

TAC NEWS

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AUSSCHLUßZONE

Another view of what 1947 *might* have looked like

GHQ's "Wehrmacht '47" project postulates World War II continuing for several years beyond its historical end in 1945. This proposition begs three questions. First, how would Germany go about administering its eastern conquests in order to exploit their abundant resources? Second, How would this administration affect the organization of the *Wehrmacht*, and the tables of organization and equipment of its various arms? Third, what effect would the prevailing conditions have on the weapons and organization of German armed forces and how would they be deployed. The purpose of this article is to give a brief overview of the Nazi plan for ruling the "Ostmark" and controlling the diverse population contained therein, and what the affect would be on the German Army. Please be advised, the following description will not be sugar-coated or sanitized. The Third *Reich* was probably the most unspeakably wicked manifestation of human depravity in all history. Its policies, though appallingly cruel, are well documented and included here solely in the interest of explaining how they might have been practically applied.

"What a task awaits us!

We have a hundred years of joyful satisfaction before us."

Adolf Hitler

Operation "Barbarossa" was more than a simple invasion of one nation by another. It was, in actuality, the final reckoning between two antithetical and mutually exclusive political and racial ideologies. To Germany, the enemy was not Russia, per se. It was the Jews and other Slavic "*untermenschen*" that were to be, not just destroyed, but totally annihilated both physically and culturally in order for the Arian people to survive and prosper. A good example of this is the number of Soviet prisoners of war killed, in one way or another, while in Nazi custody. The number is staggering. 3,300,000 died either in, or enroute to, poorly equipped camps, or murdered outright by members of the SD or *Wehrmacht* executioners. On 30 March 1942 Hitler is quoted as saying, "We must get away from the standpoint of soldierly comradeship... It is a war of extermination." On 6 June 1941 the infamous 'Commissar Order' absolved German troops, in advance, for any acts normally considered criminal in nature when dealing with enemy soldiers and civilians. It wasn't just the wholesale slaughter of 2.2 million Jews caught behind German lines that illustrates this policy, but also that of gypsies, mental patients, suspected 'agents', bandits, partisans, saboteurs, spies,

resisters of any kind, or simply the entire populations of hapless villages suspected of resistance activity. These could be shot, hanged, strangled, burned to death in barns or churches, or held as living storage vessels, to be bled to death at need to provide whole blood for the treatment of German wounded. Overall, the carnage has been independently estimated at about 30,000,000 souls.

Despite, or perhaps because of, this horrific historical backdrop, 'What if' scenarios postulating the 'Third *Reich* Triumphant' have fascinated fiction writers, history 'buffs', and professional historians alike for the last sixty years. Writers with a political bent seem to have been concerned primarily with parallels, real or imagined, with the current political climate at the time of writing. Recently, the reunification of Germany and the consequences of that reunification to European stability, have created a good deal of anxiety in the years since the collapse of the Soviet Union and end of the 'Cold War'. Oddly enough, more people seem concerned over the rise of a new *Reich* than they are over examples of Russian military adventurism or its diplomatic wooing of the Moslem bloc. The idea of a resurrected *Germania* appears to be much more deeply resented than is at first apparent to the casual observer. On the other hand, there are the works of military historians, both amateur and professional, who seem satisfied to simply move armies around, based on the enormous body of declassified Soviet documents currently available. Debating the efficacy of this or that strategy and the military consequences thereof alone has resulted in hundreds of books and articles. Some of these are actually of scholarly value. Most, however, seem to be little more than simple re-hashings of previous studies with the addition of a few colorized photos and pretty maps. Re-examining the Eastern Front has become a very popular pastime indeed; and why not? For nearly four years the Germans and Soviets fought over a front that was in places over 2,000 kilometers deep, with armies as large as 5,000,000 men at various times.

Occupation Plan

How would Germany have organized the vast new territory a victory in the East would have made available? The plans survive in detail, though the available documents give an image that is largely fragmentary in nature. All that is needed is to put the pieces together in a logical order. The 'plan' for absorbing the conquered territories and peoples is based on a combination of Nazi racial dogma and economic necessity. First,

the *Reich* would have exploited the various ethnic minorities within the greater Soviet population, establishing puppet regimes under German governors around the Baltic seacoast, Byelorussia, the Caucasus, and the Ukraine. Poland, in particular, would be dismembered and divided among several governmental entities. This would be followed by widespread decollectivisation, reprivatization of property, and restoration of religious freedom. There is a lot of evidence to show that such policies would have been eminently effective. Everywhere the Germans went there was significant collaboration by indigenous populations. About one million Russians actually served with the *Wehrmacht* in various capacities. Most of these were unarmed 'Hiwi' auxiliaries, but there were also more than 250,000 'armed' collaborators. These served in units like the Kaminski Brigade, which took part in the suppression of the Warsaw uprising, the Vlasov Army of Liberation, and assorted Cossack, Kalmyk, and Tatar combat units. In fact, some minorities were better represented in German forces than in the Soviet army! In addition, various communist '*apparatchiks*' proved extremely malleable in addition to being shockingly amoral. They proved adept at controlling civil populations by the judicious application of efficient police work and sheer terror, techniques perfected under Stalin. It is probably true that the Nazis could never have administered their eastern provinces without these faceless bureaucrats. The primary object of all this effort was to drive wedges between the Kremlin and the multi-ethnic mass of the Russian people.

The slogan, 'Liberation not Conquest' was a watchword in all German propaganda efforts, but this was a sham. The Nazi Minister for Occupied Territories, Alfred Rosenberg, was, like Hitler, a rabid Russophobe. However, he was also aware of the differences between the various Russian nationalities and the ways these could be utilized to German advantage, and not afraid to pay lip-service to these differences. The three Baltic Republics and Byelorussia would be administered as 'protectorates' with considerable leeway for independent action, as would areas with large Germanic minorities. The Ukraine would be enlarged and strengthened, along with the establishment of a Caucasian federation under Nazi *Reichskommissars*. There were even plans for creating a Muslim 'Grand Mufti of the Crimea' and various Turkish and Tatar states carved out of the easternmost areas of the '*Ostmark*.' In the Caucasus, German policy was to be especially lenient. The so-called 'Karachai National Committee' controlled by a select group of Imams and chiefs welcomed the Germans with open arms. Large numbers of these volunteered to fight for the Nazis. Hitler even declared, "I consider only the Muslims to be reliable".

The Dark Side

Recalcitrant peoples, meaning anyone not singled out for special consideration, were to be subjected to the worst kind of colonial exploitation. In Hitler's own words, "Our role in Russia will be analogous to that of England in India... Like the English, we shall rule this empire with (only) a handful of men." Land emptied by systematic extermination and forced deportations was to be repopulated by German (or Germanic) veteran-farmers (anyone with twelve or more years of military service). These would be awarded large farms, handsome cities, and palatial governor's palaces. The society would be both literally and metaphorically 'closed' to outsiders, a sort of cultural fortress where even "the least of our stable-lads must be superior to any native." For them, born slaves in need of a master, health and hygiene would be deliberately placed out of reach. Vaccinations and even soap would be denied them, while all the liquor and tobacco they could handle would be readily available. Again, in Hitler's own words, "We're not going to play at children's nurses;

we're absolutely without obligations as far as these people are concerned. To struggle against the hovels, chase away the flies, provide German teachers, bring out newspapers - very little of that for us... For the rest, let them know just enough to understand our highway signs, so that they won't be run over by our vehicles!" Economic intercourse would be particularly exploitive. German jobbers would buy up all surplus cereal and fruit production, selling in return cheap manufactured goods of the trashiest kind.

In all, German rule in the East would reflect Hitler's deep seated ideological belief in German racial superiority. The only real concessions he was willing to make were aimed squarely at Muslim and Turkic groups, who Hitler believed could be manipulated as surrogate 'enforcers' of the more violent and barbaric Nazi policies. The driving force behind this dark and bloody administration was not Rosenberg. He, although as stated above, a rabid Russophobe was motivated primarily by economic and administrative considerations. The real puppet master, pulling the strings of this monstrous apparatus of human degradation was, of course, *Reichsführer-SS* Heinrich Himmler. Himmler, even more than Hitler, had deeply-held mystic beliefs centered around what he saw as the Arian destiny to rule and dominate the lesser human subspecies. By now you should have a clear picture of the way things were going to be from a political and ethno-racial standpoint, but what would this all mean from a practical point of view?

Practical Application

From the very beginning, Hitler believed that the East 'belonged' to the SS as their personal fiefdom. After clearing out the indigenous population, extensive settlement by German colonists would begin. Each settlement would be comprised of a core of SS veterans, surrounded by the farms of racially acceptable citizens from the 'old' *Reich* and others with the proper racial and political credentials. To make room for these colonists, some forty-five million people would be forcibly deported to western Siberia. The remainder would serve the new elite as an army of local 'helots' for lack of a better word, whose lot was no better than that of slaves. These helots would receive a basic education, simple arithmetic at most. Reading was considered unnecessary! They would become little more than a mobile manual labor pool, shunted from place to place as the need arose. Harvesting, road-building, public works, or other engineering projects requiring large numbers of unskilled workers would take up all of their time. Fraternalization between 'citizens' and helots would be strictly forbidden, and punishable by death. Mainly, the idea was to establish the East as a 'cash cow' to be milked until it could no longer produce. At this point, the frontier would be moved a little further East in easy to digest stages until such time as the new *Reich* reached the shores of the Pacific Ocean.

The 'New Model' Army

Against this backdrop of ethnic cleansing, racial subjugation, and economic exploitation stands the German Army. It is clear that the role of the *Wehrmacht* would be profoundly affected by the changeover from years of nearly continuous offensive operations to a largely defensive role. To implement this changeover, it is clear that Hitler would hand over authority to Himmler as the man he most trusted to act in accordance with both Nazi principals and the vagaries of military necessity. To begin, with the *Wehrmacht* would be systematically reorganized to act primarily as an army of occupation, manning extensive static fortifications, interlaced with a comprehensive light-rail network (quick to build and inexpensive to maintain) capable of

distributing supplies, replacements, and reinforcements speedily and efficiently to any point along the frontier. The army would be deployed to occupy and defend important manufacturing and commercial centers, transportation bottlenecks such as rivers, road and rail junctions, as well as supply depots and administrative hubs.

This would mean that the *Wehrmacht* would give up much of its motor and mechanized transport, since no garrison would ever be more than fifty or so kilometers from a supply point and railhead. Horse-drawn transport would be judged sufficient for its needs, especially given the vast pool of slave labor available to breed, care for, and handle draft animals. The *Volksgrenadier* division would form the basis of this occupation army, backed up by a large artillery pool and small motorized reconnaissance contingents capable of patrolling between strong points. The mobile field army would consist solely of SS units, organized into Panzer and Panzergrenadier divisions, based at strategically placed locales capable of quick response to threats and of providing highly mobile armored *Kampfgruppen* to contain Soviet incursions or local uprisings, as well as launching points for punitive expeditions into Soviet territory. Rear area security would be provided by a large para-military constabulary consisting primarily of Cossacks, Tatars, and other ethnic minorities with little love or connection to the people among whom they would be stationed. Their main function would be to maintain an atmosphere of fear and distrust in order to prevent any sort of organized resistance to the occupiers. Beyond the frontier proper would be the "*Ausschlußzone*" (Exclusion Zone). This would be a band of from fifty to one-hundred kilometers in width, dependent on terrain and topography, largely uninhabited except for a few outposts and observation points. The point of this would be to keep the as-yet unconquered Soviets from hindering the smooth functioning of the occupied territories and to provide a sort of dry-moat between them and the German '*Ostmark*.'

Volksgrenadiers

The 'new' *Wehrmacht* was to be made up, as stated above, primarily of '*Volksgrenadier*' infantry divisions. Eight years of nearly continuous warfare, so far, had produced a chronic shortage of manpower in Hitler's *Reich*. To overcome this problem, the general staff began a sweeping reorganization of German combat formations with the purpose of decreasing manpower requirements while maintaining or enhancing firepower. They called this program "*Überwältigendes Feuer*" (Overwhelming Fire), or *Überfeuer* for short. Under the *Überfeuer* program each German Infantry division would contain a total of six 'foot' Infantry battalions organized into three "*Schützen*" regiments, a horse-drawn Artillery regiment of four battalions, one mixed *Panzerjäger/Flak* battalion, a motorized Fusilier battalion, and an Engineer Company, rounded out with the modest Medical, Supply, Maintenance, and Administrative contingents necessary to carry out the division's largely defensive mission.

Support From Corps and Army

To knit these primarily infantry units together into an integrated defense system, it was necessary to provide heavyweight support elements. These would be located at strategic points where enemy penetrations could be expected to give the system the solid 'punch' necessary to contain and limit these penetrations as much as possible, and to provide the basis for local counterattacks designed to seal them off from vital centers of commerce and administration.

The Warrior Elite

With occupation, partisan control, and general defensive duties in the hands of the *Wehrmacht*, the task of the *Waffen SS* would be twofold. The first would be to provide the real 'teeth' necessary to contain and eliminate major enemy incursions. The other would in many ways be more important. A truly static defense simply would not work. It never has. History is full of examples of societies that, satisfied with what they had, no longer felt the need to expand and turned their attention inward. This would not do for Hitler's *Reich*! No, it was deemed both necessary and desirable to 'project' power outward, beyond the limits even of the *Ausschlußzone*, deep into enemy territory. This practice would, in German opinion, keep the SS sharp as the proverbial razor as well as provide a realistic combat environment for the purpose of both weapons development and ongoing tactical evolution.

New Technology

The SS Division is where you will find most if not all the 'wonderful new toys' around which GHQ has built the *Wehrmacht* '47 project. The *Reich*'s arms minister, Albert Speer was likely one of the primary reasons for the continued success of German arms after 1943. It was he who promulgated the sweeping reorganization of German arms design and manufacture that allowed the next generation of German '*Über-weapons*' to become operational in record time and in record numbers.

1. The "E" series

These represented an entirely new way of thinking among German weapons engineers. Whereas earlier, the *Wehrmacht* was plagued with manufacturing and maintaining many different and often counterproductive weapons lines, the new "E" vehicles would be based on five distinct weight classes, ten, twenty-five, fifty, seventy-five, and one hundred tons respectively. The E-10 was to be a standard replacement for the "*Hetzer*" and several other small *Panzerjäger*s; The E-25 would replace the aging fleet of "*Sturmgeschütz*" assault guns; The E-50 would become the new "Standardpanzer" or main battle tank of the SS field divisions; and the E-75 would replace the PzVIB "Tiger II" as the new heavy tank. Rounding out the arsenal would be the truly massive E-100. This battlefield mastodon would cut an impressive figure, but would represent the upper limit imposed by both ground pressure and horsepower-to-weight considerations. Existing assembly lines would be converted to the new line as quickly as possible, while avoiding any major disruptions in production timetables. Therefore, there would perform be some delay in the full conversion of existing TO&Es to reflect weapons availability and the time necessary to integrate these new weapons into the existing arsenal.

2. The SdKfz.350 / 351

During the course of the war, it became apparent that the *Wehrmacht*'s existing SdKfz.250 and 251 half-tracked utility vehicles left quite a bit to be desired. Their suspensions were complicated and prone to breakdown, their lack of front-wheel-drive made them less mobile than their U.S. counterparts, and they were simply underpowered for the jobs they were forced to take on simply because there was no other platform available. This problem would be largely remedied by the introduction of the SdKfz.350 and 351 fully-tracked utility vehicles. They would be faster, more mobile, twice as well armored, and capable of filling the roles of personnel carrier, infantry support carrier, mortar carrier, *Panzerjäger*, engineer vehicle, prime mover, light flak vehicle, communication, reconnaissance, or command carrier. All

the roles previously assigned to the 250 and 251 series. Standardization of parts would result in both greater numbers and lower cost.

3. "Waffenträger"

A third new class of vehicle worthy of note would be the "Waffenträger" (Weapons Carriers). These were seen as a truly revolutionary 'modular' approach to weapons deployment. The Waffenträger were designed as flexible platforms for a wide variety of weapons easily 'slipped' into a fully armored weapons 'bay' at the rear. The weapon could then be clamped down, ready to fire, just like any other self-propelled mount. The genius of the scheme was that the weapon could be removed from the Waffenträger in a matter of minutes and swapped out for another. This would mean less down-time for weapons maintenance or upgrades, and full interchangeability of power plant and suspension among several different weapons types. As an added bonus, the anti-tank guns, artillery pieces, rocket launchers, etc. would be equipped with fully functional 'ground' mounts, meaning that once dismounted from the vehicle, they could be emplaced either in fortified casemates, or temporary field-works. The Wehrmacht could therefore produce more guns than tractors and shuttle the weapons back and forth between hot spots and use them as self-propelled weapons at need.

All the innovations above were to be adopted primarily as a means of getting as much firepower onto the battlefield as possible while conserving precious Arian manpower resources; the whole idea behind "ÜberFeuer" in the first place.

Why '47?

We didn't just pick the year 1947 out of a hat. Certain assumptions immediately presented themselves. To begin with, keeping the Americans out of the war in Europe required a 'Japan First' policy for the United States. By 1947, however, with the Japanese Empire reduced from an industrial powerhouse to a nation of subsistence farmers by a combination of ruthless blockade and merciless, round-the-clock fire-bombing, probably ending with the most bloody invasion in human history, a vast American land and naval armada was now turning its attention toward Europe and the Reich. U.S. occupied West Africa was now a giant springboard for a combination of conventional land and amphibious thrusts north toward breaking through the Gibraltar barrier into the Western Mediterranean, where America's huge pool of fleet carriers would turn the Mare Nostrum into an American lake in short order. Meanwhile, after suffering defeat after defeat in North Africa and the Middle East, the British Empire was finally able to rally its strength. With the help of

billions in American 'Lend-Lease' weapons and equipment, the Commonwealth First Army Group began pouring across the Tigris and Euphrates in an irresistible armored tide that would soon sweep its British, Indian, Australian, South African, New Zealander, and other loyal supporters to the very shores of that same Mediterranean nearly as quickly. Finally, a resurgent Soviet Union, freed by the collapse of the strategically and politically bankrupt Stalinist dictatorship, had begun a march of its own, again buoyed up by billions in American lend-lease, their boundless courage matched only by their deep, characteristically Slavic, need for revenge! In fact, the Reich's consistent underestimation of the Russian capacity to defy and endure, despite abuse, torture, and degradation, would be the Reich's greatest blunder. The Germans never considered the Slavs as anything more than docile cattle to be driven here and there at their whim. The holocaust they visited upon tens of millions of innocent victims would recoil back on them.

The Casablanca Conference of 15 July 1947, was illustrative of the world the Third Reich had inadvertently created. The "Big Four" of 1939 (The U.K., The U.S., France, and the U.S.S.R) was gone. In its place there stood the United Nations. Around the conference table sat the representatives of the New World Order; The United States, The United Kingdom, the Soviet Socialist Republic of Siberia, the Organización de Estados Hispánicos, the Union Africaine Centrale, the Alliance of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), The Republic of China, the Confederated Bharat Republics (India), and various independent states. The largely white, largely English-speaking, alliance that defeated Germany in our world would have had insufficient strength to overwhelm the Nazis without enlisting the aid of the black, brown, and yellow nations. These, in turn, would demand a greater say in Allied war policy, trading blood and resources for inclusion and respect. Win or lose, nothing would ever be the same. Against this multi-racial and multi-ethnic alliance stood the Axis; Gross Deutschland, the Latin League (dominated by l'Etat Française and Fascist Italy), and their various allies, associates, and clients.

By 1947, the Nazi leadership in Linz (Hitler's birthplace and the new capitol of Gross Deutschland) could dimly discern the rumble of man-made thunder and the flash pyrotechnic lightning on the distant horizon. It would soon rise to a terrifying crescendo. Therefore, 1947 is the pivotal year, the year when Nazi Germany either wins the war outright, plunging the world into a new Dark Age, or the Allies finally turn the tide once and for all, leading the world into who knows what future...

by John Fernandes

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