

CZESŁAW MADAJCZYK

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POZNAŃ  
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MARTYRS MEMORIAL AND  
MUSEUM OF THE HOLOCAUST

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*Benjamin Grey*



GENERALPLAN OST

The term *Generalplan Ost* first appears in two documents of the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories (*Reichsministerium für die besetzten Ostgebiete*), prepared by Dr. Wetzel, an employee in the Racial Policy Office of the *N.S.D.A.P.*<sup>1</sup>, who from 1941 simultaneously held an important post in the Political Department of Rosenberg's ministry. The first document is Wetzel's minute of the session on questions of the Germanization of the Soviet Baltic republics, held on February 4<sup>th</sup>, 1942, at Dr. Kleist's<sup>2</sup>. This minute refers to *S.S.-Obersturmbannführer* Gummitsch (representative of *S.S.-Standartenführer* Ehlich<sup>3</sup>) as taking part on behalf of the Security Office of the Reich (*R.S.H.A.*), on account of his association with the institution from which the *Generalplan Ost* was issued. The second document is a critical appraisal of the *Generalplan Ost* (hereafter referred to as *G.P.O.*) by Wetzel, dated April 27<sup>th</sup>, 1942. It bears the title *Stellungnahme und Gedanken zum Generalplan Ost des Reichsführers S.S.*, and has already been published in several historical periodicals<sup>4</sup>. Judging from the provenance of the document and its contents, we may be justified in assuming that it was intended for Rosenberg's use. The scepticism evident in it regarding the actuality of a number of steps proposed by the *R.S.H.A.* indicates the atmosphere of antagonism that existed between Himmler and Rosenberg at that time regarding their scope of competence in the occupied Soviet territories.

Wetzel writes that in November 1941 he had already known that the *R.S.H.A.*, then enjoying the strongest position in the Reich and — in the opinion of the institutions under Himmler — also operating as a Commissariat for Germanization, was working on a general plan for the eastern territories. A competent employee of that office, Ehlich (mentioned earlier), had then given him the figure of 31 million "aliens" destined for deportation.

<sup>1</sup> In October 1939, this Nazi expert on racial questions prepared a memorandum jointly with Dr. Hecht on the treatment of the Polish population.

<sup>2</sup> On March 11<sup>th</sup>, 1942, this protocol was received by Dr. Otto Bräutigam, head of the Eastern Political Department. Kleist was head of the Ostland Section in the same Political Department.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Hans Ehlich was head of the III B group (questions of re-Germanization, questions of ethnical groups in south-eastern territories, population policy, etc.) at the Chief Security Office of the Reich from 1940 to 1945.

<sup>4</sup> "Przegląd Zachodni" No 2/1958, "Voiенно istoricheskiy Journal" No 1/1960, "Vierteljahrshäfte für Zeitgeschichte" No 3/1958.



Certain elements of the *Generalplan Ost* elaborated by the R.S.H.A. can be singled out in Wetzel's appraisal, because he often takes them as a starting point for his counter-arguments. He quotes the following estimate of the number of future settlers provided for in the G.P.O.:

a) immediate resettlement	
110,000 persons ready to settle with their wives	220,000
peasant families in resettlers' camps	20,000
families of German origin in Russia — 4 children each	600,000
total	840,000
b) later resettlement	
peasant families	880,000
further resettlers	30,000
<i>Volksdeutsche</i> from overseas (3 children each)	200,000
total	1,110,000
c) further resettlement	
during the first 10 years 45—50,000 families	200,000
during the next 20 years, 20—30,000 families annually	2,400,000
	2,600,000
total during 30 years	4,550,000

Together with settlers from other Germanic countries and *Volksdeutsche*, the authors of the G.P.O. expected to have 10 million persons for the colonization of the eastern territories. These territories included the occupied Polish lands, the Soviet Baltic republics (Lithuania, Latvia and Esthonia), the "West Ukraine" (the provinces of Zhitomir and Kamieniec Podolski, part of Vinnitsa) and areas assigned for settlement: the Leningrad region (Ingermanland), the Crimea and hinterland and the bend of the Dnieper (Dnieprbogen). These territories were populated by about 45 million „aliens" including 5—6 million Jews<sup>5</sup>. For racial reasons, the authors of the G.P.O. planned to deport 31 million of these people to western Siberia. On the other hand, one may accept the hypothesis that the remaining 14 million people were to be annihilated, or considered suitable for Germanization and left where they were, or else used as manpower to work in the Reich or in the annexed territories.

Wetzel also writes that the G.P.O. gave the percentage of Polish and Byelorussian population and that of the "West Ukraine" and the Baltic countries that was to be deported to West Siberia in the course of thirty years. Wetzel, who opposed the resettlement of the population from the Baltic republics, made an exception here and did not quote the percentage. Of the Polish population 80—85% was to be deported, i. e., from 16 to 20.4 million; 65% of the population was to be deported from the „West Ukraine" and 75% from Byelorussia.

The first information of the provisions of the G.P.O. was probably not

<sup>5</sup> Wetzel estimated this population at 65 million, but he probably did not allow for those who had been evacuated into the interior of the U.S.S.R.

that previously mentioned given by Ehlich to Wetzel in 1941. Much goes to show that they were first mentioned in a speech made by Heydrich, head of the R.S.H.A., in Prague<sup>6</sup> on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1941, just after he had taken up the post of Protector of Bohemia and Moravia, where he presented the plans for the future of the Czech nation according to the general principles for the expansion of the Third Reich to the highest Nazi dignitaries in occupied Bohemia. These principles are worthy of close attention. True, the name G.P.O did not figure in Heydrich's speech, but the outline of expansion to the east in stages is in striking agreement with many of the elements contained in Wetzel's appraisal, Polish territory, the Baltic republics and the Ukraine, towards which Heydrich did not clearly define the intentions of the Third Reich, were to fall within its range.

In May 1942, Himmler received a memorandum from Professor Konrad Meyer-Hetling, headed *Generalplan Ost, Rechtliche, wirtschaftliche und räumliche Grundlagen des Ostaufbaues*, which we shall print below. Only the six-page summary of this memorandum under the title *Kurze Zusammenfassung der Denkschrift Generalplan Ost — rechtliche, wirtschaftliche und räumliche Grundlagen des Ostaufbaues*, among the documents of the Nuremberg Trial (No 2225), was known until recently. It was thought that the memorandum itself had been lost.

The first information of its contents was given by Robert L. Koehl in R.K.F.D.V.: *German Resettlement and Population Policy 1939—1945*, published by the Harvard University Press in 1957. Further references to its existence were made in 1960 in the West German quarterly "Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte"<sup>7</sup>. The memorandum and its summary were enclosures in the letter sent by S.S.-Oberführer Professor Meyer-Hetling on May 28<sup>th</sup>, 1942 to Himmler, Reichsführer S.S. and Commissary for Germanization.

As early as the spring of 1940, Professor Meyer-Hetling was head of the S.S. planning office for the Polish territories incorporated into the Reich<sup>8</sup>. From the following year, he was head of the planning department in the office of the Commissariat for Germanization, the *Stabshauptamt*, and of the Central Land Office (*Zentralbodenamt*). He was also Director of the Institute for Agrarian Affairs and Agrarian Policy (*Institut für Agrarwesen und Agrarpolitik*) at the Berlin University. It was at this university that the published document was prepared. Dr. J. Böslér cooperated in financial questions. Perhaps it was a coincidence that in the summer of 1942, that is, shortly after the preparation of the memorandum and its favourable reception by

<sup>6</sup> In the documentary publication *Die Vergangenheit warnt*, Prague, 1960, p. 126.

<sup>7</sup> Nachtrag zu der Dokumentation "Generalplan Ost", Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte", No 1/1960.

<sup>8</sup> As early as January 24<sup>th</sup>, 1940, during a meeting with Koppe, the chief of the S.S. and police in Poznań, he made a speech to those engaged in planning German colonization in the annexed Polish territories (National Archives, Microcopy No T-81, roll No 296 k. 2421159/2421160). The activity of Meyer-Hetling as chief of planning in Poznań was referred to by his collaborator von Machui in the book *Die Hintergründe des Falles Oberländer* written under the pseudonym of Victor Silling (pp. 45—51), published in 1960.



Himmler, Professor Meyer-Hetling was given further powers in the field of planning resettlement. He took up the post of *Beauftragter für die Siedlung und Landesraumordnung beim Reichsleiter für Agrarpolitik* in the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and of *Bauernführer* of the Reich. He was also appointed Head of the Committee for Resettlement in the occupied eastern territories<sup>9</sup>.

It follows from Professor Meyer-Hetling's previously mentioned letter of May 28<sup>th</sup> that the published memorandum was prepared in connection with instructions received on July 15<sup>th</sup>, 1941, and Meyer's report of January 27<sup>th</sup>, 1942<sup>10</sup>. Here is some information concerning these dates. In the spring of 1941, Meyer-Hetling was entrusted with the preparation of a memorandum on planning resettlement and on development planning in the Polish territories "incorporated into the Reich"<sup>11</sup>. For this purpose he made use of the results of research carried out by the Technical College in Berlin<sup>12</sup>. He made the results of this research known in a paper he read on July 15<sup>th</sup>, 1941, and at the opening of an exhibition *Planung und Aufbau im Osten* on October 23<sup>rd</sup><sup>13</sup>. Himmler expressed his appreciation of Professor Meyer-Hetling's elaboration, which included exemplary model villages and farms. On January 27<sup>th</sup>, 1942, the S.S. *Reichsführer* received Professor Meyer and entrusted him with the further task of elaborating the legal, economic and political foundations for the "future reconstruction of the East", also including the Crimea and the Leningrad region. It follows from the evidence given by Meyer at the VIII Nuremberg Trial that the *Generalplan Ost* elaborated by him had been based on suggestions made by Himmler and the head of the *Stabshauptamt* Greifelt during conversations.

In his letter of May 28<sup>th</sup>, 1942, to Himmler, Meyer wrote that the *Generalplan Ost* which he had submitted as well as the directives to this plan and the recommendations of the *Reichsführer* had called for further research on basic questions, the results of which he was presenting for consideration. In

<sup>9</sup> Buchheim, *Rechtsstellung und Organisation des Reichskommissars für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums*. The collective work, *Gutachten des Instituts für Zeitgeschichte*, München 1958.

<sup>10</sup> *Nuremberg Trial*, No VIII, vol. 8, stenogram of evidence given by Professor Meyer-Hetling.

<sup>11</sup> In October 1939, the Nazi Reich annexed Gdańsk, Pomerania, the Poznań region, most of the province of Łódź, Upper Silesia, the Dąbrowa Basin, the western part of the province of Cracow, the Ciechanów and Suwałki regions ("territories incorporated into the Reich"). These territories had nearly ten million inhabitants. The remaining Polish occupied territories, with twelve million inhabitants, were formed into the General Gouvernement by the Nazi authorities. The head of the occupational authorities in the G. G. was Dr. Hans Frank.

<sup>12</sup> See the remarks of Helmut Heiber to the documentation on the *Generalplan Ost*, "Vierteljahrshäfte für Zeitgeschichte" No 3/1958.

<sup>13</sup> The materials shown at this exhibition included the publication *Planung und Aufbau im Osten (Erläuterungen und Skizzen zum ländlichen Aufbau in den neuen Ostgebieten)* prepared by the Stabshauptamt Planning Department and edited by K. Meyer, author of the introduction. It appeared in Berlin in 1942.

the published memorandum, he recalls that the *Generalplan Ost* of July 15<sup>th</sup>, 1941, envisaged the assignment of new areas for resettlement, taking into account the development prospects over a period of 30 years. As can be seen, the term *Generalplan Ost* is used by Meyer with many meanings. In the letter he used it rather in the same sense as he did during the VIII Nuremberg Trial. In this sense, it was a plan for resettlement solely of the Polish territories "incorporated into the Reich". In the published document part B, with several tables and graphs, constitutes the continuation of the elaboration of the plan. It deals almost exclusively with calculations of the cost of the resettlement campaign and the sources from which these costs might be covered in the Polish territories "incorporated into the Reich". Detailed consideration is given to the measures essential for the rapid Germanization of these territories, and for the completion of resettlement in the rural areas within five years after the end of the war and in towns within ten years. The cheapness of labour is striking in the financial calculations. This results from the planned use of prisoners-of-war and the inmates of prisons as man power.

Parts A and C, on the other hand, have the character of a long-term plan, of long-term imperialist expansion, ranging over further Polish territories and Soviet areas under German occupation. As compared with the summary already known to us, it does not introduce any new factors in the basic principles. What is new is the detailed elaboration of these principles. The maximum of control was to be guaranteed to the S.S. in the colonized territories, by a planned system of ownership and jurisdiction based on the feudal pattern (*Zeitlehen* — 7 years, *Erblehen* — 20 years, *Leheneigentum*, *Lehensgericht*, *Oberlehensgericht*), and a State monopoly of land, both in the towns and in the rural areas. We also find a definition of *Siedlungsstützpunkte*, i. e. resettlement bases. The purpose of these bases was to guarantee communication between the Reich and the marches of the Crimea and the Leningrad region. They were to cover an area the size of 1—2 districts in the Reich (about 2,000 sq. km) and to be located at distances of about 100 km along two communication routes. One was to lead from the Reich in the direction of the Leningrad region (Königsberg-Leningrad, Wilno-Leningrad) and the other, also from the Reich, in the direction of the Crimea (Warsaw-Lublin-Równe or Cracow-Lwów-Równe and then Biała Cerkiew-Krivoi Rog-Nikolajew). A plan was hurriedly prepared for building a motor road from the Reich to the Crimea. Fourteen bases were to be set up in the General Gouvernement, in the Zamość region among others, 8 in the Ukraine and 14 in the so-called Ostland<sup>14</sup>. Also note worthy is the intention of reducing the population of the towns. In the Leningrad region, the population of the towns was to decrease from the pre-war figure of 3,200,000 to 200,000 and in the Crimea, from 790,000 to 680,000. And lastly, a rather curious thing, Professor Meyer-Hetling included 80,000 Polish mountaineers in the reserve population for resettlement.

<sup>14</sup> "Ostland" included the Byelorussian Republic and the Soviet Baltic republics.



C. Bei der Abgrenzung der Siedlungsräume in den besetzten Ostgebieten wird auf

- 1) das Ingermanland
- 2) den Gotengau
- 3) das Memel-Narew-Gebiet und
- 4) 36 Siedlungsstützpunkte

hingewiesen, für deren Eindeutschung auf dem Lande und in den Städten ein Zeitplan die Fristen absteckt. Dabei ergibt sich ein Siedlerbesatz von knapp 3,5 Mill. deutscher Menschen, dem eine Gesamtziffer von rund 5,5 Mill. Siedlern gegenübergestellt werden kann, mit welcher auch die Ansiedlung in den eingegliederten Ostgebieten (Bedarf rund 1,5 Mill. Menschen) sicherzustellen ist.

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