

As the tide of battle with the Soviet Union turned in 1942–1943, however, attempts were made to chart a more pragmatic course to seek to enlist the subject populations in what was now presented as a common European cause. The growth of SS legions was depicted in these terms. Rosenberg and the East Ministry suggested alterations in policy, including the prospect of native cultural autonomy, but met with ideological resistance in the Nazi leadership. The credibility of such efforts among the subject populations was also problematic, given the rhetoric and brutal policies of the previous years.

From 1941 to 1944, such contradictory policies were presented with propaganda slogans of construction and culture. The slogan of Reichskommissar Hinrich Lohse in the RKO was *Aufbau und Kultur*.[23] The notion of *Aufbau* or "building

up" suggested construction on virgin ground, developing undeveloped areas in the East, with the implication that nothing of note preceded this structure. The most common formulation of these slogans was *Aufbau im Osten*. Indeed, Lohse himself published an article in 1942 entitled "Ostland baut auf," "Ostland Builds Up."[24] The propaganda products of RKO struck these themes again and again. A collection of writings about travel through the RKO territory was officially published in Riga in 1944. Its contributions from visiting journalists emphasized the *Aufbau* that was taking place here under German leadership, promising yet further advances for the future. The first article also looked back to the past of the area, claiming that "German achievement has set the stamp on this land and in fact has done this so deeply that even over the centuries of being separated from the Reich, it has not taken on any other impress . . . The culture of the inhabitants has German foundations."[25] Other contributions were entitled "German Leadership in the Ostland," "Ostland Faces a New Future," or the familiar formulation, *Aufbau im Osten*.

At the same time, in discussing German views of Eastern European peoples during World War II, an indispensable starting point is the cautionary note registered by Gerhard Hirschfeld, that in fact there were clearly not uniform and monolithic views of Eastern European peoples, but rather a diversity of opinion, shadings of views, and moreover an anachronistic coexistence of older terms and views with newer ones derived from Nazi ideology.[26] These could be fused by the Nazis into support for their most radical initiatives.

An example of this precise phenomenon is provided in Rossino's discussion of the Polish campaign, where a prewar precedent of special anti-Polish sentiment could be mobilized for approval or passive acceptance of Nazi genocide.[27] Rossino discusses the rhetoric associated with Operation Tannenberg in Poland. This was a killing wave running in tandem with the invasion in the course of which more than 50,000 were killed before December 1939. Poles resisting the invasion were described as "'terrorists,' 'bandits,' 'agitators,' and 'riff-raff,'

terms that did not define them as people defending their homes and country, but as reprehensible criminals capable of any despicable act."[28]

Such radicalization of earlier views was a development most fully elaborated in the *Weltanschauungskrieg* against the Soviet Union. The views of German soldiers have been discussed in detail in Stephen Fritz's *Frontsoldaten* and Bartov's *Hitler's Army*.[29] The racialization of opposition, bracketed as "partisans" or "bandits," was a crucial step, and its potential was underlined by Hitler himself, who had stated "the partisan war gives us the possibility to exterminate everyone who opposes us."[30]

If one turns to examine more closely some of the terms used most frequently as slogans or ideological markers in the occupation in the East, one may see how they functioned in the larger Nazi language. The terms to be scrutinized are the slogans of the linked terms of *Aufbau* and *Kultur*. These terms turn out to be marked by their ambiguous usages. They shifted as the policies they were associated with shifted (or merely descended into incoherence). These ambiguities seem to second the observation of Klemperer that this "language of mass fanaticism," in its internal disorder and irrationality, could turn on itself, deconstructing itself through its inherent contradictions, as in the inflationary overuse of the word "fanatical" as a high compliment.[31]

Aufbau had a built-in ambiguity. It could be taken in several senses. On the one hand, it meant building up where nothing had stood before, new construction. On the other hand, especially when rendered as *Wiederaufbau*, it could also be used to indicate reconstruction, the replacement of damaged structures. In the occupied territories of the East, the meaning given to the term could shift, depending on the fortunes of the regime. The Nazi racial ideology and presuppositions about the peoples of Eastern Europe held that indeed the Germans, as *Kulturträger* (carriers of culture), were building up new constructions in *Neuland*, which before had been a desolation, not least in terms of its racial human material. The term was already in evidence in sources from the conquest of Poland in 1939.[32] An allied term often invoked in describing this new land to be intensively used for total war was *Erschliessung*, opening for exploitation.

Yet when trying to enlist native populations under occupation, to win some of the 18 million people for a putative common cause against the advancing Soviets as the war turned, the sense of rebuilding would be invoked. Thus, Lohse would write of the *Wiederaufbau* of the industrial base of the Baltic countries, following on the *Abbau* of Soviet institutions and nationalization of enterprises.[33] Lohse asserted that the natives were being won for a common goal and blandly claimed that "this cooperation proceeds throughout in the most pleasant forms."[34] This was a common European *Aufbauwerk*, he asserted, the community that was being formed in the struggle against the Bolsheviks. A variation of the term also occurs in Lohse's writing and in propagandistic travel reports on the RKO, where *Neubau* is the word used, perhaps seeking to evade the ambiguities raised by the earlier term by stressing instead the potentialities of future collaboration. The *Neubau im Osten* could build on the foundations of native peoples' determination to avoid a return of Soviet rule, one account argued.[35]

The paired term in Reichskommissar Lohse's slogan of RKO, *Kultur*, also was subject to ambiguities that were of an older vintage. *Kultur* had certainly been a slogan during World War I. The Nazis' anti-intellectualism, however, could make the use of *Kultur* as a motivating slogan problematic. In a play by Hanns Johst, the *Freikorps* fighter Schlageter (who was posthumously adopted as a hero by the Nazi movement for its pantheon of ancestors) is quoted to say: "If I hear the word culture, I ready my pistol."[36] This phrase is also often attributed to Göring. Himmler's statement that the peoples of the East would be fit only to serve as "slaves for our culture" made it clear that the term was being used in ways Thomas Mann or Herder would scarcely recognize.[37] In fact, the term was being used as a synonym for German racial essence, rather than an attainment or cultivated trait.

Finally, there was a striking and very important exception to the ambiguities of the slogans and ideological terms mentioned above, and that was in the use of the label of "Jew" and "Jewish." The usages here do not show the kind of multivalence the other terms often exhibit. This observation confirms

Klemperer's observation concerning the essential centrality of anti-Semitism to Nazi ideology. As he suggested, it was the core belief in their practice of racism.[38] The frequent Nazi locution of "Judeo-Bolshevism" is invoked by Lohse, who concludes his mission statement for the RKO with the affirmation of a common struggle of the peoples against "a Jewish-Bolshevik world of hate, jealousy, and decay."[39] The travel writers sometimes observed another disturbing convention, speaking in vague and cloaked terms of the disappearance of the Jews in the *Ostland*. The reports observe, as if this were a natural phenomenon, that "here, the earlier very strongly represented Jewish element has receded."[40] Or they note that "the Jews have almost vanished from the village scene. Only here and there slips a crouched figure with the yellow fleck on the back in the ghetto behind the barbed wire."[41] This was not ambiguity, but the evasion of responsibility through passive formulations.

This initial examination of the vocabularies of occupation of Eastern Europe during two world wars attests to the strong and clear presence of colonial models in how the occupations were imagined.[42] Yet it also underlines how much we need to speak in a differentiated way about colonialisms in the plural, recognizing the contrasts between occupations in the two world wars. Even the use of older terms (a continuity of vocabulary), once coupled with the fixity of Nazi racial hatred, could be turned to policies that were discontinuous with earlier, more restrained patterns of interaction with Eastern Europe. Klemperer's contemporary intuition that the Nazis did not create new words but rather perverted earlier ones is substantially supported by this examination. The word *Kultur* remained, but was stripped of the earlier rhetoric of a civilizing mission, standing instead at the inauguration of a brutal, genocidal new ordering.

NOTES

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Chapter 6

The Conquest of Nature and the Mystique of the Eastern Frontier in Nazi Germany

David Blackbourn

German subjugation of Poland in 1939 and early military successes against the Soviet Union after June 1941 unleashed grandiose projects for German settlements in the east. These proposed the uprooting of tens of millions of people. Germans and other approved races would be the settlers. Some of the original inhabitants would be "Germanized"; the rest were marked down for destruction, slave labor as "helot" peoples, or "resettlement" further east. This is now fairly well known, thanks to a striking shift of emphasis among recent historians of the Third Reich, away from the years 1933–1939, toward the six wartime years that followed. Scholars have familiarized us with the planning for a "German East": Its brutality and soured utopianism, its dynamism that was always colored by interagency disputes. Many different elements and motives in those plans have been drawn out: a belief in geopolitical destiny; the loot and plunder of materials and manpower;

the technocratic zeal of planners and "experts"; the drive for *Lebensraum*, or "living space"; the perceived need for military security on the border; the imperative of provisioning the *Wehrmacht*; and the underlying (although in practice highly inconsistent) belief in German racial superiority, with its corollary, the sense of a mission to bring German "order" to the backward east. This chapter discusses two aspects of German plans for the east that have received less attention. They are signaled in the title. The conquest of nature is the term widely used in modern Germany to describe the reclamation of marshland and moorland, the regulation of rivers, and the building of dams to store drinking water, hold back floods, or generate hydroelectric power. I am interested in the way that these interventions in the natural world physically reshaped the land, but also in the cultural meanings that were attached to these changes and the political-economic power relations that framed them. For, as Christof Dipper has neatly put it, the human domination of nature (*die Herrschaft der Natur*) tells us a lot about the nature of human domination (*die Natur der Herrschaft*).[1] That is certainly true of Germany during the Third Reich, and perhaps even more true of German-occupied areas in Eastern Europe. These became virtually a laboratory for attempts to create a landscape "tamed" and ordered in the German image.[2] And the historically based mystique of the hardy German settler on the eastern frontier was central to these endeavors.

Let me begin this chapter in a very watery part of Eastern Europe. In the 1930s the Pripet Marshes, or Polessia, straddled the border between eastern Poland and Soviet Belorussia. They covered 100,000 square miles and formed (as they still do) the largest wetlands in Europe. The region was dominated by marshes, moorland, and lakes, a landscape of willows and reeds interspersed with forested belts of pine, birch, and alder. Tributaries of the River Pripet like the Stochod drained down from the surrounding heights into a shallow basin where rainfall exceeded evaporation. These meandering streams gave the whole area its character, especially in the spring when ice-jams

and snowmelt caused their shallow banks to overflow, creating a waterworld much like the old Prussian Oderbruch before it was drained under Frederick the Great, but on a vastly larger scale. Wolves and wild boar inhabited the wooded areas, wild ducks filled the sky, mosquitoes enjoyed a perfect breeding ground.[3]

Some visitors in the 1930s were entranced by what they saw, like the American geographer Louise Boyd. Martin Bürgener, a German geographer from Danzig, was made of sterner stuff. When he wrote in his 1939 book on the Pripet Marshes that this was "one of the least developed and most primeval areas of Europe," it was not intended as a compliment. What Bürgener saw in this "grey-dark wilderness" was a series of problems: anarchic waterways, insects, and vermin that were uncontrolled, an unstable economy based on hunting, fishing, and primitive agriculture, a population "vegetating in hopeless apathy." Only in a few spots where early "Germanic" influences had supposedly been felt was there any relief from the "chaotic" pattern of settlement.[4]

If Bürgener saw problems, he also proposed solutions. The Pripet and its tributaries should be regulated and drainage ditches dug. Alluvial land in the river valleys would then support a flourishing cattle and dairy agriculture to rival Holland's. Crops would grow on reclaimed marshes, and peat dug from the moors would provide valuable energy. According to Bürgener, "a comprehensively executed improvement of Polessia would increase the agriculturally usable area by at least five million acres."[5] Nor was that all. The marshes stood geographically at a European crossroads between east and west, north and south. If the transportation infrastructure of the area, especially its waterways, were properly developed, it would no longer be a barrier but a link between Germany and the east, the Baltic and the Black Sea.[6]

Who stood in the way of this grandiose vision? Bürgener identified three villains: Slavs, Jews, and the Polish state. Running through his book was a racially based assumption that the Slavic inhabitants of Polessia were feckless and passive,

incapable of shaping their own environment. Landscape was, as another geographer put it in the language of the time, "a mirror of *völkisch* culture."[7] Using terms that drew directly on Nazi racial theorist Hans Günther, Bürgener cast the Slavs of Polessia as typical "short-headed" or "eastern Baltic" types, hence by definition "lacking the strength or capacity to extend their Lebensraum." He went a good deal further, in fact, suggesting that "a conscious containment of the degenerate fecundity of this inferior-race population would be something to consider."[8] Here the racial language of the Third Reich joined hands with an older cultural prejudice, which stereotyped Slavs by the supposedly unsatisfactory features of the natural landscape they inhabited. The word Bürgener used for "containment" was *Eindämmung*, the term that usually applied to damming or diking a threatening body of water.

The overtly racist language of the Third Reich was even more starkly evident when Bürgener described the Jewish population of Polessia, around 10 percent of the total, as a "parasitical minority that was alien to the landscape."[9] His book, published by the oldest geographical journal in Germany, conjures up scenes that would have fitted well into the National Socialist propaganda film, *Jud Süss*. But again, what I want to note in Bürgener's hate-filled descriptions is the link between landscape and race. When he summarizes the developmental needs of the region, we find a long sentence that begins with drainage schemes and ends with "an organic solution to the Jewish question."[10]

Bürgener's third obstacle to progress was Poland. That a German from Danzig would impugn the legitimacy and competence of the Polish state is no great surprise, and Bürgener's critique should clearly be seen against a background of German resentment over the territorial losses of the Versailles Treaty and the "Polish corridor" that separated East Prussia from the rest of Germany. Bürgener, however, says almost nothing directly about former German territories in the west. He concentrates his attack on what Poland had allegedly done—or not done—in the east. The lack of progress in draining and settling the area

(in itself, hard to dispute) is used as evidence to support a radical conclusion: "Poland is not equal to the task of eastern colonization."[11] Warsaw had failed the challenge of the *Drang nach Osten*, so the Pripet marshes remained "dead space" unconnected to the rest of Poland, "dead flesh on the body of the Polish state."[12] Again, reclamation and settlement were inseparable from race: Poland, for Bürgener, had failed to plant Polish colonists in an area dominated ethnically by Ukrainians, Belorussians, and Jews. As the argument unfolds, bolstered by claims (grimly surreal to us) about the "arbitrariness" of Polish census-takers in matters of race, it becomes plain that our author is really outlining something else. He is painting a picture of what a true colonizing people would do, a people mindful of its "mission" in the east, a people committed to a comprehensive reclamation of the marshes, a people bold enough to recognize that this meant finding a "biologically correct solution" for the native population.[13] It was clearly not the Polish people that Bürgener had in mind.

Soon after the book appeared Poland was carved up by Germany and the Soviet Union. The Pripet marshes fell under Soviet control—although not for long. For the moment German attentions were fixed elsewhere. The western parts of Poland were directly incorporated into the Reich. Ethnic Germans from the Baltic, Volhynia, and Bessarabia were "resettled" there, especially in the Warthegau, while the indigenous Polish and Jewish population was "evacuated" to the General Government, the rump Polish territory designed to provide Germany with forced labor, raw materials, and a dumping ground for racially "undesirable" elements from the Reich.[14] But as early as autumn 1939, the SS was thinking of ways to expel Jews even further east (the "Nisko Plan" was one instance), and by early 1941—in the lead-up to Operation Barbarossa—the euphemism "to the east" was starting to be filled out with possible destinations where Jews could be worked to death.[15] The Pripet Marshes were one of those places. In June 1941 the planning department of Himmler's Reich Commissariat for the Strengthening of Germandom, responsible for eastern colonization, commissioned a study on the area.[16]

At the same time, the decanting of Poles and Jews into the General Government became a source of increasing frustration to its governor, Hans Frank. He complained that the General Government was being treated as a "dung hill into which you could sweep and shove all the filth of the Reich."[17] Ambitious and constantly at odds with the SS over jurisdictional matters, Frank wanted to make his fiefdom more than just a convenient dumping ground. When it came to the Poles, for purely pragmatic reasons Frank saw the brutal policy of forced labor as counterproductive. When it came to the Jews, his concern was different: he no more wanted them in his territory than Gauleiter Arthur Greiser wanted them in the Warthegau. And so Frank and his planners in Cracow hatched the idea that, by extending the General Government to the east, the Jews could be "removed." Once again the Pripet Marshes suggested themselves. Frank's economists published articles and made representations in Berlin, shamelessly plundering Martin Bürgener's book to present the area as a geopolitical crossroads and a valuable source of peat and reclaimed land. One of these technocrats foresaw a hundred-year program of peat extraction and colonization.[18] As the governor general himself put it in July 1941, "with a thoroughly implemented program of drainage and cultivation, considerable value can be extracted from this region . . . I believe it is possible to engage certain population elements (especially Jewish ones) in a productive activity serving the Reich."[19]

Let me step back here and draw out some aspects of these proposals that have broader significance. One is the emphasis on productive resources within a brutal policy of racial engineering. This was a common thread among German agencies with a stake in the east: Gauleiter in the "incorporated lands," Rosenberg's East Ministry, Goering's Office for the Four-Year Plan, the Todt Organisation, the quartermasters who provisioned the *Wehrmacht*, private companies, the General Government, the SS. They fought over nuance, tactics, and especially over jurisdiction, but not over the central idea that the east would provide Germany with

food, fibers, energy, land for settlement, and forced labor. What accompanied this drive to economic exploitation was a marked technocratic strain (although less marked among the soldiers and the entrepreneurs than others). Wherever we look, hydrological engineering plans were a prominent feature—"ordering" the land by "conquering" the waters. We find drainage and river-correction plans in the new Warthegau, and a variety of projects devised by Hans Frank's administrators in the General Government to regulate the Bug and Vistula, dike and canalize other waterways, embark on irrigation schemes, build dams and exploit the Carpathians for hydroelectric power.[20] Then there was Heinrich Himmler's order to Auschwitz commandant Rudolf Höss in March 1941 that inmates of the camp, constructed on the marshy Vistula flood plain, be used to "make the entire swamp and flood area of the Vistula productive" for agriculture.[21] When Primo Levi later called Auschwitz "the ultimate drainage point of the German universe," he had thought himself into the heads of his persecutors, for whom drainage was both metaphor and reality.[22] But the grandiose schemes extended beyond the engineering of waterways. There were proposals to extend the Autobahn system east, schemes for rural electrification, and proposals to conjure up towns where they ought to be (in line with central place theory), not where they—with scandalous haphazardness—actually were. The occupiers harnessed soil experts, botanists, plant geneticists, population specialists, aerial photographers, meteorologists, and (not least) regional and landscape planners.[23] One of the last named was Erhard Mäding, who worked under Konrad Meyer on the General Plan for the East. His writings demonstrate the infamous *Ostrausch*, or "intoxication of the east," among the mainly young and ambitious planners. They also give us an insight into the character of their plans. Mäding wrote disparagingly about the old, "idyllic" landscape, to which many Germans were attached. For Mäding, it hid many serious problems. The "consciously constructed landscape" envisaged by the planners would be "simpler in its lines, colour values and forms,"

and larger in scale. "It will . . . allow you to recognize that it is to a high degree a product of the human mind, a cultural form, yes a work of art."[24]

So the productivist, technocratic proposals to drain the Pripet Marshes were exceptional only in scale. And in the summer and early fall of 1941, the temporal hinge of the war and the Holocaust, both Hans Frank and Heinrich Himmler proposed a grand design to use Jewish slave labor to drain them. It never happened. Instead, the marshes became a site of direct killing, rather than killing by attrition. In mid-August 1941 Otto Rasch, the head of Einsatzgruppe C, was still arguing that "the superfluous Jewish masses can be excellently exploited and used up, namely by cultivating the great Pripet Marshes."[25] But two weeks earlier, Himmler had given a direct order for an SS cavalry brigade to "shoot all Jews and drive Jewish women into the marshes" (which in fact proved too shallow to drown them).[26] Thereafter, "drive into the marshes" became a euphemism for killing, one that Hitler used several times in his monologues that fall.[27] By 1942, the idea of land reclamation was mere camouflage for the death camps, like the transport of Jews from Drohobych to Belzec supposedly because they were "needed for the reclamation of the Pripet Marshes."[28]

That the marshes served as both a place of killing and a cover for killing in the camps is clear. Why the project to reclaim them never materialized is less clear. The likeliest explanation is that Hitler pulled the plug—because the Pripet marshes were ideal for military manoeuvres, but also because draining them might adversely affect the climate and lead to *Versteppung*, or "desertification." This explanation is based on inference, because Hitler spoke about it in August and September, but very vaguely (which was typical enough).[29] And in fact, even more grandiose schemes to drain the marshes were resurrected in 1942–1943, by the planner Gottfried Müller in the Reichskommissariat Estonia, and by Arthur Seyss-Inquart, Hans Frank's deputy in the General Government before he became governor of the occupied Netherlands. Both proposed the mass deployment of Dutch

colonists to drain and settle the Pripet Marshes, a task that by 1942–1943 was being bruited as a means of countering partisan activity.[30]

That said, if we accept that Hitler stopped the project at least in part on environmental grounds, then this raises a question about the balance between the technocratic conquest of nature and nature conservation in Nazi policy—and how each was connected to race. I want to suggest that there is a genuine conundrum here, and that the solution lies in German views of the east.

National Socialism and nature conservation has become a hot topic lately, drawing its energy from the fact that there really are two sides to the argument. It is not only that Hitler insisted on his organic vegetables and promised bird protectionist Lina Hähnle ("mother of German birds") to "extend his protective hand over the hedgerows."[31] Other Nazis shared his sympathies—Walter Darré, Rudolf Hess, Alwin Seifert—and there were genuine affinities between the German nature conservation movement (*Naturschutzbewegung*) and National Socialism. Both criticized the damage supposedly caused by "predatory" liberal-capitalist economics, and both drew a connection between a "biologically healthy" landscape and the health of the *Volk*. Conservationists greeted the Nazi seizure of power in 1933 with enthusiasm, and leading figures like Paul Schulze-Naumburg and Walter Schoenichen worked happily with the new regime.[32] They also had successes to enjoy: legislation on bird and animal protection, above all the pathbreaking Reich Nature Conservation Law of 1935.[33]

Yet there was less to this than meets the eye. Many conservationists became disillusioned because the 1935 law established honorary, unpaid local commissioners who lacked powers of enforcement. Large dam-building projects continued, the Autobahn program was started, and in both cases the role of "nature conservation" was merely aesthetic, to assure that these technological structures—in Walter Schoenichen's words—"blended into the rhythm of the landscape" harmoniously.[34] (German nature conservationism

was always potentially co-optable in this way, because it had aesthetic values at its core.) Environmental concerns were always trumped by military needs or the priority given to economic plans that provided the sinews of war. That was especially true after 1936, under the Four-Year Plan. For it was Göring, of all people, in a double role that practically defines "conflict of interest," who was simultaneously charged with priming the economic pump and protecting nature.

Perhaps the greatest contradiction in National Socialism was not between conservation and industry or technology, but between conservation and bringing land into productive use. For land reclamation, or "inner colonization," was central to Nazi policy. After 1933, the reclamation of moors, marshes, and the North Sea coast went ahead, especially through the work of the Reich Labor Service, which had six work-camps on the high moors of Oldenburg alone. For National Socialism this was an essential aspect of creating new land for the *Volk ohne Raum*. Nature had to give way before the imperative of "living space."[35]

The conquest of vast new areas of land in the east changed the equation. Now it was possible, as conservationists pointed out, to use the "elbow-room" that had opened up in the east to save marsh and moorland at home. More than that, German domination created new opportunities for conservation across Europe. That perspective was shared by conservationists and policymakers. While plans went ahead for river regulation and the generation of hydropower in the Carpathians, other areas could be set aside as huge national parks, like the Bialowies forest in Poland, or spared for the moment on environmental grounds, like the Pripet Marshes.[36] Conservationist thinking on this scale was, like genocide, a by-product of conquest. Call it "nature conservation imperialism."[37]

There was undeniably a conviction at work here that Germans were the best stewards of nature. Yet the other side of the coin was the belief that Germans or the Nordic race were

also capable, as other peoples and races were not, of shaping the natural environment to their will—the word *Gestaltung*, or shaping, can be found repeatedly in the writings of politicians, planners, and ideologues alike. That was what separated National Socialists from orthodox geopolitical thinkers like Karl Haushofer, who believed in environmental determinism.[38] Yet Nazi arguments also ran both ways. In shaping the physical environment in the east, so it was argued ad nauseam, Germans would simultaneously create a landscape in which the *Volk* would not only feel "at home" but be renewed.

That raises the second major theme of this chapter: the mystique of the frontier. There is, of course, one famous frontier thesis: Frederick Jackson Turner's argument that engagement with the wilderness and the special character of frontier life decisively shaped American values and political institutions. Subsequent historians have done major damage to Turner's arguments, but more than a century later the frontier thesis remains important as a reference point in debates about the American West. Turner was interested in American exceptionalism. But he also believed the frontier was a phase in a general process of social evolution. This was typical of an age obsessed with the links between geography and national character, and it should come as no surprise (although it has been largely overlooked) that Turner's arguments resonated with prominent German contemporaries—indeed, sometimes echoed what Germans were writing. Friedrich Ratzel, the Leipzig geographer who put the term *Lebensraum* into circulation, had admiring things to say about the frontier thesis, while Turner for his part admired Ratzel's anthropo-geography and collaborated with Ratzel's American student, Ellen Churchill Semple.[39] In 1893, the same year that Turner delivered his first celebrated address on the closing of the American frontier, the German economist Max Sering wrote a book on German "internal colonization of the east" (i.e., the attempted "Germanization" of Polish areas in eastern Prussia), which repeatedly drew parallels with the colonization of North America.[40] Another prominent

economist in Wilhelmine Germany, Gustav Schmoller, also explicitly compared the German east with the American west. Max Weber did so implicitly.[41] But although Turner himself mentioned Germany, along with Russia and British settlements in the temperate zone, as possible parallels, the frontier has received less attention in the German case than it has in the others.

The exceptions—most recently, Sidney Pollard's comments on the German "frontier" in his *Marginal Europe*—deal, not with the modern period, but with the classic age of German eastward expansion, between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries. These scholars ask whether the frontier thesis "works" historically for this period, and their answer is: up to a point.[42] What should be emphasized here is something else: the way that the idea of a heroic, vital, dynamic German frontier society in the medieval period (and in the seventeenth and eighteenth century of Habsburg and Hohenzollern eastern colonization) was alive and well in *modern* Germany.[43] The historian Rudolf Kötzschke wrote in 1926 that only in the previous generation had the great deeds of the German people in the east come to be recognized beyond the ranks of specialists.[44] He was right; but the catching-up process was intensive. Starting around 1880, hundreds of scholarly and popular books and pamphlets were written on the subject, with a marked uptick after the "losses" sustained in the Treaty of Versailles. These historical works, together with an even more voluminous body of fictional works, formed a stock of ideas and reflexes about settlement and the frontier on which nationalists and Nazi leaders drew, and which the latter consciously fostered after coming to power.

Let me quote Hitler, who declared in autumn 1941: "The Volga must be our Mississippi."[45] There are numerous utterances of this kind in Hitler's table talk: they are even more common than analogies with British India when Hitler talks about eastern Europe. For example, "Europe—and not America—will become the land of unlimited opportunities."[46] Or, after a typical outburst about mechanized and mongrelized contemporary American culture, "But the Americans

have one thing that is becoming lost to us, a feeling for the wide open spaces. Hence our longing to extend our space." Germans had lost this feeling, but it would return: "For where would we be if we did not have at least the illusion of the vastness of our space."[47] Hitler spun his fantasies from what he had read in Karl May.[48] He was not alone, nor was Karl May the only German author writing about the American frontier who entered the German imagination. There was Friedrich Gerstäcker, in *To America!* and adventure stories like *The River Pirates of the Mississippi*.[49] Theodor Fontane told readers of his *Rambles through the March Brandenburg* that after a rain-drenched boat journey across the Wustrau marshes he felt as if he had "travelled over the Kansas River or a prairie 'far in the west.'"[50] And, in a plot progression overlooked by commentators fixated on the novel's anti-Semitic descriptions of Breslau, Gustav Freytag's *Soll und Haben* has a character, the aristocrat Fink, who first discovers himself on the American frontier before helping the hero Anton to establish the "green shoots of new life," the "water and green meadows in the wilderness" that were the marks of German superiority over the Poles in Posen.[51] The same theme surfaces in the revisionist, völkisch-minded historians of Weimar who later did service in the cause of *Ostforschung*, or "eastern research." Consider, for example, Erich Keyser, writing in the notorious 1926 essay collection *German Settlement Land in the East*, which brought together historians, archaeologists, geographers, and ethnographers to assert German moral claims over eastern Europe. For earlier German immigrants to the newly conquered east, wrote Keyser, it had been "the land of their longings, as America was in modern times for so many who were tired of Europe, because here, far away from the narrowing constraints of the motherland, not only did a better income beckon the hard-working poor man but capital brought from home could be profitably invested in acquiring land and growing corn."[52]

Let me try to identify some key elements in this German variant of the frontier myth. One, as Keyser's words suggest, was a belief that the freedom and opportunities of

the frontier attracted bold spirits, willing to work hard and sacrifice. This argument from history was made repeatedly. In his 1938 book on Frederick the Great's colonization and its "legacy" for the Third Reich, Udo Froese argued that earlier settlers were defined by their "pioneer spirit." Frederick's work "would have meant nothing if, like the medieval settlers, they had not been animated by the spirit of conquest, which made the narrowness of their homeland unbearable and moved them to strike out and express their will to live in the wide spaces of the German East."[53] The Nazi popular historian Ekkehart Staritz struck a similar note in his book on the "west-east movement in German history": If the east had been the "paradise" sometimes advertised, the race would have "gone under, suffocated by good living and indolence." Conditions required frugal, industrious settlers, happy to "sacrifice and eat their bread in the sweat of their brow."[54] Similar allusions turned up in the popular works of "respectable" historians such as Karl Hampe and Hermann Aubin.[55] The pioneer spirit was also a central motif in the fictional genre of "settler novels" in the 1930s, such as Hans Venatier's best-selling *Vogt Bartold* about intrepid German settlers in thirteenth-century Silesia.[56] We encounter it again in travel books like Kurt Freytag's *Raum deutscher Zunkunft: Grenzland im Osten* (Germany's Future Space: Borderlands in the East), published in 1933, where German settlers in Latvia are described as "pioneers" in the "wide open spaces" of the Baltic.[57] This was, of course, a highly idealized and misleading view of German settlement patterns in the past. It was quite grotesque as a description of the "pioneers" who followed the National Socialist occupation of Eastern Europe in World War II. The ethnic Germans who provided the prime "settler" material had been shuttled through relocation camps bearing numbered tags, examined by men in white coats, sorted, and (if approved) handed the blue-colored documents assigning them to the east. They were then sent by truck or rail into farms that had been forcibly cleared of their Polish owners, where they depended on the Reichskommissar

for the Strengthening of Germandom for equipment and materials, and found their house-keeping, child-rearing and morale closely monitored by volunteers from the Settlement Research Unit.[58] This bore no resemblance to the heroic trek presented in newspaper celebrations and songs.

The flattering ideal of the hardy settler type as the exemplary German was not only a staple of Nazi official publications; it also pervaded the thinking of Nazi leaders. For Hitler, the eastern frontier created a "sturdy stock" that would prevent Germany sinking into "softness."[59] Himmler had held similar views since his youth and later made sure they were central to SS education. Hans Frank, addressing a 1942 party rally in Galicia, rejected the idea that Germans in the east sat back and smoked cigars (even if some people in Germany liked that idea); the east, he insisted, was not a colony, but space for *settlement*—"and however far to the east the settlement zone stretches there will always be German people, German personalities, German men and women who work from morning till night, who are therefore healthy and strong and determined to defend their farms . . ."[60] Once again, we should note the gap between rhetoric and reality. Frank insisted that the General Government was not a colony, but it was in fact precisely that—an unusually brutal colonial regime based on plunder and lubricated by corruption. Yet it was also a land on to which men like Frank himself projected their own fantasies of future settlement that would make the basin of the Vistula as "German" as the Rhine valley.[61]

There is something else in Frank's comments in 1942 that can be identified as an integral part of the occupiers' mentality. Being far from home and vulnerable, yet sticking it out—that sense was part of the pathos of the eastern frontier. It is the second motif of the frontier mystique that I want to take up. The sentiment (and sentimentality) is well captured in a diary entry of the young Himmler in 1919: "I work for my ideal of German womanhood with whom, one day, I will live my life in the east and fight my battles as a German far from

beautiful Germany."[62] It is worth noting here that Himmler, like Hans Frank, refers to women as well as men. Women as well as men had a place in National Socialist fantasies of eastern settlement, just as matriarchs as well as patriarchs had a place in historians' and novelists' narratives of toiling eastern settlers in the past, building a future generation by generation. Young women also played a major part in the Ethnic German Liaison Office that filtered and prepared the ethnic Germans for "resettlement," just as they played a very important role in monitoring the "resettlers" after they had moved into the homes stolen from others.[63]

It remains true, however, that what I have called the pathos of the frontier had a strongly masculine quality. German nationalists had long presented themselves as "fortresses" or "rocks" of Germandom in the east, surrounded by the "Slavic flood"—this was a familiar, heavily gendered trope.[64] And the idea that a hard, masculine "northern" race was more fitted to the work of settlement than the "softer," more "feminine" Slavs had already become a cliché through the writings of men like Heinrich von Treitschke, Paul de Lagarde and Yorck von Wartenburg, even before Nazi racial theorists added their pseudo-scientific taxonomies. Both strands, the older one and newer, more overtly racist variation, were evident in Martin Bürgener's writings on the Pripet Marshes. But sometimes doubts arose in even the staunchest German male on the frontier; indeed, the frisson of danger was part of the pathos. An exemplary case is Hermann Voss, Professor of Anatomy in the new Reich University of Posen, who thrilled to what he called "wild eastern stories," but also confided to his diary: "Yes, the 'wild East' is nerve-racking. One day it will devour us."[65]

What made the "wild east" wild? Within the myth of the frontier, one answer was the inhospitable environment. And here it is worth reflecting for a moment on a familiar word. While reading German accounts of eastern settlement, historical and contemporary, one word recurs again and again: *Kultur*. What Germans had supposedly achieved in the east (and would achieve again) was a *Kulturleistung, Kulturwerk,*

Kulturarbeit. Plenty of intellectual historians have made a career out of parsing the difference between German *Kultur* and French or British *Zivilisation*, arguing that Germans took pride in their more "inward" culture by contrast with grubby, materialist civilization. This view has been strongly and deservedly criticized, although—like one of those toys with a weighted base—it seems to keep popping back up.[66] It certainly does not work very well when it comes to German arguments about eastern Europe. When Germans claimed they had brought *Kultur* to the east, their case rested heavily on boasts about material and technological "superiority" that would have been instantly recognized by advocates of the British and French colonial empires (or American westward expansion). Germans, so the argument ran, had brought towns and roads; and they had also brought culture in the sense of "cultivation." In Kurt Freytag's phrase, Germans had been *Kulturbringer und Befruchter*—German culture, or cultivation, had brought green fields and meadows, made the land fertile.[67] Such claims run like a red thread (or perhaps it is a green thread) through the heroic accounts by historians and publicists of German settlers since the Middle Ages. For Max Beheim-Schwarzbach, a nineteenth-century historian who was a favorite of Nazi landscape planner Heinrich Wiepking-Jürgensmann, Germans had brought "order" where once "weeds grew in rank profusion," so that the "new green of Germanic industriousness" grew out of the "swamps and marshes" of the Poles.[68] His contemporary, Heinrich von Treitschke, linking medieval settlements with the work of cultivating West Prussia after 1772, claimed that "just as the first German conquerors once rescued the granary of the *Werder* from the torrents, so now the industrious Netzegau rose out of the swamps alongside flourishing Bromberg."[69] Erich Gierach, writing in the 1920s, had an even more exuberant image of what it meant when Germans tamed a harsh eastern environment: "The *Heimatschein* [citizenship certificate] of the Germans in the east is not a yellowing parchment . . . but the laughing meadows and flourishing fields that they have wrested from a wild nature."[70] Himmler used similar words

when arguing that German moral claims on the east came not from "paper and parchment" but from cultivating the land; so did Hitler, Walter Darré, and Nazi landscape planners in the east like Mäding and Wiepking-Jürgensmann. For all of them, it was not state borders but the capacity of a race to etch its culture into the land that provided the decisive justification of ownership. Place barren, neglected black soil regions into the hands of sturdy Germans settlers, suggested Heinrich Himmler, and the land "could become a paradise, a European California."[71]

Arguments like this had an obviously self-serving component. Those who possess paper and parchments—legal title to land—rarely disdain them. As the lawyers say, if you have the facts on your side, argue the facts; if not, argue the law—or, in this case, argue the evidence of the laughing meadows and the German green thumb. But it would be too easy to suggest that this was nothing but a cynical cover for plunder and oppression. Of course there were opportunists—entrepreneurs, technocrats entranced by their new powers, historians writing to order—who talked the talk as needed. But within the Nazi Party, the SS and among the planners intoxicated by the "opportunities" of the east there were also plenty of true believers. If this was a legitimating ideology, it was (to use sociologist J.G. Merquior's distinction) more a veil than a mask.[72]

However convenient these arguments abut the German capacity to conjure green gardens out of Slav neglect, they expressed a deep-seated fantasy about eastern colonization. And that fantasy was embedded in a frontier myth about taming the "wild east." But did it strike chords among the population of the Third Reich? Most Germans probably warmed to the epic stories of past German deeds on the frontier, told in schoolbooks, popular histories, settler novels and party propaganda. If soldiers' letters from the eastern front are any guide, this way of seeing the world had a purchase beyond the ranks of the party faithful. After all, these heroic stories flattered the belief in German superiority, which most

people took for granted. That did not mean they necessarily wanted to be part of the new frontier society themselves. "Inner colonization" even within the Reich was not notably successful before 1914, its advocates often critical of the "settler material" that presented itself. The "settlement task" defined by the Reichskommissar for the Strengthening of Germandom was daunting: the General Plan for the East calculated that almost 3.5 million settlers would be needed over a period of 25–30 years.[73] There is evidence that even the leading authors of these future fantasies harbored some doubts. There is an interesting formulation in *Mein Kampf*, when Hitler writes that the German people would have to be "brought to recognize" that its future lay in "the arduous work of the German plough."[74] A nagging unease persisted even through the years of greatest wartime optimism, a concern that Germans might be too "soft" for the task of settling the east, too comfortable and attached to tradition. The paradox was that the frontier was supposed to "toughen" the German race; but only if attitudes at home were changed would the east actually receive the "great stream of unconstrained *Volk* energies" it needed.[75]

It was not just the hostile environment that made the "wild east" wild, but the alleged character of its inhabitants. Read the German plans for "settling" the east, and one of their most striking features is how often the indigenous inhabitants were in fact rendered invisible by the German gaze. The National Socialist vision of the German east was projected onto an empty space. This, for example, is Goebbels' comment on a high-level meeting in August 1940: "Himmler reports on the resettlement. He has already achieved much, but still more remains to be done. So let's get on with it, for we have to settle the empty spaces of the east."[76] This is a very common locution, whether we look at the ubiquitous books on *Raum und Rasse*, the planners' blueprints or Hitler's comments on the desolate and empty east. The indigenous inhabitants were mentally removed because they belonged to the "history-less peoples." They were "nomads," not true

peasants, in the conventional typology: backward, childlike, cruel. In short, they resembled Indians. This frontier analogy was an old one. Frederick the Great compared newly conquered West Prussia unfavorably with Canada, and likened the "slovenly Polish trash" who lived there to Iroquois.[77] Such comparisons would become almost routine. In the Warthebruch, even the names told the story: When Slav fisher people gave way to German farmers, when the watery *Kietz* settlement was replaced by the geometrical German village, what were the new settlements called? Florida, Charlestown, Saratoga.[78] No wonder the Polish writer Ludwik Powidaj, in an 1864 article on "Poles and Indians," traced the fate of American Indians and asked "What Pole will not see the situation of his own country?"[79] Reading the later German historical romances about bold German settlers in eastern Europe, it is not hard to decipher who the cruel and treacherous natives are supposed to be, making forays from their primitive huts in marshland and forest retreats to steal cattle, burn homesteads, and threaten the bearers of a "superior" culture.

National Socialists certainly thought this way about the indigenous people of the "wild east," both Slav and Jewish. Hans Frank called the Jews of Galicia "flat-foot Indians."[80] Hitler was also fond of the analogy, and (notwithstanding Karl May) intended it to be pejorative. In October 1941 he concluded a characteristic rant about Germans creating gardens, fields, and orchards in the desolate east with this: "There is only one task: To set about the Germanization of the land by bringing in Germans and to regard the indigenous inhabitants as Indians."[81] And when the natives fought back, his response in August 1942 was, "There is a struggle here with the partisans as in the Indian Wars in North America." Three weeks later he boasted that partisan bands would be "strung up"; "this will become a real Indian War."[82] There were indeed parallels—although we see them through a different optic. In the German east, as in the American west, the conquerors visited dispossession and genocide on indigenous peoples, even as they proclaimed their mission

to "civilize" the land, then attributed primitive cruelty to those who stood in their way. But the outcome was different. Goebbels may have filmed the resettlement of the Volhynian Germans, but he never had the opportunity to film "How the East Was Won."[83]

Even before the Red Army counteroffensive that followed Stalingrad, German settlers, administrators, and army units were harassed by these "Indians"—partisans. "On long lonely stretches and when travelling at night, it is prudent at the moment to carry a weapon," warned the 1943 Baedeker guide to the General Government.[84] The situation was more serious further to the east, and that brings me back finally to where I started, to the Pripet Marshes. Martin Bürgener recognized that the undrained marshes were strategically "easy to defend and hard to conquer."[85] He had orthodox military engagements in mind, but the same applied even more to partisan warfare. Jews fleeing ghettoes, round-ups, or slave labor gangs, Poles fleeing deportation to the Reich, Ukrainian dissidents—all were drawn to areas like the Pripet Marshes, which formed a refuge and a base for fighting back. In June 1943, German military intelligence estimated that some 45,000 partisans were operating there; by October they put the number at 76,000.

From the summer of 1943 there were repeated "cleaning-up" efforts by *Wehrmacht* and SS Cavalry in Polessia, but with limited success. Partisan activity was one of the main reasons why the idea of draining the marshes came back to life in 1942–1943. Several of the partisan camps are described in Primo Levi's novel, *If Not Now, When?* that opens with the Jewish partisans Leonid and Memel walking through the Pripet Marshes in search of Novoselki, the "republic of the marshes," in July 1943: "The path was broken more and more often by shallow ponds, which obliged them to make exhausting detours. The water was clear, unmoving, smelling of peat, with thick, round leaves floating on it, fleshy flowers and an occasional bird's egg . . . the horizon surrounding them had never been so vast throughout their journey. Vast and sad, steeped in the intense, funereal odour of the

canebrakes."[86] These were the Pripet Marshes that, along with their inhabitants, Martin Bürgener had described with such venom. Just four years later, still undrained, they were a site of survival and resistance.

NOTES

1. These are used as the headings to chapters 1 and 5 of Christof Dipper, *Deutsche Geschichte 1648–1789* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1991).
2. A pioneering work here is that of Gert Gröning and Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn, *Die Liebe zur Landschaft*, part 3, *Der Drang nach Osten: Zur Entwicklung im Nationalsozialismus und während des Zweiten Weltkrieges in den "eingegliederten Ostgebieten"* (Munich: Minerva, 1987).
3. Louise Boyd, "The Marshes of Pinsk," *Geographical Review* 26 (1936), pp. 376–395; Martin Bürgener, *Pripet-Polessie: Das Bild einer polnischen Ostraum-Landschaft*, *Petermanns Geographische Mitteilungen*, *Ergänzungsheft* 237 (Gotha: Perthes, 1939); Kurt Freytag, *Raum deutscher Zukunft: Grenzland im Osten* (Dresden: Reissner, 1933), p. 84; Joice M. Nankivell and Sydney Loch, *The River of a Hundred Ways* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1924).
4. Bürgener, *Pripet-Polessie*, pp. 9, 46, 53, 56.
5. Ibid., pp. 86–90 [90].
6. Ibid., pp. 115–121, 127–128.
7. Wilhelm Grotelüschen, cited in Hans-Dietrich Schultz, *Die deutschsprachige Geographie von 1800 bis 1970* (Berlin: Selbstverlag des Geographischen Instituts der FU Berlin, 1980), p. 205.
8. Bürgener, *Pripet-Polessie*, pp. 56–57. Among Günther's works were two that sold in the hundreds of thousands: *Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes* and *Kleine Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes*. Bürgener refers to Günther in his text, but includes none of his works in the bibliography. Bürgener used Gustav Paul's *Grundzüge der Rassen- und Raumgeschichte des deutschen Volkes* (Munich: Lehmann, 1935) to similar effect.
9. Bürgener, *Pripet-Polessie*, p. 61.
10. Ibid., p. 105.
11. Ibid., p. 92.

12. Ibid., pp. 91, 122.
13. Ibid, p. 56.
14. In addition to the works cited in note 1, see Martin Broszat, *Nationalsozialistische Polenpolitik 1939–1945* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1961); Jürgen von Hehn, *Die Umsiedlung der baltischen Deutschen—Das letzte Kapitel baltisch-deutscher Geschichte* (Marburg: Herder-Institut, 1982); Harry Stossun, *Die Umsiedlungden der Deutschen aus Litauen während des Zweiten Weltkrieges* (Marburg: Herder-Institut, 1993); Valdis O. Lumans, *Himmler's Auxiliaries: The Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle and the German National Minorities of Europe, 1922–1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993).
15. On the "Nisko Plan," see Hans Safrian, *Die Eichmann-Männer* (Vienna and Zurich: Europaverlag, 1993), pp. 68–85; Christopher R. Browning, *Nazi Policy, Jewish Workers, German Killers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 6–7; Philippe Burrin, *Hitler and the Jews* (London: Edward Arnold, 1994), p. 72.
16. Götz Aly, *"Final Solution": Nazi Population Policy and the Murder of the European Jews* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 176.
17. Hans Frank's report on the General Government, December 9, 1942: A.J. Kaminski, *Nationalsozialistische Besatzungspolitik in Polen und der Tschechoslovakei 1939–1945. Dokumente* (Bremen: Universitätsbibliothek, 1975), pp. 89–90. The *Diensttagebuch des deutschen Generalgouverneurs in Polen 1939–1945*, ed. Werner Präg and Wolfgang Jacobmeyer (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt,1975), pp. 585–586, reports Frank's end-of-year speech but only briefly paraphrases this opening passage.
18. Hansjulius Schepers, "Pripet-Polesien, Land und Leute," *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* 19 (1942), pp. 278–287 [287]. See also Helmut Meinhold, "Das Generalgouvernement als Transitland. Ein Beitrag zur Kenntnis der Standortslage des Generalgouvernements," *Die Burg* 2(4) (1941), pp. 24–44; Richard Bergius, "Die Pripetsümpfe als Entwässerungsproblem," *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* 18 (1941), pp. 667–668; Dieter Pohl, "The Murder of Jews in the General Government," in *National Socialist Extermination*

Policies, ed. Ulrich Herbert (New York: Berghahn, 2000), p. 86; Götz Aly and Susanne Heim, *Vordenker der Vernichtung* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1991), pp. 119, 249–252.

19. Frank to Hans-Heinrich Lammers, Chief of the Reich Chancellery, July 19, 1941: Aly, *"Final Solution,"* p. 175. Just three days after the letter to Lammers, Frank's "discussion points" for a meeting in the General Government included "relief by pushing Jews and other asocial elements to the east": *Diensttagebuch*, p. 389: July 22, 1941.
20. See, for example, the October 1943 report that boasts of 575,000 acres drained, 140 miles of new dikes built, 700 miles of river regulated, 2250 miles of drainage ditches dug and the Roznow Dam under construction: *Diensttagebuch*, p. 749: October 26, 1943.
21. Yehuda Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), p. 165. Bauer argues that this was not simply a retrospective "softening" of his role by Höss, but an accurate account of the early stage of the camp's history.
22. Primo Levi, *Moments of Reprieve: A Memoir of Auschwitz* (New York: Penguin, 1987), p. 124.
23. Examples of this technocratic hubris can be found throughout *Neue Dorflandschaften. Gedanken und Pläne zum ländlichen Aufbau in den neuen Ostgebieten und im Altreich. Herausgegeben vom Stabshauptamt des Reichskommissars für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums, Planungsamt sowie vom Planungsbeauftragten für die Siedlung und ländliche Neuordnung* (Berlin: Sohnrey, 1943). See also Mechtild Rössler and Sabine Schleiermacher, eds. *Der "Generalplan Ost,"* (Berlin: Akademie, 1993), and Susanne Heim, ed., *Autarkie und Ostexpansion: Pflanzenzucht und Agrarforschung im Nationalsozialismus* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2002).
24. Erhard Mäding, *Landespflege: Die Gestaltung der Landschaft als Hoheitsrecht und Hoheitspflicht* (Berlin: Deutsche Landesbuchhandlung, 1942), p. 215, comments repeated in Mäding's article the following year, "Die Gestaltung der Landschaft als Hoheitsrecht und Hoheitspflicht," *Neues Bauerntum* 35 (1943), p. 24. For a similar critique of "romantic" conceptions, Walter Wickop, "Grundsätze

und Wege der Dorfplanung," in *Neue Dorflandschaften*, p. 46.

25. Burrin, *Hitler and the Jews*, pp. 106–107; Thomas Sandkühler, "Anti-Jewish Policy and the Murder of the Jews in the District of Galicia, 1941/42," in *National Socialist Extermination Policies*, p. 112; Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust*, pp. 170–171.
26. Ruth Bettina Birn, *Die Höheren SS- und Polizeiführer: Himmlers Vertreter im Reich und in den besetzten Gebieten* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1986), 171; Christian Gerlach, "German Economic Interests, Occupation Policy and the Murder of the Jews in Belorussia, 1941/43," in *National Socialist Extermination Policies*, p. 220. Mid-August 1941 was precisely the moment when new orders to kill Jews were being passed to the Einsatzgruppen, although the orders reached the different groups unevenly. See Alfred Streim, "Zur Eröffnung des allgemeinen Judenvernichtungsbefehls gegenüber den Einsatzgruppen," in *Der Mord an den Juden im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, ed. Eberhard Jäckel and Jürgen Rohwer (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1985), pp. 113–116.
27. There are examples from October 25 and November 5, 1941. See Burrin, *Hitler and the Jews*, pp. 111–112; Christopher R. Browning, *The Path to Genocide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 106; Ian Kershaw, *Hitler, 1936–1945: Nemesis* (London: Allen Lane, 2000), p. 488; *Monologe im Führer-Hauptquartier 1941–1945: Die Aufzeichnungen Heinrich Heims*, ed. Werner Jochmann (Hamburg: Knaus, 1980), p. 128.
28. Martin Gilbert, *The Holocaust* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1985), cited Aly, *"Final Solution,"* p. 175.
29. In August he referred only to the value of the terrain for military exercises (*Monologe*, p. 55); on September 28 he referred to both military maneuvers and the negative environmental effects (p. 74). In neither cases are the marshes identified by name.
30. Martin Seckendorf, "Die 'Raumordnungsskizze' für das Reichskommissariat Ostland vom November 1942," in *Generalplan Ost,* p. 180, and the appended Dokument 6: Gottried Müller, "Vorentwurf eines Raumordnungsplanes für das Ostland," p. 17. November 1942, ibid,

p. 196; Koos Bosma, "Verbindungen zwischen Ost- und Westkolonisation," ibid., pp. 198–214; Michael Burleigh, *Germany Turns Eastwards: A Study of* Ostforschung *in the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 238–239.

31. Anna-Katharina Wöbse, "Lina Hähnle und der Reichsbund für Vogelschutz," in *Naturschutz und Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Joachim Radkau and Frank Uekötter (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2003), p. 320.
32. Raymond H. Dominick, *The Environmental Movement in Germany: Prophets and Pioneers, 1871–1971* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992), pp. 81–102; Gert Gröning and Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn, "Naturschutz und Ökologie im Nationalsozialismus," *Die Alte Stadt* 10 (1983), pp. 2–5; Burkhardt Riechers, "Nature Protection during National Socialism," *Historical Social Research* 21 (1996), pp. 40–47; Thomas Lekan, *Imagining the Nation in Nature: Landscape Preservation and German Identity, 1885–1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), pp. 141–154.
33. Michael Wettengel, "Staat und Naturschutz 1906–1945: Zur Geschichte der Staatlichen Stelle für Naturdenkmalpflege in Preussen und der Reichsstelle für Naturschutz," *Historische Zeitschrift* 257 (1993), pp. 382–387; Edeltraud Klueting, "Die gesetzliche Regelung der nationalsozialistischen Reichsregierung für den Tierschutz, den Naturschutz und den Umweltschutz," in *Naturschutz und Nationasozialismus*, pp. 77–105.
34. Helmut Maier, "Kippenlandschaft, 'Wasserkrafttaumel' und 'Kahlschlag': Anspruch und Wirklichkeit nationalsozialistischer Energiepolitik," in Günter Bayerl, Norman Fuchsloch, and Torsten Meyer, ed. *Umweltgeschichte* (Münster: Waxmann, 1996), p. 257. See also Thomas Zeller, "Ganz Deutschland sein Garten: Alwin Seifert und die Landschaft des Nationalsozialismus," in *Naturschutz und Nationalsozialismus*, pp. 273–307; Dietmar Klenke, "Autobahnbau und Naturschutz in Deutschland," in *Politische Zäsuren und gesellschaftlicher Wandel im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Matthias Freese and Michael Prinz (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1996), pp. 465–498.

35. Eugenie von Garvens, "Land dem Meere abgerungen," *Die Gartenlaube* (1935), pp. 397–398; Jan G. Smit, *Neubildung deutschen Bauerntums: Innere Kolonisation im Dritten Reich - Fallstudien in Schleswig-Holstein* (Kassel: Gesamthochschulbibliothek, 1983), pp. 280–311; Kiran Klaus Patel, *"Soldaten der Arbeit": Arbeitsdienste in Deutschland und den USA 1933–1945* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003).
36. Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York: Knopf, 1995), pp. 67–72; Heinrich Rubner, *Deutsche Forstgeschichte 1933–1945* (St. Katharinen: Scripta Mercaturae, 1985), pp. 135–136.
37. Wettengel, "Staat und Naturschutz," p. 395.
38. Mark Bassin, "Race Contra Space: The Conflict between German *Geopolitik* and National Socialism," *Political Geography Quarterly* 6 (1987), pp. 115–134.
39. Mark Bassin, "Imperialism and the Nation State in Friedrich Ratzel's Political Geography," *Progress in Human Geography* 11 (1987), pp. 479–480, 489; W. Coleman, "Science and Symbol in the Turner Frontier Hypothesis," *American Historical Review* 72 (1966), pp. 39–40; Alan Steinweis, "Eastern Europe and the Notion of the 'Frontier' in Germany to 1945," *Yearbook for European Studies* 13 (1999), pp. 60–66.
40. Max Sering, *Die innere Kolonisation im östlichen Deutschland* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1893), pp. 160, 166, 172–173, 180, 205, 212, 214, 230–231. Sering, like Ratzel, had traveled extensively in North America.
41. Dipper, *Deutsche Geschichte*, p. 26 (on Schmoller); Max Weber, "Capitalism and Society in Rural Germany," in *From Max Weber,* ed. Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952), pp. 363–385 (a lecture on Europe and America first delivered in St. Louis).
42. Sidney Pollard, *Marginal Europe: The Contribution of Marginal Lands since the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 145–160; Dietrich Gerhard, "The Frontier in Comparative View," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 1 (1959), esp. pp. 218–223.
43. As Alan Steinweis (note 40) has pointed out.

44. Rudolf Kötzschke, "Über den Ursprung und die geschichtliche Bedeutung der ostdeutschen Siedlung," in *Der ostdeutsche Volksboden,* ed. Wilhelm Volz (Breslau: Hirt, 1926), pp. 8–9.
45. Kershaw, *Hitler, 1936–1945*, p. 431.
46. *Monologe*, p. 78 (October 13, 1941). Similarly, on September 25, 1941: "In twenty years European emigration will no longer flow to America but east": ibid, p. 70.
47. *Monologe*, pp. 398–399 (June 13, 1943).
48. On Hitler and Karl May, ibid., pp. 281–282, 398.
49. Friedrich Gerstäcker, *Die Flusspiraten des Mississippi* (Leipzig: Reclam, 1890 [1848]) and *Nach Amerika!* (Jena: Costenoble, 1855). On Gerstäcker and America, see Augustus J. Prahl, "Gerstäcker und die Probleme seiner Zeit," Dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1933.
50. Theodor Fontane, *Wanderungen durch die Mark Brandenburg*, Hanser Verlag edition, vol. 1 (Munich: Hanser, 1992), p. 353.
51. Gustav Freytag, *Soll und Haben* (Berlin: Deutsche Buch-Gemeinschaft, n.d. [1855]), pp. 698–699, 820. There are many other "color-coded" references in the novel, in which the German color is always green, the Slav color always grey or yellow.
52. Erich Keyser, "Die deutsche Bevölkerung des Ordenslandes Preussen," in *Der ostdeutsche Volksboden*, p. 234.
53. Udo Froese, *Das Kolonisationswerk Friedrich des Grossen: Wesen und Vermächtnis* (Heidelberg: Vowinckel, 1938), p. 116.
54. Ekkehart Staritz, *Die West-Ostbewegung in der deutschen Geschichte* (Breslau, 1935), pp. 160–161.
55. See Karl Hampe, *Der Zug nach dem Osten: Die kolonisatorische Grosstat des deutschen Volkes im Mittelalter* (Leipzig and Berlin: Teubner, 1935 [first edition 1921]), p. 37; Hermann Aubin, "Die historische Entwicklung der ostdeutschen Agrarverfassung und ihre Beziehungen zum Nationalitätsproblem der Gegenwart," in *Der ostdeutsche Volksboden*, esp. pp. 345–347.
56. Hans Venatier, *Vogt Bartold: Der grosse Zug nach dem Osten,* 17th edition (Leipzig: 1944), pp. 147, 186, 235, 435.
57. Freytag, *Raum deutscher Zukunft*, pp. 154, 249.
58. See Lumans, *Himmler's Auxiliaries.*

59. *Monologe*, p. 68 (September 25, 1941).
60. *Diensttagebuch*, p. 534 (August 1, 1942).
61. It should be pointed out that in the early stages, through the first months of 1940, Frank himself referred openly to the General Government as a "protectorate" and likened it to Tunisia. It was only later that the fantasy of a German settlement land caught hold.
62. Diary entry of November 11, 1919: Josef Ackermann, *Heinrich Himmler als Ideologe* (Göttingen: Musterschmidt, 1970), p. 198.
63. Elizabeth Harvey, *Women and the Nazi East* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).
64. Wolfgang Wippermann, *Der "Deutsche Drang nach Osten": Ideologie und Wirklichkeit eines politischen Schlagwortes* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1981); Roger Chickering, *"We Men Who Feel Most German: A Cultural Study of the Pan-German League* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1984).
65. "The Posen Diaries of the Anatomist Hermann Voss," in *Cleansing the Fatherland: Nazi Medicine and Racial Hygiene,* ed. Götz Aly, Peter Chroust, and Christian Pross (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), pp. 139, 146.
66. The distinction can be traced back to two heavyweight authors writing at critical moments, Thomas Mann (during World War I) and Norbert Elias (on the eve of World War II). The supposedly distinctive virtue of German *Kultur* was an argument that enjoyed a short, polemical life during and immediately after World War I, but projecting it back into the nineteenth century creates a highly implausible construct at odds with the empirical record. Was the *Kulturkampf*, then, a defense of German "inwardness"? The most substantial critique comes from Jörg Fisch, writing on "Zivilisation, Kultur," in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, vol. 7, ed. Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, and Reinhart Koselleck (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1992), pp. 679–774.
67. Freytag, *Raum deutscher Zukunft*, p. 11.
68. Max Beheim-Schwarzbach, *Hohenzollernsche Colonisationen* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1874), pp. 423–424, 426.
69. Heinrich von Treitschke, *Deutsche Geschichte im 19. Jahrhundert, Erster Teil* [1879] (Königstein/Ts: Athenäum, 1981), p 66, and similar passages on pp. 45, 56–57, 76.

70. Erich Gierach, "Die Bretholzsche Theorie," in *Der ostdeutsche Volksboden*, p. 151.
71. Heinrich Himmler, writing in the 1942 pamphlet *Der Untermensch*, cited Gröning and Wolschke-Bulmahn, *Die Liebe zur Landschaft*, p. 132.
72. J.G. Merquior, *The Veil and the Mask* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979).
73. Wasser, *Himmlers Raumplanung*, p. 58.
74. Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1943), p. 742.
75. Quotation from an exceptionally interesting article by Artur von Machui, "Die Landgestaltung als Element der Volkspolitik," *Deutsche Arbeit* 42 (1942), pp. 287–305, esp. 297–304.
76. Goebbels diaries, August 9, 1940, cited in Hans-Heinrich Wilhelm, *Rassenpolitik und Kriegsführung* (Passau: Rothe, 1991), p. 99.
77. Heinrich Berger, *Friedrich der Grosse als Kolonisator* (Giessen: Ricker, 1896), p. 54; Reinhold Koser, *Geschichte Friedrich des Grossen*, vol. 3 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1974), pp. 345, 351.
78. Otto Kaplick, *Das Warthebruch: Eine deutsche Kulturlandschaft im Osten* (Würzburg: Holzner, 1956), pp. 23–25.
79. L[udwik] P[owidaj], "Polacy i Indianie," *Dzennik Literacki* 56 (December 30, 1864), p. 56. I am grateful to Patrice Dabrowski for bringing this article to my attention and for kindly translating these passages.
80. *Diensttagebuch*, pp. 522–523 (August 1, 1942).
81. *Monologe*, p. 91 (October 17, 1941).
82. Ibid., pp. 334, 377 (August 8, August 30, 1942).
83. Writing in March 1940 about the film he was having made on the "resettlement" of ethnic Germans, Goebbels commented: "Lorenz shows moving scenes from the trek of the Volhynian Germans. It truly is a magnificent modern migration of peoples": Goebbels diaries, cited Wilhelm, *Rassenpolitik*, 93 (March 13, 1940).
84. Aly and Heim, *Vordenker*, p. 189.
85. Bürgener, *Pripet-Polessie*, p. 129.
86. Primo Levi, *If Not Now, When?* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986), pp. 67–68.

Chapter 7

The Threatening Other in the East: Continuities and Discontinuities in Modern German-Polish Relations

Oliver Schmidtke

Introduction: Beyond the Colonialist Legacy in Modern German-Polish Relations?

The relationship between (West) Germany and Poland after World War II seems to be utterly deprived of any trace of colonialist domination or dependency. Even if one is willing to characterize Hitler's brutal occupation of Poland as a form of imperialistic policy in a colonialist tradition the postwar environment of a defeated Germany and the quickly emerging Cold War division of the continent appear to have put an end to any thought about the continuity of this legacy. Recent developments after 1989 and most notably Poland's membership in the European Union seem to add weight to a reading of German-Polish relations geared toward

reconciliation and equal partnership. In short, the dominant reading is that 1945 marked the beginning of an entire new era in the relationship between the two countries in which domination and enmity was replaced by respect and, after the collapse of Communism, a slowly emerging partnership. In this reading, Germany's relationship with Poland is destined to follow the exemplary rapport that Germany has developed with France since the war. The end of Communism and Poland's "return to Europe" has generated an environment in which this process is bound to complete its course that had been belated by the divisiveness of the Communist rule in Central Eastern Europe.

This idea of a radical discontinuity in the relationship between the two countries and the categorical end of all structures in the colonialist tradition can be challenged on different levels. One suggestion, which most commentators in one way or another agree upon, is to point to the continuity of (pre-1945) historic memories shaping the mutual perception of the two neighbors. It is difficult to imagine finding a similar case in Europe, in which the relationship between two nations is so firmly anchored in memories originating in the period between the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. The memory of the *Long Second World War*,[1] the experience of German occupation and politics of destruction, in particular has been the decisive prism through which the neighboring countries and their populations have perceived each other. As I will argue in the following, these often negative images of the "Other" were preserved during the Cold War and still have a surprising bearing on the present.

Yet the argument of this chapter goes beyond the widely shared observation of the critical role that a—rather divisive—collective memory has played, reflecting largely the aggression that Poland had to endure from its western neighbor. The following account of post-1945 and current German-Polish relations are based on the hypothesis that, in spite of the remarkable progress made, there is a counterintuitive

continuity in how Poland is publicly perceived and portrayed in public discourse. This is the background behind the puzzling research findings illustrating how dominant groups in German society see their eastern neighbor. The dramatic collapse of the Communist regime and the inclusion of Poland into the EU have further accentuated the perplexing gap between the image of Poland as perceived by the vast majority of the intellectual and political elite on the one hand, and how it is portrayed in public discourse and popular opinion on the other. While elite discourse, under the guidance of a Pan-European ideal, places much emphasis on the prospects of flourishing and friendly relations between the two countries, there is a widespread sentiment of disinterest, if not animosity, steering the popular perception of Poland and Poles in Germany. With respect to the latter, one can speak of an emotional estrangement and the historical persistence of negatively established stereotypes. Although many programs have been launched, the exchange between Germans and Poles is still highly restricted. There is ample evidence of how negative images have persistently obstructed many well-spirited ambitions in this respect. German-Polish cooperations in different fields often set out with great enthusiasm only to encounter all too soon considerable difficulties in how members of both national groups interact with each other on the basis of forceful stereotypes.

This chapter bases its analysis on the assumption that the relationship between the two countries is fundamentally structured by collective memories and the troubled history that both countries share in the twentieth century. These memories are condensed into relatively stable forms of national collective identities, which form the prisms through which Germany's eastern neighbor is widely perceived and stereotypes are reproduced. The relationship between the countries is a vivid illustration of how—however distorted—collective memories and popular images of national identities can persist over time in spite of ample evidence contradicting them. In an ironic twist of history in the twentieth century,

Poland provided West Germany with a reference point in redefining its troubled and contested collective identity after the war. At the core of these collective memories and identities is an image that has its roots in Germany's imperialist, quasi-colonialist attitude and policies toward Poland. Even if power and the thirst for domination primarily drive colonialist aspirations they still need a popular form of legitimation. Images of racial-cultural superiority and often a missionary fervor rooted in an alleged right to bring "civilization" to second-rate peoples form the cultural pretext of colonialism. Although any idea about racial supremacy was thoroughly discredited by the Nazi dictatorship perceptions of cultural superiority have not been eradicated by 1945. The argument will be developed in the following that similar perceptions of Poland in Germany show an astonishing degree of continuity in spite of dramatically altered historic circumstances. *Mutatis mutandi* Poland is perceived and portrayed as inherently inferior, albeit at the same time, threatening as the East European counterpart of Western modernity.

Yet, how are we to explain the continuity of these stereotypes and animosities in the dominant attitudes among Germans toward their eastern neighbor? What accounts for the persistence of colonialist attitudes in a postwar environment in which colonialist policies lost any legitimacy? How is it possible that regardless of the pro-European sentiments in German society, the images of Polish identity are still widely shaped by disapproving and stereotypical accounts? Is it simply that rooted sentiments need a lengthy period for transformation following some kind of culturalist path-dependency? The working hypothesis assumes that it is not an accident that negatively sanctioned collective memories continued to be reproduced until recently and still have a shaping impact on German-Polish relations. From a German perspective Poland continued, though under very different political circumstances, to represent the threatening image of the East European Other, thus providing key elements to a postwar West German political identity. A derogatory image of this country reflected critical political interests.

In the first part of this chapter, I will look at the historically rooted identities and stereotypes that have shaped the German perception of Poland. Here the critical question will ask why the dominant narrative of the Eastern Other could substantially survive the Third Reich and continue to serve as an interpreting device in perceiving Poland. The second part focuses on how, under the pressure of the rapid political rapprochement of both countries, the historically rooted stereotypes about Poland were "modernized" in public discourse and adapted to the changing realities in the new Europe. In the end attention will be drawn to the perplexing simultaneity of Poland's "return to Europe" on the one hand and the persistence of quasi-colonialist attitudes in public discourse on the other hand.

Constructing Poland as the Inferior and Threatening Other

The Roots of the Negative Stereotypes toward Poland

German-Polish relations are characterized by an astonishing amount of ambivalent historical narratives and the accompanying apprehensions toward the other country's cultural and political identity. Although it has been changing, the dominant German representation of Poland is shaped by images that originate in the early modern history of both countries and have survived relatively intact in their modernized versions throughout the dramatic events of the twentieth century. The key element structuring this relationship from a German perspective is the idea of a missionary zeal with respect to its eastern neighbor. Analogous to the religious fervor of the German Order of Knights (*Deutscher Ritterorden*) and its attempt to Christianize the so-called unfaithful peoples in the East, Poland has been perceived historically as a country to be transformed and modernized in the image of its allegedly superior western counterpart. The secular version of this perception remained dominant until modern times. It provided

the cultural ground, upon which Prussia under nationalistic auspices could justify "Germanization" as a legitimate route to modernization or indeed call the very existence of Poland into question (being one of those countries that partitioned Poland at the end of the eighteenth century[2]). As we will see later in more detail, these historically rooted stereotypes provide a fertile ground for more contemporary popular perceptions.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth century this missionary attitude primarily took the form of claiming to usher in civilizational enlightenment and economic reform. The social environment, in which such a sense of cultural and economic superiority could flourish, was characterized by the gap between the economically and industrially advanced German Reich and the largely agrarian Polish society.[3] The growing developmental discrepancy between the two countries in this period led to a center-periphery asymmetry whose forms of dependency and domination are often considered to be indicative of colonialist structures.[4] One additional central element that shaped the German-Polish relationship in this respect was the pronounced contrast between Protestantism and Catholicism and the different speed of secularization that accompanied this divide in both countries.[5]

This imbalance in power, economic, and religious modernization found its ideological expression in what Reisch[6] describes as the "arrogance of the modernizer." Max Weber's studies of the Polish farm laborers[7] are a very insightful illustration of how the intellectual elite of the time perceived Poland as structurally incapable of meeting the standards of a modern (western) society. The ominous term "Polish Economy," depicting a state of sustained disorder and sluggishness, emanated from such discourses and found its way into the repertoire of popular national stereotypes.[8] The Polish-German border was described as the boundary between the developed, efficient, and rational west on the one hand and the premodern, indolent, and irrational east on the other hand. The symbolic dividing line was drawn

between the western, culturally superior social model and a Slavic one, portrayed as the archetypal subordinate form of societal life. Huntington[9] refers to this cultural divide in Europe as the Velvet Curtain of cultural differences. Two fundamentally incompatible and hierarchically structured national identities provided the narrative framework for the symbolic degradation of Poland into a second-rate European country in popular perception. Cultural elites as well as almost all the political parties in the German *Kaiserreich* and the Weimar Republic held fervent anti-Polish beliefs. In a colonialist fashion Poles were depicted as outright inferior beings whose habits were incompatible with an allegedly superior civilizational Western European, German model.[10] For instance, some of Bismarck's remarks regarding the assumed unworthiness of Poles and the "natural" right of German supremacy echoes most articulately colonialist rhetoric.[11] After 1871 this attitude translated into treating Poland primarily as an object of German power politics, denying this country's right to national self-determination, if not its very political existence.

It is not surprising that such notions of cultural superiority and missionary zeal were easily integrated into the racist and imperialist ideology of the Third Reich. Hitler's regime exploited these sentiments for their myth of the superior Aryan master race, which allegedly legitimized the belligerent *Drang nach Osten* (Push to the East). One element in this ideology was to argue that backward Poland needed German rule and dominance. Yet the National Socialist regime went a step further in providing the ideational base for the ruthless practices that shaped the occupation of Poland. Blending an anti-Slavic and anti-Semitic rhetoric, the Third Reich stripped Poles and in particular Jewish Poles of their dignity as human beings; it sought a racist justification for eradicating Poland from the map of Europe and exterminating Jewish communities. The missionary zeal turned into annihilation.

To depict Poland as the inferior Other and its Jewish population as subhuman beings resonated well with another

powerful narrative device that the Third Reich used for its imperialist goals. Drawing on collective memories deeply inscribed into the psyche of the German nation since its origin, Poland was portrayed as one of Germany's threatening neighbors. Images of incompatible cultures and predetermined animosity traditionally shaped the perception of Germany's geopolitical position. The image of a continuously endangered national community jeopardized in the east by Slavic peoples had a lasting impact on the political culture in Germany as a late-coming nation. Here again the National Socialist regime could use this sense of precariousness to portray Poland as a genuine threat or, more appropriately, a legitimate target of German geopolitical ambitions in the East. The two features—Poland as a socioculturally inferior nation and as a veritable threat to the geopolitical and cultural integrity of the German people—formed the core of public and political discourse regarding both nations' identities during those years.

The Reproduction of Anti-Polish Sentiments and the "Freezing" of Stereotypes after World War II

The crimes of Hitler's regime and the Holocaust seemed to have made it impossible to imagine that the narratives of a culturally inferior and simultaneously threatening Polish national identity could survive. Any notion of racial superiority was soundly discredited, and the absurdity of using derogative notions of national identities for justifying the occupation of Poland became blatantly manifest after the war. Yet, there were still serious obstacles to challenging the almost mythical character of how Polish identity and society were portrayed. The negative stereotypes could not easily be dismissed, because a forceful new dividing line prevented a high degree of societal interaction between the two national groups. With the emerging Cold War, the processes of reconciliation initiated between two traditional enemies, Germany and France, were not feasible with postwar Germany's eastern neighbors. For

most of the citizens of postwar West Germany, Poland was terra incognita. The fact that both societies were sealed off from one another—in spite of cultural exchange among a small intellectual and political elite—surely prevented negatively colored national identities from being tested in light of the new postwar reality. The result was a degree of ignorance and disinterest among West Germans toward modern Polish society, allowing many of the traditional perceptions to easily survive. Selective images and narratives of Prussian rule in Poland and of the war continued to dominate the perception of the new Polish state.

Yet it would not be a very satisfying conclusion to attribute the endurance of collective memories and resentments simply to the lack of direct exchange between the groups involved. My hypothesis is rather that the political constellation within the young Federal Republic of Germany contributed to preserving, if not to revitalizing, the narrative of two incompatible identities dividing two countries. In spite of the horror inflicted upon Poland and its Jewish population by Nazi Germany, the negative sentiments toward Poland could survive, because they were politically instrumental. The negatively framed identity of Poland was conducive for the political identity that West Germany was seeking to create after the war in two respects: First, it helped to legitimize integration into the Western community, which Adenauer envisioned as the pivotal path for the Federal Republic of Germany's (FRG) postwar recovery, and second, to avoid confronting questions of guilt and responsibility concerning the crimes committed by the Third Reich in Central Eastern Europe.

The first aspect refers to how West Germany's integration and its close alliance with its new North American and European partners provided the dominant framework for redefining the political identity of the FRG. Now framed in terms of the conflict between the Communist and the Capitalist-Liberal world, the historically ingrained idea of a deep cultural and even civilizational divide between Eastern and Western Europe provided a powerful narrative tool in postwar politics. West

Germany lacked a valid form of national identity or tradition, upon which the new republic could build. The established historic accounts provided no feasible alternative for reinstating something like a positive countermyth to the crimes of the Third Reich. Hitler's reign irrevocably discredited the militaristic tradition of German nationalism and the idea of a cultural German-ness. Western integration and the aggressive demarcation separating the West from the Communist East exempted the young West German state from formulating a new base for its national identity. The polarizing rhetoric of the Cold War filled the ideational vacuum in the defeated and divided Germany. In this context the negative image of Poland and the idea of a deep, cultural-political divide between East and West Europe could serve as a forceful justification for the rigor with which the FRG demarcated itself from the Soviet block and claimed to be the only legitimate representative of Germany as a whole.[12]

The second aspect is that West Germany's attitude toward and perception of postwar Poland was strongly affected by the inability or unwillingness to publicly confront the legacy of Hitler's dictatorial regime. Although some representatives of the young FRG repeatedly acknowledged the responsibility of the National Socialists for the Holocaust and for the destruction inflicted upon Poland, this was not the dominant collective way of making sense of the new reality in postwar Europe. It was far more comfortable to depict historical developments where Germans were in the role of victims instead of perpetrators. Reflecting Halbwachs'[13] idea that societal memory functions very selectively, collective memories of the war and the Nazi regime were very carefully chosen; only those events were remembered that were convenient in supporting assertions about Germany's less negative role in the twentieth century. In this respect, Poland was an awkward reminder of a not so distant past that simply did not seem to have a place in the public consciousness in the young republic. The experience of the massive exodus of Germans from the eastern parts of the old German Reich and the experience of

expulsion and revenge against the German population became more important in public discourse than the way these phenomena were causally linked to the atrocities committed by Germans before 1945.

As an organizational actor that helped to nourish this image of the National Socialists' defeat as a "catastrophe" for the German people, the expellees' associations and their influential political networks proved to be of pivotal significance. They nurtured ideas of an illegitimate loss of German territory and the unacceptability of the Oder-Neisse frontier that divided East Germany and Poland after the war. These well-organized groups found strong resonance in the FRG, because the governing liberal-conservative coalition considered them a valuable political asset. Furthermore, portraying Germans as the victims of aggression and Germany as having to endure illegitimate territorial losses was a comfortable narrative in the postwar reality. It played into the form of collective amnesia that the dominant part of the West German public chose as their way of "mastering the past." Claiming the status of victims meant silencing one's own sense of individual and collective guilt. Poland had to serve as one of the scapegoats for the taboo against discussing issues of collective responsibility for Hitler's regime. In an ironic twist of interpreting Europe's twentieth-century history, Poland continued to be seen as a source of peril and instability to Germans: The expulsion of the German population, the "occupation" of German territory, and the "endangered" German minority were the dominant themes under which postwar Poland and recent history were depicted.

The political rhetoric of protecting ethnic Germans in Poland and questioning the legitimacy of the new borders in Europe provided a fertile ground for the continual perception of Poland as the threatening and unknown Other in Eastern Europe. In the first two decades after 1945, historical memories and resentments were exploited for ideological purposes under the auspices of the Cold War and of a collective identity within the FRG immune to any critical self-reflection regarding the legacy of the Third Reich. This is the primary reason why, decades

after the war and Nazi terror, fears and stereotypes could remain intact and the deep friction between West Germans and Poles become cemented.

This is the context for understanding why Brandt's grand symbolic gesture at the Holocaust Memorial in 1970 was of such significance and sparked a heated debate in Germany. It was not only about the implications of the *Ostpolitik* (East Politics) for the Oder-Neisse frontier and about Brandt's willingness to engage in a gradual rapprochement with the Communist countries in Central Eastern Europe. Brandt's acknowledgment of Germany's responsibility for the Holocaust and the war meant challenging the postwar myth portraying Germans as victims. Furthermore, in radical contrast to Adenauer's approach, Brandt's *Ostpolitik* engaged in a critical dialogue with the People's Republic of Poland, accepting this country as a respected and equal partner and paying condolences for the suffering inflicted upon Poland during the war. His political approach was a transgression of the limits set by the historical narratives, which had defined Poland's identity in negative terms. The myth of Germany as a culturally superior nation evaporated under the public acknowledgment of this nation's responsibility for the genocide conducted in the name of the Third Reich. This important change in the official language did not change the fact that German-Polish relations were still widely shaped by the persistence of traditional negative images. With the exception of a small cultural and political elite, for the vast majority of the FRG, Poland was the estranged Other in Eastern Europe. The Cold War still provided the pervasive frame of reference when it came to remembering the past and depicting national identities in Eastern Europe. This historically entrenched idea of Poland's economic and cultural backwardness as a threat to the allegedly superior German *Kulturnation* remained surprisingly resilient.

A survey conducted by the weekly magazine *Der Spiegel* in the early 1990s offers an indication of how traditional negative stereotypes have been persistently shaping the perception of Germany's neighbor to the east. This study shows

how especially the youngest generation had adopted the notion of Poland as a culturally inferior country. In the list of those countries, toward which young Germans feel culturally superior, Poland ranks at the top.[14] Even two years after the dramatic political transformation of Central and Eastern Europe, the cultural divide between the East and the West, between Poland and Germany, still provided a forceful narrative context for interpreting current events. Reflecting familiar historical narratives, the image of the German-Polish border as the dividing line between two worlds separated by incompatible levels of economic development and cultural achievement seemed to be untouched by the new reality in a far more unified Europe.

Challenged Identities: Contemporary Representations of Poland in German Public Discourse

In spite of their historical roots, collective memories and national identities need to be confirmed in public discourse to remain credible. They are dependent on a continuous confirmation through discursive practices and symbolic acts of commemoration.[15] Here it is primarily the reality created through mass media communication that provides the realm in which images of national identity are communicated. It is through this form of societal communication that these images are passed on from one generation to the other and are able to exert considerable power on perceptions of present-day social reality.

With *Solidarnocz* and the avant-garde role of Poland in challenging the power of the Communist Party in the Soviet Block, the traditional disinterest in and negative stereotypes toward Poland came under severe pressure. Suddenly, there was a broader, media-based interest in a society that had previously been portrayed almost exclusively in terms of the—for Germany painful—repercussions of the war. In order to shed light on the role of the collective memories and collective identities, mentioned above, with regard to the dramatic

changes in Europe's political landscape, the following section will illuminate the dominant discursive remodelling of the German perspective on contemporary Poland. Two sets of data have been used: first, the political elite discourse by representatives of the German government, and second, the broader media-based public discourse.

Elite Discourse: The Inclusion of Poland in the "European Family"

Recently reunited Germany is one of the European community's staunchest advocates for eastward enlargement. This support for the inclusion of Central and East European countries—and here most prominently Poland—into the EU is politically framed in terms of overcoming "obsolete boundaries" and welcoming the former Communist countries into the "European family." The Polish EU membership is seen as an important and integral part of a broader political structure for peace in Europe. The dominant framing in public discourse follows this line of thought: The fundamental transformation of the political landscape in Central Eastern Europe and the enlargement of the EU are unique opportunities to overcome the dividing line formerly marked by the Iron Curtain.[16] In light of such recent historical events, former Communist countries are now being included as members of the EU, which is portrayed as a community sharing a basis of values and interests. As a result, German-Polish relations are now marked by reconciliation and a common future; the formal recognition of the Oder-Neisse border by the German Chancellor in 1990 seemed to have marked the end of the divisive postwar period. Europe was depicted as the political and cultural umbrella under which both countries were to find an entirely new path of cooperation and exchange. German-Polish relations were now widely described in terms of a "community of interests" to which both countries would be devoted.[17]

One critical element in the political elite discourse on Poland's membership in the EU is the reference to

twentieth-century history. What has divided both countries and caused horrific agony in Poland is now described to be the driving force behind the speedy integration of Poland as a member state. For instance, Germany's Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer speaks of a "historical responsibility to provide the path for a quick integration of Poland into the EU because of the criminal policy of the Third Reich that banned Poland behind the Iron Curtain for half a century." Along the same lines, the German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder stated that only by confronting the horrific past can a brighter vision for the future of both countries be achieved. In his address to both chambers of the Polish Parliament, he also underlined that we need to look beyond the terror of the Third Reich and be aware of how deeply Poland is part of the European cultural and political legacy. A language of inclusion and commonality replaces the symbolic demarcation between the two neighbors. A redefinition of collective memories—framed in terms of the common European cultural heritage and shared political values (Poles as the "freedom fighters," paving the way for the end of the Soviet regime)—is employed to create a common modern European identity. It is the recognition of the horror instigated by Germany's colonialist attitude toward its eastern neighbor that, on a rhetorical level, forms the basis for reconciliation and a new partnership among equals.

Rational Debate and the Salience of Derogative Identities in Media Discourse

One way of presenting the wider German public discourse on Poland is to identify some predominant strategies characterizing the media perception of Germany's eastern neighbor. Before going into these media frames, one general observation can be made on the general structure of the media coverage. In light of the dramatic events that shaped Polish-German relations in the twentieth century and being aware of the traditionally strong cultural stereotypes about Poles,

the media discourse is at first sight almost exclusively focused on a rationale debate of contemporary political and economic problems. Articles raising issues explicitly related to the alleged cultural inferiority of Poland and the insurmountable gap between Eastern and Western Europe are almost nonexistent. The once powerful framing of Poland as a culturally different and thus threatening nation is no longer relevant for contemporary public discourse. If Poles are described as the Others, it is foremost in terms of a conflict over scarce resources and a perceived impact on European integration. For instance, the most sensitive and thus most prominent topics concerning the enlargement of the European Union and Poland's role in Europe are migration, the EU structural funds, and the pending reform of EU institutions.

This is reflected in the presence of basic framing strategies that appear to organize the content of articles on Polish migrants in the German press. The following table shows the thematic contexts and the basic (binary) framing strategy with which Polish migrants are portrayed in the German print media. We note that the tormenting past of both countries is very rarely seen as an issue of symbolic importance for identity and boundaries. Poland is more often mentioned when discussing issues related to social order. Here the Law and Order perspective is pervasive, reflecting how strongly Germans associate crime and illegality with Poles. Of less importance yet still present in public discourse is the conflict over social resources and the topic of social peace. In both cases the framing of this group is dominated by the portrayal of Polish migrants as a "burden" to the social system.

Distribution of articles according to basic framing strategies

Social Order	Law and Order versus active integration (87:1)
Distribution of social resources	Social burden versus social enhancement (16:5)
Cultural identity	Cultural homogeneity versus multiculturalism (7:16)
Historical perspective	Normalcy versus German guilt/responsibility (0:3)
Social peace	Social security versus social hazard (0:16)

Yet, it is worth drawing further attention to *how* these issues are discussed, in order to judge whether or not these discourses are really freed from the "burden of history" and the traditional disapproving perception of Poland as the Other. Thus, I will take a closer look at the dominant framing strategies and rhetorical structures used in these sampled articles. The three most important thematic contexts and framing strategies discussing the relationship between Germany and Poland in a controversial manner can be summarized in the following three aspects: (1) negative economic effects, (2) hazards to the labor market, and (3) the proliferation of crime.

Poland as a Threat to the Economic Prosperity of Western Europe

One of the major concerns regarding EU enlargement articulated in the media refers to a fact that is all too common in Polish-German relations over the past centuries: the structural imbalance between the two countries in terms of economic development and levels of prosperity. In particular the Polish agricultural sector is described as being far removed from the standards of the present member states. Often based on the experiences with the difficult and costly transformation of East Germany after 1989, one of the dominant ways to frame Poland's role in the enlargement of the EU is to describe it as a burdensome and economically risky endeavor. Doubts about the advisability of the enlargement are mainly expressed in terms of a distributional conflict over scarce resources. An economic rationale is the guiding principle in evaluating the benefits and challenges involved in integrating Central and Eastern European countries into the EU.

Yet, this interest-based approach is complemented by a far less rational perspective on the benefits and risks posed by Polish membership in the EU. In spite of all the hard economic data that portray Poland as having launched the transformation of its economy rather successfully, the idea of an inherently inferior "Polish economy" plagued by

inefficiency and sluggishness resonates strongly in public discourse. The gap between the western and eastern economies is often depicted in terms of a deeply entrenched divide that can not simply be overcome by an enforced modernization. Metaphors of an uncontrollable economic *moloch* and anarchy are invoked when the Polish economy is mentioned in the context of the general challenges posed by the transformation of Eastern Europe.

Poland as a Source of Massive Migration and Cheap Labor

One of the dominant themes mentioned in media discourse in connection with Poland and the impending EU enlargement is the concern that labor migration from neighboring Poland and the Czech Republic will undermine their high standard of living. In light of the expected massive influx of Polish workers to Germany after the enlargement, open borders and the free movement of citizens within the EU are often described as a genuine threat to the German labor market (That is why Germany has vigorously insisted on employment restrictions for new member states.). The discourse is primarily framed in terms of how the influx of "cheap labor" will aggravate the conflict over jobs and social privileges. The core of the problem is depicted in terms of conflicting interests and concerns over the sustainability of the German way of life.[18]

Yet again, there is a different layer of meaning behind the "rational" discussion of the perceived impact on the German labor market. The arguments about payment standards and competition are repeatedly accompanied by threatening illustrations of illegality and social disorder. One common way of presenting this problem to the German public is to relate it to the notion that the state loses its capacity to regulate the influx of migrant workers. Media coverage is full of reports on "illegal Polish workers." Here the terminology is quite revealing regarding the narrative structure of these reports. Whereas in France people without residence permits or visas

are called *sans papier*, in German public discourse they are often referred to as "illegals." This frame mostly appears in connection with the labor market and work: "illegal workers," "illegal foreigners," and so on. As Van Dijk comments, "the use of the word 'illegal' not only means that [the person] has broken the law [victimless-crime], but also associates him and other immigrants or refugees with crime."[19] This resonates with the deeply rooted suspicion about Poland and Eastern Europe as a threatening source of illegality, crime, and anarchy, concerns I will deal with at length in the next section.

Poland as a Security Risk and Source of Crime

In addition to economic uncertainty, the issue of crime occupies a significant position in German public discourse on Poland and the expected ramifications of EU enlargement. Again there is the split between the rational debate on the role of border controls and the fight against organized crime on the one hand and the highly emotional concern about Eastern Europe as the source of lawlessness and anarchy on the other hand. This is an issue that resonates well with the fear of lawlessness deeply entrenched in the German psyche and the media-driven need for dramatic (bad) news. The threat of "uncontrollable crime and violence" is a powerful narrative tool to evoke historical memories and representations of the divide between the civilized West and the uncivilized Slavic world. Patterns of chronic criminality (exemplified by the stereotype about Polish car thieves) are described almost as a part of Polish national identity. In this respect, contemporary Polish society is depicted in a way that strongly resembles the historically rooted derogatory stereotypes. They provide a powerful symbolic narrative that guides the perception of today's social reality. Phenomena in Poland are interpreted in a highly selective way and employed in a discursive strategy denouncing the society as an archetype of disorder and lawlessness.

These very condensed accounts of dominant framing strategies in public discourse are confirmed by two

studies that have been recently conducted on Polish-German relations. In light of the often stereotypical representations, both confirm the continuity of estrangement, a lack of knowledge and even animosity within significant parts of the German public. A study conducted by a research team from the Wissenschaftszentrum (WZB) in Berlin interviewed members of the political and cultural elite of both countries and came to the conclusion that there is a notable gap between the official discourse and the widespread sentiments in German society. This study points to the coexistence of a high degree of "political-rational agreement" on most issues on the one hand and the stubbornness of traditional stereotypes structuring the perception of the neighbor on the other hand. The latter aspect is said to account for the lack of an emotional attachment between these communities and for the persistence of deeply rooted prejudices. Historical narratives have continued to portray Polish society in highly pejorative terms.[20]

Conclusions: Beyond the Colonialist Legacy?

In post-1945 German-Polish relations the colonialist legacy has remained a significant force—not so much in terms of structures of domination but of stereotypical perceptions that seem to be almost frozen in time. In this respect the relationship between the two countries is an astonishing example of the persistence of collective memories and their relation to perceptions of national identities. Primarily due to the political constellation after World War II, traditional, negative images of Germany's East European neighbor have been reproduced and, throughout much of the twentieth century, served as a cultural template to justify the demarcation of Poland and Eastern Europe more generally. Negative images of cultural superiority provided a stable base for identity construction and symbolic demarcation. Pictures of the cultural Other became frozen in time and resurfaced when instrumental for contemporary political and social agendas in the Federal Republic

of Germany. The result of this process has been a degree of estrangement, disinterest, and even animosity between the two societies that is unusually high in Europe. It goes without saying that the problems in contemporary German-Polish relations are negligible compared to those before 1945; however, historical narratives and the resulting stereotypes have become a major stumbling block for recent attempts to launch an entirely new chapter in German relations with its eastern neighbor.

After 1989 one would have expected that these established collective memories and identities would quickly disperse. Indeed, the discourse of Germany's political and intellectual elites indicates that the dramatic events of 1989 and Poland's request to become a member of the European Union have radically questioned the rationale of Poland's negative image among these parts of German society. As Poland has become a member of the European community, the boundaries that divided the continent so firmly into "Us" and "Them" are transcended. The identity of the European collectivity is transformed, and the idea of a natural dividing line between the superior West and the inferior East has lost much of its plausibility. Economic differences are widely perceived as transitory, and a Pan-European rhetoric has been the prevailing perspective on the new reality east of the German border.

Yet, closer investigations of German-Polish relations indicate that there is an important gap between the rational discourse on the benefits and risks involved in EU enlargement on the one hand, and the highly emotional perceptions of Poland as a genuine threat to German society on the other hand. The latter seems not so much the result of the survival of the memories, themselves, but of the continuity of an interpretative frame, under which the other nation is perceived. Fears of crime, immigration, and economic deprivation provide a fertile ground for reinvigorating the old narratives of a threatening and inferior Polish neighbor. Considerations about the course of European integration are often interpreted and framed on the basis of long-lived national identities

and stereotypes. The experience of the negotiations leading up to the latest round of the EU's enlargement are a vivid illustration of how the socioeconomic backwardness of former Communist countries in comparison to Western Europe is depicted and politically treated in a way that resembles allegedly long obsolete images of an inherently inferior East.

This finding could be used to draw a rather cautious hypothesis about the impact of EU enlargement upon collective memories and upon symbolic boundaries in Germany's perception of Poland. Consistent with my basic assumption that identity constructions depend on discursive confirmation for maintaining their social and political relevance, the salience of derogatory images of Poland cannot be interpreted by simply pointing to the endurance of such narratives over time. As the divide between Eastern and Western Europe, between Communism and Capitalism, constituted a critical reference point in the FRG's postwar self-perception, the symbolic demarcation also plays a significant role in today's political environment. In terms of its impact on national identities and collective memories, one can characterize the process of European integration both as a unique opportunity to overcome the troubled past that has divided Poland and Germany, and as a serious challenge to established forms of collective identity. The redefinition of borders, of friends and foes in the new Europe contests the traditional historical narratives of national identities. Patterns of collective identity and communal belonging as well as political accounts of the boundaries of their own community are questioned by an increasingly transnational reality.

This perspective leads to two likely and politically opposed scenarios about the future development of German-Polish relations in light of EU enlargement. The optimistic account would argue that the historically rooted stereotypes would likely be replaced by a plethora of new narratives based on experiences drawn from a new geopolitical reality in Europe and from direct encounters between citizens from these

neighboring countries. In this perspective, Europe holds that persistent and controversial accounts of national identities and collective memories gradually become irrelevant for political conflicts. In the pessimistic scenario, one expects the prevailing sentiments of uncertainty about the future of the nation-state and the form of an integrated Europe to translate into a more aggressive reaffirmation of nationalist narratives. Contemporary Europe already provides some compelling examples of how nationalistic political groups mobilize the public by exploiting the widespread doubts concerning the feasibility and desirability of a further widening and deepening EU. Given the difficult relationship between both countries in the twentieth century, it is not unlikely that this sense of uncertainty and fear could easily be projected on to Poland. The future of German-Polish relations is deeply connected to the course of European integration in two ways: EU integration could help overcome the conflicts rooted in collective memory, or it could result in the political scapegoating of Poland for the highly controversial political course of the EU.

What the example of modern German-Polish relations shows is that colonialist structures did not only characterize European powers' policies and attitudes to those parts of the world that they sought to dominate and exploit and depicted as inherently inferior and in need of salvation from an enlightened Europe. These attitudes have also shaped Europe domestically and provided a forceful script for imperialistic policies in particular along Europe's East-West divide. In light of the still existing socioeconomic asymmetry between much of Central Eastern Europe and its prosperous Western counterpart[21] one can expect that, notwithstanding the process of European integration, this divide might still be politically exploited and provide the environment for significant cleavages. A successful German-Polish "community of interests" and partnership would be an important step toward overcoming this legacy of Europe's quasi-colonialist internal divide.

NOTES

1. Bosworth 1993, 1996.
2. Cordell.
3. Chirot.
4. Berend.
5. Spohn.
6. Reisch.
7. Weber.
8. Orlowski.
9. Huntington.
10. Niewiadomska-Frieling.
11. Hahn.
12. Bingen 1997.
13. Halbwachs.
14. Spiegel 36/1991.
15. Giesen.
16. Freudenstein.
17. Eberwein and Ecker-Erhardt; Hajnicz.
18. Rauer and Schmidtke.
19. Van Dijk, p. 114.
20. See also Niewiadomska-Frieling.
21. Greskovits and Bohle.

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Index