



# Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe

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## **Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe** Mark Mazower

Drawing on an unprecedented variety of sources, Mark Mazower reveals how the Nazis designed, maintained, and ultimately lost their European empire and offers a chilling vision of the world Hitler would have made had he won the war.

Germany's forces achieved, in just a few years, the astounding domination of a landmass and population larger than that of the United States. Control of this vast territory was meant to provide the basis for Germany's rise to unquestioned world power. Eastern Europe was to be the Reich's Wild West, transformed by massacre and colonial settlement. Western Europe was to provide the economic resources that would knit an authoritarian and racially cleansed continent together. But the brutality and short-sightedness of Nazi politics lost what German arms had won and brought their equally rapid downfall.

Time and again, the speed of the Germans' victories caught them unprepared for the economic or psychological intricacies of running such a far-flung dominion. Politically impoverished, they had no idea how to rule the millions of people they suddenly controlled, except by bludgeon.

Mazower forces us to set aside the timeworn notion that the Nazis' worldview was their own invention. Their desire for land and their racist attitudes toward Slavs and other nationalities emerged from ideas that had driven their Prussian forebears into Poland and beyond. They also drew inspiration on imperial expansion from the Americans and especially the British, whose empire they idolized. Their signal innovation was to exploit Europe's peoples and resources much as the British or French had done in India and Africa. Crushed and disheartened, many of the peoples they conquered collaborated with them to a degree that we have largely forgotten. Ultimately, the Third Reich would be beaten as much by its own hand as by the enemy.

Throughout this book are fascinating, chilling glimpses of the world that might have been. Russians, Poles, and other ethnic groups would have been slaughtered or enslaved. Germans would have been settled upon now empty lands as far east as the Black Sea—the new "Greater Germany". Europe's treasures would have been sacked, its great cities impoverished and recast as dormitories for forced laborers when they were not deliberately demolished. As dire as all this sounds, it was merely the planned extension of what actually happened in Europe under Nazi rule as recounted in this authoritative, absorbing book.

## **Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe Details**

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# From Reader Review *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe* for online ebook

## Eric says

In 1915, with Europe aflame in what everyone thought would be its worst war, W.E.B. Du Bois published a theory of the belligerents' motives in the *Atlantic Monthly*. "The African Roots of War" argued that the proverbial chickens had come home to roost: that imperial competition, especially the "scramble for Africa," had created the jealousies fueling the war, and had raised the stakes almost to preclude a lasting peace. "The Balkans are convenient for occasions, but the ownership of materials and men in the darker world is the real prize that is setting the nations of Europe at each others' throats to-day." Du Bois' tone is not one of mordant gloating, but rather deep alarm at what the colonizing mindset and respectable, "scientific" racism might do to Europe in the future—and Du Bois knew something of Europe's ethnic conflicts. David Levering Lewis describes how during vacations of the University of Berlin, in the 1890s, graduate student Du Bois tramped the back roads of the German and Hapsburg dominions, to the gates of Tsardom, once staying in Kraków with a classmate, later a victim of the camps, who had told him that if he really wanted to see a race problem surpassing that of the US, he should come observe German-Polish competition in the borderlands.

I don't know what Du Bois thought of the Nazis, but given the prophecy of "The African Roots of War," I doubt he was surprised that the defeated imperial power, stripped of its colonies and shut out of the race for more, tried to colonize Europe itself. Du Bois may have even thought what Mazower quotes the Martinican poet and theorist of *Négritude* Aimé Césaire as thinking—that Europeans had tolerated "Nazism before it was inflicted on them...they absolved it, shut their eyes to it, legitimized it, because, until then, it had been applied only to non-European peoples." The Nazis certainly ruled Eastern Europe confident in colonial precedent. Hitler frequently referred to the peoples in the way of *Lebensraum* as "redskins," "Red Indians." In 1942 one official wrote that the methods being used by *Gauleiter* Fritz Sauckel in his round-ups of slave labor for the Reich's war plants "probably have their origin in the blackest periods of the slave trade." *Reichskommissar* Ukraine Ernst Koch referred to his subjects as "niggers," and "that nigger people." Koch's deputy, *Generalkommissar* Frauenfeld, said his chief's policies comprised "points of view and methods used in past centuries against colored slave peoples." When the army high command recognized the need to cultivate Ukrainian nationalists as allies against the Soviets, the generals agreed "to take 'no nigger attitude' [*Nicht Negerstandpunkt*] towards the Ukrainians." On the eve of the invasion of the Soviet Union, Mussolini complained to the tiremaker Pirelli: "It is not possible to treat European countries like colonies." "But this is just what the Germans intended to do."

*Hitler's Empire* is the perfect book to have read on the heels of Lieven's *Empire*, in which Hitler's regime is called "a product of modern pathology, not of traditional imperial thinking"—a regime that "combined all the worst aspects of European colonial empire since its inception, turned them into a policy, and carried them to their logical extreme." Mazower's book fleshes out Hitler's imperial thinking—first and last "a violent fantasy of racial mastery." Hitler was only half-right. The successful empires he envied had more to teach than "whites up, browns down." Hitler always dismissed warnings of overreach by invoking British rule of India. That the British were able to control a subcontinent with a modest outlay of men and resources indicated to Hitler that their handful of colonial administrators were of such resplendent whiteness that the mottled masses of Asia could do naught but bow and obey. And so the Slavic *Untermensch* before the German *Herrenvolk* or Master Race. Hitler ignored or never learned about India's co-opted princes, or the native civil service, English-speaking and assimilated, that ran the country day-to-day. The conquest of the

American West was another misread precedent. Hitler pointed his generals to Karl May's Wild West pulp novels for strategic wisdom, referred to the Slavs as "Red Indians," and rode around Europe in an armored train christened "Amerika". He mistakenly believed that the US had totally exterminated the Native Americans, and never seems to have seriously considered if any Germans actually wanted to leave their homes and go as pioneers to Ukrainian farmsteads, or to have ever wondered if conquering and ruling the Polish, Czech and Russian nation-states might pose more complex, or even simply different, challenges than those America faced in subduing nomadic tribes of hunger-gatherers. Hitler emerges from Mazower's pages as the quintessential crackpot pseudointellectual—proud in the discovery of seeming parallels, oblivious to subtle distinctions, and engaged in an alchemiac quest to divine immutable historical laws.

Hitler seems to have read just enough to apply real place-names to his apocalyptic futurology; his comic book grandeurs date from when America was Land of the Future. He thought his empire would rewind history, drawing back to Germany the descendants of those who had immigrated to North and South America in the previous century. He wanted Berlin's new railway station to be larger than Grand Central Station, the new Elbe bridge modeled on San Francisco's Golden Gate, but totally, like, bigger and stuff. Hamburg's regional party headquarters would be housed in a skyscraper—expressly dwarfing the Empire State Building—"that would be visible for miles, with a huge neon swastika to guide shipping." And with the Allies bombing from above and battering the gates, Hitler continued to mumble about the "wonder weapons" whose deployment would shatter his foes. Hitler is MF Doom's "Lego-megalomaniac," giddy over scale models of his sci-fi Berlin, his monumental metropolis, and crouching to gaze a bleary eye down its small triumphal avenues. Bolaño makes science fiction one of the major genres of *Nazi Literature in the Americas*:

Gustavo Borda was just over five feet tall; he had a swarthy complexion, thick black hair, and enormous very white teeth. His characters, by contrast, are tall, fair-haired and blue-eyed. The spaceships that appear in his novels have German names. Their crews are German too. The colonies in space are called New Berlin, New Hamburg, New Frankfurt, and New Koenigsberg. His cosmic police dress like SS officers who have somehow managed to survive into the twenty-second century.

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## Jenny T says

Easily the most compelling book I've read this year, Hitler's Empire detailed Germany's domination of Europe from the 1930s to 1950--and the aftermath. From Germany's initial goal of uniting all the "Germanic peoples" in Europe under a single flag, to forced migration, attempted genocide, forced labor, political backstabbing, and mass murder, this is a sad, scary story.

But it's a fascinating one. Rather than focusing strictly on the political power of a few men (Hitler, Himmler, Goebbels, Stalin, etc), as many history books do, the book focuses on the everyday administration of the Third Reich--how it was expanded and run by ordinary people, some with evil motives, others just doing what they were told. Hitler's regime is presented as a splintered one, with various parties with widely differently philosophies fighting amongst themselves--in particular, the Nazi Party proper and the SS. The

Holocaust is covered from a political, as well as an administrative point of view: logistically speaking, \*how\* was all that horror accomplished? Who collaborated with the Nazis and why? How did comparatively powerless countries fight back, even before the Americans joined the war? And what happened after Hitler's death?

An emotional roller-coaster for me, this book took a long time to get through, but I'm now much more aware of the staggering effects of Nazism on other countries in Europe, especially Italy, Poland, and Greece, and my heart goes out to those in affected countries who struggled to put the pieces back together after so many nations were torn apart.

I'm left with additional questions, and I suspect this book is just the beginning of my forays into World War Two history.

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## **Marks54 says**

This is a terrific book about how the Nazis administered their conquered territories. It is a serious history book, filled with lots of detail, copious citations, and considerable insight. It is also a dense read and not for the timid.

Why is this book so interesting and valuable? It is insufficient to say it is well crafted. One would certainly hope for that, but that sort of quality would not guarantee that the book was interesting or valuable. The answer is more fundamental. It is impossible to read much about the Nazis without wondering how they did it -- how did they "pull it off"? This question gets raised in lots of histories but is seldom a focus. The issue is that Nazi organization was almost intentionally not very organized and even chaotic -- literally an intense storm swirling around the person of Hitler. There are lots of metaphors for the chaos, going at least back to Arendt's vision of an onion getting more intense towards the center.

This book focuses on the order problem in terms of imperial administration. In effect, the Nazi order can be viewed in comparison with other imperial orders - such as those of England and France overseas, with the exception that the Nazis applied their order to other Europeans on their home grounds. Of course the Nazis were extremely violent and genocidal but that does not do away with the need for some organization.

Mazower's account is filled with learning and "takeaways" but some were especially interesting to me. One was that the Nazis did not originally plan for how to administer their conquests but instead found themselves surprised at their success that left them wondering what to do next. A second theme in the book was that Nazi order evolved based on earlier choices. As the empire grew, the Reich instituted new laws and structures - often "on the fly". As conquests piled up, however, choices about administration were based on earlier choices and arrangements. A third theme was that the war in the Soviet Union changed everything due to its vast scale, harsh conditions, and the place within Nazi ideology of the lower races. Once the Wehrmacht started to lose (after Stalingrad), the organization started coming off the rails. This also contributed to the expansion of the final solution - not a new story of course, but fascinating and told well. A final theme that was very interesting concerned economic relations. At various time, the Nazi planners started thinking about the economic organization of Europe under German overlordship. Some of these plans bear a surprising similarity to how the economics of European integration have developed -- without the military conquest and mass murder, of course.

This book took a while to read but it was well worth it.

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## Ushan says

In 1938-1945 Nazi Germany ran a short-lived but large European empire, which at its peak in late 1942 stretched from western France to the Volga, and from northern Norway to Greek islands. It started rather innocuously, when Nazi Germany annexed Austria and majority-German border areas of Czechoslovakia, with the consent of most of their citizens. This is what a lot of independent European nations wanted to do since the beginning of the Age of Nationalism: Bulgaria wanted to rule all Bulgarians, including peasants from northern Greece bilingual in Greek and a Slavic idiom Bulgarian linguists classified as Bulgarian; the Marshal of Finland declared that he would not put his sword in its scabbard until Finland annexes the province of Russia the indigenous ethnic group of which is closely related to the Finns; and so on. However, as time went on, Hitler's empire became something like the British, Dutch and other European colonial empires. That a small number of first-class citizens should rule over a large number of second-class subjects was as much a feature of British India and Netherlands East Indies as of Nazi-occupied Poland. That the colonized should be worked to death to benefit the colonizers was as true of the Belgian Congo as of Nazi concentration camps a few decades later. A Nazi official could claim an estate in occupied Poland, evicting Polish farmers or making them work for him; there wasn't a world of difference between him and a Briton who acquired a farm in Kenya. In 1939, George Orwell wrote an essay where he claimed, no doubt based on his experiences as a colonial policeman, that it was quite common for an Indian coolie's leg to be thinner than the average Englishman's arm; Buchenwald had opened just two years before. This had never been done *to* Europeans before, only *by* Europeans, but there is a first time for everything. Yet there were some salient differences.

First, Nazis, like any other large movement, were a heterogeneous bunch, but many, including Heinrich Himmler, romantically dreamed of an agricultural neo-Medieval future for Germany as a nation of farmers. This was an absurd future for a country that built the world's first production jet aircraft, ballistic missile and a computer with floating-point arithmetic, and strangely resembling the future Morgenthau Plan for de-industrializing defeated Germany, but no one is saying Nazis were realists. Farmers have large families; there needs to be enough land for them and their children and grandchildren. This land, reasoned the Nazis, was to be found in the East: in Poland, the Czech lands, and especially the Soviet Union. If Germany incorporated all this land, it would create a land empire self-sufficient in food and invulnerable to a naval blockade. What is to be done with the people already living in these countries? Ethnic Germans should be made a part of the Great German nation; the rest should either be reduced to the servitude or killed.

Second, Nazis were obsessed with pseudo-scientific "racial theory". Much like Communists see the world through the glasses of class struggle, Nazis saw it through the glasses of racial struggle: between the Jew and the Aryan and between the Slav and the German. Racism wasn't a Nazi invention; what was specifically Nazi (and Communist) was a sense of urgency; as Lenin put it in a different context, "Who whom?" Shooting and gassing millions of Jews made no economic sense; why not feed them just enough and force them to work for the Reich, and postpone the killings until after the victory? Yet the Nazis did it anyway because they believed it was the right thing to do: ridding the Earth of the vermin that is the Jews as soon as possible. The Nazis did not get a chance, but there are several indications that Slavs would be next; Reinhard Heydrich is quoted as saying that those Czechs who couldn't be assimilated into the German nation would be "sent to Siberia", and obvious euphemism for being killed.

Hitler's empire was destroyed by the force of arms of the Grand Alliance. Germany was reduced in size, and divided; yet instead of a shortage of land she has experienced a shortage of labor, and had to import Turkish

guest workers. The Common Agricultural Policy and the Green Revolution ensured that Germany and her neighbors would have enough to eat without killing and enslaving millions. The emphasis of world politics has shifted to protecting human rights; no doubt it has much hypocrisy and double standards, but it is still much preferable to a politics of existential racial struggles. One lesson I draw from this book, however, is how hard it is to meaningfully divide the mass of humanity into distinct ethnic groups. Ever since the French Wars of Religion, Germany has been home to the descendants of Huguenots with French family names; one became the Reich Minister of Food and Agriculture; no one doubted their Germanness. However, when Nazi Germany annexed Alsace-Lorraine, the residents were forced to Germanize their names, so a Boulanger became Becker. Many residents of the Czech lands were "amphibians": bilingual in German and Czech; products of mixed marriages; were they Germans, liable to be drafted into the Wehrmacht, or untermenschen Czechs? In parts of Poland so many residents were dragooned onto the List of Ethnic Germans that a "German" stormtroop would march through a town singing Polish national songs. Many "ethnic Germans" resettled from the Balkans into land confiscated from the Poles barely spoke German at all. Mazower says that the closest analogy in the postwar world is Israel, which tries to plant settlements on Arab lands like Germany did on Polish lands, tries to become the home of the world's Jews like Germany tried to become the home of the world's Germans, teaching Hebrew to new arrivals like Germany taught German to Balkan Germans, and has been struggling to define, who is a Jew, like Germany struggled to define, who is a German.

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## Terence says

There's a scene in the classic Star Trek episode "Patterns of Force" that always comes to mind when I read Nazi-era histories. In the episode, *Enterprise* is called to the planets Ekos and Zeon to find out what happened to the Federation's cultural observer, John Gill, who's disappeared. They discover Ekos ruled by a Nazi Party identical in every way to Earth's, down to the very uniforms; led by the Fuhrer, John Gill; and embarked on a campaign to finally eradicate the Zeon "scum" (the Zeons all had Jewish names - Star Trek was not known for subtlety, even in her best episodes). The scene in question occurs late in the episode; Kirk and Spock have penetrated Party HQ to confront Gill and Kirk asks him, "Why Nazi Germany?" Gill replies that it was the most efficient state Earth ever knew, and Spock concurs. The historian in me always cringes at that because Nazi Germany was one of the most inefficient and corrupt examples of a modern state one could conceive of. What efficiencies pertained were offset by the feudal structure of the regime; rivalries between Party, civil service & the military; and the personal leadership of the Fuhrer. All this and more is documented in Mark Mazower's look at how the Nazi's ran Germany and their empire.

The book is divided into 3 parts. The first 2 focus on Nazi Germany primarily during the war years; there's almost nothing about National Socialism's domestic policies from '33 to '39 (for those interested, see Richard Evan's *The Third Reich in Power*). The final part, "Perspectives," looks at some of the fallout from the Nazi era.

"For Greater Germany": Chapters 1 and 2 in this section offer a brief overview of German political history from 1848 to 1918. Here, Mazower makes several important points. First, the roots of the Nazi's New Order lay in traditional German aspirations to unify all Germans and become the dominant European power. Aspirations reinforced by Wilson's idealistic (and, in practice, unworkable) notion of self-determination set out at Versailles. A second point is that German society always had strong anti-Slav and anti-Semitic strains. In fact, **all** of Europe had powerful anti-Semitic movements. Nazism was a particularly psychotic and toxic expression of sentiments very common Europe-wide. A third point is that, while Nazi occupations were lethally brutal they weren't all that moreso than standard Wehrmacht policy as evidenced by Germany's



treatment of Belgium and Poland in the Great War (the consequences of this brutality are explored more fully in section 2). Nazi racial ideology played a significant role in the difference. In the East, especially, the Nazi's were far more brutal. Germans felt themselves to be morally and racially superior to the Slavs. In the West, in countries of fellow Aryans, the conquered were treated more leniently and non-Nazi elements were able to retain control till late in the war. Furthermore, in many countries conservative, right-wing parties actually welcomed the chance to eliminate center and leftist opponents. In the West, Germany's primary objective was to keep things quiet so it could focus on the East. A final point Mazower makes is that the Nazi's were caught flat-footed by their successes. The morass of Party fiefdoms and competing ministries emerged because they couldn't plan ahead and all important decisions went through Hitler, who liked to play his people off against each other.

A few thoughts from the later chapters of section 1: Two things stood out to me - The Nazi's drive to create a Greater Germany and weed out the untermenschen who were contaminating it foundered on the fact that their racial ideology was nearly incoherent. Since it had no scientific, cultural or linguistic validity, the Nazi's were unable to define "Germanness," and so, depending upon the gauleiter in question and the exigencies of wartime needs, "Germanness" could mean just about anything.

In the Warthegau, Arthur Greiser maintained a strict regime of racial purity. A policy made easier as this province received the bulk of the German immigrants. In West Prussia, Albert Forster kept settlers away and used the SS's racial classifications to "Germanize" large numbers of Poles (even if they didn't want to be "German"). And in Upper Silesia, the administration held the SS off by arguing that economic stability mandated keeping the old population in place (for the time being). Here, as elsewhere, Nazi ideology shipwrecked on the shores of reality. In the first case, uprooting large numbers of people caused such economic turmoil and interfered with the war effort to make it impracticable. In the second case, there simply weren't enough Germans who needed or wanted to settle in all that Lebensraum the early successes of the war made available. (pp. 189-198)

A second facet of Nazi government that I found interesting is Mazower's argument that there were 2 visions of the New Order. The old-time Party hacks preferred what Mazower calls "decentralized chaos" - a mode of governing which had characterized Nazi rule since they had come to power. A second vision, supported by the SS and the civil service, was a "lethal excess of centralized order." It's here that one catches a glimpse of what a Nazified Europe may have looked like - death camps, secret police, the brutally efficient regime mythologized in Star Trek and other venues. As the war progressed and the inadequacies of that first vision became apparent and crippling, Himmler managed to grasp greater and greater power for the SS both inside Germany and in the Occupied Territories.

"The New Order": In section 2, Mazower takes a closer look at aspects of Nazi rule, beginning with "Making Occupation Pay." The driving reason behind all of Germany's decisions regarding policies in the Occupied Territories was how it could benefit the Reich. Absolutely no regard was given to the economic effects on the conquered or even allied nations.

Just as with economic policy, Nazi ideology blinded them to diplomatic opportunities to sow goodwill. It may be hateful to the wartime myths of Europe but many nations before 1945 were quite willing to consider working with Germany. It's the Germans themselves who made it impossible by insisting on a Europe that existed for exploitation by Germany. Fascist movements and other right-wing parties were increasingly alienated by the high-handed and inept diplomacy of the Reich.

Despite that, before it became clear Germany would lose the war, collaboration with the Nazi regime was widespread since it often resulted in the enrichment of private corporations (like L'Oreal, Mercedes, and

others), and could be argued as the only sane course in a Europe that looked to be a Nazi garden before 1942.

The opposite of collaboration is opposition and Mazower offers a typically nuanced view of that aspect of the Nazi era, as well. As was true elsewhere, Germany's wartime fortunes generally dictated how opposition developed: Before the great reverses of 1942-43, opposition in the West was almost nonexistent; and when it did arise, the German response against civilians was so vicious that most gave it up as too costly. Over the course of the war, especially after the Allies breached Festung Europa in 1944, the Resistance of myth finally coalesced and began coordinating operations with the Anglo-American command despite continued German reprisals. In the East, the opposition developed earlier, particularly among the Jews and the Poles, both of whom quickly realized that German intentions toward them gave them nothing to lose. Many may remember the destruction of Lidice after Reinhard Heydrich's assassination but this was the **typical** response to such incidents! After a time, the roll call of slaughtered civilians becomes mind numbing: In Belorussia, upwards of 375,000 died as a result of reprisal actions alone (p. 487); in Yugoslavia, 10,000 were rounded up in retaliation for raid and 2,300 were immediately shot (p. 483); and in the Warsaw Ghetto there remained (at most) 70,000 Jews in 1943 from a 1941 population of 450,000 (p. 494).

Ultimately opposition was more important politically than militarily. Its strategic significance was negligible but it often legitimized the various governments-in-exile. Beyond that, Allied response to resistance movements was often ambivalent. In the East, the Soviets were given carte blanche to make policy and the non-Communists were left to hang (often literally). In Greece and elsewhere, Anglo-American fears of Communism influenced policy. Thus, in Greece, the British bombed ELAS (the Greek communist partisans) positions. (pp. 515-521)

*Hitler's Empire* goes on for 672 pages of text, notes and sources so it should be obvious that I've only sketched out the roughest thumbnail of Mazower's arguments (despite this review's length), and I have refrained from drawing the obvious parallels with our own recent history, and the fragility of liberal democracy. I can only urge the interested to go out and find a copy of their own to read.

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## **Michael Williams says**

In terms of Realpolitik and political theory, though adamantly not in ethical terms, Nazi hegemony of Eurasia was a real and legitimate possibility for a brief while in the late 1930s and first years of the 1940s. Why this possibility did not materialize is the question that Mark Mazower confronts in *Hitler's Empire*, which, as its title suggests, locates the answer in the field of imperial policy. This approach hearkens back to Mazower's earlier *Dark Continent*, a political history of twentieth-century Europe, in which the author boldly deemed Hitler's short-lived mastery of Europe a "lost opportunity" for providing a war-torn and ideologically riven continent with a stable new order (Such language in reference to an episode of history that cost upwards 60 million people their lives may strike some as absolutely appalling, but this, I suggest, is due to a conceptual confusion between the three distinct, and sometimes irreconcilable, types of legitimacy alluded to above). In both works, Mazower identified the failure of Nazi Germany to consolidate Europe as a failure to visualize a Europe that would have been acceptable to its non-German denizens.

In his attempt to reveal what might have been, Mazower hits upon some strange heroes. Alfred Rosenberg, one of the parties foremost anti-Semites and the nominal head of the territories conquered in the Soviet Union, advocated casting the Germans as liberators from Bolshevism and, in the case of Byelorussians and Ukrainians, as liberators from Russian imperialism. Such policies, Rosenberg hoped and Mazower estimates, might well have obviated resistance in the Eastern territories. The SS-man and political theorist Werner Best, though perfectly comfortable with the extermination of Jews, argued that the Third Reich would best be

served by treating its conquered peoples in the East and West with a light hand, overseeing rather than administering, exercising soft power, and recognizing national ambitions. The Governor General Hans Frank, though a notorious hypocrite, argued that empires could not stand and nations could not reign without the rule of law. Mussolini himself and a cadre of Italian advisors urged Hitler to promote a vision of Europe that could compete with the Atlantic Charter. All of these proposals and plans came to naught. Instead, the regime's racism, extreme nationalism, administrative inefficiency and overlapping zones of power, and the economic demands of total war combined with Hitler's disinterest and Himmler's opposition to establish a de facto policy of all out exploitation and extraction in the East. The official policies of population transfers and mass murder ensured that relatively few Eastern Europeans could adopt a Nazi party platform. As for the West, a state of uneasy neglect set in, with Nazi officials hesitant to terrorize Frenchmen and "Germanic" speakers in the manner that they terrorized a variety of Slavs.

Hitler's Empire is very valuable as an examination of the power structures of Europe and dilemmas of Europeans under the Third Reich. This, indeed, is a neglected area of study, which Mazower brings to life with characteristic insight and grit. His final chapters, in which he paints the defeat of the Third Reich equally as a defeat of the nineteenth-century imperial system is compelling. In this regard, Mazower's work is not only well worth the read but actually occupies an essential place in the library of any student of modern Europe or of global history. Further, as a companion piece to *Dark Continent*, Hitler's Empire does convince readers that the overwhelming majority of Europeans would have cooperated with or acquiesced in Nazi leadership had the Nazis 1) won the war and 2) proved themselves more capable and tolerant leaders – if, in Best's distinction, they had settled for *Führung* (leadership) rather than *Herrschaft* (domination and coercive power).

But therein lies the rub; neither of these things were the case or were remotely likely to have been the case. After December of 1941, with the Wehrmacht stalled before the gates of Moscow, Zhukov in command of Soviet forces, and the United States and its industrial might having entered the war, Nazi Germany was highly unlikely to have won the war. Any chance that it had lay in delivering a death blow to the Red Army. While this would have been easier to achieve had the Germans not already alienated Russians, Ukrainians, and Byelorussians, it still would have necessitated battlefield victories and a successful strategy. Thus, if one is going to ask the question of how the Germans could have won the war and why they did not, it seems to me that one must write a primarily military history, which Mazower does not do. More importantly, however, National Socialism was inseparable from the beliefs and whims of Adolf Hitler and, to a lesser extent, from those of Heinrich Himmler. This was so both in fact and in theory, for the theories of Hitler and Himmler were the only ones that mattered given the circumstances. Thus, try as he might, Mazower does not succeed in presenting Best as a neglected alternative that contingency passed over. Best's fall and the fall of those like him was due not to contingency but rather to the very nature of National Socialism. It could not have been much more tolerant than it was; there was simply no room for tolerance in the worldviews of Hitler and Himmler, especially after the war began. And, though Mazower's introduction acknowledges that Hitler's dictatorial powers and National Socialism's murderous version of racism separates it from other empires, one must go a step farther in concluding that these factors not only marked Hitler's empire off as a special type of empire but rather altogether broke the mould of empire as it had been established in Europe over the preceding centuries. If the motives of British, French, Dutch, and American empire-builders included the spread of "civilization," economic gain, and national prestige, they did not include wholesale destruction of entire peoples as an end in itself or a Manichean view of an ages-long battle between culture-builders and culture-destroyers. As the motives between these empires and the Third Reich were distinct, so were there outcomes. I would argue for an entangled view of empire and National Socialism rather than for the classification of the latter under the former. And, in this more limited respect, Mazower's work stands as a landmark.

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## DoctorM says

An excellent account of Germany's attempt to administer its conquered territories and of how the Third Reich so haplessly failed to understand both its own economic and military limitations and to coordinate any vision of what a Europe dominated by Greater Germany would look like. Mazower focuses on the utter disjunct between Nazi racial visions and the economic needs of the Reich whether in peace or war and on the sheer venality and incompetence of all-too-many of the new rulers in the conquered East, as well as on Germany's complete inability to develop reliable allies.

Where Mazower is less successful is in his effort to place German efforts from the Anschluss in 1938 through the collapse of the Reich in 1945 into the category of "colonial" rule. While he quite correctly points out the similarities between German territorial goals in 1914-18 and those of the Third Reich, he is less successful in trying to compare German occupation policy with British or French policies overseas. While he points out that the policies of Germany's allies (Hungary, Italy, Bulgaria, Romania) in conquered or regained territories were not so very different in levels of brutality or hopes of national purification, he fails to really establish a typology for "colonial" rule.

Mazower does make one very interesting point that I'd love to see fleshed out. He looks at the small cliques of young technocrats in the SD--- the NSDAP's security service ---and the foreign ministry who tried to develop a body of administrative law and a coherent vision of European economic integration and notes in passing that many of them survived the war and de-nazification to become postwar managerial enthusiasts and supporters of the Common Market and European unity. Very much something worth exploring.

"Hitler's Empire" is a very fine introduction to the economic and social effects of German occupation, and a reminder of the costs of ideological rule--- a book worth reading for anyone interested in the rise and fall of powerful conquest states.

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## Jonny Ruddock says

An examination of how the Germans plundered, murdered and stole their way through Europe in the years from 1938 to 1945. Not unsurprisingly, it's a catalogue of lack of planning, graft, genocidal tendencies, outright theft and the insanity of issuing vague instructions to competing individuals. Of particular interest was the way that the definition of "ethnic Germans" shifted depending on the racism of the Gauleiters and the pressure of quotas to Germanise Poland, and the fact that said "ethnic Germans" were often no less Slavic than the populations they were meant to replace - and often had no wish to be resettled anywhere at all. A very important look at the effect of the Nazi regime on Europe, well worth a look and a good deal of thought.

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## Jon says

I read this in tandem with Fischer's *Germany's Aims in the First World War* to get a sense of whether there was any continuity between the means and ends of German aggression in the world wars. In short, there definitely was. Mazower provides a detailed and extremely well-written account of 1)Germany's extensive aims, 2)its decided lack of a well thought-out plan for administering the territories it conquered, 3)its failure to coordinate military and civilian organizations in formulating any policies, 4)the different forms of

brutality to which the Wehrmacht, SS, and Eastern offices subjected Poland, the Baltic, and occupied Soviet territories, and 5) the similarities between Nazi and Imperial German goals in the two world wars. Mazower has done an excellent job of covering a difficult and oft-neglected subject: what happened in WWII Europe behind (and often as a consequence of) the advancing armies.

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## **Helmut says**

### **Fassungslos...**

Ich lasse mich nur selten durch ein Buch aus der Fassung bringen, aber Mark Mazower hat das mit seinem Werk geschafft. Das Panorama, das er in wunderbar lesbarer Prosa vor dem Leser ausbreitet, zeigt das Dritte Reich in seiner ganzen Unfähigkeit: Beginnend bei einer Darstellung der völligen Planlosigkeit des faschistischen Regimes, welche durch den Sturm und Drang zunächst nicht sehr auffiel bis hin zum ständigen aktiven Wunsch, die eroberten Gebiete gegen sich aufzubringen. Dabei geht der Autor sehr detailliert vor und legt in einer schonungslosen Klarheit die Eitelkeiten und Inkompetenz eines Ribbentrops und Görings ebenso offen wie die Machtgeilheit eines Himmler oder den fast religiösen Rassenfanatismus eines Goebbels und Heydrich. Wenn aus bestimmten Kreisen immer wieder die Effizienz des Dritten Reichs gerühmt wird, so zeigt sich während der Lektüre hier ein völlig anderes Bild: Effizienz gab es im Dritten Reich ausschließlich bei der Vernichtung von Menschen (und sogar dabei gab es Probleme). Mazowers These, dass Deutschland ein Kolonialreich in Europa errichten wollte, und die eroberten Gebiete entsprechend behandelte, halte ich anhand der präsentierten Tatsachen für durchaus nachvollziehbar.

Mazowers Portraits der Hauptpersonen Hitler, Himmler, Heydrich und diverser weiterer wichtiger Personen wie Frank, Stuckart, Ribbentrop, Speer und Jeckeln, aber auch ausländischer Führungspersonen wie Mussolini und Antonescu, die ihren Teil in der Geschichte hatten, sind in einer beeindruckenden Klarheit erschreckende Beispiele für den globalen Wahn, der in den dreißiger und vierziger Jahren des 20. Jh. die Welt erfasst hatte, jedwede humanistische Zügel zeriss und dem Wolf im Menschen die Kontrolle über alles gab. Es waren eben nicht nur Hitler und Himmler, sondern Bereitwillige auf allen Ebenen, die erst ermöglichten, Europa in den Untergang zu stürzen.

Die erschreckende Wahrheit, dass die Welt ein Deutsch-Europa durchaus sogar akzeptiert hätte, wenn die Nazis nicht so übermäßig gierig und unkooperativ gewesen wären, bietet genügend Stoff, einmal darüber nachzudenken, wie die Welt dann heute aussähe. Darüberhinaus habe ich persönlich sehr viel über deutsche Geschichte gelernt und sehe nun vieles aus einer informierteren Position.

Das Paperback ist typische Penguin-Qualität mit dünnem Papier. Es enthält einige Fotoseiten, die allerdings meiner Meinung nach zu unspezifisch sind und in dieser Form dem Text keinen Mehrwert liefern. Die 600 Seiten Text werden durch weitere 100 Seiten Endnoten ergänzt.

Ein sehr dicht geschriebenes Buch, das dem Leser einiges abfordert, da jede einzelne Seite vor Informationen fast platzt; der lockere aber nüchterne Schreibstil Mazowers, der sowohl die Absurditäten des Regimes als auch die Schrecken emotionslos kommentiert, hilft dem Leser aber sehr. Akribisch recherchiert, brilliant formuliert: Äußerst empfehlenswert.

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## **Matt says**

In *Hitler's Empire*, Mark Mazower explores Nazi Germany from a very specific angle. He does not write about the many battles of World War II. There are no discussions of weaponry or tactics. He is not interested in the twisted, pathological personalities that studded the Nazi hierarchies. He is not here to describe Hitler's rise to power or the domestic politics of his party. Instead, *Hitler's Empire* is a thorough (604 pages of text), readable exploration of the way Nazi Germany administered its occupied territories.

We've all seen a map of Occupied Europe and marveled at the breadth of Hitler's cartoonish ambitions. To look at that map, though, is to miss the distinctions in the way that Nazi Germany swallowed its kills. Not all conquests were the same, which made a great deal of difference to the people being conquered. Austria and parts of Poland were incorporated into the Reich. Czechoslovakia became the protectorates of Bohemia and Moravia. Norway and the Netherlands came under German civil administration, while France was divided in two, with one half occupied. Meanwhile, parts of Poland and the Ukraine were administered by the General Government as part of a broader plan to Germanize the area. Whether or not you survived the arrival of Hitler's minions depended on how Germany administered your country. In the west, Germany generally left civil structures and authority intact. In the east, on the other hand, those same authorities and structures (and the people comprising them) were liquidated.

Mazower breaks his book into three sections. The first is a broad-ranging introduction to the theory, history, and early execution of German expansionist dreams. Mazower begins in 1848 (at the Frankfurt Parliament) and ends in 1942, with Germany fulfilling long-held territorial/racial ambitions by invading the Soviet Union. In between you learn about German goals, centered on that ill-omened word, *lebensraum*. This ultimate end was bolstered by the twin pillars of nationalism (which embodied the notion of "Greater Germany", the unification of German-speaking peoples) and anti-Slavism/anti-Semitism (which embodied the German belief in their superiority, in turn justifying their precipitous actions). The strands of this delusion coalesced into substantive complaints following the harsh Treaty of Versailles in 1919. Versailles stripped German colonies in Africa and the Pacific, took from them Alsace and Lorraine (of course, they'd taken that from France in the Franco-Prussian War), and carved up Prussia. The Treaty also ignored Woodrow Wilson's proposed "self determination" by refusing to allow Austria to join Germany.

The first section starts slowly by developing some of the intellectual underpinnings of German visions. The pace picks up considerably once Hitler starts putting these plans into action by annexing Austria, occupying the Sudetenland, and invading Poland.

The second section is the heart of the book. Whereas the first part proceeded chronologically, the second is arranged topically. There are thematic chapters devoted to subjects such as labor policy, collaborators, and resistance movements. Within each of these chapters, Mazower surveys the various countries that fell under German control.

Several things jump out in these chapters. One is the absolute ad hoc nature of German planning. Despite nurturing these expansionary plans for decades, and despite the supposed Germanic traits of preparation and scheduling, the Nazis were unable to keep up with their own successes. The result was a lot of freelancing, as officials tried to create administrative structures on the fly. This led to competing visions. For instance, Mazower depicts the clashing ideologies of Werner Best and Reinhardt Heydrich. Best proposed a "typology of occupation regimes" based on National Socialist Principles. Certain countries, such as Denmark, could be run through the Foreign Ministry. Similarly, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands, might be administered informally, with Germans working through those countries' own civil service. Both of these options would have qualified as a "light touch" relative to the Nazis. At the other end of the scale, however, you had the "colonial" category, embodied by the General Government of Poland, where German racial views of the inhabitants required higher participation in government. Heydrich opposed Best, because Best's proposals

might seal off the SS from entering many parts of Occupied Europe.

(Relative to other Nazis, Best often sounds almost rational. Mazower makes clear that seeming rational is not difficult when pitted against annihilationist monsters such as Reinhardt Heydrich. Best was a criminal like the rest, who recognized the possibility they might have to “totally destroy” unwanted groups).

Another leitmotif that arises is Hitler’s adamant refusal to centralize functions. Today, bureaucracy gets a bad name. You hear bureaucracy and you think Patty and Selma from *The Simpsons* issuing one driver’s license an hour at the DMV. Fair enough – the DMV is a wretched place. But bureaucracy has its uses. It can – properly implemented – promote efficiency by streamlining services, avoiding redundancies, and providing consistency. Centralization also keeps power struggles from arising. This is what Hitler wanted to avoid by decentralization. To the end, the Nazis struggled finding the balance between Party politics and governance. Hitler always had one eye on his own authority, his own place within the party. He managed his own risk by pitting various factions and personalities against each other. Sometimes he’d side with the SS over the Interior Ministry; sometimes he’d side with the Interior Ministry over the SS. By forcing them to fight for Hitler’s graces, he kept them from obtaining too much power. (And the Nazis loved power more than anything. It’s almost pathological. Even at the bitter end, with Germany in ruins and the Soviets beating on the door to Hitler’s Bunker, you had Hitler’s sycophants vying for the honor of King of the Ashes).

There is only one chapter devoted solely to the Holocaust. Consistent with other areas of Nazi policy, their genocidal policies moved forward in fits and starts. Over time, they moved from property seizures, ostracizing laws, and forced immigration to shooting people in the back of the head, and burying them in mass graves. Eventually, their murderous impulses culminated in gas chambers and crematoriums.

However, the Holocaust runs through this book like poison in the blood. German administrative policies always had to account for the roundup, incarceration, and slaughter of millions of humans. This, of course, diverted resources away from battling the free world. Moreover, the Germans continually prioritized genocide over larger war aims. (There were minor exceptions, of course; as the *Götterdämmerung* approached, Himmler made some abortive efforts to exchange hostages). For instance, Germany was constantly beset by manpower shortages and had to conscript workers from the occupied territories. Not to be glib, but Germany had millions of laborers ready at hand. Instead of killing them, or working them to death, the Germans might simply have treated them as property – as an asset. Of course, even this shred of humanity coupled with sense eluded the Germans. In the final analysis, the destruction of Nazi Germany was built into the very DNA of the Nazis. Hate fueled and consumed them.

Mazower ends his book with a short final section giving some perspective to Germany’s failed attempt to rule Europe. He has some interesting observations about how Nazi Germany’s notion of a united Europe morphed into the European Union that we recognize today. For a short, terrible time during the 1940s, Berlin was the dark heart of Europe. That ended long before Hitler’s prophesied 1,000 years, but the price was high. In the end, peace finally came to Europe – a tremulous, cold war peace at first; later, something far more lasting. Strangely, it was the countries Hitler most feared – the US and the USSR – that dominated this process.

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**Lazarus P Badpenny Esq says**

Excellent companion to the Richard Evans trilogy, dealing as it does with the effect of Nazism on the protectorates, the occupied territories, palatinates, and client states of the Greater German Reich.

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### Christopher Saunders says

Mark Mazower's **Hitler's Empire** offers an ambitious, provocative look at Nazi management of conquered territories and collaborators throughout the Second World War. Mazower examines the underpinnings of Hitler's dream for lebensraum in the broader contexts of German imperial history, racial fears of Russians and Jews, and (reviving an old idea of A.J.P. Taylor) the American and British expansionists whom Hitler professed to admire. Yet Mazower stresses the differences between American Manifest Destiny or Pax Britannica and Germany's late-stage empire building are more profound than the broad similarities. Neither Hitler nor his henchmen realized that a continental super-state was utterly incompatible with his fantasies of racial purity; each territorial acquisition brought more and more non-Germans into the Reich, without a clear plan how to manage them. Thus administration of territories proceeded ad hoc, less managed by Hitler than the whims of bureaucrats and local military commanders; some countries, particularly the Germanic peoples of Holland and Denmark, enjoyed relatively benign occupations while others (especially in Russia and Poland) suffered unrelenting savagery. Mazower's book emphasizes this inconstancy while emphasizing the brutality underpinning it; he demonstrates that fascist violence generally dissuaded mass resistance outside of the USSR, that they found many willing collaborators in conquered territories, and yet that political incompetence, economic mismanagement and crude "ersatz diplomacy" towards foreign allies and neutrals constantly undermined their goals. Overall, Mazower portrays a dysfunctional state both intoxicated and confused by its own success, with unworkable policies, unreliable allies and a capricious Fuhrer conspiring to undermine them. A fascinating, thought-provoking look at a well-worn subject.

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### La pointe de la sauce says

The wholesale betrayal of the Jewish people by Europe headed by the third Reich. Systematic. A dishonour to humanity. The murder of millions of women and children on a scale unimaginable. Little is sadder in the whole grim story than the accounts of Jewish women and children emerging out of the Polish woods to give themselves up at gendarmerie posts asking to be shot. Their certainty that they were doomed if they relied on local Christians is chilling. The calculated total horror was beyond the comprehension of both Germany's collaborators and it's opponents and yet Europe as a whole has to be blamed for it's treatment of minorities even before 1938 and it's lack of tolerance was evident in it's immediate collaboration with Hitler. Anti-Semitism, radical nationalism, imperialism and racism did not begin with the Nazis and didn't die of with the third Reich. We still have a long way to go.

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Notes:

Hitler's Empire

The roots of the Nazi New Order in 1933 lay not in anti-Semitism, nor in the blind lust for conquest, but rather in the quest to unify Germans within a single German state. Under the direction of a self made leader and his mass party, this aimed to succeed where the Kaiser had failed, in establishing a permanent dominion in the East over the Slavs and in this way to become powerful enough to exercise mastery over Europe as a whole.



Between 1938 and 1942, Germany had amassed approximately one-third of the European land-mass and ruled nearly half its inhabitants.

Ruthlessly brutal operational force combined with Amateur administration of conquered territories.

Very little importance was attached to administration.

The period between 1918 - 1926 saw the exodus of the German population from Poland, Prussia and Czechoslovakia due to nationalistic sentiments of the ruling Polish/Slavic/Czech majorities.

1918 End of WW1.

1938 - Annexes Austria without firing a shot and decides to administer it not as a separate country but as a province within Germany.

Sept. 1938 - Marches into the Czech Republic again with very little confrontation. Signs deal with Slovakia which announces its independence from Czechoslovakia. Sets up a puppet government in Czech Republic and annexes huge swaths of land bordering Germany as the Bohemian Protectorate.

1939. January. Begins putting pressure on Poland. Poland signs an agreement with France and Britain to come to its defense in the event of an attack. August 1939. Hitler gives order to occupy Poland and signs an agreement with the Soviets for the partition of Poland.

Order is given to shoot on sight - intellectuals, troublemakers etc. List is made of 100s of intellectuals to shoot.

The generals are unwilling to sign up to war crimes so the SS is drafted in for massacre. A total destruction of the Polish leadership class. As a result 50,000 Poles and 7,000 Jews were executed during the invasion.

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## **Jan Peczkis says**

### **A Fallacy: Nazis Were to "Conquer the World" and Thereby Kill ALL Jews. Holocaust Detailed, Including GENERALPLAN OST**

The author uses many scholarly sources. For example, he praises historian Marek Jan Chodakiewicz's BETWEEN NAZIS AND SOVIETS as a pioneering work. (p. 637).

#### **THE POTENTIAL FOR A WWI-ERA JUDEOPOLONIA IN THE EVENT OF A GERMAN VICTORY**

Consider the WWI German incursion into Russian-ruled Poland. Although Mazower does not mention Judeopolonia, he illustrates the setting that could have led to a joint Jewish-German rule over eastern Poland. He writes, (quote) The German army also had a conscious policy of supporting the Jewish press in Poland and the governor, General Hans von Beseler, set up a Jewish self-government. In short, the Germans tried to present themselves as liberators from Russian tyranny, and Beseler urged the formation of a "Polish national state" "in the closest association with Germany"--basically a revival of the post-Napoleonic Congress of Poland but this time under German not Russian rule. (unquote)(p. 23).

## NO EVIDENCE THAT NAZI GERMAN ALLOWING SOME JEWS TO LEAVE MEANT THAT THEY WOULD LATER BE KILLED "AFTER THE NAZIS CONQUERED THE WORLD"

Now on WWII. The Hitler Youth song, "Today Germany is ours, and tomorrow the whole world" should not be taken literally. There is no agreement among historians as to how geographically distant Nazi German geopolitical ambitions actually went. (p. 2). Thus, the Holocaust uniqueness argument, that the Nazis intended to kill all the world's Jews, once having gotten into a position to do so, is a myth.

## GERMAN-CONQUERED POLAND

After conquering Poland, the Germans flouted the Geneva Convention by turning Polish POWs into civilian laborers--based on the rationalization that the Polish State had ceased to exist. (p. 160). [This was the exact same farcical excuse given by the Soviet Union for its aggressive impulses towards Poland throughout and after WWII.]

As for the lack of a Polish Quisling, Mazower takes a middle view between that of Germans not wanting one, and the Poles refusing to provide one. He realizes, for example, that Poland's former long-term prime minister, Wincenty Witos, was repeatedly approached by the Germans as a prospective Quisling, but refused. (p. 447).

During the Nazi German occupation of Poland, policies governing the Polish UNTERMENSCHEN were sometimes inconsistent. Thus, Poles were required to give the Hitler salute to German officials at some locations, while being forbidden to use this salute at other locations. (p. 93).

Although Poles and Jews were "unequal victims" in terms of group outcomes, Nazi German attitudes towards them overlapped considerably. For example, in the German-annexed regions of conquered Poland, Germans were forbidden from fraternizing with Poles, because "There are no decent Poles, just as there are no decent Jews." (p. 94).

## NON-GENOCIDAL JEWISH DEATH RATES

The author provides many numerical figures. Thus, the Jewish mortality rate in the Warsaw Ghetto was, per 1,000 inhabitants, 23.5 in 1940, 90 in 1941, and 140 in 1942. (p. 95). In the early part of the Nazi occupation of the USSR, at least, some 5% of Soviet guerrillas were Jews. (p. 173). In the spring of 1945, approximately 100,000 of the 600,000 freed inmates of various German camps were Jews. (p. 411).

## POLISH ECONOMIC LOSSES DURING THE POLOKAUST

As for Poles, they experienced a catastrophic 40% drop in national income following the 1939 war, and it never recovered. (p. 266). An amazing 7.4% of the ENTIRE population of the General Government was forced laborers inside the Reich. (p. 261),

German grain-requisitions in rural occupied Poland were onerous in scale and draconian in conduct. (p. 277). Poles struggled to avoid starvation, and the ration for Polish children dropped below 500 daily calories. Sugar and salt were rarely available. (p. 281). The privations were severe enough to cause a marked drop in the population of Poland (along with that of Greece and Yugoslavia). (p. 289). [The Germans took advantage of all this by offering Poles food rewards (such as a bag of sugar) in exchange for a denounced fugitive Jew.]

## THE UNFOLDING POLOKAUST AND THE EVENTUAL MASS EXTERMINATION OF POLES

Mazower details the long-term GENERALPLAN OST. He assesses Erhard Wetzel's ideas as follows, (quote) But according to Wetzel's calculations, there would in fact be some 60-65 million people to deal with, and at least 46-51 million to deport. He singled out the Poles in particular as "numerically the strongest and therefore the most dangerous of all the alien ethnic groups which the Plan envisioned for resettlement". Reckoning their population at 20-24 million, Wetzel feared that resettling them in western Siberia would create "a source of continual unrest against German rule." Yet mass murder did not seem possible either. In his revealing words, "it should be obvious that one cannot solve the Polish problem by liquidating the Poles in the same way as the Jews' since the Germans would be burdened with guilt "for years to come" and would alienate their neighbors as well. On the other hand, Germanization, even if one avoided excessively strict criteria, would by no definition cover more than a small fraction of the population. Looking further ahead, Wetzel worried that a radical resettlement of the notoriously fast-breeding Russians would merely sow the seeds of another race war in twenty-five or thirty years' time. (unquote) (p. 209).

Let us analyze this. Erhard Wetzel has been misquoted by those who think that the Nazis held Poles in significantly higher esteem than Jews. Clearly, the different treatment to be afforded Poles relative to Jews stemmed from consequences to Germany, and other practical matters.

In addition, there is a slippery slope between resettlement and extermination. After all, the Nazis first thought in terms of the mass resettling of Jews, to such places as the Lublin area or Madagascar. (pp. 118-120; 38-39). As recently as the start of Operation Barbarossa, some German officials, local ones at least, believed that the flight of Soviet Jews beyond the Urals was an acceptable part of the "Final Solution" to the Jewish problem. (p. 177).

Genocide is also latent in the thinking behind GENERALPLAN OST. The Slavs, like the Jews, stood in the way of fundamental German plans. They were both a problem requiring a solution. With some exceptions, Slavs could not become Aryans any more than Jews could. [No more than 3% of Poles were reckoned Germanizable--in actuality, to be re-Germanized. (p. 188)] In addition, the proposed mass resettlement of Slavs, no less than that of Jews, would relocate and postpone the respective problems, not solve them. Mazower accepts possible Slav extermination as an outcome of a Nazi victory. (pp. 414-415).

Meanwhile, GENERALPLAN OST was tried by the Germans, on a small scale, in the Zamosc region. Some Poles were gassed at places such as Maidanek. Fierce Polish resistance eventually ended the operation. (pp. 214-216).

## THE DISTINCTIVENESS OF THE POLISH UNDERGROUND MOVEMENT

Mazower characterizes the Polish Underground movement as follows (quote) From the summer of 1940, therefore, the Poles concentrated on building what became the most remarkable underground state on the continent--complete with its own educational, judicial, welfare and propaganda wings. Its purpose was to preserve Polish society from disintegrating under the pressure of Nazi occupation policies, while preparing for the moment when the Germans could be driven out. (unquote)(p. 473).

## SOME SHORTCOMINGS OF THIS BOOK

The author repeats the German myth about BLUT SONNTAG (Bloody Sunday) at Bydgoszcz (Bromberg) in 1939. For the truth, please click on [Dywiersja niemiecka i zbrodnie hitlerowskie w Bydgoszczy na tle wydarzen w dniu 3 IX 1939](#) (Polish and German Edition), and read the detailed English-language Peczkis review.

Mazower uses the at-worst mendacious and at-best misleading phrase: "Polish death camps." (p. 174). This may be half-excusable for a sloppy journalist, but not a historian, regardless of any "innocent" motives.

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