

# Greater Germany: WW2 German Plans

Based on German Plans and Intentions, with Extrapolations



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## Notice and Disclaimer

This guidebook maps and explains a hypothetical Greater Germany that Nazi Germany tried to create during World War II. The formation of such a state would have involved genocide beyond the scale of the Holocaust and massive numbers of crimes against humanity. Some of these topics are mentioned or alluded to in the text below.

Nazi plans for their Greater Germany were abhorrent. I only explore this topic as part of historical research and speculation on matters relating to World War II. I expressly condemn the efforts to create such a state.

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Map of Nazi Plans and Intention for Greater Germany with Extrapolations

City names in parts of the USSR intended for incorporation into Greater Germany are shown in angle brackets, <Leningrad>. Leningrad itself was slated for destruction. The Germans would have likely renamed some of the other cities, particularly those like Gorkiy and Stalingrad that the Soviets themselves had renamed for political reasons. During the war, the Germans in their occupied territories often reverted Soviet political names to their pre-Soviet versions. Whether the Germans would have renamed the cities shown on the map is unknown. The Nazis at a minimum

would have used the German spellings of the city names rather than the Russian and would have renamed Gorkiy and Stalingrad:

Arkhangelsk: *Archangelsk*

Astrakhan: *Astrachan*

Gorkiy: *Nischni Nowgorod* (German for former Russian name, Nizhniy Novgorod)

Kharkov: *Charkow*

Kiev: *Kiew*

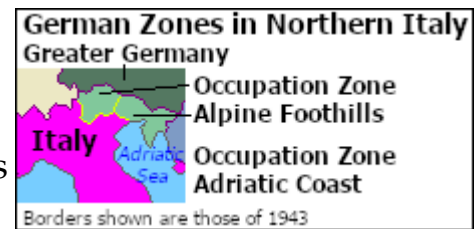
Moskva: *Moskau*

Stalingrad: *Zarizyn* (German for former Russian name, Tsaritsyn)

(Baku is the same in Russian and German.)

You can find various maps of a possible Greater Germany based on Nazi Germany's goals and wartime gains (see, for example, this 2015 [Wikipedia map](#)<sup>1</sup>), but many that I've seen are flawed in various ways. The basic assumption for a map with such an extensive Greater Germany must be that Germany either won the war or at least substantially defeated the USSR while achieving a stalemate against the western Allies. This outcome was very unlikely but not impossible, so a map showing a possible Greater Germany is an interesting, albeit chilling illustration of a possibility that did not occur.

One significant flaw in some of these maps is that they show Greater Germany's borders having reached the Adriatic Sea, in former Yugoslav territory that had gone to Italy in 1941 together with a narrow strip of land in northern Italy<sup>2</sup>. Others show Germany expanding further into northern Italy, based on the occupation zones Germany set up there, which were detached from Italian administration<sup>3</sup>. The problem with this expansion to the Adriatic is that Germany was losing the war by this point. It was now *extremely* unlikely German fortunes could rebound to win (or to achieve a stalemate), so these maps are really not representative of a Greater Germany that might actually have emerged from the war.



Another flaw is that most of these maps fail to show the full range of Nazi intentions. The creators of these maps have instead shown a Greater Germany based on their own assumptions on what they thought might occur. These maps do not explain the assumptions or note that what is depicted is less than the actual Nazi intentions.

1 Map dated 8 July 2015 and still current as of 2023. Note that the nature of Wikipedia means this map might be replaced in the future with a different version at any time.

2 These maps perhaps not by coincidence seem to closely match the historical southern borders of the German Confederation of 1815–1866 and those of the Holy Roman Empire, which had been dissolved in 1806.

3 This Italian administration was that of the Italian Social Republic, the puppet state Germany created after Italy surrendered to the Allies. (After surrendering to the Allies in September 1943, the legitimate Italian government evacuated to Allied-held territory and then declared war on Germany in October, in response to the German occupation of much of Italy.)

The logic of Nazi expansion suggests that they would have eventually incorporated the northern Italian occupation zones into Greater Germany. For example, Joseph Goebbels (Germany's minister of propaganda) in his diary entry for 29 September 1943 states that during a discussion of the situation in Italy he asked Hitler about "how far he [Hitler] intends to extend the Reich. His idea is that we ought to advance as far as the Venetian border, and that Venetia should be included in the Reich in a sort of loose confederation". Quote is from Louis P. Lochner (translator and editor); *The Goebbels Diaries: 1942–1943; 1948*; available at <https://archive.org/details/goebbelsdiaries100loch/page/n7/mode/2up>.

Other, lesser flaws include failing to show likely interactions with Germany's Axis allies and would-be states. Another annoyance is that the Arkhangelsk-Astrakhan Line, the maximum military advance Germany hoped for in 1941, is often shown incorrectly as the hard border between Greater Germany and the remnant Soviet Union, and an unrealistically straight border at that.

My map of a possible Greater Germany avoids these flaws. The basic premise is to take the situation in 1940–1941 and extrapolates what a Greater Germany might have looked like if the war went better for the Axis. Italy thus remains in the war with Germany, and there is no annexation of Italian territory into Greater Germany. While this situation was very unlikely to occur, it is not as unlikely as the situations that underlie the flawed maps. The map also shows the full extent of Nazi ambitions in Europe, however improbable this would have been to achieve, and the various assumptions and extrapolations that went into the map are explained.

#### ***What's in a Name: Greater Germany***

"Greater Germany" (*Grossdeutschland*, also *Großdeutschland*) was the informal name of the Nazi state (and the name of an elite German Army unit). The name was not a Nazi invention but was rooted in German history. The German people of central Europe had a complex past with multiple independent states and empires, perhaps epitomized by the Holy Roman Empire and the Austrian Empire. Emperor Franz I of Austria was also Holy Roman Emperor Franz II, and some parts of the Austrian Empire were part of the Holy Roman Empire while other parts were not!

The Holy Roman Empire arose in the early Middle Ages. In its early centuries, this empire contained many central European lands inhabited by Czechs, French, Dutch, Germans, Italians, Slovenes, and other peoples. Over time, the empire shrunk so that it was mostly confined to German lands, and in 1512 it was named the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation (*Heiliges Römisches Reich Deutscher Nation*). Despite its imperial associations, the empire evolved into a traditional association of independent states rather than being a centralized state. Despite having an emperor, it was not a dynastic state: When an emperor died, a small group of electors (rulers of various states in the empire) selected a new one. Over time, it became customary but not mandatory to elect the Austrian Habsburgs as emperors.

In German nationalist views, the Holy Roman Empire was the First Reich. Napoleon ended this empire in 1806, but his downfall in 1814–1815 led to the creation of the German Confederation, with borders almost the same as those of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806. This confederation was expressly an association of independent states; it was specifically was not called an empire and had no emperor or other ruler. Instead, the member states determined Confederation policies though unanimous vote.

The German Confederation did not contain all the Germans of central Europe. Parts of the Austrian Empire were outside the confederation but had German minorities, like Hungary. The eastern regions of the Kingdom of Prussia were also outside the borders of the confederation but contained German majority and minority areas. The confederation also contained many non-German peoples, such as the Czechs and Slovenes<sup>4</sup>. (The German Confederation would be dissolved in 1866 as a consequence of war between Prussia and Austria.)



<sup>4</sup> Bohemia, a Habsburg kingdom, was in the German Confederation but had a Czech majority (and a German minority plus other groups). Carniola, a Habsburg duchy, was in the German Confederation but had a Slovene majority (and a German minority plus other groups).



The term “Greater Germany” went into popular use in the 19th Century as modern-style nationalism spread across the many German states. Many Germans desired a unified Germany but debated what the nature of such a state should be. Should the German state be a Greater Germany that including the Habsburg lands, or should it be just a Lesser Germany (*Kleindeutschland*) without these lands? This question was bound up with the issue of who would rule a united Germany. The Austrians favored a Greater Germany, which would make the Habsburgs the logical choice as rulers. The Prussians by no coincidence favored a Lesser Germany. Without the Habsburgs, the Prussia would be the biggest and strongest part of this Germany, making the Prussian Hohenzollern monarchy the obvious choice as rulers. Prussia won out by diplomacy and war. Germany was united in 1871<sup>5</sup> with the Hohenzollerns as the German *kaisers* (emperors). The Lesser Germany concept thus won, but this Germany of course did not call itself *Kleindeutschland*; its official name was the *Deutsches Reich* (German Empire). This was the Second Reich in German nationalist thinking.

The German Empire lost World War I, the kaiser abdicated, and Germany became a republic. Due to lack of consensus for a new state name, *Deutsches Reich* remained the official name<sup>6</sup>. The Nazis and other German authoritarians despised the republic and hoped to restore German glory in a Third Reich (*Drittes Reich*)<sup>7</sup>. When the Nazis came to power in 1933, they set about creating a Greater Germany. Their plans grew as they went from success to success in the 1930s and early 1940s. They began unofficially using “Greater Germany” for their state once they annexed Austria in 1938, although the official state name remained *Deutsches Reich*. Finally, in 1943, when the Germans were now losing the war, the Nazis officially changed their state name to the Greater Germanic Reich of the German Nation (*Großgermanisches Reich Deutscher Nation*)<sup>8</sup>.

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- 5 Luxembourg had been part of the German Confederation. Luxembourgers spoke Luxembourgish, a West Germanic language at times considered a dialect of German. They developed their own ethnic identity during the 19th Century, became a neutral state in 1866 when the German Confederation ended, and did not become part of the German Empire.
  - 6 The imperial name, *Deutsches Reich*, for different reasons annoyed German socialists, republicans, monarchists, and fascists, so this name was little used except for official business. Instead, the unofficial *Deutschland* was widely used.
  - 7 Third Reich was never the official name of the Nazi state. It wasn’t even Nazi in origin, having been popularized in a 1923 book, *Das Dritte Reich*, by Arthur Moeller van den Bruck. The Nazis adopted and used “Third Reich” extensively in the 1920s. The term increasingly fell out of favor in Nazis circles after they came to power in 1933, with “Thousand-Year Reich” (*Tausendjähriges Reich*) becoming the preferred term. In June 1939, Hitler instructed the Nazi Party and the German media to cease using “Third Reich”.
  - 8 I have not done enough research to determine the specific date in 1943 when the change was made. One work hints at it being in September 1943. This is partially supported by the fact the first German postage stamp with the new official name was





This is claimed to be the first German postage stamp using “Grossdeutsches Reich” instead of “Deutsches Reich”. It was issued in October 1943 in commemoration of the founding of Lübeck 800 years earlier.

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issued in October 1943. A quick search of German postage stamps issued in 1943 does show earlier ones with “*Deutsches Reich*” and later ones with “*Grossdeutsches Reich*”.

## 3 Details

The following sections detail the assumptions and considerations taken into account for the Greater Germany map.

### 3.A *Lebensraum* and Greater Germany

Nazi plans to create a Greater Germany were intimately bound up with Hitler's goal to gain *Lebensraum* ("living space") for the Germans. This was a modernized version of an older German concept of "*Drang nach Osten*" (Drive to the East) that became quite popular among many 19th Century German nationalists<sup>9</sup>. Around the start of the 20th Century, the idea of *Lebensraum* was popularized in Germany, among German nationalists in general and among the German imperialists who ran the German government. During World War I, the military successes of Germany against Russia kindled German hopes to realize *Lebensraum* and dominate many territories to the east.

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<sup>9</sup> *Drang nach Osten* itself was not an entirely original idea but derived earlier German history. In the Middle Ages, the "Eastern Settlement" (*Ostsiedlung*) saw Germans migrate east from what is now western Germany to settle in what is now eastern Germany, Poland, and the Czech Republic. Later movements also contributed to the eastward idea, such as the Germanic military-religious orders like the Teutonic Knights that took over parts of eastern Europe, and the German migrations of the 16th–19th Centuries that established German minorities in many parts of central and eastern Europe.

Further back in history, Germanic tribes in ancient times at one point ranged from Scandinavia across central and eastern Europe to the Crimea. As the (western) Roman Empire fell, German tribes migrated west, and these eastern lands were then inhabited by Slavs and other non-Germanic peoples. Some German ultranationalists considered all these territories to be traditional German soil that needed to be reclaimed. This of course conveniently ignored the fact that archaeological evidence indicated the prehistoric Germanic tribes themselves were not the original inhabitants of most of these lands, having first spread in central and eastern Europe from Scandinavia.



Rather than outright annexation of the eastern territories, Imperial Germany decided to create an array of vassal states to be ruled by dukes and kings drawn from Germany's aristocracy and to be dependent upon Germany. German culture was to be promoted in Lithuania and the Baltic region, to help reinforce German rule and likely as a first step to try to germanify the local non-German peoples. Societies in Germany were organized to recruit German colonists for settlement in parts of the Baltic region. All this unraveled in November 1918 when Germany lost World War I and soon had to withdraw all its troops back to Germany.

Hitler's *Lebensraum* was a much larger, far crueler vision of *Drang nach Osten* and the *Lebensraum* of Imperial Germany. He envisioned that, Germany would conquer lands east of Germany including Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and the USSR up to the Ural Mountains. *Lebensraum* was bound up with Nazi racist ideology, with the goals of transforming some of these territories into German-inhabited lands in the short-to-medium term. Some areas would be germanized, with, for example, many Estonians and Latvians to be assimilated as Germans. "Lesser races" like Slavs and Jews would be expelled or worse to make way for Germanic colonists. Outside of the areas actively being settled, the Slavs would be kept in place as semi-enslaved workers supporting the German economy. *Lebensraum* was also a multi-generational aspiration, with a long-term goal of settling most of the conquered lands up to the Urals with Germans. *Lebensraum* had no set final border for Greater Germany. Once Germany had absorbed most of the lands east of the Urals, German

armies were to march east again, into the Ural Mountains and Central Asia to gain new territory for German colonization.

The Nazis were also opportunistic. During the early war years, they expanded their intentions for Greater Germany as they overran much of western and central Europe. By mid 1941, the Nazis were envisioning expanding Germany into France and turning Serbia into a permanent German stronghold in the Balkans. These topics are discussed below.

### **3.B The Axis Does Better against the USSR**

Nazi Germany wildly overestimated its ability to defeat the USSR in 1941. They basically failed to prepare for the very possible contingency that a war with the Soviets might be more prolonged and intense than they wished it would be<sup>10</sup>. Only late in 1941 when it was becoming clear the Soviets were not on the verge of collapse did the Germans take the situation more seriously. They then began programs to increase military production and resources needed for the war effort, to create more powerful models of tanks and weapons, and to modify ideologically-motivated policies that had prevented them from utilizing many of the material and human resources of the territories they had conquered in the USSR. Many results of these efforts came too late to affect the crucial 1942 campaign, when it was still possible to inflict major defeats on the USSR. All of these programs and policy changes they actually did later in the war could have begun in 1940 had the Nazis adopted a somewhat more rational approach to invading the USSR.

Better preparations might have helped the Germans do better in the 1941 and could have substantially helped them in 1942. The historical German invasion caused an agricultural crisis, disrupted Soviet industry for a time, reduced Soviet military manpower resources by capturing much of the western USSR, and significantly reduced vital Soviet energy supplies.

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10 Increasing resources and military production would have come at an economic cost the 1940–1941 Nazis did not want to bear, so they assumed they could quickly overrun the western USSR like they did with Poland, France, Yugoslavia, and other countries. One irony here is that Hitler before coming into power in speeches and in print used to blame Imperial Germany for failing to have the will and foresight to take the actions necessary to make Germany a world power rather than just a European one. Another irony was that the failure of the 1941 campaign meant that by 1943–1944 the Nazis were bearing much higher economic costs to fight the war, without any real prospect of victory in any theater.

*Indices of the Soviet Economy, 1940-45 (1940 = 100)<sup>11</sup>*

	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945
Total Income	100	92	66	74	88	83
Gross Industrial Output	100	98	77	90	104	92
Military Production*	100	140	186	224	251	—
Gross Agricultural Output	100	62	38	37	54	60

\*Aircraft, tanks, armaments, and munitions

War with Germany started on 22 June 1941 and ended on 9 May 1945.

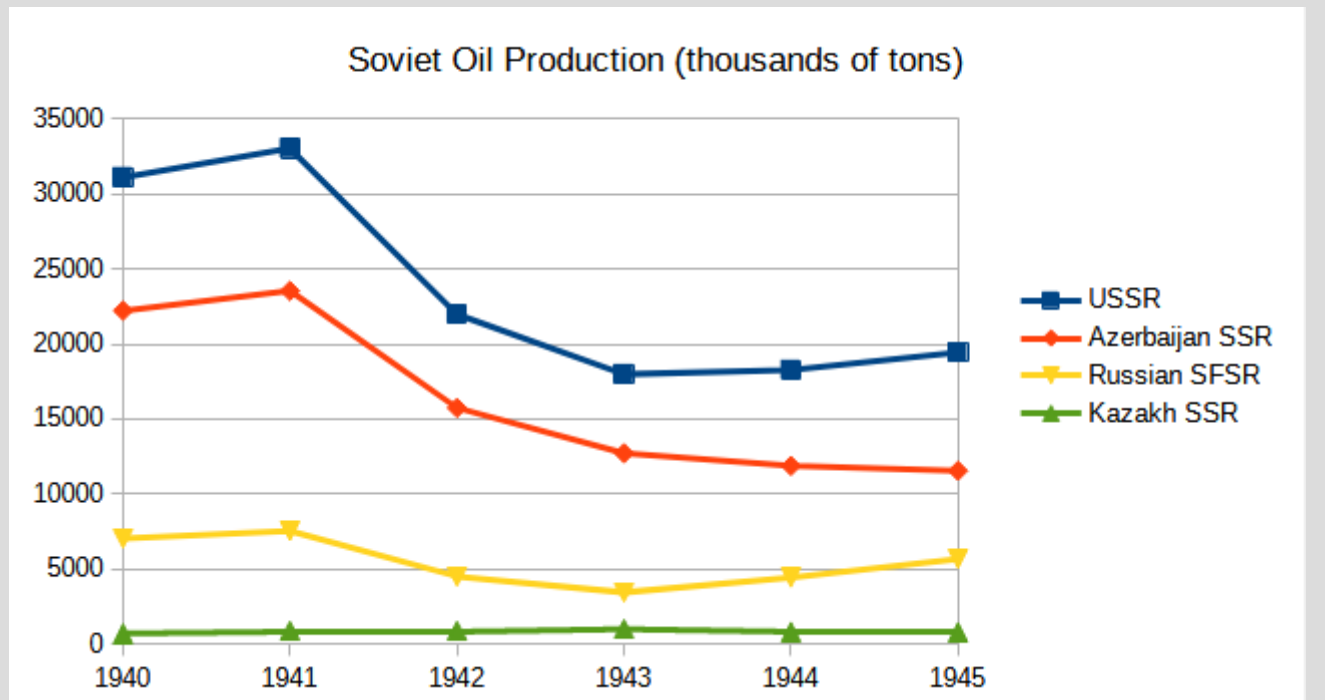
Ukraine was a major food producer, and its loss meant the Soviets experienced food shortages throughout the war. Agricultural problems were compounded by the mass conscription of military-age men into the Soviet military, the emphasis on manufacturing military equipment at the expense of goods like tractors, and the shortages of fuel to run agricultural equipment.

The German invasion also caused multiple energy crises in the USSR. Coal production was reduced with the capture of a major coal basin, the Donbass in Ukraine, in 1941, which caused coal shortages throughout the western USSR. Donbass coal was needed to power factories, make electricity, heat cities, and run the railroads. It could not be quickly replaced. Oil production was reduced in 1942, as a result of the German offensive that attempted to capture major Soviet oilfields. This strained the Soviets' supply of liquid fuels (gasoline, diesel fuel, naphtha, fuel oil) which were needed for the tanks, trucks, aircraft, ships of the Soviet military as well for trucks, tractors, and factories in the Soviet economy.

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11 *"Velikaya Otechestvennaya voyna Sovetskogo Soyuza 1941-45"* ("Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union of 1941-45"); *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, 3rd Edition; 1969-1978; <http://bse.sci-lib.com/article003823.html> (in Russian).

## Soviet Oil Production



### Soviet Oil Production (including gas condensate\*), thousands of tons

	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945
Total	31,121	33,038	21,988	17,984	18,261	19,436
Percentage of 1940	100%	106%	71%	58%	59%	62%

### Oil Production (including gas condensate) by Union-Republic, thousands of tons

	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945
Azerbaijan SSR	22,231.0	23,541.0	15,739.2	12,715.4	11,871.2	11,540.5
Russian SFSR	7,039.0	7,525.9	4,501.6	3,436.9	4,432.3	5,675.1
Kazakh SSR	697.0	864.9	867.8	981.7	799.6	788.0
Turkmen SSR	587.2	630.3	578.9	465.2	634.6	628.9
Ukrainian SSR	352.8	165.3	0	0	93.0	250.0
Uzbek SSR	119.2	196.3	189.7	280.3	339.9	477.8
Georgian SSR	41.2	57.5	56.1	57.5	46.3	36.4
Tajik SSR	29.8	29.1	26.3	21.7	22.1	20.0
Kyrgyz SSR	23.8	27.7	28.3	25.0	22.0	19.4

\*"Gas condensate" is natural-gas condensate (aka natural gasoline) and some naphtha. (Some naphtha was also produced from crude oil and thus was part of normal oil production).

Notes: The Azerbaijan SSR contained the Baku oilfields. The Russian SFSR contained the North

Caucasus oilfields and the Volga-Urals “Second Baku” oilfields. The Kazakh SSR contained the Emba oilfields. Most of the Ukrainian SSR’s oilfields had come from Poland when eastern Poland was annexed by the USSR in 1939. Many of these union republics also had smaller or less-developed oilfields than the ones mentioned here.

Several union republics experienced declining oil production at some point during the war. The decline in the Ukrainian SSR and some of the decline in the Russian SFSR was the result of German conquest of oilfields there. The decline in the Azerbaijan SSR and some of the decline in the Russian SFSR was the result of the Soviets evacuating equipment and taking measures to prevent the Germans from capturing intact oilfields. Of the other six oil-producing union republics, only the Uzbek SSR saw increasing production throughout the entire war. The other five experienced declines at some time. This was due to the wartime Soviets both decreasing production of oil extraction equipment in favor of military production and overusing existing oil extraction equipment to the point where it frequently broke down or wore out entirely.

The above table lists the nine union republics of the USSR with significant oil production. By the time Germany invaded the Soviet Union in 1941, the USSR had 16 union republics. The other seven had little or no oil production: the Armenian, Belorussian, Estonian, Karelo-Finnish, Latvian, Lithuanian, and Moldavian SSRs.

The Soviets survived the economic strains and energy shortages by focusing the Soviet economy on war production at the expense of the civilian population. Some cities including Moskva switched from coal to hand-chopped firewood for civilian winter heating. Food was strictly rationed. The military forces and the civilian defense workers (with their families) got the best rations, but even these were often meager. Other civilians got less food, and some died of starvation or diseases of malnutrition. Western Allied aid (“Lend-Lease”) helped the Soviets with weapons, raw materials, liquid fuels, machinery for factories, and food, but it was impossible to supply everything the Soviets needed. Had the Germans done better in 1941–1942, the strain on the Soviet economy would have been greater and more damaging. Rather than the Soviets being able to marshal resources to successfully counterattack the Germans in late 1942, one possibility is the Soviets would have to remain on the defensive and continue to lose territory, especially if the Germans had better prepared themselves for the war. The Germans might have been able to achieve the Arkhangelsk-Astrakhan Line or a similar position in late 1942 or 1943 and then go over to the defensive, transferring resources to face the western Allies.

One important opportunity the Germans squandered in 1941 was use of captured Soviet material resources. Germany in 1941 planned to utilize only a few, vital captured resources



like food, oil, and certain minerals like manganese that factories needed back in Germany<sup>12</sup>. Most other resources like iron and coal mines, industrial facilities, and most economic infrastructure were to be left in ruins. Only when it became clear that the USSR was not going to collapse did the Germans begin rebuilding many useful mining, electrical, and industrial facilities in Ukraine, so that the region could begin to produce steel and weapons for the German war effort. This effort was just bearing fruit in the second half of 1943 when Soviet offensives drove the Germans out of the rebuilt facilities<sup>13</sup>. Had the Germans been prepared to restore these facilities from the outset, steel and weapon production could have begun a year earlier, bolstering the German war effort.



Members of the Turkestan Legion in 1943<sup>14</sup>

Nazi Germany with its virulent racist ideology also badly mismanaged the human resources in the territories they captured in the USSR. The Nazis viewed most Soviet ethnic groups as inferior, at best fit to become menial workers and at worse to be eliminated. Soviet prisoners of war were treated inhumanely, at great cost of life. Ukrainians in occupied territory were recruited to work in Germany but were mistreated there and treated almost like forced laborers. Those who escaped back to Ukraine spread word of their experiences, which ended the willingness of most Ukrainians to volunteer to work in Germany. The Germans responded by forcing Ukrainians and others Soviet civilians to go work in Germany, beginning the system of outright slave labor that Germany would use for the rest of the war.

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12 Kim Christian Priemel; "Occupying Ukraine: Great Expectations, Failed Opportunities, and the Spoils of War, 1941–1943"; *Central European History* Vol. 48 No. 1; 2015; <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43965115>.

13 The Germans expended considerable economic resources to rebuild Ukrainian facilities only to destroy them to prevent their capture by the Soviets, an overall net loss to the German war effort.

14 By Bundesarchiv, Bild 101I-295-1560-21 / Müller, Karl / CC-BY-SA 3.0, CC BY-SA 3.0 de; available at <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=5410748>.

Many Soviet civilians tried to avoid being sent to Germany and became more willing to join the Soviet partisans.

Civilians in the occupied territories were treated poorly in other ways. For example, the Germans refused to break up the hated collective farms into private farms, as they wished to exploit the farmers as the Soviets had done<sup>15</sup>. This of course alienated the farmers, who then viewed the Germans as no better than the Soviets. For another example, as the Soviet partisan movement increasingly became effective, the Germans responded with savage retaliation measures against the locals where partisan attacks occurred, regardless of the guilt or innocence of the civilians. The goal was to terrorize the countryside into passivity<sup>16</sup>. This collective punishment backfired, alienating civilians against the Germany and causing them to support the partisans. The Germans eventually realized the harm these measures were causing and ceased them<sup>17</sup>, but only when it was too late to affect how civilians viewed the Germans.

While most Soviet civilians remained loyal to the USSR, so many had suffered from Stalin's policies<sup>18</sup> that there was a large pool of people who hoped to be liberated from the Soviet state. Hundreds of thousands, potentially millions, of civilians in the occupied territories willing to collaborate with the Germans against the Soviets. In many places the Germans found ready volunteers to help administer the occupied territories and to assist in other ways. Had the Germans adopted more humane policies towards the Soviet civilians, they

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15 Private farmers expected fair market prices for their output, and many would stop growing crops for sale if they felt they were being exploited. Collective agriculture allowed the Soviets to appropriate agricultural output on the cheap. During the war, some Nazi officials tried to break up the collective farms, but they were blocked by the Nazi leadership. Instead, as a propaganda move, the Nazis renamed the collective farms as "community farms" and claimed it was the first step in creating private farms for farmers who met their production quotas. See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collectivization\\_in\\_the\\_Soviet\\_Union#Decollectivization\\_under\\_German\\_occupation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collectivization_in_the_Soviet_Union#Decollectivization_under_German_occupation).

16 One German directive on this matter stated: "The troops available for securing the conquered eastern areas will, considering the vast expanse of these stretches, suffice only if the occupying power meets all resistance, **not by legally punishing the guilty, but rather by spreading that type of terror which is the only means of taking from the population every desire for opposition.**" Source: Supplement to Dir 33, 23 Jul 41, OKW/WFSt/Abt. L (I Op). Nr. 442254/41 as translated into English by unattributed editors and translators of the Office of Naval Intelligence of the US Navy in *Fuehrer Directives and Other Top-Level Directives of the German Armed Forces, 1942-1945*; in two volumes.

17 "Experience had shown, however, that such measures had not had the desired effect and in many cases had driven sizable blocks of the people into active cooperation with the bands... Accordingly, OKH directed that retaliatory measures be taken only when absolutely necessary to maintain German authority, and only after the reasons for such were carefully explained to the people." See Edgar M. Howell; *The Soviet Partisan Movement, 1941-1944*; 1956; [https://history.army.mil/html/books/104/104-19/CMH\\_Pub\\_104-19.pdf](https://history.army.mil/html/books/104/104-19/CMH_Pub_104-19.pdf).

18 Some examples: The forced collectivization of agriculture and resulting famine; purges including arbitrary arrests, imprisonment in the GULag, torture, and execution; class warfare against prosperous private farmers, the Cossacks, the former middle classes of Russia.

would have gained even more volunteers, particularly in minority ethnic groups that had especially suffered from Soviet policies or had a tradition of wanting independence.

Nazi policies also squandered the willingness of many Soviet POWs and Soviet citizens in the occupied territories to fight against the Soviets. Hitler's racism initially prevented the Germans from recruiting soldiers or even helpers for the German military from these people. Many civilians nonetheless became auxiliaries, the Hiwis (from *Hilfswilligern*, auxiliary helpers), assisting German forces in the USSR. Some German troops in 1941 began secretly accepting their help despite the ban on them. Later that year, the failure to win the war coupled with growing German losses caused the German high command to authorize the use of Hiwis. About 600,000 served in German forces during the war. Despite being called "auxiliary helpers", German manpower shortages saw Hiwis increasingly take up combat roles, sometimes in emergency situations but sometimes as a matter of course. Some German units had entire infantry companies composed mostly of Hiwi soldiers. Hiwis at times comprised a significant fraction of the strength of some German units. For example, at one point in 1942 half the personnel in the German 134th Infantry Division consisted of Hiwis<sup>19</sup>.

The need for more soldiers led the Germans to raise what became a vast array of military, security, and construction forces from the Soviet peoples and POWs. To greatly simplify things, the main forces were the Eastern Troops<sup>20</sup>, mostly based on Soviet ethnic groups. These were mostly infantry and cavalry forces organized in Troop Battalions like the Eastern Battalions (*Ost-Bataillone*)<sup>21</sup>. The battalions were field combat units, mostly led by German officers and NCOs together with a few Eastern Troop officers and NCOs. The battalions were integrated into German military units and served just like German troops. (The proximity and camaraderie of non-Aryan troops with German troops caused a few qualms among some Nazis and racist German Army officers.) Hundreds of thousands of Soviet citizens and ex-POWs served in the Eastern Troops.

The Germans also organized named Eastern Legions (*Ostlegionen*) for many Soviet non-Slavic peoples. These were organizations for the recruitment, training, and replacement of

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19 Nigel Thomas; *Hitler's Russian & Cossack Allies 1941–45*; 2015.

20 Other forces raised in occupied Soviet territory that were not technically part of the Eastern Troops included construction units, security units, police organizations, and paramilitary forces.

21 The Eastern Battalions (*Ost-Bataillone*) technically were Slavic battalions. Many were a mix of Russians, Belarusians, and Ukrainians as the Germans often couldn't tell the difference between these people. (Many non-Russian Slavs could speak Russian as a second language and some even as their first language.) For example, Cossacks were in Cossack Battalions (*Kosaken-Bataillone*), Volga Tatars in Volga Tatar Battalions (*Wolgatatarische-Bataillone*), Georgians in Georgian Battalions, etc. Many English-language works use "Ost Battalions" as the collective term for all these units, but I prefer "Eastern Troop Battalions".

certain Eastern Troop Battalions and were not combat units<sup>22</sup>. The legions were ethnically organized, with a Volga Tatar Legion, an Armenian Legion, a Georgian Legion, etc. Some legions were actually multi-ethnic, for all of the non-Slavic peoples in a Soviet region. The Volga Tatar Legion, for example, was for the multiple non-Slavic ethnic groups of the Volga-Urals region. There was no overall legion for Slavs, although very late in the war there were German-controlled Russian and Ukrainian armies (Russian Liberation Army; Ukrainian National Army) trying with varying success to raise Russian and Ukrainian divisions to fight the Soviets.

Racism was an inherent feature of the Nazi system, so it is absurd to suppose Germany would have actually followed actually benign policies towards the peoples of the occupied territories. However, improved policies done for the Germans' own self interest, little more than what they were willing to do by 1943, would have raised many more collaborators, Hiwis, and Eastern Troops. Significant forces of Hiwis and Eastern Troops could have been built up in time for the German 1942 offensives, improving their odds of success.

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22 *Scorched Earth* shows them as combat units for convenience, as a way to represent the Eastern Troops Battalions at Europa scale.

### 3.C The Axis Stalemates the Western Allies



Das neue Europa ist unschlagbar  
The new Europe is invincible<sup>23</sup>

This is a German propaganda poster from 1942, at the high point of Axis success in the summer or autumn of 1942. (Note that Germany is shown as *Grossdeutschland* (Greater Germany), not *Deutschland* or *Deutsches Reich*.)

A more successful war against the USSR in 1941–1942 might have allowed the Axis to then concentrate more resources against the western Allies. However, these extra resources likely

<sup>23</sup> Available at <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn3776>.



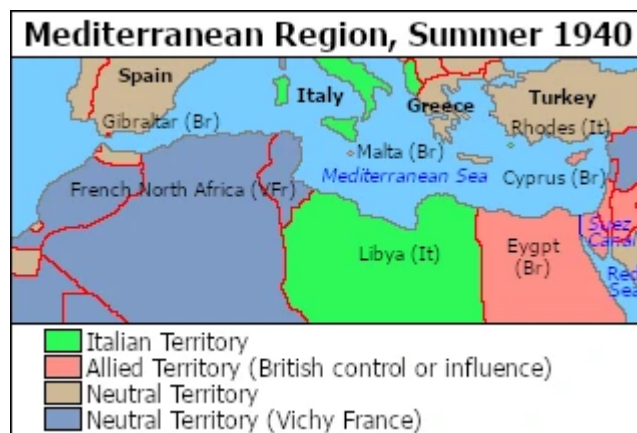
not become substantial until late 1942 at the earliest, at a time when frequent Italian defeats had eroded Italy's ability and will to remain in the war. The Allies had also built up forces by late 1942 to drive the Axis out of North Africa in 1943, with Italy that year as Allied troops invaded mainland Italy itself. Stalemating the Allies therefore would have required better Axis performance in North Africa earlier in the war. This very like could might have been achieved had Italy and Germany cooperated better in 1940.



British Battleship HMS Howe and an Egyptian felucca in the Suez Canal, 14 July 1944

Image: © IWM (A 24896)<sup>24</sup>

Despite being allies, Germany and Italy cooperated quite poorly at the start of World War II. Italy remained neutral in 1939 when the war started. The Italians declared war on France in June 1940 only because the Germans were already defeating the French, not due to a coordinated plan between Italy and Germany. Italy then provided a token force to participate in the Battle of Britain. Otherwise, the two countries pursued separate goals, and Italy even hid from Germany its intentions to invade Greece in late 1940, knowing that the Germans wanted to keep southeastern Europe out of the war.



<sup>24</sup> Available at <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/205156722>.

The second half of 1940 was the best time for the Axis to try to secure the Mediterranean, Egypt, and nearby areas. France had surrendered, the British Army had lost most of its modern military equipment in France, and the Royal Air Force had to concentrate its assets in Britain to defend against the Luftwaffe assault. The Germans hoped to stage an amphibious invasion of Britain, but this even if successful would have required only a fraction of the German Army, leaving many units available for other operations. This was thus the prime time to try to drive the British out of the Mediterranean and Egypt. The Germans in 1940 did seriously consider a coordinated German-Italian effort to do just this. The Italians were not interested, as they believed they could do this on their own. In December 1940, a British offensive smashed the Italian invasion force in Egypt, forcing Italy and Germany to finally cooperate seriously. By now, however, the best chance to drive the British out had passed, as British military strength was recovering.

Had the Italians been willing to cooperate earlier, all that might have been needed for a major victory in Egypt in 1940 was for the German Army to send many of the forces they historically sent to North Africa in 1941–1942. This situation is explored and explained in some detail in this [Classic Europa scenario](#). Play of the scenario suggests the Axis would have had a much better chance to capture much of Egypt and at least reach the Suez Canal, causing the Allies to evacuate the entire eastern Mediterranean. This would have greatly improved the Axis position throughout the entire Mediterranean. The Allies would likely try to advance back into the region and capture North Africa, but these efforts at a minimum likely would take longer and be opposed more successfully than they were historically. It is possible that the Axis might stalemate the Allies in North Africa or on the approaches to Italy. If so, Italy likely remains in the war, and the Germans do not occupy or annex any Italian territory.

### 3.D Western Europe

The German campaign in the west in the spring of 1940 overran Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Belgium, and France. The Luxembourgers and Dutch spoke Germanic languages and so in the Nazi view were to become parts of Greater Germany. Luxembourg was placed under the German civilian administration of the Koblenz-Trier region (*Gau Koblenz-Trier*) and then was outright annexed in 1942. The Netherlands, with its much larger population, was placed under a separate German civilian administration (not part of a



German *Gau*), with policies being enacted to promote Nazism and eventually annexation into Germany.

Belgium and France were also affected. Germany took back territory it had lost to these countries following World War I: Eupen-Malmedy from Belgium and Alsace-Lorraine from France. Eupen-Malmedy was mostly German-speaking with French and Walloon minorities, and days after the German invasion of Belgium in May 1940 Germany occupied the region and outright annexed it. Alsace-Lorraine was a large region with a mix of peoples who mostly spoke Alsatian (a dialect of German) and French. (It should be noted that language did not necessarily define national identity; many Alsatians were loyal to France, not Germany.) Germany had taken Alsace-Lorraine from France in 1871, lost it to France after World War I, and retook it in the spring of 1940. The WW2 Germans did not formally annex the region but simply administratively incorporated it into adjoining regions of Germany (*Gau Westmark* and *Gau Baden*). This was creeping annexation, as the inhabitants came under German law, then were declared German citizens, and finally were liable to conscription in the German military. Speaking or publishing in French was made illegal, and school children were required to learn German. French-speaking residents of Alsace-Lorraine who were outside the region when Germany took it were not allowed to return. About 135,000 residents in the region whom the Germans decided were not germanizable were expelled to occupied France. Hitler also had a secret annexation decree for Alsace-Lorraine that he planned to reveal once Germany won the war in the west.

Nazi plans for Belgium and France went far beyond the recovery of Eupen-Malmedy and Alsace-Lorraine. Belgium was a multi-ethnic country with Germanic-language Flemings in the north and Romance-language Walloons in the south. Nazi Germany considered the Flemings a Germanic people and planned to eventually incorporate Flanders into Greater Germany. The Walloons were not considered Germanic and at first posed a puzzle for the Nazis. They finally decided that centuries ago Wallonia had been “Germanic soil” and thus would become part of Greater Germany. The eventually fate of the Walloons apparently was not decided during the war. One Nazi view was that they were “decadent and weak Latins”, which suggests the Nazis might have ethnically cleansed them from Wallonia and resettled the region with Germanic colonists. Another Nazi view was that the Walloons were Germans in origin but had been corrupted by the French over the centuries. This suggests the Nazis might have tried to germanize them<sup>25</sup>.

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25 If the Nazis decided to treat the Walloons like their plans for the Latvians and Estonians, Walloons might have classified into several categories. Those judged most Germanic might then have been germanized, and those judged least Germanic might have been ethnically cleansed or reduced to slave laborers.

Unlike Belgium, France was to survive in some reduced form. France had been frequently been an enemy of Germany (and the earlier Prussia). In some Nazis' thinking, this was part of a French-German hostility that extended back to the Middle Ages, when the empire of Charlemagne broke up in pieces. What eventually became the Kingdom France and the Holy Roman Empire at times fought for various lands along their borders<sup>26</sup>. After Germany's rapid victory over France in 1940, Hitler decided to permanently weaken France by eventually annexing northeastern France into Greater Germany. This region, which had industry, iron ore, and coal, was to become Germanic by force<sup>27</sup>, likely through germanization of some inhabitants, expulsion of other French-speaking inhabitants, and settlement by Germanic colonists. However, these plans were highly secret and subject to change based on circumstances, as Hitler viewed expansion in the west as an opportunity but expansion in the east as a necessity. Almost all of the plan was not to be implemented until German "victory in the west was certain". This secrecy almost certainly was meant to avoid increasing French resistance and rebellion during the war.

One preliminary part of the plan was implemented: a Northeast Line<sup>28</sup> was set up in France to separate northeastern France from the rest of German-occupied France. Unlike Alsace-Lorraine with its mixed population of French and Germanic Alsatians, northeastern France had only a tiny population of Alsatians or other speakers of Germanic-languages. The line was guarded through December 1941 by German security forces<sup>29</sup>, who greatly restricted French access to northeastern France from the rest of the country. Also, residents of northeastern France who were outside the region when the line was created were mostly denied reentry. The reasons for the line and the restricted access were never publicly explained, but their mere existence provoked speculation among the French that the Germans were planning to annex northeastern France.

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26 This view of interminable French-German rivalry was excessive, as basically all European empires, kingdoms, duchies, and so on frequently went to war with their neighbors from the time of the Middle Ages. This is exemplified by France's many wars with England, Spain, and other states. Indeed, German-French rivalry paled in comparison to English-French rivalry which included the Hundred Years' War as just one of many conflicts between them.

27 The Germans considered the small Flemish area of France as already Germanic. This was the city of Dunkerque ("Dunkirk" in English; "Duunkerke" in the Flemish of the area; "Dünkirchen" in German) and its nearby area.

28 *Nord-Ost-Linie* in German. It was sometimes informally called the "Führer Line" by Nazi officials, most likely reflecting the idea for the line and for annexing northeastern France originated with Hitler. Some modern maps show it as the "Zone of German Settlement", but this is confusing. While German settlement was very likely the ultimate plan, during the war the zone was not called this nor were Germans settled in the zone.

29 The line's guards were withdrawn in December 1941. The reason for this is unexplained in my source, but it is almost certainly due to the need to send troops to the Eastern Front once the Soviet winter counteroffensive began.

### Note

For much of the information about the Nazi views of Wallonia, see C. Hamans; “Minority Languages Under Nazi Occupation”; 2019; [https://pure.uva.nl/ws/files/43861961/Minority\\_languages\\_Nazi\\_occupation.pdf](https://pure.uva.nl/ws/files/43861961/Minority_languages_Nazi_occupation.pdf).

For much of the information about the Nazi intentions for France, see Peter Schöttler; “Eine Art ›Generalplan West‹. Die Stuckart-Denkschrift vom 14. Juni 1940 und die Planungen für eine neue deutsch-französische Grenze im Zweiten Weltkrieg” [“A Kind of ‘General Plan West’. The Stuckart Memorandum of 14 June 1940 and the Plans for a new Franco-German Border in World War II”; 2003; [https://www.academia.edu/9712109/Eine\\_Art\\_Generalplan\\_West\\_Die\\_Stuckart\\_Denkschrift\\_vom\\_14\\_Juni\\_1940\\_2003](https://www.academia.edu/9712109/Eine_Art_Generalplan_West_Die_Stuckart_Denkschrift_vom_14_Juni_1940_2003). Schöttler convincingly refutes the view that Nazi Germany plans for northeastern France were based on history, such as the borders of the Holy Roman Empire following the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. Instead, he shows that Hitler likely drew the putative new border, with German scholars then enlisted to find reasons for why Germany should gain this territory.

## 3.E Romania and Finland

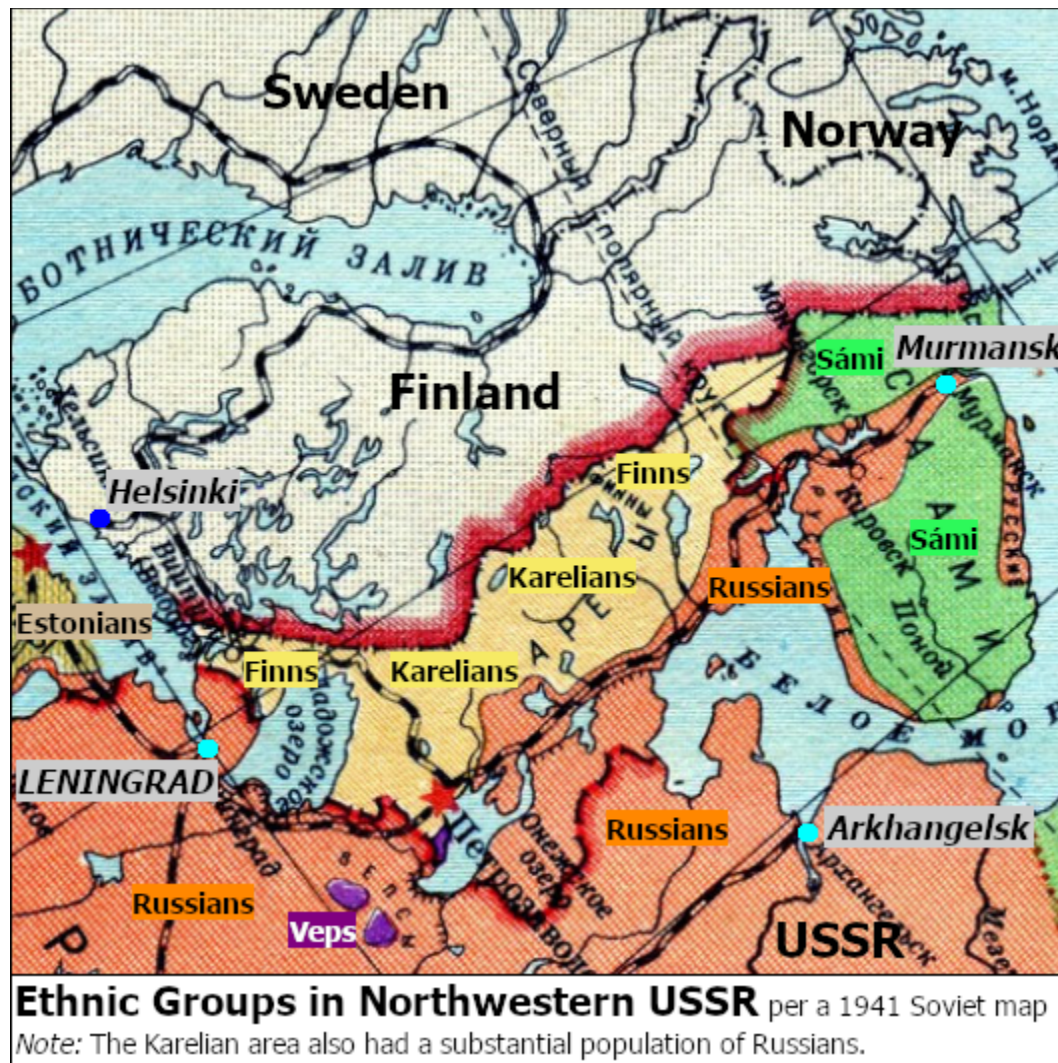
Some maps of a Greater Germany poorly handle the situation with Finland and sometimes with Romania. My map attempts a better portrayal.

Romania had been forced to cede its eastern territories to the USSR in 1940. This caused Romania to join the Axis and participate in the invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941. The country in 1941 not only recovered its lost territories, it gained “Transnistria”, a region in Ukraine east of the Dniester River<sup>30</sup>. This was mostly an imperialist prize for the Romanians, as while the region did have a Romanian minority it had a large Ukrainian majority and many other minorities including Russians, Jews, Greeks, Germans, Bulgarians, and more<sup>31</sup>.

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30 “Transnistria” derives from Romanian, as *Nistru* is the Romanian name for the Dniester River. This Transnistria disappeared as a political entity when the Soviets reconquered Ukraine. Transnistria today is the informal name of a Russian-controlled statelet carved out of Moldovan territory (officially the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic; *Pridnestrovo* being Transnistria in Russian). Modern Transnistria, confusingly, controls territory on both sides of the Dniester River.

31 For ethnic maps of Ukraine based on the 1926 Soviet census, see <https://gis.huri.harvard.edu/ethnic-composition>.



The Soviet map is a bit deceptive. Almost all of the area north of Leningrad had been part of Finland until 1940. Finland evacuated almost the entire population of this area before handing it over to the USSR, and the Soviets then began settling the region with Soviet citizens, mostly Russians, including in the area marked “Finns”.

Finland also participated in the war against the USSR with the goal of recovering the territory it had lost to the Soviet Union in 1940, a consequence of the Winter War of 1939–1940. Finnish nationalists also hoped to liberate eastern Karelia (aka Soviet Karelia) and unite it with Finland. The Karelians were an ethnic group with a culture and language closely related to the Finns’. More extremist nationalist claims allowed for a “Greater Finland” that also included Estonia, Ingria (what the Russian Empire and Germany called Ingermanland, a historical name for what had become the Soviet Leningrad region), and all of Kola Peninsula<sup>32</sup>. However, most of this expansive version of Finland was not part of Finland’s

<sup>32</sup> Estonian was a Finnic language, although much less similar to Finnish than Karelian.

Ingria once had many Finnic peoples, but they had been reduced to small minorities after the region became part of Russia.



wartime ambitions. The Germans intended to incorporate Estonia into Greater Germany. The Finns and Germans agreed to split Ingria/Ingermanland. The German plan was to capture Leningrad, destroy the city, and make the Neva River that ran through Leningrad from Lake Ladoga the German-Finnish border. The Finns knew about the planned destruction of that city and agreed that the Neva River would become the boundary between Finland and Germany<sup>33</sup>.

The Germans were at first also interested in the Kola Peninsula, for its mineral resources (particularly nickel). In July 1941, Hitler at a meeting with Nazi and military leaders, Hitler was on record as intending to keep Kola for Germany. By the autumn of 1941, however, Hitler had decided that all Germany needed was “the right to participate in the exploitation of the nickel mines on the Kola Peninsula”, with Kola going to Finland as the Finns wished. The port city of Murmansk was a key location on the peninsula. I speculate that had Germany done better in the war, the Germans and Finns would have come to an arrangement in which German forces would have been given the right to use Murmansk as a German naval base, to deter western Allied naval forces from operating in the Barents Sea. (The Finns only had a relatively small navy, which would not have been adequate for defending the Barents Sea.) German forces might also have remained in various areas in the north, to protect the nickel mines and to guard the Kola coast.

### 3.F German Client and Puppet States

The Nazis’ racist ideology consigned many ethnic groups as being inherently inferior to the Germans and the other “Aryans”. The Slavs (including Croats, Czechs, Poles, Russians, Serbs, Slovaks, Ukrainians, and others) were categorized as non-Aryan, which partly explains Nazi plans to colonize Slavic lands in the east, replacing Slavs with Germans. However, the Nazis at times tempered their racism with some pragmatism (including declaring the Japanese honorary Aryans). Other than in the east, Slavic groups willing to cooperate with Germany were allowed to have their own states, albeit either as client states (independent but reliant on the German economy and military) or as puppets (controlled by Germany). The first was the client state of Slovakia, formed when Germany dismembered

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The Kola Peninsula had relatively few Finns or Karelians, but it was part of the Sámi homelands. Some nationalist Finns considered the Sámi to be a Finnic people, as in the 20th Century it was widely believed that the Finnic and Sámi languages derived from a common ancestor (a linguistic theory that is less certain in the 21st Century).

33 Norman Rich; *Hitler’s War Aims*, Vol. 2: *The Establishment of the New Order*; 1974. Rich is also used the information on the Kola Peninsula (excluding my speculations).

Czechoslovakia in March 1939. Slovakia was self-governing under the leadership of pro-German Slovak fascists.

Croatia was an example of a puppet state. When Germany and Italy dismembered Yugoslavia in the spring of 1941, the Croatian part became the state of Croatia. This was a puppet state run jointly by Germany and Italy (and solely by Germany after the Italian surrender in 1943). It had a pretense of being independent under Croatian leaders. These pro-German leaders raised Croatian military and militia troops that fought for Croatia and the Axis against the Yugoslav guerrilla movements. They were also deeply involved in war crimes and crimes against humanity.

In the war with the USSR, Nazi Germany planned to create three puppet states in Soviet territory, and I speculate they would have ended up creating more. Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia in the Caucasus region all had briefly become independent after World War I but then were overrun by the Soviets in the early 1920s. The Germans intended to have nationalists from these regions set up and run puppet states, which would help Germany control the greater region. This region was of key importance due to the immense oilfields at Baku in Azerbaijan.

As discussed above, had the Germans pursued more rational policies in the east from the outset, they likely would have raised more Hiwis and Eastern Troops from anti-Soviet ethnic groups. I speculate that in this case the Germans might have created at least three additional puppet states: Kalmykia, “Mountain Caucasia” and “Volga-Urals”. Like with the other puppets, these states would have recruited soldiers and helped Germany keep control of nearby conquered regions.

The borders of the eastern puppet states on the map are based on historical borders, adjusted for other considerations. Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia are based on the Armenian, Azerbaijan, and Georgian Soviet Socialist Republics, with a couple of adjustments. The eastern, oil-producing region around Baku is detached from Azerbaijan and is controlled directly by Germany. One of the main goals of the German invasion of the USSR was to conquer this oil center, in hopes it could solve Germany’s oil shortages. I hypothesize that its importance means Germany would take direct control of this region and would have eventually settled it with German colonists<sup>34</sup>. As compensation for this land grab, Azerbaijan

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<sup>34</sup> The Baku region and Baku itself had an important ethnic Russian minority, the result of oil development by the earlier Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. The Germans at a minimum would most likely have replaced most of them with Germans. The nucleus of this replacement was present from the very start of the German invasion of the USSR in June 1941: a special organization of a few thousand oil workers, engineers, and technicians accompanied the invasion forces with plans to restore Baku’s oil production following its capture.

in return receives land from southern Armenia to connect it to its enclave of Nakhchivan. (In the USSR, Nakhchivan was an Azerbaijan-majority region separated from Azerbaijan proper by Armenia<sup>35</sup>.)

The fourth eastern puppet, Kalmykia, is based on the Kalmyk ASSR, an internal part of the Russian SFSR<sup>36</sup>. Kalmykia is a region with a majority population of Kalmyks, a mostly-Buddhist people speaking a Mongolic language. Many Kalmyks resisted Soviet control and revolted in 1926 and 1930. The Kalmyks were also hit hard by the famine of the early 1930s caused by Stalin's forced collectivization of agriculture. Many Kalmyks thus welcomed Germany as their liberator when the Germans occupied much of Kalmykia in 1942, and many collaborated with the Germans<sup>37</sup>. While the historical Germans did not plan to create a Kalmyk puppet state (as far as I am aware), I hypothesize that they might have had they adopted more sensible policies.

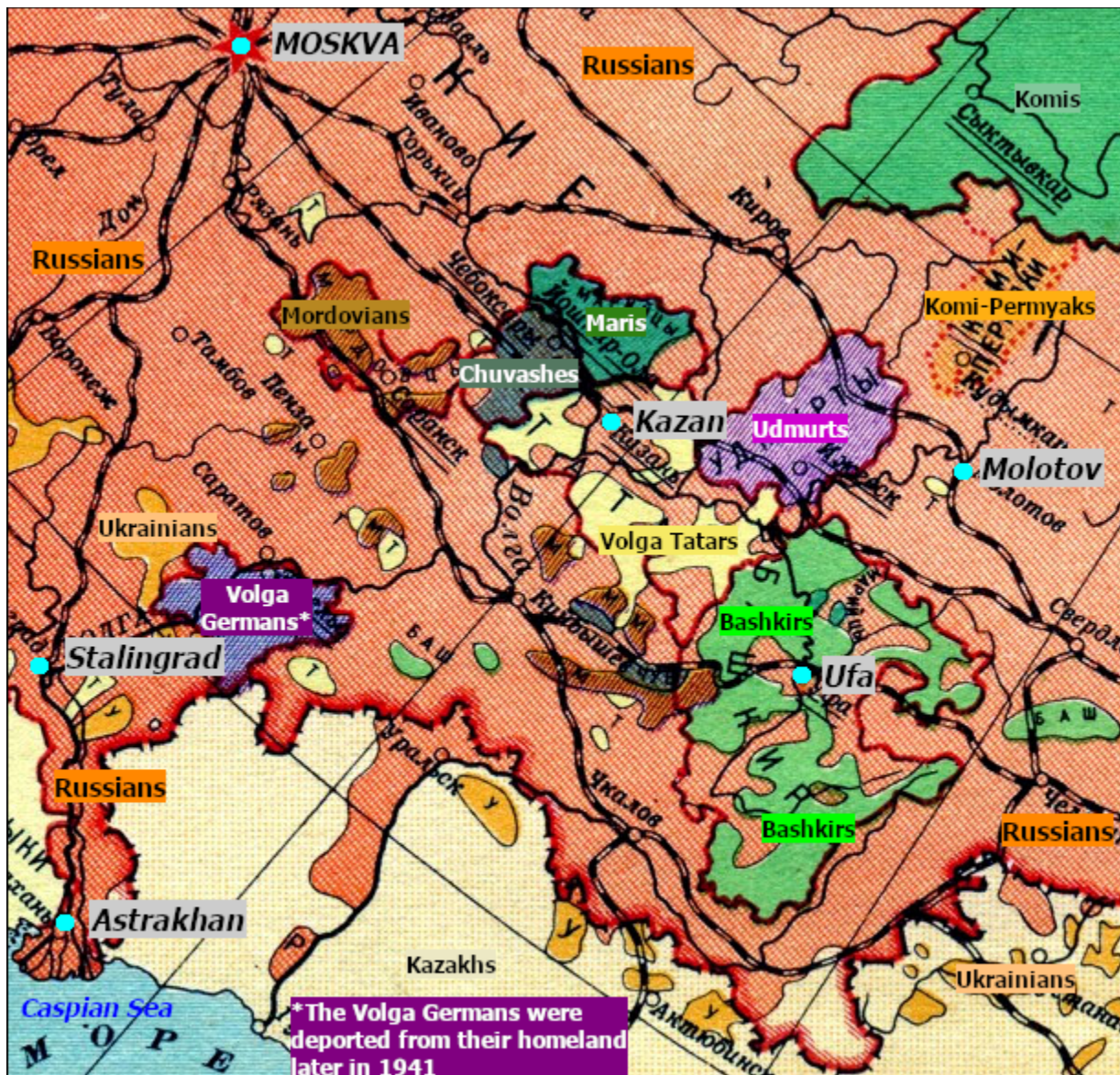
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35 The Armenians of course would not appreciate losing land to Azerbaijan. When the two countries were briefly independent in 1918–1920 during the Russian Civil War, they ended up fighting over their borders. (They periodically resumed the fight after the USSR broke up in 1991.) Nazi Germany with its racist policies almost paradoxically considered the “non-Aryan”, Muslim Azerbaijanis more reliable than the “Aryan”, Christian Armenians. Some in the Nazi leadership including Hitler viewed Armenians as “Levantine traders”, implying they were more like the despised Jews despite their technical classification as Aryans. The Nazi leadership also regarded some Soviet Muslim groups as the most anti-Soviet ethnic groups in the USSR and thus the most reliable for the German cause.

36 It still exists today as the Republic of Kalmykia in the Russian Federation. In both Soviet and modern times, its autonomy was and is fictitious.

37 After Soviet authority returned, the Soviets in 1943 forcibly relocated the Kalmyks from their homeland as collective punishment.





The Soviet map does not show that most of these non-Russian ethnic areas also included populations of Russians, large populations in some places.

The remaining two eastern puppet states are hypothetical: “Mountain Caucasia” and “Volga-Urals”. They are in regions with many anti-Soviet ethnic groups. Mountain Caucasia is an invented name for a puppet confederation of various ethnic groups in the region of the Caucasus Mountains. Groups there included Balkars, Chechens, Cherkess, Ingushes, Kabardians, Karachays, and many more. The state name is derivative of the briefly-lived Mountain Republic of the Northern Caucasus from the early 1920s and the names of the German North Caucasian and Mountain-Caucasian Legions. Many of these ethnic groups had (so-called) autonomous provinces or districts in the USSR, which partially are used for

the borders of Mountain Caucasus. The borders are adjusted, however, so that oil centers there like Grozny would remain under direct German control.

Volga-Urals is a historical regional name for part of the central Volga River area together with the southern Urals area, which I reuse for the Volga-Urals puppet state, a confederation ethnic groups in the region. These groups included the (Muslim) Volga Tatars, (Muslim) Bashkirs, (Christian) Chuvashes, (Christian) Maris, (Christian) Udmurts, and (Christian) Mordvins<sup>38</sup>. Members of all these groups served in the Volga Tatar Legion of the Eastern Troops. The Tatar name of this legion was “Idel-Ural”, *Idel-Ural* being Tatar for “Volga-Ural”. The borders of this puppet state are loosely based on the borders of the Soviet autonomous republics and provinces for these people, expanded to make the region continuous.

Not all major collaborating groups get a puppet state. For example, the Crimean Tatars helped the Germans as collaborators, auxiliaries, and soldiers (in the Crimean Tatar Legion). In Soviet eyes, they helped the Germans so much they were ethnically cleansed from the Crimea in 1944. However, Nazi Germany intended the Crimea to be a location for German settlement, so I assume the Crimean Tatars would not have received a puppet state even with more rational Nazi policies<sup>39</sup>.

### 3.G The Arkhangelsk-Astrakhan Line and the Urals

The Arkhangelsk-Astrakhan Line would not have become a straight, hard border between Greater Germany and the USSR. Historically, it was not conceived to be the German border at all but was just to be the stop line for the 1941 campaign. The Nazis envisioned pushing their realm up to the Ural Mountains and settling most of the conquered lands with Germanic colonists. The Arkhangelsk-Astrakhan Line was thus just to be temporary, with the Germans going over to the defensive along this line while diverting military resources to

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38 The Mordvins were actually two ethnic groups, the Erzyas and the Mokshas. They spoke related but not mutually-intelligible languages. Outsiders collectively called them Mordvins based on the historical name of the their shared region, Mordovia.

39 The German occupiers did allow the Crimean Tatars to set up “Muslim Committees” in some towns and villages, but even these were mostly symbols of local government rather than bodies with real power.

fight the western Allies<sup>40</sup>. Once the western Allies were dealt with, the Nazis intended to resume their advance to the Urals.

The convenience of the Arkhangelsk-Astrakhan was that it was one of the shortest lines that the Germans could hold at after capturing the key cities of the western USSR, including the major industrial region from Moskva to Gorkiy, and the oil resources of the Caucasus. It is unclear, however, how much thought the Germans put into this line beyond it being a conveniently straight line on a map<sup>41</sup>.

The Arkhangelsk-Astrakhan Line also was not a strict military objective that. It actually would have been very difficult for the Germans to attain the line in several places as long as the Soviets continued to resist. It mattered little if the Germans undershot or overshot the line. Several regions along the line had forbidding terrain and lacked railroads the Germans needed to bring up supplies for their forces. In the north, there was a single railroad running to Arkhangelsk, east of which were forests and swamps without railroads or good roads. In the south, there was a single railroad running to Astrakhan, east of which were dry grasslands without railroads or good roads. On the other hand, the central Volga-Urals region had good tank country and excellent communications, which would have in theory allowed German breakthroughs to advance past the line and capture important cities there. I've accordingly adjusted the front lines between Germany and the USSR to take account of these considerations rather than strictly following the line.

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40 While the German ground forces would go over to the defensive, the historical Germans planned the Luftwaffe to bomb and "destroy" Soviet industry in the Urals. (See Kim Christian Priemel; "Occupying Ukraine: Great Expectations, Failed Opportunities, and the Spoils of War, 1941–1943"; *Central European History* Vol. 48 No. 1; 2015; <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43965115>.) This plan, however, was unrealistic without a much larger Luftwaffe. Historically, the Luftwaffe in 1942 struggled just to support ground operations in the USSR against the Soviets and in the Mediterranean against the western Allies. The ability of air forces to destroy industry was also greatly overrated, as the western Allies themselves discovered when bombing German factories.

41 The Arkhangelsk-Astrakhan Line did have some logic to it. Arkhangelsk in the north had been an important port in World War I for Allied shipments to the Russian Empire and logically would (and did) serve the same purpose in WW2 for Allied aid to the USSR. There were no ports of any large capacity further east in the north, so Arkhangelsk was the logical stopping point for the Germans.

In the south, Astrakhan commanded the southern Volga River and its confluence with the Caspian Sea. Holding Astrakhan would thus cut the main overland and water routes for shipping oil products from Baku to where they were needed in the USSR. Thus, holding Astrakhan would have important effects if it took some time to capture more-distant Baku. (Two secondary ports on the Caspian could handle some of the oil shipments. Gurev [now Atyrau, Kazakhstan], however, lacked high-capacity ground transportation infrastructure to move large amounts of oil products to where they were needed. Krasnovodsk [now Türkmenbaşy, Turkmenistan] was on a major railroad but required the oil to be railed for well over 3,000 km (well over 2,000 miles) through Central Asia before it could reach where it was needed. This would tie up great amounts of rail capacity. These difficulties were historically encountered when the Germans temporarily blocked the Volga route in the Stalingrad area in 1942–1943, forcing the Soviets to increase use of Gurev and Krasnovodsk.



For the purposes of the map, I've assumed a Germany better prepared for war with the USSR reached the adjusted line at best in late 1942 or sometime in 1943. I then assume that the Germans go on the defensive and divert resources to confront the western Allies in other theaters. With the US in the war from late 1941, the western Allies were unlikely to be defeated but might be stalemated, although I believe this could take considerable time to achieve. Thus, while Nazi intentions were to reach the Urals, I think in practice the Germans might not be able to advance beyond the approximate Arkhangelsk-Astrakhan Line for many years at the least.

Had they advanced further east, stopping at "the Urals" was a somewhat nebulous goal. Like with the Arkhangelsk-Astrakhan Line, in the north there was considerable harsh terrain and lack of good communications. How much progress the Germans could actually make in this region if the Soviets continued to resist is open to question. In the south, the Ural Mountains did not extend to the Caspian Sea, so the stop line there very likely would have been the Ural River. This river was by far the best defensive line south of the Urals. It would have been a fairly good, albeit long, defense line during warm weather, especially during the spring floods when the river in places exceeded a width of 10 km (6 miles). Its value in the winter was far less, as it usually was frozen over from late November through late March.

Despite Nazis plans to settle the east, the historical Germany almost entirely avoided officially annexing Soviet territory into Greater Germany. Doing such would have needlessly increased resistance and rebellion among local peoples who would not want to be part of Germany. A tiny area adjacent to East Prussia was incorporated into East Prussia in August 1941<sup>42</sup>. Otherwise, the Nazis started a process of unannounced, incremental annexations. This involved reassigning captured territory from military occupation to German civilian administration. In July 1941, they took some Ukrainian territory and incorporated it in General Government<sup>43</sup>, the name the Germans gave to the part of Poland that they conquered in 1939 but did not annex. General Government is often described as occupied territory, but the Nazis intended much more than occupation. They placed it under a special German civilian administration and intended over the course of 15–20 years to ethnically cleansing the region, resettle it with Germanic colonists, and make it part of Greater Germany.

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42 This land was taken from the newly-formed Belostok District but then returned to that district in October 1943.

43 This land, which the Germans named the Galicia (*Galizien*) district of General Government, had been the eastern half of the Austro-Hungarian province of Galicia before Poland gained it in 1918 and the USSR in 1939. Although the district had a Ukrainian majority, it had not been part of Ukrainian in the Russian Empire and thus had no tradition of Russian/Soviet rule. This together with the fact that it had been under German rule (by the Habsburgs) in 1772–1918 perhaps was part of the reason it was attached to General Government rather than placed in Reich Commissariat Ukraine.



In August 1941, the Germans attached the Belarusian Belostok<sup>44</sup> region to East Prussia as the Belostok District (*Bezirk Bjelostock*). It was not formally annexed in Germany but was under German civilian administration from East Prussia. The district was sometimes informally called Southern East Prussia and would have eventually been annexed into Germany.

The Germans planned to organized all other the territory they took from the USSR into Reich Commissariats (*Reichskommissariate*). These would be under special German civilian administrations similar to General Government. The names and intended borders of some commissariats changed over time, not all of which are covered here. In addition to normal administration and occupation functions, the commissariats were to prepare their territories

<sup>44</sup> This area had been part of Poland and was annexed into the USSR in 1939. After the war, some of the region including the city of Belostok was returned to Poland, whereupon it resumed its Polish name, Białystok.

for incremental incorporation into Greater Germany, such by germanifying some areas and settling other areas with Germanic colonists. Historically, only two commissariats were fully established in the eastern territories: Reich Commissariat Ostland (*Reichskommissariat Ostland*) and Reich Commissariat Ukraine (*Reichskommissariat Ukraine*). Two more were planned but not established because the Germans only (temporarily) conquered some of the territories intended for them: Reich Commissariat Muscovy (*Reichskommissariat Moskowien*)<sup>45</sup> and Reich Commissariat Caucasia (*Reichskommissariat Kaukasien*). Another two were just aspirational goals for when Germany would expand into the Urals and Central Asia: Reich Commissariat Urals (*Reichskommissariat Ural*) and Reich Commissariat Turkestan (*Reichskommissariat Turkestan*).

### 3.H German Colonization

#### *Sidetrip: "Germanic" Colonists*

Nazi Germany intended to settle many conquered areas with Germanic colonists of one sort or another. During the war, this almost always involved ethnic Germans, sometimes from Germany itself but much more often from other countries with large minorities of *Volksdeutsche*, ethnic Germans. In the early war years, many of these *Volksdeutsche* came from regions being annexed by the Soviet Union, such as Romanian province of Bessarabia.

Nazi racist ideology considered most peoples speaking Germanic languages as types of Germans. The Nazis intended that these peoples would become part of Greater Germany: the Dutch, Flemings, and Luxembourgers in the west and the Nordic Danes, Norwegians, and Swedes in Scandinavia. All these peoples were eligible to provide soldiers for Germany. Volunteers from these people joined the Waffen-SS, which in the early war years strongly followed racist principles<sup>46</sup>.

All these peoples were also potential Germanic colonists. During the war, the Germans attempted to recruit Nordics as colonists for some Soviet territories,

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45 This commissariat was originally named Reich Commissariat Russia (*Reichskommissariat Russland*), but the Germans soon decided to remove any mention of "Russia" from their territory names. They changed the name to Reich Commissariat Muscovy (*Reichskommissariat Moskowien*). *Moskowien*/Muscovy was a traditional name for Russia stemming from the time of the Grand Principality of Muscovy before it became the Tsardom of Russia. Reich Commissariat Muscovy was sometimes informally but incorrectly called Reich Commissariat Moskva (*Reichskommissariat Moskau*).

46 Later in the war, the need for soldiers meant even the Waffen-SS recruited non-Germanic soldiers into its ranks. Before then, the few non-Germanic volunteers had to join special German Army units rather than Waffen-SS units.

although this effort failed to attract volunteers. However, it seems likely that had Germany won the war, the Germans eventually would have been able to recruit some colonists from these peoples.

The Greater Germany map shows the lands subject to germanization and German colonization. German colonization in the east began in 1939 soon after Germany and the USSR carved up Poland. The Germans started to expel Poles from the parts of Poland they annexed into Germany and resettle these areas with Germans, mostly *Volksdeutsche*. This was just the first wave of colonization; the Nazis intended to keep expanding its scope, such as into General Government and the lands further east.

Colonization plans expanded when Germany invaded the USSR, with selected parts of Ukraine and western Russia to be colonized in the short term and to become 50% within 25 years. The plans were rather detailed, with settlement points, Reich marches, and even autobahn routes mapped, but they all foundered.

The Belostok District was one of the targets. Efforts to germanize some of the inhabitants judged to be more Germanic occurred. However, colonization by Germanic settlers had not begun when the Germans were driven from the area in 1944.

Ingermanland, the part of the Leningrad region the Nazis planned to incorporate into Greater Germany, was another target. This plan was contingent on the Germans capturing and destroying the city of Leningrad. Leningrad was never captured and colonization of the area did not occur.

The Germans also viewed the Crimean Peninsula as a prime colonization objective. They had captured all of the peninsula by July 1942 and began preparations to bring in colonists<sup>47</sup>. These plans had to be postponed after the Germans lost the Battle of Stalingrad in 1943 and then abandoned as the Red Army took the Crimea in 1944.

“Who would have dreamed ten years ago that we would be holding an SS meeting in a village named Hegewald, situated near the Jewish-Russian city of Zhitomir... This Germanic East extending as far as the Urals must be cultivated as a hothouse of Germanic blood... the next generations of Germans and history will not remember how it was done, but rather the goal.”

—Heinrich Himmler, head of the SS, 16 September 1942 speech at Hegewald during a meeting of SS and German Police senior leaders<sup>48</sup>. Hegewald was the name of Himmler’s SS headquarters in Ukraine and also the name of his nearby colonial project. This was the first

<sup>47</sup> Recalling the ancient world when Germanic Gothic tribes were in the Black Sea region, some Nazis envisioned reorganizing the Crimea and parts of southern Ukraine as *Gotengau*, the *Gau* of the Goths. This in turn prompted the Nazi head of General Government to want to turn his region into *Vandalengau*, the *Gau* of the Vandals.



step or “pearl” of a colonization effort that, like a pearl, was supposed to incrementally grow to encompass Ukrainian lands. Colonization actually began later in 1942 but by late 1943 the colony was abandoned due to the advance of Soviet troops in Ukraine. The metaphor of pearl growth was a common theme of German colonization plans in the east.

One colonization effort did get underway during the war. The SS expelled the Ukrainian inhabitants of a “Hegewald” area south of the occupied city of Zhitomir (now Zhytomyr, Ukraine). Himmler’s initial plan was to recruit Dutch and Nordic settlers, but this was abandoned due to lack of volunteers. Instead, Himmler decided to settle the area with *Volksdeutsche* colonists and ex-service SS personnel. The goal was an early population of about 10,000, but it was also difficult to recruit *Volksdeutsche* for the project due to fear of Soviet partisans. In the end, most if not all of the *Volksdeutsche* colonists were forcibly relocated to the area starting in late 1942, but only 27 villages were formed. The colonists were poorly supplied and struggled to succeed, a task made harder when many of the expelled Ukrainians began returning to the area looking for their homes. Later in 1943, the colony was completely abandoned when the colonists fled west upon the approach of the Red Army.

#### *Sidetrip: Soldier-Farmers (Wehrbauern)*

Nazi colonization plans envisaged settling the countryside with *Wehrbauern*. This term more literally translates as “Defense-Peasants” but its sense is better captured as “Soldier-Farmers”. The colonists were to be farmers with military weapons and training. Longer term plans envisaged that young men recruited as soldiers from farming homes would serving 12-year terms of enlistment, with the final two years in agricultural education. Upon discharge, they would be given their own farms in areas being colonized. Their military training would enable them to serve as a defensive paramilitary to help keep the colonial regions under German control.

The Hegewald colonists did not have military training and were not *Wehrbauern*. Some works suggest that the *Volksdeutsche* settlers of western Poland were better equipped as soldier-farmers and that some perhaps tried to defend their farms. However, most military-age men among these *Volksdeutsche* been conscripted in the German military, and the vast majority of these settlers fled west when the Red Army entered this region in early 1945.

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48 Wendy Lower; “A New Ordering of Space and Race: Nazi Colonial Dreams in Zhytomyr, Ukraine, 1941-1944”; *German Studies Review* Vol. 25 No. 2; 2002; <https://doi.org/10.2307/1432991>.

*Lebensraum* originally was intended for the lands east of Germany. The Balkan countries to Germany's southeast, including mostly-Slavic Yugoslavia, were not to be colonized or even conquered, at least in the short term. Instead, they were to be economically subservient to Germany, providing resources like Yugoslav minerals and Romanian oil and serving as markets for German goods. However, Italy's botched invasion of Greece in late 1940 brought the war to the Balkans. To keep British forces out of the region, the Germans ended up overrunning Greece and Yugoslavia in 1941. Yugoslavia was broken up, with pieces going to Germany, Italy, Bulgaria, and the newly-created Axis puppet state of Croatia. Serbia (roughly about three-quarters the size of present day Serbia) was all that was left from Yugoslavia and was occupied by Germany. The *Volksdeutsche* minority in the Banat, a northern region of Serbia, thereafter agitated for German colonization of their region and for eventual incorporation into Greater Germany. While this did not directly come to pass, German plans for Serbia evolved to envision the land under perpetual German control, with the historic fortress in Beograd (Belgrade in English) to become a German "Reich fortress"<sup>49</sup>. I project that such plans would have eventually led to German colonization the Banat and of at least some parts of Serbia further south.

### 3.1 Final Remarks



<sup>49</sup> German documents called it "*Reichsfestung Belgrad*", Belgrad being German for Beograd. The fortress was in Beograd and thus would ensure German control of the city and the nearby region. Beograd itself might have eventually been renamed "Prince Eugene City" (*Prinz Eugen Stadt*). Prince Eugene/Prinz Eugen had been a highly successful field marshal for the Habsburgs and had captured Beograd from the Ottoman Empire in 1717.

Nazi plans for their Greater Germany were abhorrent and would have resulted in human tragedy far exceeding that of the Holocaust. Germany's defeat in World War II not only ended dreams of Greater Germany but created a Germany even smaller than that of 1938. Not only were all German territorial gains undone, but parts of eastern Germany were annexed into Poland and the Soviet Union. Rather than Germany colonizing the east with Germans, centuries of German settlement were undone: Most countries in central and eastern Europe that had suffered German occupation and atrocities expelled almost all of their *Volksdeutsche* populations to Germany in the immediate years after the war.

Germany itself was divided into occupation zones by the Allied forces and came to exist as two states, West Germany (the Federal Republic of Germany, *Bundesrepublik Deutschland*) and East Germany (the German Democratic Republic, *Deutsche Demokratische Republik*)<sup>50</sup>. They were the main armed camps and front lines for the Cold War, until the late 1980s when Communism began to crumble in eastern Europe and the USSR. On 3 October 1990, Germany became reunited again under the Federal Republic of Germany. The international agreement that allowed reunification required Germany to renounce any and all territorial claims outside its borders.



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<sup>50</sup> Berlin was also divided into occupation zones, becoming West Berlin and East Berlin. East Berlin became the capital of East Germany, while West Berlin became associated with West Germany. West Berlin was not officially a part of West Germany, as that would have required agreement from the Soviet Union, which was not forthcoming. This mattered, since West Berlin was separated from West Germany by East German territory and guarded by Soviet and East German forces. West Berlin followed the applicable parts of the West German constitution as much as practical while still technically remaining occupied territory.

In turn, the western occupying powers did not agree to East Berlin being the capital of East Germany and officially refused to recognize this situation. However, since East Berlin was in East Germany, it was easily integrated into that country despite what the western powers preferred.

# Greater Germany: WW2 German Plans

Based on German Plans and Intentions, with Extrapolations