

A 'New Order'

National Socialist Notions of Europe and their Implementation during the Second World War

by

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Doctoral Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for
the award of Doctor of Philosophy of Loughborough University

21.09.2015

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Abstract:

The term 'Europe' was omnipresent in the 'Third Reich' during the Second World War. An abundance of primary sources attests to the German interest in a new European order. Nevertheless, historiography is in disagreement on the Europeanness of this New Order and on its actual relevance for National Socialist policies. This study argues that these differing appraisals are the result of a mistaken understanding of the National Socialist New Order.

National Socialist Germany did not pursue a single, stable, and clear-cut notion of Europe-to-be, but constantly kept negotiating its war aims and the future of Europe under the heading 'New Order'. By means of a discourse-analytical approach, this thesis reconstructs this New Order and shows that its defining dimensions were long-standing and well-established knowledge and belief systems: the idea of European economic cooperation and *völkisch* beliefs. Depending on the military situation and the scope of the German sphere of influence, the discursive weight of these interpretive frames varied during the war. Nevertheless, they produced temporarily stable visions of Europe-to-be. Contrasted with this development, an analysis of German policies clearly demonstrates that the New Order discourse did matter. A hermeneutical approach which draws on discourse-analytical concepts of power relations makes clear that the New Order discourse was powerful. It defined the permissible ways of thinking and speaking about the future of Europe and it endowed the activities of German occupation authorities and private companies with meaning.

Thus, this study and its innovative perspective shed new light on the New Order and broaden our understanding of National Socialist wartime policies. Its findings suggest that the National Socialist Europe must not be dismissed as anti-European. National Socialist Germany discursively constructed and realised its own ideals of Europe-to-be. This *völkisch* and economic reorganisation not only guided the policies of German occupation policies and informed the actions of private businesses, but it also fits well into the German tradition of European thinking.

Keywords: Germany; Europe; National Socialism; World War; 1939-1945; Germany – Economic Policy – 1939-1945; Germany – Occupation Policy; Europe – Economic Integration

Acknowledgements

Writing a PhD can be a lonesome and gruelling task. Luckily, for me it was not. Thanks to all the moral, practical, and financial support I have received, the fundamental doubts – which probably every PhD student experiences – kept within reasonable limits. Accordingly, the list of people and institutions I would like to thank is long.

First of all, I owe thanks to the late Christoph Buchheim for letting me pursue an initially vague idea, which evolved into this research project, and Jonas Scherner, who saw to it that the ‘orphaned’ Doctoral candidates at the Chair for Social and Economic History at Mannheim University could continue their research. Not least, thanks to him, I was able to find a new academic home at Loughborough University.

I am grateful to its Graduate School for funding my research project and to the *Karin-Islinger Stiftung* as well as the German Historical Institute in Moscow for enabling me to work through the indispensable primary sources in various archives in Germany and Moscow. For all the help I obtained in these archives – be it the expertise and helpfulness of the staff or the friendliness of colleagues, who worked there – I am also very thankful.

However, most of the work was done at my desk in the department for Politics, History, and International Relations. All of its members contributed to its warm and welcoming atmosphere, which made it easy for me to settle in. There, I not only found the distractions a PhD student occasionally needs and the peace and quiet to focus on my work, but also enjoyed the support of many colleagues. In particular, I would like to thank Robert Knight, my second supervisor, for his help, and Claus-Christian Szejnmann, my first supervisor. Despite his enormous workload as head of the department, he always found the time to have a talk and had a sympathetic ear for my concerns and problems. His warm-heartedness and open-mindedness made these meetings very enjoyable, and our overlapping research interests enhanced my research in many respects. Thank you! I am also very grateful to Jeremy Leaman. His comments helped to refine my research and his enthusiasm for my work and the many kind words he found for it were a major source of motivation in times of doubt or frustration. For keeping both at bay, I also owe thanks to my dear PhD colleague

Maximilian Drephal. Even though the long conversations we had on our way back from the office rarely touched our PhD-topics, these talks about god and his wife were inspiring and welcome distractions from our studies, which I already miss.

The most important person, however, was not in Loughborough. Despite being hundreds of miles away, Sandra gave me strength, faith, and dedication. Without her, I would never have been able to finish this thesis. This work is dedicated to her.

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1. A New Europe

When the *Europakränzchen* met for the first time in the Hotel Esplanade in Berlin, on 16 December 1943, Hans Kehrl, head of the planning office of the Ministry of Armaments and War Production, opened the meeting with a recapitulation: he reminded the attendees of the “birth of the European idea [in the] summer of 1940”, but regretted that cooperation within the “European economic community” still left a lot to be desired.¹ Kehrl’s Europe-rhetoric is far from being an isolated case in the history of the ‘Third Reich’. In fact, the conquests of the National Socialist regime, occupation policies, crimes and atrocities, and even its downfall were accompanied by a constant Europe-centred background noise. After the defeat of France, slogans about the ‘European *Großraumwirtschaft*’², the ‘reorganisation of Europe’, and the ‘New European Order’ were omnipresent. With the attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941, this vocabulary was complemented by phrases like ‘Europe’s crusade against Bolshevism’, the ‘Greater Germanic Empire’, and ‘Europe’s granary’. In the end, impending defeat turned Europe into a ‘fortress’, a ‘community of destiny’, and a ‘solidaristic defensive front’ which was fighting for its very existence.

Understandably, historical research has paid attention to the frequent use of the word Europe in its varying contexts.³ However, given the monstrous crimes that National Socialist Germany committed all over the continent, many historians tended to see the regime’s promotion of a new Europe as little more than an empty propagandistic phrase. If anything, National Socialist concepts and policies were seen as anti-European. Other historians, by contrast, argued that the National Socialist policy of extermination clearly reflected the vision of a *völkisch* reorganisation of Europe, just as German concepts for a European *Großraumwirtschaft* found their expression in the economic penetration of the occupied states. These contradictory views raise the question of what relevance National Socialist notions of Europe actually had. Since Europe-related terms did not solely appear in public discourse, but also featured

¹ Kehrl’s manuscript for the *Europakränzchen*, 16 December 1943, BArch, R 3, 1940, pp. 173-177.

² Throughout the text, the words ‘*Großraumwirtschaft*’ and ‘*Großwirtschaftsraum*’ will appear frequently. The difference between the two expressions is marginal and a matter of emphasis: While ‘*Großraumwirtschaft*’ puts the emphasis on the economy of a *Großraum*, the ‘*Großwirtschaftsraum*’ stresses the *Großraum* as an economic area of operation.

³ The following chapter (1.1) gives an overview of the historiography of the National Socialist notions of Europe.

prominently in internal documents, it seems unlikely that the National Socialist regime tailored its European rhetoric exclusively to propagandistic purposes. On the other hand, if National Socialist concepts for Europe must have had a limited effect on German occupation policy, if research in one of the most studied periods of history has not yielded undisputed results yet. This gap is the starting-point of this study. The study argues that the National Socialist regime did indeed develop notions of a future Europe. Even though there was no single, stable, or clear-cut vision of what it would look like, National Socialist planning always rooted in long-standing and well-established *völkisch* and economic knowledge and belief systems. In many instances, German officials and companies worked towards realising them, but the result was hardly a coherent reorganisation of Europe. Internal differences, resistance in the occupied territories, and the growing pressure of the war effort thwarted their efforts. Nevertheless, contrary to some historical research – some aspects of the National Socialist New Order did materialise.

1.1 Historical Research and the National Socialist New Order

Even though the National Socialist European rhetoric and policy have received scholarly attention, the state of research on this area is patchy. The following paragraphs will sum up the existing research, explain their shortcomings, and discuss their possible causes, thereby leading to considerations on a possible solution.

The first groundbreaking study on the National Socialist New Order was Paul Kluge's 1955 article '*Nationalsozialistische Europaideologie*'.⁴ Kluge shows that the German New Order concepts underwent fundamental changes during the course of the war: While the victory over France triggered a planning euphoria and the attack on the Soviet Union was accompanied by anti-communist arguments, German European rhetoric climaxed in desperate attempts to mobilise solidarity against bolshevism after the turning-point of the war.⁵ Other historians have refined Kluge's picture of the

⁴ See P. Kluge, 'Nationalsozialistische Europaideologie', *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, vol. 3, no. 3, 1955, pp. 240-275. Toynbee's edition on Hitler's Europe was published one year before, in 1954. However, it does not primarily focus on the New Order but presents a general overview of developments in German occupied Europe. A. Toynbee and V. Toynbee, (eds.), *Hitler's Europe*, London, Oxford University Press, 1954.

⁵ Kluge links the turning point to the defeat of the Sixth Army in Stalingrad. See Kluge, *Europaideologie*, p. 270. For other standpoints, see A. Tooze, *Ökonomie der Zerstörung*, Bonn, Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 2007, p. 563; K. Roth, "'Neuordnung' und wirtschaftliche Nachkriegsplanungen", in

New Order by giving more differentiated accounts of this development, but they basically confirm his findings.⁶ Unfortunately, they also suffer from the weaknesses of Kluge's analysis: on the one hand, he understands Europe as a "home to a family of peoples that share a certain spiritual and political heritage, shaped by the ancient world, Christendom and Germanic-Romanic nature"⁷ and consequently concludes that National Socialist concepts were not at all borne by a sense of responsibility for this "old continent and its permanently threatened, but nevertheless everlasting values"⁸. By making his own implicit understanding of what Europe is supposed to be the benchmark, he can only perceive the National Socialist understanding of Europe as propaganda employed to conceal the true intentions of the National Socialist regime, its claim to power and conquest.⁹ On the other hand, he argues that Hitler's views ultimately determined German policy, but, for lack of supporting archival evidence, his account relies on newspaper articles and on statements by high-ranking officials. By filling the gaps in Hitler's notion of Europe with other National Socialist leaders' views, he ends up with a coherent picture of the New Order, but cannot assess its significance. Overall therefore, Kluge's work reveals the two major problems which historical research on National Socialist notions of Europe has to cope with: Firstly, an underlying but usually only implicit normative understanding of Europe determines the perspective and influences the outcome,¹⁰ and, secondly, the poly-cratic political system of the 'Third Reich' complicates the question of which European concepts actually mattered.

Our views of National Socialist plans for Europe are blurred by normative understandings of what Europe is supposed to be. No matter what political camp one belongs to, nobody would argue the case for a European order along National Socialist lines: For Marxist historians, National Socialist Europe, its crimes, and its atrocities

D. Eichholtz (ed.), *Krieg und Wirtschaft. Studien zur deutschen Wirtschaftsgeschichte 1939-1945*, Berlin, Metropol Verlag, 1999, pp. 195-219, here pp. 211-216.

⁶ See e.g. M. Salewski, 'Europa: Idee und Wirklichkeit in der nationalsozialistischen Weltanschauung und politischen Praxis', in F. Otmar (ed.), *Europas Mitte*, Göttingen, Muster-Schmidt, 1987, pp. 85-106. J. Hoensch, 'Nationalsozialistische Europapläne im Zweiten Weltkrieg. Versuch einer Synthese', in R. Plaschka et al. (eds.), *Mitteleuropa-Konzeptionen in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Vienna, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1995, pp. 307-325.

⁷ My own translation of Kluge, 'Europaideologie', p. 260. Throughout the thesis, all translations are my own.

⁸ Ibid., p. 275.

⁹ See ibid., p. 274.

¹⁰ R. Bauer, "Anti-Europa" oder die "Gesetzmäßigkeiten des Finanzkapitals"? Zur Darstellung der NS-Europapläne in Quellensammlungen', *Zeithistorische Forschungen*, vol. 9, no. 3, 2012, pp. 457-466.

were the logical result of the intrinsic trend of development of capitalism.¹¹ On liberal and democratic assumptions, the National Socialist means and ends are considered to run contrary to the “spiritual essence” of Europe and its fundamental values of freedom and equality.¹² Moreover, even right-wing historians bemoan the fact that plans for a nationalistic Europe were not able to stand up to the ideological stubbornness of high National Socialist officials who went over the top.¹³ Thus, National Socialist plans for Europe are in any case depicted as the antithesis to the respective author’s own ideal of Europe and therefore are categorically rejected. However, this consensus also creates historiographical problems because it leads to over-categorical instead of differentiated verdicts: By defining their own ideal of Europe as standard and consequently concluding that National Socialist European policy was not a “real European policy”¹⁴ but a “perversion of the European idea”¹⁵ because it was not borne by a “real European concept”¹⁶, or by simply stating that this “kind of European philosophy”¹⁷ cannot be considered a part of the German European discourse, historians effectively turn their work into an act of self-assurance.¹⁸ Of course, one must not leave aside the inhumanity of National Socialist ideology and policy when dealing with the National Socialist notions of Europe, but, at the same time one

¹¹ See G. Hass and W. Schumann (eds.), *Anatomie der Aggression. Neue Dokumente zu den Kriegszielen des faschistischen deutschen Imperialismus im zweiten Weltkrieg*, Berlin, VEB Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1972, p. 8.

¹² See M. Salewski, ‘Ideas of the National Socialist Government and Party’, in Lipgens W. (ed.), *Documents on the History of European Integration. Vol. 1: Continental Plans for European Union 1939-1945*, Berlin, de Gruyter, pp. 37-54, here p. 54.

¹³ See H. Neulen, ‘Nachwort’, in H. Neulen (ed.), *Europa und das 3. Reich. Einigungsbestrebungen im deutschen Machtbereich 1939-1945*, Munich, Universitas, 1987, pp. 393-398.

¹⁴ B. Kletz, *Europa aus Rasse und Raum. Die nationalsozialistische Idee der Neuen Ordnung*, Münster, LIT Verlag, 2000, p. 216.

¹⁵ V. Schöberl, *„Es gibt ein großes und herrliches Land, das sich selbst nicht kennt... Es heißt Europa.“ Die Diskussion um die Paneuropaidee in Deutschland, Frankreich und Großbritannien 1922-1933*, Münster, LIT Verlag, 2007, p. 336.

¹⁶ P. Krüger, ‘Hitlers Europapolitik’, in W. Benz, H. Buchheim and H. Mommsen (eds.), *Der Nationalsozialismus. Studien zur Ideologie und Herrschaft*, Frankfurt a.M., Fischer, 1993, pp. 104-132, here p. 120.

¹⁷ H. Duchhardt, ‘Der deutsche Europa-Diskurs des 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhunderts’, in H. Duchhardt (ed.), *Option Europa. Deutsche, Polnische und Ungarische Europapläne des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005, pp. 15-42, here p. 38.

¹⁸ See Bauer, ‘Europapläne’, pp. 457-466. Other authors that either label the New Order as ‘Anti-Europe’ or state a perversion of the European idea are for example: B. Schilmar, *Der Europadiskurs im deutschen Exil 1933-1945*, Munich, Oldenbourg, 2004, p. 140; Neulen, ‘Nachwort’, p. 397; M. Salewski, ‘Ideas’, p. 54; H. Looock, ‘Zur “Großgermanischen Politik” des Dritten Reiches’, *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* vol. 8, no. 1, 1960, pp. 37-63, here p. 40; G. Brunn, *Die Europäische Einigung von 1945 bis heute*, Bonn, Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 2004, p. 29; W. Schmale, *Geschichte Europas*, Vienna, Böhlau, 2001, p. 116; M. Smith, ‘Introduction: European Unity and the Second World War’, in M. Smith and P. Stirk (eds.), *Making the New Europe. European Unity and the Second World War*, London, Pinter, 1990, pp. 1-17.

must not – against better judgement – begin a search that is bound to fail.¹⁹ There is no point in looking for a Europe already defined as a community of free and equal people within an ideology that rested on beliefs of racial inequality and the right of the strong. Doing it anyway and arriving at the inevitable ‘Anti-Europe’ conclusion ultimately means rhetorically barring the possibility of a more differentiated view, thus blanking out an entire period of the history of Europe.²⁰ The consequential dismissal of the New Order as mere propaganda and the refusal to see anything ‘European’ in National Socialist planning and policy, can easily lead to an interpretation of the ‘Third Reich’ as an isolated aberration in a supposedly consistent success story that culminated in the ‘real European idea’ materialising in ‘real European policy’, namely the European Union.²¹ Hence, instead of contrasting the ‘right’ path Europe is currently treading with the National Socialist wrongdoings, a more constructivist approach²² could yield results that go beyond the moral condemnations that go without saying. Thus, this study therefore analyses the New Order as one out of many different concepts for a new European order that did play some role in the complicated dynamics leading ultimately to the post-war European integration.²³

If one takes a closer look at what the labels “Anti-Europe” and “perversion of the European idea” stand for, one finds a broad spectrum of results. Some scholars ar-

¹⁹ One of Salewski’s articles illustrates this problematic approach: Initially, he states that the idea of a voluntary and equal integration of Europe did not play a role in National Socialist ideology. In the end, he concludes that it was impossible for National Socialists to approve of a “truly European idea”. And by ‘truly European’ he means an allegedly consensual definition of Europe as a “geographical, cultural, and religious but also [as] a political and an intellectual-historical concept.” Salewski, ‘Europa’, pp. 85, 88, 99, 106.

²⁰ V. Conze, *Das Europa der Deutschen. Ideen von Europa in Deutschland zwischen Reichstradition und Westorientierung*, Munich, Oldenbourg, 2005, pp. 1-4.

²¹ Kletzin claims that the entire debate about a ‘New Europe’ was meant to provide German propaganda with a pseudo-scientific backing. See Kletzin, *Rasse und Raum*, p. 212. Loth also emphasises the propagandistic aspect of the New Order. See W. Loth, ‘Rettungsanker Europa? Deutsche Europa-Konzeptionen vom Dritten Reich bis zur Bundesrepublik’, in H. Volkmann (ed.), *Ende des Dritten Reiches - Ende des Zweiten Weltkriegs. Eine Perspektivische Rückschau*, Munich, Piper, 1995, pp. 201-222, here p. 201.

²² Constructivist approaches assume that knowledge is based on symbolic orders constructed by societies. In discourses, these orders are produced, legitimised, and transformed. See R. Keller, *Müll - Die Gesellschaftliche Konstruktion des Wertvollen*, Wiesbaden, Westdeutscher Verlag, 1998, p. 35.

²³ Recently, many scholars have called for such an approach and published corresponding studies. See e.g. V. Conze, ‘Vielfalt ohne Einheit. Deutsche Europaideen im 20. Jahrhundert’, in U. Lappenküper and G. Thiemeyer (eds.), *Europäische Einigung im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Paderborn, Schöningh, 2013, pp. 45-68, here p. 46; I. Schröder, ‘Europa im Zeichen des Hakenkreuzes: Historiographische Perspektiven im Wandel. Ein Kommentar’, *Zeithistorische Forschungen*, vol. 9, no. 3, 2012, pp. 449-456, here p. 456; R. Gerwarth and S. Malinowski, ‘Europeanization through Violence? War Experiences and the Making of Modern Europe’, in M. Conway and K. Patel (eds.), *Europeanization in the Twentieth Century. Historical Approaches*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, pp. 189-209, here p. 203; Conze, *Ideen von Europa*, p. 4.

gue that when National Socialists spoke about a new European order, they were merely seeking to conceal their true intentions under the cloak of the widely appealing European rhetoric.²⁴ In Kletzin's eyes, the purpose of the New Order was to cash in propagandistically on the widely shared understanding that Europe needed to unite. National Socialist occupation policy, however, ran contrary to a "truly European policy".²⁵ Until the autumn 1942, Salewski argues, National Socialists did not really care about Europe but intended to erect a 'Germanic Reich'. Later on, however, there were indeed some isolated voices – belonging to Ribbentrop, Himmler, Goebbels, and Funk amongst others – which seriously called for a common European effort against the Bolshevik menace.²⁶ According to Elvert, these calls might have shown their true colours, but fell on deaf ears as long as imperialists like Hitler and the party bigwigs surrounding him dominated decision-making.²⁷ For Krüger, the catch phrase 'Europe' had taken over the role that the term 'peace' had played in pre-war speeches; it was meant to allay the concerns of other nations. However, in his view there was no "truly European policy" behind this rhetoric. Even though plans for a New Order became more "reasonable" the more desperate the military situation became, Hitler was not willing to engage with them.²⁸ In Hoensch's eyes, these more moderate-sounding plans were nothing but a sham, intended to win over the subjugated people in order to realise Hitler's vision of a racially defined 'Greater Germanic Reich'.²⁹ Overall, existing research paints the picture of a lively discussion on the New Order that led nowhere. Some participants might actually have been serious about their comparatively modest New Order plans, but for leading National Socialists, they amounted to nothing more than a welcome contribution to propaganda. All this talking left Hitler's imperialist concept unaffected and all German officials did, was – as Herzstein puts it – use the New Order as a tool "to forge one more weapon in their struggle to win the war".³⁰

²⁴ See Kluge, 'Europaideologie', p. 274.

²⁵ Kletzin, *Rasse und Raum*, pp. 212, 216.

²⁶ See Salewski, 'Europa', pp. 102-103.

²⁷ See e.g. J. Elvert, *Mitteleuropa! Deutsche Pläne zur europäischen Neuordnung (1918-1945)*, Stuttgart, Steiner, 1999, pp. 369-372; H. Neulen, *Eurofaschismus und der Zweite Weltkrieg. Europas verratene Söhne*, Munich, Universitas, 1980, pp. 126-132.

²⁸ See Krüger, 'Europapolitik', pp. 120-129.

²⁹ See Hoensch, 'Europapläne', pp. 322-324.

³⁰ R. Herzstein, *When Nazi Dreams Come True. The Horrifying Story of the Nazi Blueprint for Europe*, London, Abacus, 1982, p. 3. Even though this book is one of the few monographs on the New Order, it will not be referenced frequently because its lack of references makes it scientifically questionable.

Unfortunately, it is hard to tell what kind of Europe Hitler himself had in mind. His often-quoted statement that “Europe is not a geographical but a blood-wise [*blutsmäßig*] determined concept”³¹ is perhaps the most explicit exposition of his notion of Europe. Scholars have tried to circumvent this gap in three ways: firstly, by adopting a very Hitler-centric view, some scholars set out to deduce the details of National Socialist Europe-to-be from his more general beliefs.³² Thus, a combination of what he wrote in ‘Mein Kampf’ and several other isolated statements relating to Europe informs their idea of Hitler’s concept.

A second approach also acts on the assumption that Hitler’s new Europe would have rested on racism and *Lebensraum*. Often with reference to the well-known notes of Bormann on a meeting in July 1941,³³ scholars argue that Hitler had a clear-cut idea of Europe-to-be, but deemed it unwise to make any rhetorical commitments during the war because once the war was won, Germany could realise any plan anyway. Therefore, the concrete form of Hitler’s new European order necessarily stays indistinct, as he himself considered this matter a ‘*cura posterior*’.³⁴ This view is often accompanied by the conclusion mentioned above: a large part of the New Order discussion was irrelevant and futile. Most of the plans voiced were not hamstrung because of their propagandistic value, but they did not in the end stand a chance of being realised. High-ranking party and state officials held imperialist views that ran contrary to these concepts.³⁵ However, they did not see the need to intervene or to

³¹ Cited in H. Picker (ed.), *Hitlers Tischgespräche im Führerhauptquartier 1941-1942*, Stuttgart, See-
wald, 1963, p. 144. Many works quote this sentence, e.g. M. Wildt, ‘Völkische Neuordnung Europas’,
in *Themenportal Europäische Geschichte*, 2007, pp. 1-6, here p. 5, [<http://www.europa.clio-online.de/2007/Article=202>], (accessed 25 May 2016).

³² See e.g. Krüger, ‘Europapolitik’; Hoensch, ‘Europapläne’; C. Child, ‘The Concept of the New Order’,
in A. Toynbee and V. Toynbee, (eds.), *Hitler’s Europe*, London, Oxford University Press, 1954, pp.
47-73, here pp. 56-61.

³³ See Martin Bormann, record of meeting, 16 July 1941, printed in W. Lipgens (ed.) 1985. *Docu-
ments on the History of European Integration. Vol. 1: Continental Plans for European Union 1939-
1945*, Berlin, de Gruyter, 1985, pp. 84-86.

³⁴ See Hoensch, ‘Europapläne’, p. 324; H. Umbreit, ‘Zur Organisation der Besatzungsherrschaft’, in J.
ten Cate and G. Otto (eds.), *Das organisierte Chaos. Ämterdarwinismus und ‘Gesinnungsethik’:
Determinanten nationalsozialistischer Besatzungsherrschaft*, Berlin, Metropol, 1999, pp. 35-54, here
p. 47; H. Umbreit, ‘Die deutsche Besatzungsverwaltung. Konzept und Typisierung’, in W. Michalka
(ed.), *Der Zweite Weltkrieg. Analysen, Grundzüge, Forschungsbilanz*, Munich, Piper, pp. 710-726,
here p. 718.

³⁵ Several scholars have identified two camps among National Socialist officials. They held opposing
views on how to rule Europe. See e.g. Looock, ‘Großgermanische Politik’, 1960; J. Elvert, “Germanen”
und “Imperialisten”. Zwei Europakonzepte aus nationalsozialistischer Zeit, *Historische Mitteilungen*,
vol. 5, no. 2, 1992, pp. 161-184, here pp. 182-183; M. Mazower, *Hitler’s Empire. Nazi Rule in Occu-
pied Europe*, London, Penguin Books, 2008, p. 245.

justify their own intentions because they would set their policy in motion as soon as possible.³⁶

Finally, a third approach attempts to cope with the lack of primary sources about Hitler's notion of Europe by supplementing his views with those held by his satraps, one step down the ladder.³⁷ The problem is that there was no single ladder. Beneath Hitler, the undisputed head, the National Socialist regime was "no monolithic block, no strict hierarchy [...], in which power unhamperedly flowed top down, but a complex and complicated power structure with a coexistence and inconsistency of relatively autonomous, competing centres of power that tried to oust or to penetrate each other."³⁸ This 'polycratic rule' has been seen by some as intentionally created by Hitler as a strategy of *divide et impera*, others see it as the result of his unwillingness or incompetence to create a clear cut political system.³⁹ Regardless of this difference, this constellation makes it hard to pin down the power and authority of a person or institution. In 1936, for example, Hjalmar Schacht officially occupied a crucial role in the German corridors of power. He was president of the *Reichsbank*, Minister of Economics, and Plenipotentiary for the War Economy. However, his opposition to the policy of increasing autarky and funding the German armament with debts did not lead to his dismissal, but to Hitler putting Göring in charge of preparing Germany for a war within four years. Authorised directly by the *Führer*, Göring used his new roles as Plenipotentiary for the Four Year Plan and head of the *Vierjahresplanbehörde* to expand his competences. In the end, they cut across those of many others ministries.⁴⁰ This pattern of appointing particular individuals or creating new organisations for special tasks and of legitimising their authority through their accountability to Hitler, while the existing institutions were left untouched, characterises the power structure of the NS regime within and outside of the Reich. The formal responsibili-

³⁶ See Elvert, *Mitteleuropa*, p. 372.

³⁷ See Schilmar, *Europadiskurs*, p. 121.

³⁸ H. Schmuhl, 'Rassismus unter den Bedingungen charismatischer Herrschaft. Zum Übergang von der Verfolgung zur Vernichtung gesellschaftlicher Minderheiten im Dritten Reich', in K. Bracher, M. Funke and H. Jacobsen, (eds.), *Nationalsozialistische Diktatur 1933-1945. Eine Bilanz*, Düsseldorf, Droste, 1983, pp. 182-197, here p. 194.

³⁹ See I. Kershaw, *Der NS-Staat*, Hamburg, Nikol Verlag, 2009, p. 121; P. Hüttenberger, 'Nationalsozialistische Polykratie', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, vol. 2, no. 4, 1976, pp. 417-442, here p. 442; D. Rebutisch, *Führerstaat und Verwaltung im Zweiten Weltkrieg. Verfassungsentwicklung und Verwaltungspolitik 1939-1945*, Stuttgart, Steiner, 1989, p. 284.

⁴⁰ See M. Ruck, 'Führerabsolutismus und polykratisches Herrschaftsgefüge - Verfassungsstrukturen des NS-Staates', in K. Bracher, M. Funke and H. Jacobsen, (eds.), *Nationalsozialistische Diktatur 1933-1945*, Düsseldorf, Droste, 1983, pp. 32-56, here p. 52; H. Thamer, *Verführung und Gewalt. Deutschland 1933-1945*, Berlin, Siedler, 1986, p. 361.

ties and authorities of an office or institution do not signify its factual influence and power.⁴¹

In the occupied territories the local authorities – be it the *Chefs der Zivilverwaltung* (Heads of Civil Administrations), *Reichskommissare*, the *Reichsprotektor* in Bohemia and Moravia, or the Governor General of the occupied Polish territories – were also appointed by Hitler.⁴² Nevertheless, they faced plenipotentiaries who enjoyed the same kind of legitimacy and who deduced certain responsibilities from the special task they had been assigned. Göring as the Plenipotentiary for the Four Year Plan, for example, claimed authority over economic policies in the occupied territories. Himmler, since 1939 Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood, acted on his responsibility for all matters concerning *Volkstum* and settlement policies in the entire German sphere of influence.⁴³ As *Reichsführer* SS and chief of the German police, Himmler also commanded the Higher SS and Police leaders that headed the local SS and policed many occupied territories.⁴⁴ And from 1942 onwards, Fritz Sauckel, Plenipotentiary for Labour Deployment, repeatedly clashed with Albert Speer, Minister of Armaments and War Production, who had superseded Göring as the centre of power in German economic policy despite the *Vierjahresplanbehörde* officially still existing. Both Sauckel and Speer pursued a Europe-wide policy, but while Speer wanted to export work, Sauckel forcefully imported workers.⁴⁵ Thus, apart from Hitler, no single person or institution had the authority to set clear policy guidelines in the occupied territories. This absence of clearly defined and generally binding objectives in certain policy fields unleashed a dynamic as single protagonists sought to gain the prerogative of interpretation by either enlisting broad support or by winning Hitler's favour.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Even the formal responsibilities and authorities were sometimes unclear. By 1941, the Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, founded in 1933, still did not have a clearly defined field of responsibility. Accordingly, it was also unclear which agencies, offices, and institutions were subordinated to the Ministry. See Rebutisch, *Führerstaat und Verwaltung*, p. 291.

⁴² See e.g. *ibid.*, pp. 293, 295, 298-206.

⁴³ See H. Thamer, *Verführung und Gewalt*, p. 362.

⁴⁴ See P. Longerich, *Politik der Vernichtung. Eine Gesamtdarstellung der nationalsozialistischen Judenverfolgung*, Munich, Piper, 1998, p. 302.

⁴⁵ See A. Milward, *The New Order and the French Economy*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993, pp. 141-146.

⁴⁶ Kershaw, *NS-Staat*, p. 122. German officials frequently complained about the impossibility of pursuing a consistent policy under these circumstances. See e.g. German economic policy in France, 10 July 1943, BArch, R 3101, 32.261, 1-16; Letter concerning the ambivalent policy in the occupied territories, 23 February 1943, BArch, R 55, 1432, 10-23.

The New Order was also subject to this polycratic “*Zuständigkeitswirrwarr*”⁴⁷ (confusion of responsibilities). Beneath Hitler, numerous high-ranking officials took part in the construal of Europe-to-be and tried to establish their notion of Europe as German war aim. And beneath them a large number of experts and functionaries did the same. Rosenberg authored many memoranda on German long-term goals; Göring ordered Funk to prepare an economic order for post-war Europe; Funk himself gave a number of speeches on the New Order; Goebbels briefed his staff as well as the press on how to speak about Europe; and Ribbentrop’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs drafted treaties for a European Federation.⁴⁸ In addition to the already unanswerable question of which one of these well-known National Socialists had the more important say in European matters, the different layers and facets of the National Socialist power structure kept changing: Göring’s influence diminished until his functions ultimately became obsolete because of Speer’s Ministry of Armaments and War Production. Alfred Rosenberg, who officially was in charge of the Newly Occupied Eastern Territories, in fact found himself presiding over an institution that Mazower calls “something of a joke”⁴⁹, while Ribbentrop’s standing was increasingly impaired by the fact that most European issues were no longer foreign affairs. Moreover, the general priorities of German policy partly shifted during the war. While in the aftermath of the initial victories the debate revolved around the means and ends of German dominance, the military setbacks in the East gave rise to a mentality of all-out war, in which keeping the war machine going as smoothly as possible became paramount.⁵⁰ So, even if one assumes that Hitler’s principles left big enough a margin for a European planning of some significance at lower political levels,⁵¹ research dealing with

⁴⁷ P. Hüttenberger, ‘Polykratie’, p. 442.

⁴⁸ See e.g. Hoensch, ‘Europapläne’. Dallin is also referring to Rosenberg’s statements a lot, even though he simultaneously argues that Rosenberg and his ministry were more and more sidelined. A. Dallin, *German Rule in Russia 1941-1945*, London, Macmillan, 1981; L. Herbst, *Der totale Krieg und die Ordnung der Wirtschaft*, Stuttgart, Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1982, pp. 127-130; R. Grunert, *Der Europagedanke westeuropäischer faschistischer Bewegungen 1940-1945*, Paderborn, Schöningh, 2012, pp. 61-62; Mazower, *Nazi Rule*, pp. 108, 109, 121; Loth, ‘Rettungsanker Europa’, pp. 203-204.

⁴⁹ Mazower, *Nazi Rule*, p. 151.

⁵⁰ See R. Bauer, ‘When Ends become Means – Post-War Planning and the Exigencies of War in the Discussion about the Economic ‘New Order’ in Europe (1939-1945)’, in D. Pohl and J. Dafinger (eds.), *A New Nationalist Europe under Hitler: Concepts of Europe and Transnational Networks in the National Socialist Sphere of Influence (1933-1945)*, forthcoming.

⁵¹ Volkmann for example argues that a Hitler-centric view fails to account for the major developments in the field of economics. See H. Volkmann, ‘Zur europäischen Dimension nationalsozialistischer Wirtschaftspolitik’, in B. Chiari (ed.), *Ökonomie und Expansion. Grundzüge der NS-Wirtschaftspolitik*, Munich, Oldenbourg, 2003, pp. 19-44, here p. 27.

the New Order still faces a fundamental problem that the polycratic architecture of the National Socialist regime raises. As Orlow puts it:

[T]he historian who sets out to write a study of the National Socialist New Order plans [...] will not be embarrassed by a lack of documentary material; a vast array of articles, books, memoranda, and conference minutes attest to the interest in postwar planning of virtually every major component of the National Socialist power structure. He soon discovers, however, that the very abundance of historical raw material presents him with pressing methodological problems. The documentary evidence abounds with internal inconsistencies and incompatibilities that reflect the constant friction and infighting of the offices and agencies that produced it.⁵²

Some responses to this methodological challenge have been problematic. Inspired by the History of Ideas, scholars stick to opinions they deem important, or they reconstruct an allegedly shared vision of a New Order. However, trying to determine the relevance of an idea by the power of its holder is bound to fail in the polycratic National Socialist regime, and filling the void left by Hitler's scarce statements with selected views seems arbitrary. In consequence, neither studies picking up a selection of statements on the New Order and arranging them in a more or less consistent picture of a National Socialist Europe, nor a restriction to the concepts developed by single persons or institutions, can ensure that the chosen people and ideas actually did matter.⁵³ Hence, the 'blueprint' of the National Socialist Europe-to-be that historical research presented so far is either a patchwork, remains indistinct, or is only roughly reconstructed on the basis of Hitler's general statements. This problematic reconstruction of the New Order is why every attempt to analyse its impact on actual German policies must produce arguable results.

Since Hitler's views on Europe-to-be cannot be pinpointed exactly and the polycratic power structure makes it hard to pin down the actual influence of other high-ranking National Socialists, assessing the factual impact of the shifting priorities within the

⁵² D. Orlow, *The Nazis in the Balkans. A Case Study of Totalitarian Politics*, Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1968, p. 95.

⁵³ Gruchmann, for instance, starts by reconstructing Hitler's European convictions before supplementing them with different statements from other National Socialist officials. Even though he tries to stick as closely as possible to sources attesting to Hitler's views, he has to rely on other sources as well. See L. Gruchmann, *Nationalsozialistische Großraumordnung. Die Konstruktion einer "deutschen Monroe-Doktrin"*, Stuttgart, Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1962, pp. 71-12. Kroll, by contrast, analyses the ideas of single National Socialists. See F. Kroll, 'Die Reichsidee im Nationalsozialismus', in F. Bosbach and H. Hiery (eds.), *Imperium, Empire, Reich. Ein Konzept politischer Herrschaft im deutsch-britischen Vergleich*, Munich, Saur, 1999, pp. 179-196. Herbert's study is an exception in this respect, since he does link Best's concepts to his policies. See U. Herbert, *Best. Biographische Studien über Radikalismus, Weltanschauung und Vernunft 1903-1989.*, Bonn, Dietz, 1996.

New Order discussion is complicated, to say the least. Accordingly, historians have arrived at very different conclusions.

Firstly, there are those who see the New Order merely as a means of concealing the true intentions of National Socialism. They limit its potential effects to the field of propaganda. While some of these proponents point out its appeal to the subjugated peoples and consider it one of the reasons why National Socialism found willing collaborators in nearly every European country, others see its prime effect in uniting Europe in the rejection of any form of European hegemony, thus promoting the idea of pluralism and tolerance.⁵⁴ However, both agree that these New Order concepts represented mere lip-services to something that never materialised.

Secondly, many scholars who analysed the Holocaust, the war of extermination in the East, or the ruthless measures of Germanisation and resettlement in many parts of the German sphere of influence, oppose that view. They argue that the perpetrators acted in accordance with their worldview and a new European order was a central part of it. Aly and Heim, for example, demonstrate that a well-educated functional elite pushed on with its vision of a New Order. They would stop at nothing to create a 'better' Europe by easing the alleged pressure of overpopulation in the occupied Eastern territories with the help of what they regarded as tough but necessary measures. Thus, the economic marginalisation of the Jewish population, expulsion, resettlement, the policy of starvation, and mass killings are to be considered their contribution to a New Order.⁵⁵ According to Heinemann, the staff of the *Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt* of the SS shared Himmler's post-war vision of a racially defined and 'Jew-free' Germanic Europe and acted accordingly. Even though the resettlement schemes were not implemented on a large scale, this vision cannot be dismissed as an "escapist model,"⁵⁶ because the policy of racial selection and Ger-

⁵⁴ See Smith, 'European Unity', p. 16. Kletzin, for example, states that collaboration can only be explained with "the understanding of the necessity for a European New Order, for a European integration". Kletzin, *Rasse und Raum*, p. 217. Neulen, too, thinks that moderate German plans for a New Order fell on fertile ground in the occupied territories. Neulen, 'Nachwort', pp. 393-395.

⁵⁵ See G. Aly and S. Heim, *Vordenker der Vernichtung. Auschwitz und die deutschen Pläne für eine neue europäische Ordnung*, Frankfurt a.M., Fischer, 2004, pp. 487-492; G. Aly, 'Bevölkerungspolitische Selektion als Mittel der sozialen "Neuordnung"', in N. Frei and H. Kling (eds.), *Der nationalsozialistische Krieg*, Frankfurt a.M., Campus, 1990, pp. 137-145; also L. Raphael, 'Radikales Ordnungsdenken und die Organisation totalitärer Herrschaft: Weltanschauungseliten und Humanwissenschaftler im NS-Regime', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, no. 27, 2001, pp. 5-40.

⁵⁶ I. Heinemann, "Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut." *Das Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt der SS und die rassenpolitische Neuordnung Europas*, Göttingen, Wallstein, 2003, p. 607. This has also been one of the most criticised aspects of Heim's and Aly's study. See J. Noakes, *Review of Architects of Anni-*

manisation was actually sustained by this conviction. The staff of the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* staff also determinedly stuck to their aim of a racial new European Order free of Jews. In Wildt's eyes, obstacles and setbacks did not stop their ideologically shaped actions, but triggered further radicalisation.⁵⁷ Mai also diagnoses a process of radicalisation in Himmler's policy of settlement and Germanisation. The bigger the scale of his planning became and the more transnational it had to be, the more important the racial aspects became. However, according to Mai, while Himmler's vision of a 'Germanic Reich' did guide actions, it was an unspecified utopia rather than a concrete programme.⁵⁸ Hence, while historiography can clearly prove that German policy during the war partly reflected two of the main pillars of National Socialist ideology, racism and *Lebensraum*, it is still unclear what influence the medium-level protagonists, who drove this policy, exerted, to what extent their convictions were linked to a particular vision of a New Order, and whose model of a new Europe would have prevailed in the end.

Thirdly, some historians argue that Hitler's views were not particularly clear-cut in the field of economics, so that individuals and institutions in this area enjoyed enough leeway to put some of their own ideas into effect.⁵⁹ While in Mazower's eyes, the "Nazi vision for Europe, [...] belonged to the sphere of economics, not politics" but did have "little impact upon policy"⁶⁰, Salewski identifies "a move towards a new European order"⁶¹ in the field of economics. By naming the concrete policies that they regard as steps towards the propagated economic New Order, others are more specific. Overy, for example, argues that the New Order was more than an empty phrase because calls for economic integration after the defeat of France fell on fertile

hilation: Auschwitz and the Logic of Destruction, History.ac.uk, 2003, [www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/373], (accessed 25 May 2016).

⁵⁷ See M. Wildt, *Generation des Unbedingten. Das Führungskorps des Reichssicherheitshauptamtes*, Hamburg, Hamburger Edition, 2002, p. 606.

⁵⁸ See U. Mai, 'Rasse und Raum'. *Agrarpolitik, Sozial- und Raumplanung im NS-Staat*, Paderborn, Schöningh, 2002, p. 357.

⁵⁹ See J. Freymond, *Le III^{ème} Reich et la réorganisation économique de l'Europe 1940-1942. Origines et Projets*, Geneva, Sijthoff, 1974, p. 207; A. Toynbee, 'Introduction', in A. Toynbee and V. Toynbee (eds.), *Hitler's Europe*, London, Oxford University Press, 1954, pp. 1-10, here pp. 1, 5-6.

⁶⁰ M. Mazower, *Dark Continent. Europe's Twentieth Century*, New York, Vintage Books, 2000, pp. 150-151.

⁶¹ Salewski, 'Ideas', p. 45. Volkmann also interprets some measures as means to create a European economy. Volkmann, 'Europäische Dimension', pp. 27, 33.

ground and “a great deal was done under the shadow of war”.⁶² Even though large parts of German private business may not have cherished the central clearing system that was set up, they did appreciate that the foundation of international cartels was officially encouraged, and gladly welcomed the leverage that the support of the Ministry of Economics and of the *Vierjahresplanbehörde* provided for expanding their business.⁶³ For Buggeln the central clearing system was indeed the “centrepiece of the National Socialist New Order”. However, he considers it primarily a means of exploiting the participating countries that happened to have the convenient side effect of facilitating peaceful cooperation as well.⁶⁴ By pointing out that the economic measures of the National Socialist regime were predominantly tailored to the needs of the war economy, Boldorf refuses to see an act of Europeanization or the genesis of a *Großraumwirtschaft* in Europe during World War II.⁶⁵ Other historians take the same line, but suggest a more differentiated picture: While some argue that the German policy of exploitation differed geographically, others emphasise the changes caused by the course of the war.⁶⁶ Even though Germany might initially have tried to realise the vision “of a New Order in Europe, a large-scale, pan-European economy that would mobilize the Continent as a single block to pit against the giant economies of the USA and the British Empire”⁶⁷, from 1941 onwards, the war effort took priority over it.⁶⁸ According to Milward, National Socialist Germany had to “abandon its earlier concepts. The pressure of economic necessity distorted the New Order until it became that quite different thing, ‘the European war economy’.”⁶⁹ Barkai, by contrast, argues that this European war economy was the antedated realisation of post-war

⁶² R. Overy, ‘The Economy of the German “New Order”’, in R. Overy, G. Otto and J. Ten Cate (eds.), *Die “Neuordnung” Europas. NS-Wirtschaftspolitik in den besetzten Gebieten*, Berlin, Metropol, 1997, pp. 11-28, p. 23.

⁶³ See H. Volkmann, ‘Zum Verhältnis von Großwirtschaft und NS-Regime im Zweiten Weltkrieg’, in W. Dlugoborski (ed.), *Zweiter Weltkrieg und sozialer Wandel. Achsenmächte und besetzte Länder*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981, pp. 87-117.

⁶⁴ See M. Buggeln, ‘Währungspläne für den europäischen Großraum. Die Diskussion der nationalsozialistischen Wirtschaftsexperten über ein zukünftiges europäisches Zahlungssystem’, in T. Sandkühler (ed.), *Europäische Integration. Deutsche Hegemonialpolitik gegenüber Westeuropa 1920-1960*, Göttingen, Wallstein, 2002, pp. 41-76, here p. 76.

⁶⁵ See M. Boldorf, ‘Neue Wege zur Erforschung der Wirtschaftsgeschichte Europas unter nationalsozialistischer Hegemonie’, in C. Buchheim and M. Boldorf (ed.), *Europäische Volkswirtschaften unter deutscher Hegemonie 1938-1945*, Munich, Oldenbourg, 2012, pp. 1-23, here p. 11.

⁶⁶ See H. Klemann and S. Kudryashov, *Occupied Economies. An economic History of Nazi-occupied Europe, 1939-1945*, London, Berg, 2012, pp. 434-435.

⁶⁷ R. Evans, *The Third Reich at War 1939-1945*, London, Penguin Books, 2008, p. 336.

⁶⁸ See Freymond dates this shift of priorities to the winter of 1941/1942. Freymond, *Réorganisation Économique*, p. XV.

⁶⁹ Milward, *New Order*, p. 269.

plans for a European *Großraumwirtschaft*.⁷⁰ A different and much criticised – interpretation was penned by Aly. In his eyes, the National Socialists exploited the European economies for the sake of the material prosperity of the German population, bribing them into consent.⁷¹

In light of the broad spectrum of these appraisals, one might agree with Overy that the perspective of the respective author explains the differing conclusions. While scholars holding ‘structuralist’ views tend to depict the New Order as a series of inconsistent and improvised measures geared towards the war effort, ‘intentionalists’ interpret certain steps as being part of a master plan.⁷² Even though this diagnosis does not directly contribute to ascertaining the factual impact of the New Order, it highlights two critical points. Firstly, if the New Order had any significance at all, it had to comply or to compete with the war effort. Some political measures that were actually taken might have brought the regime closer to both, while others were clearly tailored to foster the latter. Secondly, as long as the ‘master plan’ for a New Order is unknown, it will be impossible to tell one from the other, rendering an assessment of the factual policies pointless.

Overall, historiography reveals fundamental differences in the appraisal of the factual ramifications of the New Order. Politically, it is, on the one hand, primarily seen as an appealing sham. On the other hand, the SS and the *Wehrmacht* expelled, resettled, and killed millions in the name of a new European Order. Economically, the New Order apparently did not leave such a clear mark: While some historians depict it as a war aim that was partly realised already during the war, for others it is nothing but a retrospective projection onto measures that were supposed to advance the war effort.

Not least because the master plan for a National Socialist Europe appears to be more of a blurry picture than a precise blueprint, some scholars try to deduce the New Order from actual occupation policies.⁷³ Based upon the numerous existing

⁷⁰ See A. Barkai, *Das Wirtschaftssystem des Nationalsozialismus*, Frankfurt a.M., Fischer, 1998, p. 224.

⁷¹ See G. Aly, *Hitlers Volksstaat. Raub, Rassenkrieg und nationaler Sozialismus*, Frankfurt a.M., Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 2005, p. 333. For critical assessments of this reading, see e.g. See e.g. J. Bähr, *Review of Götz Aly's 'Hitlers Volksstaat. Raub, Rassenkrieg und nationaler Sozialismus'*, sehepunkte.de, 2005, [<http://www.sehepunkte.de/2005/07/8192.html>], (accessed 25 May 2016); M. Spoerer, *Review of Götz Aly's 'Hitlers Volksstaat. Raub, Rassenkrieg und nationaler Sozialismus'*, H/Soz/Kult, 2005, [<http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/rezensionen/2005-2-143>], (accessed 25 May 2016).

⁷² Overy, ‘New Order’, pp. 11-12.

⁷³ See N. Rich, *Hitler's War Aims. The Establishment of the New Order*, London, Norton, 1974.

studies of German occupation policy during World War II, historians created typologies which are not only supposed to provide an analytical framework for research but also claim to illustrate what a National Socialist Europe would have looked like, had the 'Third Reich' won the war. Unfortunately, these attempts yield differing results as well.⁷⁴ While Child, Umbreit, and Benz make out patterns behind the occupied territories' administrative status, Dlugoborski built his typology around the effects and intentions of German rule.⁷⁵ Madajczyk takes a similar line and organises his categories along the aims of the occupiers, their means, their treatment of the population, and the respective level of interference.⁷⁶ As a result, these approaches lead to different groupings. Being designated as German *Lebensraum*, parts of Poland and the Soviet Union are a distinct group if German aims are taken into account, while they find themselves among countries like Norway and the Netherlands if formal criteria are decisive. The intentions and effects of German occupation, however, are not as objectively ascertainable as formal features. So all typologies have their pros and cons and their value depends on the research context, in which they are used. With regard to the New Order, the existing typologies are problematic. Since the status of the occupied territories was determined right after they had fallen into German hands, typologies sticking to formal criteria offer all but a snapshot of National Socialist rule. Even though Umbreit assumes that his focus on the first years of the war would not diminish the value of his typology, its static nature prevents it from taking into account informal changes, potential learning processes, or shifting priorities.⁷⁷ Typolo-

⁷⁴ For a thorough analysis of the existing typologies see W. Röhr, 'Forschungsprobleme zur deutschen Okkupationspolitik im Spiegel der Reihe "Europa unterm Hakenkreuz"', in W. Röhr (ed.), *Europa unterm Hakenkreuz. Analysen, Quellen, Register*, Heidelberg, Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1996, pp. 25-343, here pp.136-146; J. Gross, *Polish Society under German Occupation. The Generalgouvernement 1939-1944*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1979, p. 32.

⁷⁵ See W. Dlugoborski, 'Einleitung: Faschismus, Besatzung und sozialer Wandel. Fragestellung und Typologie', in W. Dlugoborski (ed.), *Zweiter Weltkrieg und sozialer Wandel. Achsenmächte und besetzte Länder*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981, pp. 11-61, here pp. 22-32. According to Child, the value of a territory to the *Reich* decided on how tightly Germany subordinated it to its will. In Umbreit's eyes, the designated parts of a 'Greater Germanic Reich' or its colonial supplements were ruled by a civil administration. Benz organises his typology along formal legal criteria, but immediately points out the need to add an historical-political perspective. See C. Child, 'Administration', in A. Toynbee and V. Toynbee (eds.), *Hitler's Europe*, London, Oxford University Press, 1954, pp. 91-125, here pp. 91-97; Umbreit, *Besatzungsverwaltung*, p. 715; W. Benz, 'Typologie der Herrschaftsformen in den Gebieten unter deutschem Einfluß', in W. Benz, J. ten Cate and G. Otto (eds.) *Die Bürokratie der Okkupation. Strukturen der Herrschaft und Verwaltung im besetzten Europa*, Berlin, Metropol, 1998, pp. 11-26.

⁷⁶ See C. Madajczyk, 'Die Besatzungssysteme der Achsenmächte. Versuch einer Komparativen Analyse', *Studia historiae oeconomicae*, vol. 14, 1979, pp. 105-122, here p. 106.

⁷⁷ See Umbreit, 'Besatzungsverwaltung', p. 719; in the 'Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia', for instance, the initial polity was changed after Heydrich took over von Neurath's functions. See D.

gies created along informal lines, on the other hand, paint a more differentiated picture of National Socialist Europe – unfortunately at the expense of objectivity. By relying on informal criteria, like the aims and effects of German occupation policy, the classification not only depends on the author’s assessment but also implicitly assumes that the aims were clear, did not change, and that the outcomes of policies had always been intended.⁷⁸ Overall, typologies tend to understate not only the general commonalities in German occupation policy but also its economic dimension.⁷⁹ Furthermore, both approaches implicitly assume that decisions on how to administer and reshape the respective country were based upon a concrete and stable vision. Thus, despite their undeniable value in other respects, the typologies of German occupation policy have to be regarded with suspicion as far as the New Order is concerned.

Business history is a second perspective that has its starting-point in factual policies and could also shed light on the nature and the impact of the National Socialist New Order. This view of National Socialist European policy has been a domain of Marxist historians for decades. Even though they failed to prove that “the imperialistic apparatus of state and the Wehrmacht were merely the executing institutions for what the *Konzernherren* [heads of firms] decided”⁸⁰, their attempts to explain the German subjugation of Europe with the intrinsic logic of capitalism proved highly valuable in two respects: Firstly, the interest of the German Democratic Republic in discrediting the capitalist system of its Western neighbour manifested itself in the publication of numerous editions of primary sources, which – despite their biased introductions – provide scholars with an excellent overview of National Socialist policy in general, its

Brandes, *Die Tschechen unter Deutschem Protektorat. Vol. 1: Besatzungspolitik, Kollaboration und Widerstand im Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren bis Heydrichs Tod (1939-1942)*, Munich, Oldenbourg, 1969, pp. 213-225. On shifting priorities see also H. Wixforth, *Die Expansion der Dresdner Bank in Europa*, Munich, Oldenbourg, 2006, p. 871; Bauer, ‘New Order’.

⁷⁸ Hans Frank, Governor-General in the General Government, however, stated that policy guidelines changed fundamentally. Speech by Frank before the defensive committee, 2 March 1940, in: W. Schumann and L. Nestler (eds.), *Nacht über Europa. Vol 2: Die faschistische Okkupationspolitik in Polen (1939-1945)*, Cologne, Pahl-Rugenstein, 1989, pp. 165-166. Many studies of German occupation policy state an irresolvable conflict of aims so that the results might have differed from the intentions. According to Dieckmann, in Lithuania, the German long-term aims were not realised because the war and its necessities dominated German policy. See C. Dieckmann, ‘Plan und Praxis. Deutsche Siedlungspolitik im besetzten Litauen 1941-1944’, in I. Heinemann and P. Wagner (eds.), *Wissenschaft - Planung - Vertreibung. Neuordnungskonzepte und Umsiedlungspolitik im 20. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart, Steiner, 2006, pp. 93-118.

⁷⁹ Röhr, for example, points out that all occupied territories saw anti-Jewish policy and oppression of resistance. Röhr, ‘Okkupationspolitik’, p. 143.

⁸⁰ W. Schumann, *Die Beteiligung des Zeiss-Konzerns an der Vorbereitung und Durchführung des zweiten Weltkrieges*, Jena, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, 1961, p. 238.

regional differences, and country-specific developments.⁸¹ Secondly, although Marxist historiography clearly overestimates the influence of companies on National Socialist policy, they – after what seems to be a period of outright rejection by their Western counterparts – raised the awareness not only for the economic aspect of German rule but also for the role private companies played in the New Order.

Western historiography has not ignored economic matters, but its focus rested on the macro level and the general means of exploitation until the 1980s brought about analyses of the activities of private companies and their links to state policies.⁸² In the 1990s, business-historical research in general started to boom and spurred numerous studies either covering or focusing on National Socialist Germany.⁸³ Unfortunately, not all of them attend to the European dimension of business policies, but those that do suggest a lively interest for the New Order among German companies: They took part in the specification of Europe-to-be and seized the opportunities the Wehrmacht had opened up and the National Socialist regime was promoting.⁸⁴ The greedy behaviour of the big German banks, which often paved the way for expand-

⁸¹ See e.g. D. Eichholtz and W. Schumann (eds.), *Anatomie des Krieges. Neue Dokumente über die Rolle des deutschen Monopolkapitals bei der Vorbereitung und Durchführung des zweiten Weltkrieges*, Berlin, VEB Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1969; Hass and Schumann (ed.), *Anatomie der Aggression*; W. Schumann and L. Nestler (eds.), *Weltherrschaft im Visier. Dokumente zu den Europa- und Weltherrschaftsplänen des deutschen Imperialismus von der Jahrhundertwende bis Mai 1945*, Berlin, VEB Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1975. W. Schumann (ed.), *Griff nach Südosteuropa. Neue Dokumente über die Politik des deutschen Imperialismus und Militarismus gegenüber Südosteuropa im zweiten Weltkrieg*, Berlin, VEB Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1973; M. Menger et al. (eds.), *Expansionsrichtung Nordeuropa. Dokumente zur Nordeuropapolitik des faschistischen deutschen Imperialismus 1939 bis 1945*, Berlin, VEB Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1987. And see the eight volumes of the series “Europa unterm Hakenkreuz” edited by Wolfgang Schumann, which were also published under the title “Nacht über Europa”. These volumes, covering the entire time span and area of German occupation policy during World War II, will be referenced frequently throughout this study.

⁸² See e.g. Volkman, ‘Großwirtschaft’; Herbst, *Ordnung der Wirtschaft*; J. Gillingham, ‘Zur Vorgeschichte der Montan-Union. Westeuropas Kohle und Stahl in Depression und Krieg’, *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, vol. 34, no. 3, 1986, pp. 381-405; P. Hayes, *Industry and Ideology. IG Farben in the Nazi Era*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987; K. Roth, ‘Der Weg zum guten Stern des “Dritten Reichs”: Schlaglichter auf die Geschichte der Daimler-Benz AG und ihrer Vorläufer (1890-1945)’, in Hamburger Stiftung für Sozialgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts (ed.), *Das Daimler-Benz-Buch*, Nördlingen, Greno, 1987, pp. 28-391; G. Mollin, *Montankonzerne und “Drittes Reich”*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988.

⁸³ For a short summary of how the perspective on the ‘Third Reich’ has changed in the field of economic history, see W. Abelshauser, J. Hesse and W. Plumpe, ‘Wirtschaftsordnung und Unternehmen im Nationalsozialismus. Neuere Forschungen zur Wirtschaftsgeschichte des Nationalsozialismus’, in W. Abelshauser, J. Hesse and W. Plumpe (eds.), *Wirtschaftsordnung, Staat und Unternehmen. Neue Forschungen zur Wirtschaftsgeschichte des Nationalsozialismus*, Essen, Klartext, 2003, pp. 9-16, here pp. 9-11.

⁸⁴ See e.g. E. Grunow-Osswald, *Die Internationalisierung eines Konzerns: Daimler-Benz 1890-1997*, Vaihingen/Enz, IPa, 2005, p. 182; D. Eichholtz, *Carl Zeiss. Einst und jetzt*, Berlin, Rütten & Loening, 1962, p. 544; Gillingham, *Montan-Union*, 1986, pp. 393-394.

ing the reach of both private businesses and the constantly growing *Reichswerke Hermann Göring* concern,⁸⁵ even produced a saying among German contemporaries: “Who is walking behind the first tank? It’s Dr. Rasche from the Dresdner Bank!”⁸⁶ However, even though the factual European expansion of several German companies is beyond doubt, the role of the New Order in this process is unclear. Most historians agree in rejecting the Marxist view that private companies were the driving force behind the reorganisation of Europe, but there are studies suggesting that they actually had a major stake in it. Without having a concrete concept, the regime, according to Herbst, merely set the goal, watched the discussion unfold, and chose the pieces that suited its own ideas.⁸⁷ And the different branches of the German economy did readily contribute to the formulation of aims when it fitted their interests. Within the *IG Farben* corporation numerous memoranda on the future of the European chemical industry were authored; *Carl Zeiss* agitated for a tariff-free European post-war order without any subsidies in the field of precision mechanics and optics; and German heavy industry tried to influence the allocation of the works in the occupied and annexed territories. Obviously, German companies expected something from the New Order. Exactly what remains controversial: According to Hayes, the *IG Farben* was not keen on expanding into other countries, but simply tried to protect its interests. The IG used the New Order “to clothe its objectives in appeals to military necessity or the Party’s goals”⁸⁸. Christian Marx claims that the *Gutehoffnungshütte* expanded into Ukraine because its directors deemed it necessary for the European post-war market.⁸⁹ Hallgarten also stresses that German companies were not merely the executive bodies of the regime’s interests, but followed their own agenda. Even though they might not have shared its ideological premises, they contributed to the overall dynamic of National Socialist expansion in this way.⁹⁰ Wixforth’s work on the Dresdner Bank underscores this view. The bank was not driven by ideological mo-

⁸⁵ See H. James, ‘Die Deutsche Bank und die Diktatur’, in L. Gall (ed.), *Die Deutsche Bank 1870-1995*, Munich, C.H. Beck, 1995, pp. 315-408.

⁸⁶ Cited in G. Aalders, ‘Three Ways of Economic Penetration in the Netherlands: Cloaking, Capital Interlocking and an “Aryanization”’, in R. Overy, G. Otto and J. ten Cate (ed.), *Die “Neuordnung” Europas: NS-Wirtschaftspolitik in den besetzten Gebieten*, Berlin, Metropol, 1997, pp. 273-298, here p. 293.

⁸⁷ See L. Herbst, ‘Die nationalsozialistische Wirtschaftspolitik im Vergleich’, in W. Benz, H. Buchheim and H. Mommsen (ed.), *Der Nationalsozialismus. Studien zur Ideologie und Herrschaft*, Frankfurt a.M., Fischer, 1993, pp. 153-176, p. 174.

⁸⁸ Hayes, *Industry and Ideology*, p. 218.

⁸⁹ See C. Marx, *Paul Reusch und die Gutehoffnungshütte. Leitung eines deutschen Großunternehmens*, Göttingen, Wallstein, 2013, p. 462.

⁹⁰ See G. Hallgarten and J. Radkau, *Deutsche Industrie und Politik von Bismarck bis heute*, Frankfurt a.M., Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1974, p. 411.

tives, nevertheless it willingly participated in the regime's policy in order to secure a leading role in Europe-to-be.⁹¹ Bähr et al., by contrast, argue that German authorities held the reins tightly and that political considerations trumped private economic interests. German heavy industry, for instance, was only able to expand if the privileged *Reichswerke Herman Göring* and the political objectives allowed for an involvement of private businesses.⁹²

Unfortunately, a synthesis of historical findings on German businesses does not exist, and the exact role companies played in framing and implementing National Socialist Europe has yet to be further explored. For now, it seems that companies were neither the driving force behind the New Order nor mere instruments to realise it. By seizing opportunities that fitted into their agenda where politics let them, they apparently contributed to the planning as well as the realisation of the New Order. Given the weight of economic arguments within the debate, a study of the National Socialist reorganisation of Europe will benefit from looking into the interdependence between private business and politics.

Overall, research on the New Order and its factual impact is flawed by two fundamental problems. While the biased view that makes do with stating a 'perversion of the European idea' is self-imposed, the lack of documents about Hitler's opinion and the polycratic nature of the NS regime are not. In consequence, existing research either does not even bother to look into potential ramifications, or analyses them against problematic backgrounds. The resulting assessments therefore differ. Furthermore, attempts to reconstruct the National Socialist vision of a New Order on the basis of the factual German occupation policy does not yield consistent results and, with regard to business history, an attempt to synthesise the insights of the many existing case studies has not yet been undertaken. Therefore, we do not know what impact the New Order had on German policies during the Second World War and whose standpoints really mattered. What we do know is that its construction and perception were diverse, that they underwent several changes, and that they were borne by a range of persons and institutions. Thus, if the factual relevance of the New Order is to be assessed, we have to find a way to reconstruct the National Socialist notions of Europe-to-be within a heterogeneous and polyvalent discussion.

⁹¹ See Wixforth, *Dresdner Bank*, pp. 878, 889.

⁹² See J. Bähr et al., *Der Flick-Konzern im Dritten Reich*, Munich, Oldenbourg, 2008, p. 469.

Against this background, we should be able to evaluate the ramifications of the New Order.

1.2 A New Perspective on the New Order – Methodological Considerations

The previous sections have highlighted the importance of methodology for this study: If we want to assess the relevance of the New Order, we have to find out what it meant to contemporary decision makers. It seems to have been many things to different people and at different points in time. Unfortunately, the polycratic nature of the National Socialist regime makes it almost impossible to deduce the significance of certain ideas from the power of those who held them, and the attempts to use the factual German occupation policies as indicators for the underlying ideas does not yield consistent results. This suggests that the most appropriate methodical approach should be capable of two things: firstly, weighing arguments within a heterogeneous and changing debate and thereby identifying the crucial ones, and, secondly, providing a way of plausibly relating ideas and actions. This section proposes such an approach. After some brief considerations on the ‘classical’ History of Ideas, it focusses on more recent developments, namely the Cambridge School, the History of Concepts, and Foucauldian discourse analysis. A discourse-analytic approach proved to fit our needs best and will be adopted as the methodical framework for this thesis.

The Significance of Ideas and Their History

Even though the proposition that ‘soft’ cultural factors like ideas have somehow shaped the course of history is generally accepted, the merits of the History of Ideas are far from uncontroversial. Apart from some scholars deprecating ideas in general as unspecific and rather insignificant entities,⁹³ sceptics have raised several justifiable objections: The most common criticism is that focusing solely on the canonical works of famous thinkers leads to an overestimation of their importance.⁹⁴ Consulting their works in order to gain insights for current debates is as misleading as criticising them for not taking into account contemporary ideas. Furthermore, the tendency to

⁹³ See M. Hahn, ‘Auseinandergelungende Verständnisse der Ideengeschichte’, *Dialektik*, vol. 18, 1989, pp. 108-121, here pp. 117-118.

⁹⁴ See G. Lottes, “The State of the Art”. Stand und Perspektiven der “intellectual history”, in F. Kroll (ed.), *Neue Wege der Ideengeschichte: Festschrift für Kurt Kluxen zum 85. Geburtstag*, Paderborn, Schöningh, 1996, pp. 27-45, here p. 27.

construct ideal types of ideas and to subsequently search for their predecessors leads to fallacies: Scholars are primarily praised for anticipating later thoughts, traditions are created that might not have existed at all, and altogether history ends up being written as a success story of the particular idea finally prevailing.⁹⁵ Additionally, there is the key issue of a history of ideas that neglects society and a social history that does not take contemporary thought into account.⁹⁶

In recent decades, several attempts have been made, in different ways, to overcome these shortcomings. One of the most important, the Cambridge School of the History of Ideas opposes the interpretation of ideas as timeless entities and accentuates the importance of their (linguistic) context. At the same time, in an attempt to bridge the gap between ideas and social reality, the History of Concepts approach focuses on the process of convergence between these two dimensions. Last not least, in France, poststructuralist considerations on how reality is constructed was shaped by Foucault's focus on statements in what he called 'discourse'. What all three approaches have in common is that they are not only interested in language as the medium in which thoughts are formed and expressed but also in how ideas become potentially effective.

The Cambridge School

The so-called Cambridge School of the History of Ideas was founded by and named after the Cambridge University professors John Pocock and Quentin Skinner. Criticising the classical History of Ideas approach for analysing ideas as timeless entities, they argue that even the most famous works are products of their time.⁹⁷ That does not mean that they should be read as mere reflections of the socio-economic circumstances in which they were created, but that understanding the contemporary language is a necessary precondition for an astute understanding of the meaning and significance of certain thoughts. These considerations refer to Ludwig Wittgen-

⁹⁵ See Q. Skinner, 'Bedeutung und Verstehen in der Ideengeschichte', in M. Mulsow and A. Mahler (eds.), *Die Cambridge School der politischen Ideengeschichte*, Berlin, Suhrkamp, 2010, pp. 21-87, here pp. 27-41.

⁹⁶ See Peter Burke cited in L. Raphael, "'Ideen als gesellschaftliche Gestaltungskraft im Europa der Neuzeit': Bemerkungen zur Bilanz eines DFG-Schwerpunktprogramms', in L. Raphael and H-E. Tenorth (eds.), *Ideen als gesellschaftliche Gestaltungskraft im Europa der Neuzeit*, Munich, Oldenbourg, 2006, pp. 11-27, here p. 11.

⁹⁷ See Skinner, 'Bedeutung und Verstehen'.

stein's philosophy of language and conclude that contemporary language limits the form and content of statements.⁹⁸ Thus, contemporary language and its conventions – that is the sum of all possible and reasonable statements in a certain culture at a certain time⁹⁹ – have to be understood before the interpretation of a text can claim to be reasonable. After this common starting-point, Pocock and Skinner take slightly different routes: Pocock distinguishes – following Ferdinand de Saussure – between the language as a whole ('la langue') and single speech acts ('la parole'). The limits for possible statements are set by 'la langue', but at the same time 'paroles' are in principle capable of challenging those boundaries.¹⁰⁰ Whether or not an historical text sticks to the rules or tries to change them can thus only be assessed when it is analysed within the conventions of contemporary language. Skinner on the other hand is inspired by John Austin and John Searle. In their theory of speech acts, the conventions of a language are the result of many single speech acts that either sustain or undermine those conventions.¹⁰¹ Thus, the intention behind an historical statement or text and its degree of innovation can only be assessed when it is seen against the backdrop of common language. Hence, despite taking different paths, Pocock and Skinner arrive at a similar conclusion: The contemporary linguistic context is essential in order to understand historical texts or statements.

Pocock and Skinner establish the link between speech acts and actions with a further reference to Wittgenstein: "Words are also deeds."¹⁰² Because of the different speech act theories they apply, their explanations of the relationship of words and deeds have a slightly different emphasis. Skinner refers to Searle and Austin and their distinction between illocutionary and perlocutionary speech acts. Whereas the former, for example in the form of a promise, is in itself already a deed, the latter, for instance the attempt to persuade someone, necessitates further actions to result in a

⁹⁸ See J. Pocock, 'Sprachen und ihre Implikationen: Die Wende in der Erforschung des politischen Denkens', in M. Mulsow and A. Mahler (eds.), *Die Cambridge School der politischen Ideengeschichte*, Berlin, Suhrkamp, 2010, pp. 88-126, here p. 110.

⁹⁹ See M. Mulsow and A. Mahler, 'Einleitung', in M. Mulsow and A. Mahler (eds.), *Die Cambridge School der politischen Ideengeschichte*, Berlin, Suhrkamp, 2010, pp. 7-20, here p. 10.

¹⁰⁰ See M. Bevir, 'The Role of Contexts in Understanding and Explanation', in H. Bödeker (ed.), *Begriffsgeschichte, Diskursgeschichte, Metapherngeschichte*, Göttingen, Wallstein, 2002, pp. 159-208, here pp. 166-168.

¹⁰¹ See I. Hampsher-Monk, 'Speech Acts, Languages or Conceptual History?', in I. Hampsher-Monk, K. Tilman and F. van Vree (eds.), *History of Concepts. Comparative Perspectives*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 1998, pp. 37-50, here pp. 42-43.

¹⁰² Cited in Q. Skinner, *Visions of Politics. Vol. 1: Regarding Method*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 4.

deed.¹⁰³ But the effect of words on deeds, the perlocutionary dimension of a statement, will only become apparent – as we have seen – when the intentions of the speaker can be clarified by contrasting his speech acts with contemporary language. If the perlocutionary force of normative vocabulary is successfully changed, it may gain historical relevance:

Not only is our moral and social world held in place by the manner in which we choose to apply our inherited normative vocabularies, but one of the ways in which we are capable of re-appraising and changing our world is by changing the ways in which these vocabularies are applied.¹⁰⁴

In the long run, changes in vocabulary are stabilized by socialization and common practice. If that does not happen, practices will stay within the limits of what is justifiable.¹⁰⁵ Pocock argues very similarly. What can be said is determined by language, but at the same time language can be modified by what is said.¹⁰⁶ The task for historians is therefore to acquaint themselves with the contemporary language in order to be able to recognize the innovative potential of certain speech acts.¹⁰⁷ However, Pocock is sceptical about the possibility of tracing the effects that words have on deeds: There is no doubt that language influences people and that texts have an impact on readers, but those effects are partly synchronic, partly diachronic. Thus, the outcome of such a long-term process will be heterogeneous and blurred. Even though linguistic developments should be analysed with regard to their factual ramifications, Pocock sees no possibility of linking them directly.¹⁰⁸ Overall, in Pocock's and Skinner's view, social reality and social action are constructed and limited by language. Thus, if language is changing, society is too, provided innovative thinking expressed in speech acts and actions become the norm and thus the new limit of social reality.

Seeking to apply the Cambridge School approach to the New Order, we face several problems: Pocock and Skinner worked in the field of political sciences and accordingly used their methodical framework primarily in order to contextualize the canon-

¹⁰³ See Hampsher-Monk, 'Conceptual History', p. 43.

¹⁰⁴ Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, p. 178.

¹⁰⁵ See J. Tully, 'The Pen is a Mighty Sword: Quentin Skinner's analysis of Politics', in J. Tully (ed.), *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and his Critics*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1988, pp. 7-25, here pp. 13-16.

¹⁰⁶ See J. Pocock, 'Der Begriff einer "Sprache" und das métier d'historien: Einige Überlegungen zur Praxis', in M. Mulsow and A. Mahler (eds.), *Die Cambridge School der politischen Ideengeschichte*, Berlin, Suhrkamp, 2010, pp. 127-152, here p. 128.

¹⁰⁷ See J. Pocock, 'The Reconstruction of Discourse: Towards the Historiography of Political Thought', *Comparative Literature*, vol. 96, no. 5, 1981, pp. 959-980, here p. 973.

¹⁰⁸ See Pocock, 'Métier d'Historien', pp. 151-152.

cal works of political theory. By means of contemporary language and thinking, they were able to reinterpret and -evaluate the ideas promoted in those writings. But whose statements are to be contrasted with the wider debate on what a German Europe should look like? In our case, we might be able to reconstruct the contemporary linguistic conventions of how to speak about the New Order, but – in their terms – we cannot identify the crucial parole within ‘la langue’. Thus, the decisive analytical advantage of the Cambridge School over the classical History of Ideas approach is lost.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, Pocock and Skinner conceptualize the link between an altered language and actions changing accordingly as a process of socializations, whereas the Second World War and the construction of a National Socialist New Europe lasted for six years; which is too short a time span for a socialization process to be completed. This deficit could be mitigated by choosing a broad and diachronic perspective, but this would run the risk of repeating the flaws identified in existing research.

All in all, the Cambridge School of the History of Ideas is perfectly suited for an analysis of a single work within its contemporary linguistic context. For our purpose, however, Pocock’s and Skinner’s approach has two regrettable shortcomings: Firstly, the connection between words and deeds stays vague as long as the observed time span is short. Secondly, the Cambridge School does not provide a means of identifying significant speech acts within a language because its purpose is the evaluation of speech acts that have already been chosen beforehand.

The History of Concepts

The History of Concepts emerged with the first volumes of ‘*Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*’, edited by Otto Brunner, Werner Conze and Reinhart Koselleck. All contributions in these volumes revolve around the changing meaning of concepts during the transition period from the early modern to the modern age (*Sattelzeit*).¹¹⁰ Just like the Cambridge School, the History of Concepts does not interpret ideas as timeless entities. Acknowledging that the meanings of ideas might have changed with time, the

¹⁰⁹ See Hampsher-Monk, ‘Conceptual History’, p. 41.

¹¹⁰ See R. Koselleck, ‘Einleitung’, in O. Brunner, W. Conze and R. Koselleck (eds.), *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*. Vol. 1: A-D, Stuttgart, Klett, 1972, pp. XIII-XXVII.

History of Concepts focuses on the time-dependent use of expressed ideas.¹¹¹ The starting-point of Koselleck's considerations – he is the main theorist of the History of Concepts – is the analytical distinction between language and social reality. Following Wittgenstein, he confirms that words are also deeds; however, the converse does not hold true: not every deed is a speech act.¹¹² Thus – according to Koselleck – history cannot be narrowed down to a merely linguistic perspective. Even though historical developments never take place without language, they must not be reduced to it: “Linguistic understanding never catches up with what happens or was actually the case, nor does anything happen that has not already been altered by its linguistic processing.”¹¹³ Thus, language and social reality are interdependent, but never completely congruent “metahistorical facts”¹¹⁴ that have to be equally taken into account. As historians reconstruct the past primarily on the basis of written documents and sources, they need to be aware of the importance of linguistic and semantic matters. The History of Concepts tries to live up to this postulate by concentrating on concepts – defined as words that are loaded with experiences and expectations, thus being ambiguous – and their changing meaning and use in the course of time.¹¹⁵ Trying to gain a better understanding of central concepts is essential. They were not only the weapons that social and political conflicts of the past were fought with, but contemporary language has also to be read as a metaphor for the time in question.¹¹⁶ Hence, concepts are factors and at the same time indicators of historical developments that have to be understood in their contemporary meaning, otherwise historical sources cannot be interpreted adequately.

¹¹¹ See H. Bödeker, ‘Concept - Meaning - Discourse. Begriffsgeschichte reconsidered’, in I. Hampsher-Monk, K. Tilmans and F. van Vree (eds.), *History of Concepts. Comparative Perspectives*, Amsterdam, 1998, pp. 51-63, here p. 52.

¹¹² See H. Bödeker, ‘Reflexionen über Begriffsgeschichte als Methode’, in H. Bödeker (ed.), *Begriffsgeschichte, Diskursgeschichte, Metapherngeschichte*, Göttingen, Wallstein, 2002, pp. 73-121, here p. 114.

¹¹³ R. Koselleck, ‘Social History and Begriffsgeschichte’, in I. Hampsher-Monk, K. Tilmans and F. van Vree (eds.), *History of Concepts. Comparative Perspectives*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 1998, pp. 23-35, here p. 25.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ For the definition of concepts, see R. Koselleck, *Zeitschichten. Studien zur Historik*, Frankfurt a.M., Suhrkamp, 2000, pp. 331-334. Bödeker stresses that, actually, it is not the concept that changes, but its use and perception. See H. Bödeker, ‘Begriffsgeschichte als Theoriegeschichte - Theoriegeschichte als Begriffsgeschichte. Ein Versuch’, in R. Casale, D. Tröhler and J. Oelkers, (eds.), *Methoden und Kontexte. Historiographische Probleme der Bildungsforschung*, Göttingen, Wallstein, 2006, pp. 91-119, here p. 110.

¹¹⁶ See R. Koselleck, ‘Begriffsgeschichte und Sozialgeschichte’, in P. Ludz (ed.), *Soziologie und Sozialgeschichte. Aspekte und Probleme*, Opladen, Westdeutscher Verlag, 1972, pp. 116-131, here p. 120; Koselleck, ‘Einleitung’, p. XIII.

The core of the History of Concepts is, however, the interdependence between words and the extra-linguistic world, or in our case, between verbalised ideas and their connection to actions. If social action is – as Koselleck argues – motivated by experiences and expectations, the analysis of concepts is worthwhile because concepts are loaded with views of the past or the future.¹¹⁷ Particularly concepts that are of a primarily normative nature serve “less as statements about the world than as tools and weapons of ideological debate.”¹¹⁸ Thus, changing concepts do not merely reflect changing realities, but are a result of controversies that point beyond the *status quo*:

In the contested words there are the programmatic identities of social groups, there is the self-assessment of their social perspectives, there is the resistance against the conditions or symbolic compliance to them.¹¹⁹

In this understanding, the analytical distinction between language and the non-linguistic world as separate entities reveals a tension between expressed demands and social reality that can never be completely resolved. However, both spheres might converge. The History of Concepts focuses on this process of convergence.¹²⁰ On the one hand, concepts are used in a primarily descriptive manner; on the other hand, they shape the course of history by opening up new possibilities of social action due to their normative dimension. Thus, concepts become a driving force of historical developments and gain relevance for social history:

Beliefs and language through which they are expressed do not merely reflect facets of our social world. Rather they inform the very actions by which we establish, maintain, and transform that world. The history of ideas should form an integral part of any attempt to understand or to explain any feature of human life.¹²¹

Because language is needed to justify actions, linguistic changes modify the limits of acceptable behaviour. If a newly created or fundamentally reinterpreted concept becomes widely known and is ideologically utilizable, future-oriented, and loaded with political expectations, it has to be taken into account as an influential element of his-

¹¹⁷ See Koselleck, *Zeitschichten*, pp. 331, 334.

¹¹⁸ This quotation from Skinner emphasises explicitly the common ground that the Cambridge School and the History of Concepts share. Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, p. 177.

¹¹⁹ C. Knobloch, ‘Überlegungen zur Theorie der Begriffsgeschichte aus Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaftlicher Sicht’, *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte*, vol. 35, 1992, pp. 7-24, here p. 12.

¹²⁰ See Koselleck, ‘Begriffsgeschichte’, p. 125.

¹²¹ M. Bevir, ‘Begriffsgeschichte’, *History and Theory*, vol. 39, no. 2, 2000, pp. 273-284, here p. 274.

torical developments:¹²² “We can indeed kill kings with swords or axes, but it is only with words that we can abolish monarchies.”¹²³

The History of Concepts approach seems to be very well suited to the needs of this study. The New Order, understood as a contested normative concept, would form the backdrop against which the potential process of convergence could be analysed. If social-historical developments have been in accordance with the respective current ideal of a Europe-to-be, we could conclude that National Socialist European ideas shaped reality. However, the question arises to which concept the actual development should be contrasted: the heterogeneous discussion on the New Order yielded numerous keywords. Whereas some dreamt of a ‘Greater German Empire’ or a ‘Greater Germanic Empire’, others argued for *Mitteleuropa*, a *Großraum* or a *Großraumwirtschaft* led by Germany. Unfortunately, Koselleck’s theoretical framework provides no means to choose the ‘right’ or most important of the many different concepts.¹²⁴ Of course, it would be possible to analyse all the prevalent ones, but the History of Concepts offers no way of weighing the different concepts. Even if we tried to deduce the significance of certain concepts by having a closer look at the actual social-historical developments, we would fail because some of the concepts are closely related or overlapping. The History of Concepts approach thus manifests the same deficiencies as the ‘classical’ History of Ideas approach: It calls for an essential *a priori* decision, but offers no adequate guidelines for reaching it.

Overall, the History of Concepts is not capable of meeting our requirements, due to two deficiencies: Even though its connection between ideas and actions seems to be more helpful for historians than the one established by the Cambridge School, it cannot clear the hurdle set by a polycentric and heterogeneous debate. Neither does the History of Concepts provide a means to guide the initial choice it calls for, nor does it include a justifiable way to evaluate the significance of rival concepts.

¹²² See Bödeker, ‘Begriffsgeschichte Reconsidered’, p. 52.

¹²³ This quote by Hampsher-Monk is taken slightly out of its context: He stresses the power of language in order to criticize the distinction between language and social reality. Nevertheless, this quote underlines the power he and Koselleck see in normative-linguistic changes. Hampsher-Monk, ‘Conceptual History’, p. 48.

¹²⁴ This is also due to the problematic definition of concepts used by Koselleck. See Knobloch, ‘Begriffsgeschichte’, p. 10; and H. Schultz, ‘Begriffsgeschichte und Argumentationsgeschichte’, in P. Ludz (ed.), *Soziologie und Sozialgeschichte. Aspekte und Probleme*, Opladen, Westdeutscher Verlag, 1972, pp. 43-74, here pp. 52-56.

Discourse Analysis

Discourse Analysis was largely shaped by Michel Foucault. In his works *The Birth of the Clinic* and *The Order of Things* he already practised a discourse-analytical approach, before then refining the theoretical foundations of these works in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. The starting-point of his considerations is a fundamental criticism of traditional historiography put forward in the introduction of the *Archaeology*. The attempt to reconstruct the past on the basis of critically perceived primary sources inevitably leads to a teleological historiography because the historian is a product of his time and his perspective on the past is influenced by it. Since the *status quo* not only shapes the questions posed but also sets the standards against which the findings are measured, the present is perceived as the temporary 'happy end' to a success story, the current climax of a sequence of advancements.¹²⁵ Historiography thus becomes a mere instrument legitimising the here and now.¹²⁶ Foucault's discourse-analytic approach, in contrast, avoids the bias caused by today's views by not asking the classical hermeneutic questions of who, what, where, and why:

we must grasp the statement in the exact specificity of its occurrence; determine its conditions of existence, fix at least its limits, establish its correlation with other statements that may be connected with it, and show what other forms of statements it excludes. We do not seek below what is manifest the half silent murmur of another discourse; we must show why it could not be other than it was [...] The question proper to such an analysis might be formulated in this way: what is this specific existence that emerges from what is said and nowhere else?¹²⁷

Foucault, therefore, does not care about the tensions linguists see emerging from the interdependent but never congruent signifier and the signified, but focuses on the fact that certain statements were made:¹²⁸ Why, out of all in principle grammatically and logically correct statements, is there always only a specific subset actually made

¹²⁵ See M. Foucault, 'Antwort auf eine Frage', in M. Foucault, *Analytik der Macht*, Frankfurt a.M., Suhrkamp, 2005, pp. 25-51, here p. 39.

¹²⁶ See M. Foucault, 'Nietzsche, die Genealogie, die Historie', in C. Conrad and M. Kessel (eds.), *Kultur & Geschichte. Neue Einblicke in eine alte Beziehung*, Stuttgart, Reclam, 1998, pp. 43-71, here pp. 61-62.

¹²⁷ M. Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge*, London, Tavistock, 1972, p. 28. As Foucault's writing is hard to translate, all direct quotations are taken from this official translation.

¹²⁸ See P. Sarasin, 'Diskurstheorie und Geschichtswissenschaft', in R. Keller et al. (eds.), *Handbuch sozialwissenschaftliche Diskursanalyse. Vol. 1: Theorien und Methoden*, Opladen, Leske + Budrich, 2001, pp. 53-79, here p. 63; U. Schneider, *Michel Foucault*, Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2004, p. 102.

and why is it exactly this one?¹²⁹ According to Foucault, the answer lies in the “conditions of emergence of statements”¹³⁰:

For Foucault they are wholly culturally and historically specific: what is humanly possible in one epoch simply may not be in another. Our ability to think in a certain way – to reason, to question, to analyse – is not essential to us as intelligent beings, but contingent on our location in time and space.¹³¹

Thus, an analysis of what has actually been voiced is worthwhile, or more precisely, the underlying set of rules structuring the sum of all statements made on a specific topic is to be found because it is telling. Analytically two different sets of rules can be distinguished: On the one hand, the ‘discursive practice’ that is defined as a

body of anonymous, historical rules, always determined in the time and space that have defined a given period, and for a given social, economic, geographical, or linguistic area, the conditions of operation of the enunciative function.¹³²

The specific dispersion of the statements made, on the other hand, attests to the characteristic principles of the discourse that are called ‘discursive formation’.¹³³ Hence, the analysis of the characteristics the discourse reveals that the discourse itself follows certain rules. The discursive formation shapes the discourse, on the one hand, by framing the spectrum all statements have to fit in and, on the other hand, by accounting for the specific dispersion and direction of statements. The discursive practices, in contrast, determine the value of statements within the discourse by setting the conditions that have to be met in order to be able to make an acknowledgeable statement. They define which people, in which positions, and which roles can legitimately contribute to which topic.

The link between these regulated statements and deeds is rather unclear in Foucault’s early works:

‘Words and Things’¹³⁴ is the entirely serious title of a problem; it is the ironic title of a work that modifies its own form, displaces its own data, and reveals, at the end of the day, a quite different task. A task that consists of not – of no longer – treating discourses as groups of signs

¹²⁹ See A. Landwehr, ‘Diskursgeschichte als Geschichte des Politischen’, in B. Kerchner and S. Schneider (eds.), *Foucault: Diskursanalyse der Politik. Eine Einführung*, Wiesbaden, VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2006, pp. 104-122, here p. 107.

¹³⁰ Foucault, *Archeology*, p. 127.

¹³¹ L. Downing, *The Cambridge Introduction to Foucault*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 39.

¹³² Foucault, *Archeology*, p. 117.

¹³³ See M. Foucault, *Archäologie des Wissens*, Frankfurt a.M., Suhrkamp, 2013, p. 156.

¹³⁴ “Les mots et les choses” is the original French title of Foucault’s “The Order of Things”.

[...] but as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak. Of course, discourses are composed of signs; but what they do is more than use these signs to designate things. It is this more that renders them irreducible to the language (langue) and to speech. It is this 'more' that we must reveal and describe.¹³⁵

By understanding discourses as power relations in his later works, Foucault addresses this 'more'. The observation that discourses – expressed on a linguistic level – somehow manifest themselves in the extra-linguistic world, leads to a conceptualisation in which discourses are understood as an overarching third instance between words and deeds.¹³⁶ The link between these spheres is power. Discourses exercise power over subjects by restraining statements, actions, and thoughts, whereas subjects aspire to exercise power over the discourse:¹³⁷

It does not matter that discourse appears to be of little account because the prohibitions that surround it very soon reveal its link with desire and with power. There is nothing surprising about that, since [...] discourse is not simply that which translates struggles or systems of domination, but is the thing for which and by which there is struggle, discourse is the power which is to be seized.¹³⁸

Being the "object of a struggle"¹³⁹ as well as the power that sets the rules that "guide, restrict, and decentre"¹⁴⁰ the subject, the discourse shapes actions in two ways: The knowledge and truth it produces provide subjects with a meaning for their practices, while there are binding rules for the participation in this production process. In the first case ideas would shape actions – from a top-down perspective – as an effect of the 'discursive formation', in the latter, actions are – from a bottom-up view – guided by ideas because the 'discursive practices' have set the preconditions that are to be met in order to be able to participate in the argument on knowledge, truth, and social reality.¹⁴¹ Thus, at the macro level, discursive power leads to the production of social

¹³⁵ Foucault, *Archeology*, p. 49.

¹³⁶ See D. Busse, *Historische Semantik. Analyse eines Programms*, Stuttgart, Klett-Cotta, 1987, p. 226.

¹³⁷ See A. Landwehr, *Historische Diskursanalyse*, Frankfurt a.M., Campus, 2008, p. 127.

¹³⁸ M. Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse', in R. Young (ed.), *Untying the Text. A Post-Structuralist Reader*, Boston, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981, pp. 48-78, here pp. 52-53.

¹³⁹ Foucault, *Archeology*, p. 120.

¹⁴⁰ P. Sarasin, *Michel Foucault zur Einführung*, Hamburg, Junius, 2005, p. 105

¹⁴¹ This approach is practised mainly in the political sciences and the history of medicine because they are primarily interested in the struggle for influence on discourse. See e.g. L. Sauerteig, *Krankheit, Sexualität, Gesellschaft: Geschlechtskrankheiten und gesundheitspolitik in Deutschland im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart, Steiner, 1999. The focus on the capability of the discourse to endow actions with meanings plays an important role in the discourse-analytical approaches of the sociology of knowledge. See e.g. R. Keller, 'Wissenssoziologische Diskursanalyse', in R. Keller et al.

reality, whereas at the micro level discursive power becomes apparent in acts of self-disciplining through 'voluntary subordination'.¹⁴²

If we apply these abstract considerations to the New Order, the upsides and downsides of the discourse-analytical approach become clearer. In contrast to the Cambridge School and the History of Concepts, no a priori decision on the relevance of source materials has to be made because – in principle – every statement on the New Order can and should be taken into account: The more opinions are included, the clearer the picture will be. By assembling as many primary sources as possible, the analysis will reveal a pattern in which the single dots add up to a large picture that depicts the New Order discourse, its mainstream, its participants, its limits, its turns, and its inherent logic. From the discourse, reconstructed in this way, we can derive the set of rules that structured the statements on the New Order, the 'discursive formation' and the 'discursive practice'. These rules, in turn, will provide the means for a further analysis of the actions factually taken and their connection to the ideas voiced in the discourse. Finally, a closer look at the participants will reveal whether or not the New Order ideas indeed guided actions and to what extent the New Order rhetoric was adopted willingly as a means to exert influence. So overall, a discourse analysis circumvents the main weaknesses of the other two approaches because a heterogeneous and varying discussion can be traced without problems, while actions and deeds can convincingly be linked. Unfortunately, tackling the New Order in this way also raises problems of its own: The wartime New Order discourse lasted for only six years, freedom of speech and press were abolished pretty soon after the National Socialists seized power in Germany, and in order to establish the links between actions and deeds a micro level analysis is necessary. However, since the approach does meet our needs best, it seems advisable to try to minimise its weaknesses instead of dismissing it.

Overall therefore, a discourse-analytical approach that additionally takes into account power relations suits our needs best. Because the reconstruction of a discourse rests on as many statements on a specific topic as possible, it easily captures a changing and heterogeneous debate without any major a priori decision. Further-

(eds.), *Handbuch Sozialwissenschaftliche Diskursanalyse. Vol. 2: Forschungspraxis*, Opladen, Leske + Budrich, 2003, pp. 115-146, here pp. 131-132.

¹⁴² See M. Foucault, *In Verteidigung der Gesellschaft. Vorlesungen am Collège de France*, Frankfurt a.M., Suhrkamp, 2001, pp. 38, 43.

more, it offers a theoretical framework that incorporates words and deeds as well as their interdependence. Unfortunately, this perspective is not an complete solution and raises its own problems. In the following section, ways to mitigate them will be discussed.

The New Order Discourse – Minimizing the Deficits

As we saw above, discourse analysis has important advantages over the other two approaches taken into consideration, but raises its own problems: Firstly, discourse-analytical works usually rely on newspaper and journal articles because the public sphere is supposedly the main and decisive stage for debate and deliberation. However, in National Socialist Germany there was no freedom of speech or press and thus no free public sphere. Secondly, discourse-analytical works often cover centuries or at least decades, whereas the actual New Order discourse took place during the six years the Second World War lasted. Thirdly, discourses are primarily reconstructed as macro level developments as are their effects. Previous research, however, found no evidence of the National Socialist New Order being realised on a large-scale. Moreover, existing objections to a discourse-analytical perspective on the 'Third Reich' have to be addressed.

In general, approaching the 'Third Reich' discourse-analytically is not common because of a fundamental scepticism which Richard Evans has put in a nutshell: "Auschwitz was not a discourse"¹⁴³. Due to the concern that the relativism of post-modernist methods might downplay the severest crime in history, he calls for a self-restriction of historiography.¹⁴⁴ Others, by contrast, argue that a discourse-analytical approach might give deeper insights.¹⁴⁵ Given that the National Socialist state neither complied fully nor always with establish norms, but partly replaced the rule of law with a state of instrumental measures, it seems very likely that informal guide-

¹⁴³ R. Evans, *In Defence of History*, London, Granta, 1997, p. 124; Wehler calls Foucault a "crypto-normativistic rat catcher for the postmodern era". H. Wehler, *Die Herausforderung der Kulturgeschichte*, Munich, Beck, 1998, p. 91.

¹⁴⁴ In Evans' eyes, the major problem of the current relativism is its blindness towards 'historical facts' because not acknowledging any objective truths plays into the hands of revisionists i.e. 'denialists'. Evans, *Defence of History*, pp. 241-243.

¹⁴⁵ See P. Hansen, 'Dealing with the Problem of Business and German Hegemony 1939-1945: Closing Remarks', in J. Lund (ed.), *Working for the New Order*, Copenhagen, Copenhagen Business School Press, 2006, pp. 175-189, here pp. 183-184.

lines gained in importance.¹⁴⁶ In discourses these non-codified and informal norms are negotiated and construed that might have served as points of reference. Therefore, a discourse analysis might contribute to our understanding of National Socialist Germany and its European concepts, just as new perspectives do in general, while it is hard to see how it could play down the atrocities and crimes committed by National Socialist Germany. Thus, our primary concern should be whether this theoretically promising approach turns out to be practicable.

In Germany, the freedom of press was already severely constrained in 1933. With the help of emergency decrees, the National Socialist regime forbade opposition newspapers and magazines shortly after the takeover of power. The *Schriftleitergesetz* from October 1933 prohibited Jews and politically non-compliant persons from being editors and allowed National Socialist officials to exert influence on all publications. In the following years, the regime tightened its control over the press further.¹⁴⁷ Thus the most common course of action, namely using newspaper and journal articles as primary sources for a discourse analysis is problematic.¹⁴⁸ Even though the largest part of the German people received their information on the New Order from the *gleichgeschalteten* (politically aligned) media, the decisive debates took place elsewhere.¹⁴⁹ Apart from articles in scientific journals, the debate on what Europe should look like in the future took place mostly within and between political and economic institutions.¹⁵⁰ In discourse-analytical terms we would have to take account of a strict restriction of the 'discursive practice': The number of positions from which

¹⁴⁶ See E. Fraenkel, *Der Doppelstaat. Recht und Justiz im 'Dritten Reich'*, Frankfurt a.M., Fischer, 1984, p. 26. According to Fraenkel private business could still rely on the rule of law. However, the New Order had not been officially codified so that companies were still in the dark.

¹⁴⁷ See P. Longerich, 'Nationalsozialistische Propaganda', in K. Bracher, M. Funke and H. Jacobsen (eds.), *Deutschland 1933-1945. Neue Studien zur nationalsozialistischen Herrschaft*, Düsseldorf, Droste, 1992, pp. 291-314, here pp. 297-299; R. Stöber, 'Presse im Nationalsozialismus', in B. Heidenreich and S. Neitzel (eds.), *Medien im Nationalsozialismus*, Paderborn, Schöningh, 2010, pp. 275-294. According to Dussel, the leeway the local press still enjoyed is unknown. See K. Dussel, *Deutsche Tagespresse im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Münster, LIT, 2004, p. 170.

¹⁴⁸ However, the usefulness of depictions of Europe in German newspapers depends on the epistemological interest. Greiner, for example, shows that their analysis and international contextualisation yields valuable insights. See F. Greiner, *Wege nach Europa. Deutungen eines imaginierten Kontinents in deutschen, britischen und amerikanischen Printmedien, 1914-1945*, Göttingen, Wallstein, 2014.

¹⁴⁹ Hacke calls National Socialist Germany a "laboratory of radical political ideas that competed with each other". J. Hacke, 'Politische Ideengeschichte und die Ideologien des 20. Jahrhunderts. Im Spannungsfeld historischer und politiktheoretisch geleiteter Absichten', in J. Hacke and M. Pohlig (eds.), *Theorie in der Geschichtswissenschaft. Einblicke in die Praxis des historischen Forschens*, Frankfurt a.M., Campus, 2008, pp. 147-170, here p. 160.

¹⁵⁰ Kletzin's work primarily focuses on published New Order concepts. Kletzin, *Rasse und Raum*.

one could have legitimately contributed to the discourse declined, but the statements made out of these positions gained in influence on the discourse and in their claim for truth. Hence, instead of focussing solely on the public sphere, a discourse-analytic perspective on the New Order should focus on internal struggle for interpretational sovereignty.

Relying predominantly on primary sources originating from within the participating institutions, has three major advantages: Firstly, the institutions the discourse analysis revolves around were not concerned with the New Europe on a merely theoretical level, but ministries, occupation authorities and enterprises were capable of implementing the appropriate measures. Secondly, by restraining the underlying sources the workload can be narrowed down without losing explanatory power because all the important standpoints have been developed within, or at least adopted by one of, these institutions. Finally, this focus seems to be an appropriate answer to the absence of a free public sphere in National Socialist Germany. The discourse might not have represented large parts of the population, but this fact does not diminish the potential insights.

The decision to choose a discourse-analytical perspective on National Socialist Germany raises another problem that becomes even more pressing if we solely concentrate on the wartime: Silke Schneider, for example, doubts that something like a genuinely National Socialist discourse exists at all. In her eyes, it is more accurate to speak of National Socialist versions of on-going discourses.¹⁵¹ This primarily semantic question is not a cause for concern here, but the fact that a discourse analysis – designed to trace the discontinuities of thoughts and actions for decades or even centuries – might be able to encompass the smaller changes that might have taken place within a few years definitely is. However, Schneider's conclusion offers a first hint of a possible solution: If the period we are primarily interested in just features variations of discourses from a longer tradition, our analysis could benefit by taking those predecessors into account. Thus, an examination of the National Socialist New Order discourse against the backdrop of previous thoughts on Europe would make it possible to identify the specifics of the National Socialist Europe-to-be, as reminiscences and innovations can be identified, just as re-emerging arguments and

¹⁵¹ See S. Schneider, 'Diskurse und Diktatur? Überlegungen zu einer Analyse des Nationalsozialismus mit Foucault', in B. Kerchner and S. Schneider (eds.), *Foucault: Diskursanalyse der Politik. Eine Einführung*, Wiesbaden, VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2006, pp. 123-144, here p. 140.

thought patterns can. Furthermore, concepts that lost ground or vanished completely will become evident. If, in so doing, the nuances of National Socialist discourse can be highlighted, this downside of the discourse-analytical approach is viably minimised – at least theoretically. Practically, the question then arises which concepts of and thoughts on Europe from the interwar period do qualify as predecessors of the National Socialist New Order. In principle, every pitfall described in the chapter on methodology also holds true in this respect: Our perspective on the interwar period should not be confined to certain concepts or specific ideas, for this would call for a priori decisions that might shut out crucial aspects. Therefore, we will give a concise overview covering the entire political spectrum and incorporating the main concepts. By gaining a better understanding of the voiced notions of the future of Europe during the interwar years, we virtually prolong our observation period from six to 27 years and can put the National Socialist plans for Europe into context more accurately.

The third downside of the discourse-analytical approach that has to be mitigated is its macro level nature. To focus on what was actually said and to reconstruct the sets of rules governing these statements is remote from the origins of these statements. However, in the long run the effects of discursively set standards or aims will lead to corresponding actions – or not – that will become apparent on the macro level. Foucault for example showed that the reorganization of medical knowledge was accompanied by the emergence of clinics, and the changing understanding of madness manifested itself in the building of ‘madhouses’¹⁵². The New Order discourse, however, did not result in comparable macro level phenomena. There was no consistent European policy, no supranational institutions were created, and no other widely visible measures on a European scale were introduced. Nevertheless, at the micro level numerous primary sources show that the New Order was an important point of reference for many individuals, networks, political institutions, and companies. Considering the short period of time during which the New Order seemed the most likely future scenario, it seems plausible to assume that the New Order discourse did have an effect, but it did not yet become apparent at the macro level. Thus, this study cannot restrict itself to adding up the used primary sources to a reconstruction of the

¹⁵² See M. Foucault, *Die Geburt der Klinik. Eine Archäologie des ärztlichen Blicks*, Frankfurt a.M., Fischer, 2005; M. Foucault, *Wahnsinn und Gesellschaft*, Frankfurt a.M., Suhrkamp, 2013.

discourse; it also has to trace the inverted process and the impact of the discourse on micro level developments. By referring to the power relations inevitably linked to discourses and by emphasising the relationship between words and deeds in our discussion of the different methodical approaches, we have already laid the theoretical ground for such an analysis: As has been stated above, restrictions are a key characteristic for discourses. On the one hand, they restrict what can be said and done. On the other hand, access to the discourse is restricted to those who meet their criteria. Thus, the power relations inherent to the discourse become apparent in two respects: An effect of the New Order discourse has to be affirmed if either its changing tenor succeeded in changing the rhetoric, thinking, or even actions on the micro level, or if the micro level development reveals what has been called a 'voluntary subordination'. More precisely, after having reconstructed the discourse, this study has to analyse micro level actors, their reasoning, and their actions in order to assess whether their words and deeds were – or changed – in accordance with the discursively altered New Order, thereby probing the significance of the discourse.

Overall therefore, a discourse analysis promises insights that clearly outweigh the fears about applying it to the 'Third Reich'. Furthermore, the three problems this approach faces in this study can be mitigated by relying primarily on internal sources, by prolonging the observation period, and by conceptualising the effects of discourses as being a two-way process: What individuals and institutions said and did constituted the discourse, but the discourse in turn set the limits for what could be said and done. This interdependence lies at the core of assessing the relevance of the New Order.

1.3 Analysing the New Order – Outline

The purpose of this study – assessing the factual relevance of the New Order – and the methodological answer to the shortcomings of previous research determine the structure of this work.

The first chapter 'Dreaming of a New Order' (chapter 2) will briefly outline German concepts for Europe in the interwar period. This section covers the entire political spectrum and was added to mitigate the methodical problems that arose out of the relatively short time span that the study covers. Apart from embedding the National

Socialist thought patterns, motives, arguments, and concepts into the tradition of European thinking in Germany before 1933 (chapter 2.1), the chapter will argue that several aspects of the German discourse on the future of Europe survived the National Socialist seizure of power (chapter 2.2) and later on found their way into the New Order discourse. While before 1933 the *völkisch* knowledge and belief system and its narrative of Europe had been championed only in conservative and right wing circles, aspects of the economic interpretive frame can be found in all political camps. A combination of both dominated the German discourse of Europe on the eve of the Second World War (chapter 2.3).

Against the background of these two dominant and long-standing interpretive frames,¹⁵³ the centrepiece of the study analyses the National Socialist New Order discourse under the heading “Planning of a New Order” (chapter 3). Even though this chapter is organised chronologically around the turning-points (1941 and 1943) which have been adopted from existing research, this chapter will hardly refer to secondary literature. As a reconstruction of contemporary thought, this section cannot rely on hermeneutic *ex-post* interpretations. Instead, as many primary sources as possible inform this chapter on National Socialist notions of Europe. While the ‘Unlimited Possibilities Made Feasible by the Sword’ (chapter 3.1) primarily exhibit German economic interests in Europe together with its *völkisch* desire to unite everyone of German blood in one *Reich*, ‘The Rise of Racism and the Growing Needs of All-Out War’ (chapter 3.2) characterise the discourse after the German assault on the Soviet Union. The National Socialist claim to *Lebensraum*, the racist ideology, and dreams of colonising the East engendered criticism as early as 1941, but these warnings fell on deaf ears until the military situation deteriorated dramatically. Nevertheless, despite the ‘Impending Defeat’ (chapter 3.3) the discursive mainstream was still marked by the same vision of a Europe graded by the racial value and the economic predisposition that National Socialists ascribed to them. Under the growing pressure of the war effort, however, the New Order disintegrated more and more: All

¹⁵³ These two interpretive frames will be spelled out in chapter 2.3. The concept of ‘interpretive frames’ has been adopted from Rainer Keller’s social-scientific discourse analysis of the German and French discourse on rubbish. He defines them, following Meuser and Sackmann, as “modes of perception and interpretation of the social world, schemes of ordering experiences [Erfahrungsaufordnung] and horizons of possible experiences, and means to cope with problems that call for actions [Handlungsprobleme].” Keller, *Müll*, p. 38.

the different notions that had amalgamated into a temporarily stable vision of Europe-to-be now re-emerged as potential alternatives.

Chapter 4, 'Creating the New Order', analyses the significance of the New Order. Subdivided into three periods, analogous to the discourse analysis, this chapter traces the influence of the New Order discourse on micro level protagonists. By contrasting the motives, aims, and actions of occupation regimes (chapter 4.1.1, 4.2.1, 4.3.1) and German businesses (chapter 4.1.2, 4.2.2, 4.3.2) with the changes that the notions of Europe underwent, it will become clear to what extent the thought patterns and arguments that dominated the discourse shaped their words and deeds. Unfortunately, it is impossible to cover German businesses and the multitude of German occupation authorities in their entirety. Thus, this chapter has to content itself with highlighting specific examples of related developments in order to shed light on their role in the discursive construction and the realisation of the New Order.

The last chapter, finally, revisits the label of National Socialist 'Anti-Europe' (chapter 5). By summing up the findings and correlating them to existing research - which had to be left aside in chapter 3 -, the advantages of analysing the New Order as a discourse should emerge clearly. Even though National Socialist notions of Europe were constantly rooted in *völkisch* and economic knowledge and belief systems, they also maintained traditional German notions of Europe in many respects. Furthermore, occupation authorities and private companies played their part in realising this vision, until private businesses defected in the wake of the disintegrating effects of the war effort. Finally, the study will conclude with a few indications of the persistence of several thought patterns and arguments that survived the 'Third Reich' to play a role in West Germany's post-war European policy.

1.4 Evidencing the New Order – Sources

As large parts of this study are based on primary sources, there is a need to provide a short overview of the primary sources and their role.

Unfortunately, an exhaustive overview of German notions of Europe during the interwar period does not yet exist. The spiritual forerunners of National Socialism¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴ See e.g. K. Sontheimer, *Antidemokratisches Denken in der Weimarer Republik. Die politischen Ideen des deutschen Nationalismus zwischen 1918 und 1933*, Munich, Nymphenburger, 1962; A.

and specific concepts like 'Paneuropa'¹⁵⁵, 'Mitteleuropa'¹⁵⁶, the 'Abendland'¹⁵⁷ (Occident), and the 'Reich'¹⁵⁸ (Empire) have provided deeper insights into the European dimension of contemporary thinking. More recently, monographs on Christian- and Social-democratic concepts for Europe and the ideas of the working class¹⁵⁹ have been published. However, due to their different focuses, these studies do not add up to a general overview of German notions of Europe between 1918 and 1939. Therefore, several periodicals and contemporary monographs have been consulted. The *Sozialistische Monatshefte* are crucial for outlining the leftist standpoints, while liberal and democratic views are reconstructed mainly on the basis of contemporary monographs. For conservative notions of Europe, the periodicals *Das Neue Reich*, *Hochland*, *Die Tat*, and the *Europäische Revue* proved to be useful. The chapter on extreme right-wing concepts mainly draws on the *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte* and several monographs. All of the periodicals mentioned inform the chapter on German notions of Europe between 1933 and 1939, as far as they were still allowed to be published.

The reconstruction of the wartime discourse on the future of Europe will – as mentioned above – almost exclusively rely on primary sources. For this purpose, I have

Mohler, *Die konservative Revolution in Deutschland 1918-1932. Ein Handbuch*, Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1972; S. Breuer, *Grundpositionen der deutschen Rechten (1871-1945)*, Tübingen, Diskord, 1999.

¹⁵⁵ See e.g. C. Pegg, *Evolution of the European Idea, 1914-1932*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1983; E. Richter, 'Die Paneuropa-Idee. Die aristokratische Rettung des Abendlandes', in J. Nautz and R. Vahrenkamp (eds.), *Die Wiener Jahrhundertwende. Einflüsse - Umwelt - Wirkungen*, Vienna, Böhlau, 1993, pp. 788-812; K. Erdmenger, *Neue Ansätze zur Organisation Europas nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg (1917-1933). Ein neues Verständnis von Europa?*, Sinzheim, Pro Universitate, 1994.

¹⁵⁶ See e.g. Elvert, *Mittleuropa*; R. Frommelt, *Paneuropa oder Mitteleuropa? Einigungsbestrebungen im Kalkül deutscher Wirtschaft und Politik 1925-1933*, Stuttgart, Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1977; G. Delanty, *Inventing Europe - Idea, Identity, Reality*, Houndmills, Macmillan, 1995; P. Stirk, 'The Idea of Mitteleuropa', in P. Stirk (ed.), *Mitteleuropa. History and Prospects*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1994, pp. 1-35; H. Meyer, *Mitteleuropa in German Thought and Action 1815-1945*, Den Haag, Nijhoff, 1955.

¹⁵⁷ See e.g. Conze, *Ideen von Europa*, 2005; R. Faber, *Abendland. Ein politischer Kampfbegriff*, Berlin, Philo, 2002.

¹⁵⁸ See e.g. D. Langewiesche, *Reich, Nation, Föderation. Deutschland und Europa*, Nördlingen, Beck, 2008; H. Münkler, *Reich, Nation, Europa. Modelle politischer Ordnung*, Weinheim, Athenäum, 1996; J. Hermand, *Der alte Traum vom neuen Reich. Völkische Utopien und Nationalsozialismus*, Frankfurt a.M., Athenäum, 1988.

¹⁵⁹ See C. Bailey, 'The European Discourse in Germany, 1939-1950: Three Case Studies', *German History*, vol. 28, no. 4, 2010, pp. 453-478. C. Bailey, 'The Continuities of West German History. Conceptions of Europe, Democracy and the West in Interwar and Postwar Germany', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, vol. 36, no. 4, 2010, pp. 567-596; C. Bailey, *Between Yesterday and Tomorrow. German Visions of Europe, 1926-1950*, New York, Berghahn, 2013; W. Buschak, *Die Vereinigten Staaten von Europa sind unser Ziel. Arbeiterbewegung und Europa im frühen 20. Jahrhundert*, Essen, Klartext, 2014.

gathered as many documents as possible that attest to a concept for Europe or to an interest in any form of European post-war order. Despite actually having a different focus, several editions of sources are a major help in this respect (see chapter 1.1). Additionally, a lot of work went into additional research in different archives. In the *Bundesarchiv-Lichterfelde*, the documents of several Nazi party (BArch NS 6, NS 51, NS 10) and SS-institutions (NS 19, NS 2), the *Reichswirtschaftsministerium* (R 3101), the *Reichsfinanzministerium* (R 2), the *Deutsche Reichsbank* (R 2501), the *Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda* (R 55), the *Reichsministerium für Rüstungs- und Kriegsproduktion* (R 3), *Reichsverkehrsministerium* (R 5), the *Reichsministerium für die besetzten Ostgebiete* (R 6), the *Auswärtiges Amt* (R 901) proved relevant. For documents related to the role of private companies within the New Order, I worked through the documents of the *Reichsgruppe Industrie* (R 12 I) and the numerous *Wirtschaftsgruppen* (R 13 I-XXXIV), whereas the standpoints of central army institutions (BArch MA RW 19, 45, 46) was analysed in the military historical branch of the *Bundesarchiv* in Freiburg. Furthermore, a short-term research fellowship from the German Historical Institute in Moscow allowed for research in the Russian State Military Archives in Moscow. Unfortunately, four weeks did not suffice to work through all of its promising holdings.¹⁶⁰ Nevertheless, the valuable additional primary sources from the *Reichswirtschaftsministerium* (RGVA 1458) and the *Vierjahresplanbehörde* (700) alone justified the journey. Thus, the reconstruction of the discourse can rely on a broad basis of primary sources originating from various institutions.

The penultimate chapter, which explores the impact of the New Order on the micro level, can heavily draw on existing research. Numerous case studies extensively cover German occupation policies and their leading figures, while the recent boom in business history has yielded plenty of studies that shed light on business policies during the 'Third Reich'. Nevertheless, additional archival work was necessary for this chapter because business-historical case studies occasionally neglect the European dimension or do not address it in as much depth as is necessary for our pur-

¹⁶⁰ K. Scheel, 'Deutsche Beuteakten im Sonderarchiv Moskau. Vorgeschichte und Bestände', in W. Röhr and B. Berlekamp (eds.), *"Neuordnung Europas" - Vorträge vor der Berliner Gesellschaft für Faschismus- und Weltkriegsforschung 1992-1996*, Berlin, Organon, 1996, pp. 415-432; B. Eggenkämper, 'Der Bestand Reichswirtschaftsministerium im "Zentrum für die Aufbewahrung historisch-dokumentarischer Sammlungen" ("Sonderarchiv") in Moskau', *Zeitschrift für Unternehmensgeschichte*, vol. 43, no. 2, 1998, pp. 227-236.

pose. Since the exact wordings of statements and motives for actions matter in this context, the internal documents of several businesses from different branches were analysed. Visits to the *Carl Zeiss* archive (CZA) and the historical archive of *Daimler-Benz AG* (DBA) as well as the *Dresdner Bank's* documents in the historical archive of the *Commerzbank* (HAC) and *Mannesmann AG's* records (M) in the company archive of *Salzgitter AG*, provided valuable material. Even though the findings were not on their own extensive enough to sustain an argument based on a single case study, they substantiate the exemplary cases that highlight the significance of the New Order for the policies of German private businesses.

Overall, the broad basis of secondary literature and primary sources that inform this study form a sound basis for the reconstruction of National Socialist notions of Europe and for the analysis of their implementation.

2. Dreaming of a New Order

Something sinister has descended on the world. It hangs heavily over the killing fields and the ruins of Russia; it is astir in Germany's starving, disillusioned and helpless masses. Is it the twilight of an ageing, exhausted Europe which is enveloping the continent after a long, momentous and world-changing history, ushering it into the night of soulless barbarism? Or can we observe the dawning of a better future?¹ (Walter Vogel, 1921)

The First World War dramatically changed global power relations: The United States of America emerged from the worldwide conflict as the leading industrial and financial power in the world and experienced growth and prosperity in the following decade. The European states, by contrast, were deeply in debt and shaken by the political and economic consequences of the war. In contrast to the U.S. and other aspiring large areas of the world like Asia and the Soviet Union, Europe, once the political, economic, and cultural centre of the world, found itself fragmented and at risk of being marginalised.² In Germany the feeling of crisis and decline was even more intense than elsewhere in Europe: After having lost the war that was supposed to result in its supremacy on the continent, Germany was held responsible for its outbreak and lost important parts of its territory, its traditional political system, most of its military power, and was forced to pay reparations to the victors. In addition to the wounded 'national pride', the lost war and the peace treaties brought about a political and economic instability that undermined support for the newly formed Weimar Republic and the *status quo* in general. Accordingly, the mood amongst Germans was full of gloom. Edgar Jung for example stated in 1927 that what was nowadays labelled progress was in fact decline, and the title of Oswald Spengler's very influential book *The Decline of the West* seemed to have put the generally bleak prospects in a nutshell.³

This chapter deals with the interwar period and reconstructs how Germans perceived Europe, what shortcomings they ascribed to it, and what measures they proposed to

¹ W. Vogel, *Das neue Europa und seine historisch-geographischen Grundlagen*, Bonn, Kurt Schroeder, 1921, p. 57.

² See D. Heater, *The Idea of European Unity*, Leicester, Leicester University Press, 1992, p. 116.

³ See E. Jung, *Die Herrschaft der Minderwertigen. Ihr Zerfall und ihre Ablösung*, Berlin, Deutsche Rundschau, 1927, pp. 2-3; L. Dupeux, 'Die Intellektuellen der "Konservativen Revolution" und ihr Einfluß zur Zeit der Weimarer Republik', in W. Schmitz and C. Vollnhals (eds.), *Völkische Bewegung - Konservative Revolution - Nationalsozialismus. Aspekte einer politisierten Kultur*, Dresden, Thelem, 2005, pp. 3-20, here p. 11.

remedy these. In order to cover the multitude of notions of Europe voiced across the political spectrum, the overview is structured along broad political affiliations, ranging from socialist and social democratic standpoints, subsumed under 'leftist', to authoritarian and '*völkisch*' conceptions on the 'extreme right' (chapter 2.1). These categories are not strictly distinct,⁴ but they are broad enough to encompass all the existing positions and, at the same time, they are narrow enough to illustrate shared thought patterns, motives, objectives, expectations and approaches. Whilst the following chapter cannot claim to be an exhaustive overview, its findings make clear what impact the National Socialist seizure of power in 1933 had on the German discourse on Europe (chapter 2.2). By 1939, the discourse was dominated by notions of Europe that were rooted in two long-standing and well-established knowledge and belief systems: Europe was discursively constructed along widely accepted economic thought patterns and along a *völkisch* interpretive frame, which owed its discursive dominance to the National Socialist seizure of power (chapter 2.3)

2.1 Germany Prescribing Cures for Moribund Europe (1918-1933)

Even though most contemporary German diagnoses of the state of affairs in Europe sounded fatalistic and bleak, they also held out hope. Claiming to have identified the causes of Europe's current misery, these appraisals usually prescribed a supposedly efficacious remedy. The comparison of Europe's currently moribund state with its glorious past or with its healthier competitors suggested different causes – and thus the potential cures varied. A look abroad, on the one hand, suggested that the US-American formula of success – creating a vast territorial entity under a common political roof – might be the silver bullet for achieving power and prosperity.⁵ Many believed that if Europe did not want to go under between the economic dominance of the U.S. and the military power of Russia, it had to follow suit.⁶ A look back in history,

⁴ Coudenhove-Kalergi, for example, held liberal views as well as aristocratic ones, and some conservative ideas cannot be separated adequately from right-wing notions. See e.g. G. Müller, 'Jenseits des Nationalismus? – "Europa" als Konzept grenzübergreifender adlig-bürgerlicher Elitendiskurse zwischen den beiden Weltkriegen', in H. Reif (ed.), *Adel und Bürgertum in Deutschland II - Entwicklungslinien und Wendepunkte im 20. Jahrhundert*, Berlin, Akademie, 2001, pp. 235-268, here p. 247; L. McGowan, 'The Extreme Right', in P. Panayi (ed.), *Weimar and Nazi Germany. Continuities and Discontinuities*, Harlow, Pearson, 2001, pp. 246-272, here p. 249.

⁵ See A. Weber, 'Europa als Weltindustrienzentrum und die Idee der Zollunion', in H. Heiman (ed.), *Europäische Zollunion. Beiträge zu Problem und Lösung*, Berlin, Hobbing, 1926, pp. 122-132, here p. 132.

⁶ See R. Coudenhove-Kalergi, *Panuropa*, Vienna, Paneuropa-Verlag, 1926, p. 15.

on the other hand, offered different ways out of contemporary problems: a German-dominated *Mitteleuropa* for which World War I had been fought, the Greater German Empire Bismarck had failed to erect, the Hanseatic League constituting a mutually beneficial Europe-wide trade association, and the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation loosely uniting Europe under the Christian faith, all taught different lessons and led to varying conclusions.⁷ Furthermore, for some, Europe's decline was not a matter of organisation or political systems but of a process of racial and spiritual degeneration that had to be reversed.⁸ Hence, the discussion on how Europe could recover and reclaim its due status provoked heterogeneous thoughts and a broad spectrum of potential options that oscillated between all these points of reference.

2.1.1 Capitalist Means for a Socialist Future – Leftist Concepts for Europe

The direction of the development is decisive: Towards peace, towards prosperity, towards the social advancement of the masses, towards the integration of Europe!⁹ (Wladimir Woytinski, 1930)

German socialists were in favour of a unified Europe. They considered it a means to secure peace and prosperity and to eventually overcome capitalism. Largely sharing the same beliefs and being driven by the same motives, the socialist left did not differ very much in its opinions on how such a European order could be realised.

From a working class point of view, Europe's decay had to be stopped not because political power and cultural influence were values as such and worth preserving, but because Europe's current state endangered its economic well-being.¹⁰ The rise of

⁷ See J. Wolf, 'Vorläufer und Parallelen einer europäischen Zollunion', in H. Heiman (ed.), *Europäische Zollunion. Beiträge zu Problem und Lösung*, Berlin, Hobbings, 1926, pp. 9-22, p. 22; M. Clauss, *Die deutsche Wende in Europa*, Munich, Callway, 1934, p. 214; W. Daitz, 'Organischer Aufbau von Volks- und Großraumwirtschaft', in W. Daitz (ed.), *Der Weg zur völkischen Wirtschaft*, Berlin, Verlag der Deutschen Technik, 1938, pp. 59-75, here p. 75; M. Hussarek, 'Paneuropäische Betrachtungen', *Das Neue Reich*, vol. 9, no. 13/14, 1926, pp. 258-260, here p. 258.

⁸ See O. Eberz, 'Europäisches Selbstbewußtsein', *Hochland*, vol. 22, no. 1, 1924/1925, pp. 172-188, here p. 188. This fear of racial degeneration was widespread in the interwar period and explains the international popularity of eugenics. See e.g. C. Hutton, *Race and the Third Reich. Linguistics, Racial Anthropology and Genetics in the Dialectic of Volk*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2005, pp. 11-12; S. Kühl, *Die Internationale der Rassisten. Aufstieg und Niedergang der internationalen Bewegung für Eugenik und Rassenhygiene im 20. Jahrhundert*, Frankfurt a.M., Campus, 1997; A. Feiler, *Amerika-Europa*, Frankfurt a.M., Frankfurter Societäts-Druckerei, 1926, pp. 335-336.

⁹ W. Woytinski, *Tatsachen und Zahlen Europas*, Vienna, Paneuropa-Verlag, 1930, p. 210.

¹⁰ See M. Cohen, 'Für deutsche Europapolitik', *Sozialistische Monatshefte*, vol. 36, no. 71, 1930, pp. 638-644, here p. 639; P. Kampffmeyer, 'Zu einer europäischen Wirtschafts- und Sozialpolitik', *Sozialistische Monatshefte*, vol. 32, no. 63, 1926, pp. 17-19, here p. 18.

the United States, the formation of the Soviet Union, the advancing integration in the Asian-Pacific area and the cooperation within the British Commonwealth were cause for concern, but economic growth and increasing prosperity were considered to be the key to improving Europe's standing.¹¹ Therefore, anything which hampered the European economies had to be overcome.

One of the most serious obstacles to economic well-being was the fragmentation of Europe created by the treaty of Versailles:¹² Not being able to compete with the largest industrial nations, the smaller states tried to shield their own industries with tariff walls. This resulted in reduced market access for exporting countries and in the emergence of inefficient, non-competitive industries.¹³ In the eyes of German socialists, Europe would be better off if tariffs were reduced or abolished and a European division of labour was established.¹⁴ The creation of a large common market would not only be in the interest of the industrial nations but would also be beneficial to agrarian states.¹⁵ Complementing one another perfectly, all European countries would be able to focus on their respective comparative advantages, thus allowing them to benefit from a customs union: For German industrial output a large market would emerge and the rising living standards – brought about by economies of scale – would increase demand for quality foodstuffs. This demand could then be met by the exports of agrarian states, enabling them to intensify farming and to invest in processing industries.¹⁶ By putting to work its capital surplus, France was supposed to play the role of a catalyst for investments, thereby becoming Europe's prime banker.¹⁷ The creation of such a 'win-win-win situation' promised economic growth and prosperity because intensifying the given natural linkages was supposed to unleash synergy effects.¹⁸

¹¹ See F. Stössinger, 'Kontinentalpolitik als Beginn der Neuzeit', *Sozialistische Monatshefte*, vol. 36, no. 71, 1930, pp. 455-461, here p. 460.

¹² See H. Kranold, 'Nun erst recht Kontinentalpolitik', *Sozialistische Monatshefte*, vol. 36, no. 72, 1930, pp. 845-854, here p. 847.

¹³ See M. Schippel, 'Handelspolitische Gruppenbildung, Kontinentaleuropa und Freihandel', *Sozialistische Monatshefte*, vol. 32, no. 63, 1926, pp. 682-686, p. 684.

¹⁴ See M. Cohen-Reuß, 'Schutzzoll und Freihandel innerhalb und außerhalb einer europäischen Zollunion', in H. Heiman (ed.), *Europäische Zollunion. Beiträge zu Problem und Lösung*, Berlin, Hobbings, 1926, pp. 140-148, here p. 148.

¹⁵ See H. Kranold, *Vereinigte Staaten von Europa. Eine Aufgabe proletarischer Politik*, Hannover, Meister und Ko, 1924, p. 14.

¹⁶ See Schippel, 'Handelspolitische Gruppenbildung', p. 686.

¹⁷ See R. Kleineibst, 'Spiel um Europa', *Sozialistische Monatshefte*, vol. 37, no. 74, 1931, pp. 731-738, here pp. 737-738.

¹⁸ See Woytinski, *Tatsachen und Zahlen*, pp. 40-54.

German socialists expected that bringing the European economies back on track would facilitate their work. Instead of having to fight over the fair redistribution of existing prosperity, economic growth meant that the wealth increase could be distributed, thus rendering the socialist struggle easier. Furthermore, the creation of a large common market was expected to change the nature of companies and the way they operated. In order to stay competitive, businesses had to grow accordingly, or had to seek other arrangements to secure their vital interests. German socialists endorsed both. European cartels, syndicates, and price agreements would not only steady capitalist business cycles but were also considered as an essential part of a European social policy as working conditions and living standards were expected to align.¹⁹ Additionally, the growth of economic organisations and companies were expected to have another convenient side effect: Highly integrated businesses with long production chains were deemed more vulnerable. Like giants on clay feet, their weak spots could be exploited in times of labour disputes.²⁰ At the same time, the labour movement was expected to gain in number and strength – just as it did after the German unification – because if borders lost their significance not only would capital internationalise but socialist cooperation would as well.²¹ Thus, German socialists recommended coming to terms with the capitalist system and forming a temporary alliance with bourgeois forces in order ultimately to overcome both.²²

The key issue of this socialist Europe-to-be was the question of how it could be realised. Given the atmosphere of animosity and mistrust, which centuries of rivalry and wars had created, European unification faced severe obstacles. From this perspective, Europe's glorious history had evolved into a burden: Whereas the United States – a country with no history²³ – could rely on a feeling of togetherness, the European peoples were focused on the differences between them, thereby reinforcing envy and hate. Even though German socialists were convinced that the European nations had far more in common than they realised, most of them feared that their blood relationship, their shared way of thinking, their common culture, and their actual economic interdependence would not be enough to sustain a process of European Inte-

¹⁹ See R. Kleineibst, 'Vor der Europakonferenz', *Sozialistische Monatshefte*, vol. 37, no. 73, 1931, pp. 426-430, here p. 430.

²⁰ See Kranold, *Vereinigte Staaten von Europa*, p. 29.

²¹ See Kampffmeyer, 'Wirtschafts- und Sozialpolitik', pp. 18-19.

²² See Kranold, *Vereinigte Staaten von Europa*, pp. 28-30.

²³ See Woytinski, *Tatsachen und Zahlen*, p. 209.

gration.²⁴ Thus, the feeling of community could not serve as a starting-point for European unification but was rather seen as one of the hoped-for results. However, a decisive first step towards a “European fatherland”²⁵ could already be taken: economic cooperation. By demonstrating the extent to which European countries depended on each other and by increasing international understanding through cooperation, a customs union would pave the way for further “political, legal, mental, and cultural”²⁶ integration.

In contrast to German conservatives and right-wing politicians, socialists did not look eastwards or cling to *Mitteleuropa* but advocated a French-German agreement. In the eyes of German socialists, France’s quest for European supremacy was nothing more than a conservative spectre; in fact, France pursued its European policy in good faith and honestly wished for reconciliation and agreement.²⁷ Furthermore, Germany’s defeat of 1918 had cleared the way for cooperation between the erstwhile arch-enemies, as it had abolished absolutism and cleared the way for socialist work in parliament.²⁸ Thus, the conditions were supposedly ideal and mere reason alone would suffice to initiate a process of European integration.²⁹ Once France and Germany had started to cooperate economically, the smaller countries would not be able to withstand them. Being attractive to all European states, the area of economic cooperation would expand and ultimately unite all of Europe – except for Great Britain and the Soviet Union: The former was itself an empire and mainly concerned with the Commonwealth; the latter’s interests and better part of its territory lay outside of Europe.³⁰ Nevertheless, Europe would be able to become largely self-sufficient thanks to its colonies. German socialists argued for the inclusion of Africa, since it could provide Europe with exotic foodstuffs and raw materials.³¹ In exchange, France

²⁴ See P. Goehre, ‘Die europäische Zollunion als geopolitische Vorbedingung Kontinentaleuropas’, in H. Heiman (ed.), *Europäische Zollunion. Beiträge zu Problem und Lösung*, Berlin, Hobbing, 1926, pp. 36-44, here p. 42.

²⁵ Kranold, ‘Kontinentalpolitik’, p. 854.

²⁶ Goehre, ‘Europäische Zollunion’, p. 43.

²⁷ See R. Kleineibst, ‘Es wird europäisch gesprochen’, *Sozialistische Monatshefte*, vol. 36, no. 71, 1930, pp. 735-741, here p. 741.

²⁸ See P. Kampffmeyer, ‘Sozialistische Demokratie als Grundlage Europäischer Politik’, *Sozialistische Monatshefte*, vol. 37, no. 73, 1931, pp. 530-536, here p. 536.

²⁹ See Kleineibst, ‘Spiel um Europa’, pp. 737-738.

³⁰ See M. Cohen, ‘Östliche und kontinentale Orientierung’, *Sozialistische Monatshefte*, vol. 32, no. 63, 1926, pp. 809-813, here p. 810.

³¹ See M. Cohen, ‘Für eine deutsche Kolonialzukunft’, *Sozialistische Monatshefte*, vol. 32, no. 63, 1926, pp. 687-693, p. 688.

and Germany could assist in modernising Africa.³² Thus, the ultimate aim of French-German cooperation was to unleash a dynamic of integration that would eventually create an unnamed³³ economic union comprising the European continent and Africa.

Overall, German socialists had no doubts that Europe's future lay in its unification. In this way, Europe could reclaim its place among the leading economic powers in the world. Socialism would benefit as well and get closer to achieving its goals. Since a European sense of community did not exist, economic cooperation was supposed to initiate the process of unification and constituted the backbone of most socialist concepts. Ultimately, a European Union was seen as a means to overcome capitalism and as a step towards the long-term objective: a worldwide federation of socialist nations.

2.1.2 The 'Good Europeans' – Liberal and Democratic Concepts for Europe

Only the unification of all European states to an organic whole [...] can turn Europe into an equal participant and factor in human development on earth once again. Only this unification is capable of breathing new life into Europe's individual states, which are otherwise destined to insignificance, of wrenching them out of the hopelessness of their current situation ... to save the *Abendland* [Occident].³⁴ (Franz Carl Endres, 1925)

German liberals and democrats, who are usually considered to be the 'good Europeans',³⁵ of the interwar period, wished for a European Unification, not least because they deemed it vital: Not to pool Europe's potential would inevitably lead further down the road to ruin. The creation of a European Community, on the contrary, promised peace, wealth, and the preservation of European culture and its role in the world. Being aware of the many difficulties such a project faced, liberals and democrats discussed several ways to realise a united Europe.

³² See H. Sörgel, 'Europa-Afrika; ein Weltteil', *Sozialistische Monatshefte*, vol. 37, no. 74, 1931, pp. 983-987, here p.986

³³ In contrast to other political camps, socialists did not have a catch phrase for their concept. Even though some used the terms '*PanEuropa*' or 'United States of Europe' from time to time, fundamental differences to the aristocratic Pan-European movement and the aversion to the capitalist and allegedly uncultivated United States brought German socialists to speak of 'European Unification' or 'united European continent' most of the time. See e.g. P. Schmidt, 'Das Herz Europas', *Sozialistische Monatshefte*, vol. 36, no. 70, pp. 145-147, here p. 147.

³⁴ F. Endres, *Vaterland Europa*, Berlin, Schwetschke & Sohn, 1925, p. 36.

³⁵ This term is a reference to Pegg, who speaks of the supporters of Coudenhove-Kalergi's Pan-European movement as the 'good Europeans'. Pegg, *European Idea*.

In their eyes, Europe's strength had to be rebuilt in order to avoid its decay. On the one hand, the rise of the United States, Great Britain, and Japan entailed the risk of being economically marginalized.³⁶ The Communist Revolution in Russia and its claim to world revolution, on the other hand, posed an abstract ideational and a concrete military threat.³⁷ Since no country would stand a chance on its own, the European states had to cooperate: economically in order to prevent Communism from gaining further ground by raising European living standards; and politically in order to deter the Soviet Union from expansionist ambitions by displaying Europe's solidarity. Only a united Europe would be powerful enough to avert the "misery and barbarism"³⁸ of a "new thousand-year medieval period"³⁹.

According to most German liberals and democrats, the creation of *PanEuropa*⁴⁰, or the 'United States of Europe'⁴¹ was essential and the only adequate response to the fundamental changes the world had been undergoing in the past decades. Economic competition had become fiercer in a world that was getting smaller and smaller due to technological progress, faster transport, and more efficient means of communication.⁴² Having to match rivals on a global level, companies operating in small states were handicapped. Compared to the domestic market in the United States, the various shielded European markets were tiny. If Europe wanted to stay competitive, customs barriers had to make way for a large common market that would render highly efficient mass production profitable.⁴³ Being protected by tariff walls on the outer borders, such a *Großraumwirtschaft*⁴⁴ would increase Europe's wealth and the living standards of its inhabitants.⁴⁵

³⁶ See Weber, 'Idee der Zollunion', p. 122.

³⁷ See Endres, *Vaterland Europa*, p. 135.

³⁸ R. Riedl, 'Die Vereinigten Staaten von Europa als konstruktives Problem', in K. Loesch (ed.), *Staat und Volkstum*, Berlin, Deutscher Schutzbund Verlag, 1926, pp. 51-86, here p. 53.

³⁹ S. Haupt-Buchenrode, *Die Zukunft Europas*, Leipzig, Der neue Geist Verlag, 1922, p. 90.

⁴⁰ *PanEuropa* was the title of Coudenhove-Kalergi's first book. Published in 1923, it became a bestseller. Much of the discussion about Europe's future in the interwar period revolved around this catch phrase. See V. Conze, *Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi. Umstrittener Visionär Europas*, Zürich, Muster-Schmidt, 2004, pp. 15-16.

⁴¹ While some democrats envisaged the United States of Europe, others rejected this expression because of the inappropriate parallels with the United States of America. See e.g. G. Stolper, 'Staat - Nation - Wirtschaft. Zur Problematik der europäischen Zollunion', in H. Heiman (ed.), *Europäische Zollunion. Beiträge zu Problem und Lösung*, Berlin, Hobbings, 1926, pp. 45-60, here p. 46.

⁴² See Coudenhove-Kalergi, *PanEuropa*, pp. 16-18.

⁴³ Weber, 'Idee der Zollunion', p. 122.

⁴⁴ The idea of a '*Großraumwirtschaft*' was not exclusively discussed among conservatives and nationalists. See e.g. W. Grotkopp, *Europäische Zollunion als Weg aus deutscher Wirtschaftsnot*, Berlin,

Some liberals, however, rejected the idea of a European common market because its external tariffs would reinforce protectionist tendencies elsewhere without offering advantages over a general free trade policy.⁴⁶ Both scenarios, intra-European free trade and worldwide free trade, fanned fears in smaller countries that had to be allayed. Most of the industries that had developed since the beginning of World War I would not survive the end of protectionism. However, bearing in mind the overall welfare gains, German liberals and democrats emphasised that this price was not too high to pay.⁴⁷ Of course, Germany's overwhelming industrial potential made it easy to take this stance. But apart from the economic well-being of Europe as a whole, a second hope was pinned on the expansion of European cooperation. The fight "for the reduction of tariffs, for the European customs union, for a rapprochement of the peoples today" was also considered "a matter of a higher aim: Securing peace."⁴⁸ After all, the nationalisms within Europe had culminated in the First World War and had brought the continent to the brink. Therefore, another war had to be avoided by putting the nation into perspective.⁴⁹ But since European cooperation was the only way to save the nation, such a step would not be betrayal but patriotism.⁵⁰ Together with economic dependence, cultural similarities, and shared beliefs, this insight was to form the basis for a European sense of community.

Since the outcome of World War I had put an end to many monarchies in Europe, the supranational order was envisaged as democratic. However, given existing scepticism, it seemed advisable to limit the political process of unification at the beginning. By avoiding majority decisions and by still granting the member states a high degree of sovereignty, this new polity was meant to be acceptable for every nation.⁵¹ Nevertheless, some decision-making powers had to be delegated: Richard Riedl, for example, envisaged an arbitrating body that should bindingly settle disputes between the states. Furthermore, a bicameral parliament – consisting of one chamber com-

Rothschild, 1931, p. 28; F. Eulenburg, *Großraumwirtschaft und Autarkie*, Jena, Gustav Fischer, 1932, p. 6.

⁴⁵ W. Grotkopp, *Die Zölle nieder! Wege zur europäischen Wirtschaftseinheit*, Berlin, Rothschild, 1930, pp. 138-141.

⁴⁶ Stolper, 'Zollunion', p. 60.

⁴⁷ Grotkopp, *Europäische Zollunion*, pp. 1, 12-14.

⁴⁸ Grotkopp, *Zölle nieder*, p. 141.

⁴⁹ Coudenhove-Kalergi, *Panuropa*, pp. 85-94.

⁵⁰ Endres, *Vaterland Europa*, pp. 18-20.

⁵¹ See F. Friedensburg, 'Verwaltungsmöglichkeiten der europäischen Zollunion', in H. Heiman (ed.), *Europäische Zollunion. Beiträge zu Problem und Lösung*, Berlin, Hobbing, 1926, pp. 193-203, here pp. 194-197.

prising delegates of the parliaments and one consisting of the governments – should represent Europe abroad and watch over the adherence of the economic basic rules, such as the free movement of persons, freedom of trade, and the equal status of all enterprises and persons.⁵² Later on, when the ‘United States of Europe’ had proven successful, it could expand into other policy fields. “One tariff, one currency, one market, one will, one friendship, one fate, that is Europe as it ought to be and as it can be.”⁵³

The question of how to reach the goal of a united Europe, however, split liberals and democrats into different fractions. In principle, they discussed four different starting-points. As a prime example for a peaceful cooperation between states, the League of Nations was a role model for a European polity for some and a means to realize Europe’s unification for others.⁵⁴ Due to its conciliatory nature, it would help to allay the fears of smaller countries, meet France’s need for safety, and demonstrate Germany’s good will.⁵⁵ Others objected that European issues should be dealt with by European states, not an “inorganic” organisation comprising most countries of the world. Demanding a European Monroe Doctrine, they postulated “Europe for the Europeans”⁵⁶. Thus, for other liberals and democrats, Europe itself was to take the initiative and to advance its political efforts. Ideally, a meeting of all European nations should be summoned to elaborate a first treaty laying the groundwork for further integration.⁵⁷ However, even optimists regarded it as unlikely that any treaty could attract the support of all European states. A French-German treaty, as the nucleus for enlargement, therefore seemed a more realistic option.⁵⁸ Those German liberals and democrats who considered this approach too ambitious still advocated economic cooperation as a first step: revitalising the economy was one of Europe’s most pressing problems, and a thriving large common market would appeal to industries in many countries.⁵⁹ Having to clear the lowest hurdles, such a step would then require

⁵² See Riedl, ‘Vereinigte Staaten von Europa’, pp. 55-73.

⁵³ Endres, *Vaterland Europa*, p. 103.

⁵⁴ See E. Koch-Weser, *Deutschlands Außenpolitik in der Nachkriegszeit 1919-1929*, Berlin, Vowinckel, 1929, p. 100; Endres, *Vaterland Europa*, pp. 111-114.

⁵⁵ See W. Heile, *Nationalstaat und Völkerbund. Gedanken über Deutschlands europäische Sendung*, Halberstadt, Meyer’s Buchdruckerei, 1926, pp. 60-76.

⁵⁶ Coudenhove-Kalergi, *Panuropa*, p. 75.

⁵⁷ See *Ibid.*, pp. 140-154.

⁵⁸ See e.g. F. Funk, *Die Vereinigten Staaten Europas*, Aarau, Sauerländer, 1930, pp. 3-4; Koch-Weser, *Deutschlands Außenpolitik*, 1929, pp. 89, 121.

⁵⁹ See W. Frisch, ‘Genfer Europa-Diskussionen’, *Der deutsche Volkswirt*, vol. 4, no. 51, 1930, pp. 1733-1735.

Europe-wide regulations and agreements thus leading to political cooperation as well. Nevertheless, sceptics argued that the only thing all European countries shared was a “solidarity of poverty”⁶⁰. And without a solid ideological foundation, a European sense of community, every attempt to create a European polity or even measures of economic integration were bound to fail.⁶¹

Overall, German liberals and democrats considered the unification of Europe a necessity. Even though they disagreed on the means by which their vision of Europe could be realized, they all shared the belief that, without economic cooperation, Europe would not be able meet to the needs of the modern world, and that security and peace were essential preconditions if Europe wanted to regain its former political significance. Both objectives were partly ends in themselves and partly driven by the fear that communist Russia might exploit Europe’s weakness.

2.1.3 Going Forward, Looking Backwards – Conservative Concepts for Europe

The Reich is the great and tragic destiny of the Germans, for it prevents them from contenting themselves with just a state, and commits them to wanting a territorial and spiritual union which is not to be found among themselves, but which transcends them. They bear the destiny of Europe on their shoulders and Europe’s discord in their hearts – from the very outset.⁶² (Fritz Büchner, 1932)

German conservatives argued for a reorganisation of Europe. In order to preserve its values and its culture, the Treaty of Versailles had to be revised. Claiming that the condition of Europe had always depended on Germany’s well-being, they advocated the restoration of Germany’s power and glory. After all, the *Reich* was entitled to it and Europe needed it. Even though conservatives shared a Germany-centred perspective, they put forward a broad variety of motives, objectives, and hopes. The designated means to realize these differed accordingly.

In the eyes of many German conservatives, the political decay of Europe was a mere allegory of an underlying, more substantial spiritual decline.⁶³ Due to the dominance

⁶⁰ T. Heuss, ‘Der Einfluß von Krieg und Frieden auf das europäische Problem’, in H. Heiman (ed.), *Europäische Zollunion. Beiträge zu Problem und Lösung*, Berlin, Hobbing, pp. 23-35, here p. 35.

⁶¹ See e.g. Stolper, ‘Zollunion’, p. 60; Grotkopp, *Europäische Zollunion*, p. 30.

⁶² F. Büchner, ‘Das Reich als Raum und Geschichte’, in F. Büchner (ed.), *Was ist das Reich? Eine Aussprache unter Deutschen*, Oldenburg, Stalling, 1932, pp. 7-12, here p. 7.

⁶³ See F. Foerster, ‘Der Sinn der gegenwärtigen Krisis des Abendlandes’, *Das Neue Reich*, vol. 3, no. 38, 1923, pp. 835-837, here p. 835.

of France and its political principles, Europe had lost its unifying idea and had descended into individualism and separation.⁶⁴ Being threatened by the Bolshevik menace in the East and the economic dominance of the United States in the West, Europe had become a *Schicksalsgemeinschaft* (community of destiny) that would either counter this situation together or was bound to perish.⁶⁵ Only a genuinely European idea, a third way between the misguided liberalism of the West and the destructive communism of the East, could unify Europe and enable it to hold its ground within a world shaped by different *Großräume* and their ideologies. Giving Europe this idea was deemed Germany's calling.⁶⁶

Germany was the central point of reference for this conservative Europe-to-be: Just as the life of any organism depended on a healthy heart, Europe needed the sound beating of the "heart of Europe"⁶⁷: Germany. However, since the dominance of France and the Treaty of Versailles it supported so vigorously, had crippled Germany, both had to be overcome if Europe was ever to prosper again.⁶⁸ The existing "mechanical" order, inspired by the supposedly universal principles of freedom and equality, had to make way for a system that complied with Europe's character.⁶⁹ Having given Europe a long-lasting order before and being the geographical and spiritual middle ground of Europe, Germany was destined to spearhead this process. Depending on what values they cherished, German conservatives took their cues either from the notion of the Holy Roman Empire or from *Mitteleuropa* as envisaged by List and Naumann.⁷⁰

For advocates of *Mitteleuropa*, Europe's fragmentation stood in the way of economic recovery. The only way out of the current misery was a German reorientation eastwards,⁷¹ which promised to bring together two spheres that complemented each

⁶⁴ See O. Kunze, 'Die christlich-abendländische Kulturidee', *Das Neue Reich*, vol. 5, no. 41, 1923, pp. 926-927, here p. 927.

⁶⁵ See E. Eudorius, 'Dämonen über Europa - Der Bolschewismus als dämonische Macht', *Das Neue Reich*, vol. 7, no. 26, 1925, pp. 604-610, here p. 606; H. Burgert, 'Europa zwischen den Mühlsteinen. Rußland und Amerika im Bunde?', *Das Neue Reich*, vol. 18, no. 27, 1931, pp. 561-562, here p. 562.

⁶⁶ See G. Treviranus, 'Geleitwort', in W. Gürges and W. Grotkopp (eds.), *Großraumwirtschaft - Der Weg zur europäischen Einheit*, Berlin, Hirzel, 1931, pp. 7-8, here p. 8.

⁶⁷ R. Quatz, *Vereinigte Staaten von Europa?*, Langensalza, Beyer, 1930, p. 36.

⁶⁸ See C. Eckert, *Die Neuformung Europas*, Leipzig, Gloeckner, 1928, pp. 8-9.

⁶⁹ See Jung, *Herrschaft der Minderwertigen*, 1927, p. 60; K. Rohan, 'Abrüstung - Friede - Europa', *Europäische Revue*, vol. 4, no. 1, 1928, pp. 150-152, here p. 152.

⁷⁰ See Treviranus, 'Geleitwort', pp. 7-8. For a short overview of the German tradition of *Mitteleuropa* ideas, see chapter 2.3.

⁷¹ See E. Amelung, 'Das Ringen um die Wirtschaftseinheit Europas', *Das Neue Reich*, vol. 8, no. 22, 1926, pp. 462-465.

other: the agrarian countries in Eastern and Southeastern Europe and Germany's industrial potential.⁷² Uniting several of these states under German leadership was partly seen as an end in itself, partly as a potential starting-point for Europe's recovery and eventually its unification.⁷³ Conservatives who were primarily concerned with the spiritual and cultural decay of Europe strove for a 'Third Reich'.⁷⁴ In contrast to the relatively clear-cut economic concept of *Mitteleuropa*, the idea of a new *Reich* probably had as many different meanings as it had supporters.⁷⁵ The numerous diverse answers Fritz Büchner received and published after asking the question "What is the *Reich*?"⁷⁶ have been cited as emblematic examples of this.⁷⁷ While some wanted to reunite the Occident (*Abendland*) under the Christian faith, for others the goal was a federalist entity.⁷⁸ Some stressed the difference between *Reich* and the nation-state, others saw it as a means for responsible leadership *inter pares*.⁷⁹ For some it was a distinct hierarchical order, whereas for others the *Reich* was bound to remain an unreachable utopia.⁸⁰ One thing was clear to conservative thinkers, though: Germany was destined to bring the *Reich* into being and to preside over it.⁸¹

The hopes that German conservatives pinned on Europe-to-be depended on the respective order they envisaged: By bringing together the industries of Germany and Austria with the agrarian countries of the Southeast, *Mitteleuropa* was supposed to

⁷² See F. Heiderich, 'Die politische und wirtschaftliche Gestaltung von Mitteleuropa', *Das Neue Reich*, vol. 6, no. 4, 1923, pp. 68-69, here p. 69.

⁷³ See W. Gurge, *Panuropa und Mitteleuropa*, Berlin, B. Staar, 1929, p. 64; H. Thierbach, 'Deutsche Kulturpolitik in Mitteleuropa', *Die Tat*, vol. 22, no. 2, 1931, pp. 562-567, here pp. 563-564; F. Klein, *Dreizehn Männer regieren Europa. Umriss der europäischen Zukunftspolitik*, Hamburg, Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1930, pp. 33-35.

⁷⁴ This catchphrase was coined by Moeller van den Bruck's book entitled 'Das dritte Reich', originally published in 1923. See A. Moeller van den Bruck, *Das dritte Reich*, Hamburg, Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1931.

⁷⁵ As a diffuse projection screen, the notion of the *Reich* evolved into a promising antithesis to the Republic of Weimar. See H. Beilner, 'Reichsidee, ständische Erneuerung und Führertum als Elemente des Geschichtsbildes der Weimarer Zeit', *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht*, vol. 28, no. 1, 1977, pp. 1-16, here p. 11.

⁷⁶ F. Büchner (ed.), *Was ist das Reich? Eine Aussprache unter Deutschen*, Oldenburg, Stalling, 1932.

⁷⁷ See L. Kettenacker, 'Der Mythos vom Reich', in K. Bohrer (ed.), *Mythos und Moderne. Begriff und Bild einer Rekonstruktion*, Frankfurt a.M., Suhrkamp, 1983, pp. 261-289.

⁷⁸ See O. Kunze, *abendländische Kulturidee*, pp. 926-927; C. Goden, 'Die abendländische Kulturmission des Süddeutschtums', *Das Neue Reich*, vol. 8, no. 10&12, 1925, pp. 203-207, 248-252, here pp. 249-252.

⁷⁹ See Jung, *Herrschaft der Minderwertigen*, p. 49; M. Clauss, 'Erziehung der Nation zum Reich', *Europäische Revue*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1928/1929, pp. 529-536, here pp. 534-536.

⁸⁰ See Mohler, *Konservative Revolution*, pp. 139-140; A. Dempf, 'Das Dritte Reich. Schicksale einer Idee', *Hochland*, vol. 29, no. 1, 1931, pp. 36-48, 158-171, here p. 170.

⁸¹ See Faber, *Abendland*, p. 23.

“organically” strengthen naturally given linkages.⁸² In this non-capitalist international division of labour, every country could focus on its respective advantages and benefit from the growing demand increasing living standards would bring.⁸³ For Germany, this constellation promised even more than these mutual benefits. As *Mitteleuropa* was to comprise *Großdeutschland* (Greater Germany) – including Austria and the German minorities abroad – it would not only subvert the Treaty of Versailles but also lend political substance to the economic weight of the *Reich*.⁸⁴ German conservatives who wished for a ‘Third Reich’, in contrast, deemed all attempts at resolving Europe’s political and economic problems futile as long as the fundamental spiritual aberration that caused them existed.⁸⁵ individualism, liberalism and nationalism, the predominant principles of the French Revolution, had evolved into mere egoism on the societal, political, and economic level.⁸⁶ These conservatives hoped that Germany could restore the vital sense of community by giving Europe a new unifying idea. In Jung’s words: “As champions of a higher morality, the Germans will then become the prophets of a better Europe that will once again be able to give something to the world”⁸⁷. However, in order to tread this ‘third way’⁸⁸ between the two dominant ideologies, the stabilising geographical and spiritual centre of the continent, Germany, had to reclaim its leading role. Accordingly, the envisaged European order was neither a democratic nor equal, but sometimes a Christian,⁸⁹ federation of peoples, led but not ruled by the Germans.

Even though the advocates of both a new *Reich* and *Mitteleuropa* assigned the leading role for its realisation to Germany, their approaches differed. The road to *Mitteleuropa* was clear: Together with other nations that refused the current order,

⁸² See Treviranus, ‘Geleitwort’, p. 8.

⁸³ See G. Wirsing, ‘Richtung Ost-Südost’, *Die Tat*, vol. 22, no. 2, 1931, pp. 628-645, here pp. 629-630; G. Wirsing, *Zwischeneuropa und die deutsche Zukunft*, Jena, Eugen Diederichs, 1932, pp. 250, 301; W. Gurge, ‘Der Ausbau Mittel- und Südosteuropas als wirtschaftliche Forderung’, in W. Gurge and W. Grotkopp (eds.), *Großraumwirtschaft - Der Weg zur europäischen Einheit*, Berlin, Hirzel, 1931, pp. 11-28, here p. 20.

⁸⁴ See J. Räuscher, ‘Echtes und falsches Großdeutschtum’, *Hochland*, vol. 21, no. 2, 1924, pp. 113-119, here p. 119; K. Krüger, *Deutsche Großraumwirtschaft*, Hamburg, Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1932, p. 16; Elvert, *Mitteleuropa*, 1999, pp. 131-132.

⁸⁵ See F. Fuchs, ‘Von der echten und der unechten Unionsidee’, *Hochland*, vol. 22, no. 2, 1925, pp. 347-351, here p. 347.

⁸⁶ See M. Hussarek, ‘Paneuropäische Betrachtungen’, p. 260.

⁸⁷ Jung, *Herrschaft der Minderwertigen*, p. 317.

⁸⁸ See B. Faulenbach, *Ideologie des deutschen Weges. Die deutsche Geschichte in der Historiographie zwischen Kaiserreich und Nationalsozialismus*, Munich, Beck, 1980, pp. 300-302.

⁸⁹ See J. Giese, ‘Gedanken zur abendländischen Friedensidee’, *Das Neue Reich*, vol. 10, no. 50, 1928, pp. 1047-1048, here p. 1048.

Germany had to overcome the Treaty of Versailles.⁹⁰ After having healed the “bleeding wounds at the German borderlines”⁹¹ by reclaiming the lost territories and realising the *Anschluss*, Germany would inevitably again become the economic and cultural centre of gravity of Europe.⁹² Using Austria as a gateway, the complementary markets of Germany and the agrarian Southeast-European states would naturally merge.⁹³ If national egoisms were put aside in favour of a “solidaristic community of nations”,⁹⁴ *Mitteleuropa* could be united in a customs union that would make up for Germany’s loss of colonies and give back Austria its traditional markets.⁹⁵ Creating the *Reich*, in contrast, was primarily a spiritual task. The starting-point was the emergence of a new kind of thinking.⁹⁶ Before Europe would abandon the disastrous values of the French Revolution in favour of a higher “life form” that would bring about an “organically structured cooperative unity in diversity”⁹⁷, the *Reich* and its ideational foundation had to come to life within the German people.⁹⁸ While this vision necessarily seemed wishful thinking to some conservatives, others were more resolute:

Nobody knows whether the road to German freedom emerges from Europe’s reorganisation or whether only a free Germany can rebuild Europe. It is beyond doubt, however, that the German *Volk* has to be mentally forearmed. It has to be determined to establish German freedom and European reorganisation with its blood if necessary.⁹⁹

Overall, conservatives wanted to see the French dominance of Europe broken. Germany was to spearhead the renunciation of the political and spiritual aberrations that had caused Europe’s bleak situation. A German-led *Mitteleuropa* or a ‘Third Reich’, as European ways out of this impasse, would strengthen Europe’s economy as well as its sense of community, thus enabling it to stand its ground in a world shaped by large and powerful political entities.

⁹⁰ See Klein, *Europäische Zukunftspolitik*, pp. 35, 189.

⁹¹ Eckert, *Neuformung Europas*, p. 39.

⁹² See Quatz, *Vereinigte Staaten von Europa*, p. 36.

⁹³ See Gürge, *Panuropa und Mitteleuropa*, pp. 62-64.

⁹⁴ H. Burgert, ‘Auf dem Wege zum größeren Mitteleuropa’, *Das Neue Reich*, vol. 13, no. 28, 1931, pp. 583-584, here p. 584.

⁹⁵ See Amelung, ‘Wirtschaftseinheit Europas’, p. 463-465.

⁹⁶ See Jung, *Herrschaft der Minderwertigen*, pp. 299-302, 322.

⁹⁷ B. Schmittmann, *Grundkräfte zur Neugestaltung Europa*, Leipzig, Gloeckner, 1928, p. 34.

⁹⁸ See Giese, ‘Abendländische Friedensidee’, p. 1048.

⁹⁹ Jung, *Herrschaft der Minderwertigen*, p. 324.

2.1.4 'Deutschland über Alles' – Extreme Right-Wing¹⁰⁰ Concepts for Europe

Young people have to know that we live in a world of enemies. Whoever talks to them about *Panuropa* [Pan-European Union], about world peace etc, consigns them to misfortune. Because everywhere there is struggle; our young people, however, are being artificially made into sheep for the wolf to eat. There is only one kind of peace, the peace of one's soul which comes from the consciousness of a duty fulfilled. Your duty, however, is to be a German in thought and in deed. Remember that you are a German. Why? Because everything creative is of Nordic and thus of Germanic origin.¹⁰¹ (Reinhold Wulle, 1931)

For the extreme right in Germany, the *Volk* lay at the core of all convictions. Therefore, their concepts primarily revolved around Germany, not Europe. However, realising their *völkisch*¹⁰² convictions would inevitably change the face of Europe as well: either by uniting all Germans in one state or by deriving the right to expansion from such a nation-state. The concrete shape of this new European order, however, remained vague.

German right-wing thinkers saw a war raging, a "very big, final decision, a global struggle, a last battle between idealism and materialism, blood and money, labour and capital, light and darkness"¹⁰³. Just as in the World War, Germany upheld true virtues facing the mere interests of the Western powers. In order to survive this battle, Germany needed to recollect the source of its strength, its *Volk*. Only a *völkisch* redefinition of politics, society, and economics would allow Germany to recover, thus enabling it to regain its strength and freedom.¹⁰⁴ This spiritual renewal would not only save Germany, Europe, and the white race, but also reorder Europe.

Their *völkisch* convictions defined the objectives which the extreme right in Germany pursued. They strove for a state comprising all people of German blood and for a

¹⁰⁰ Even though the term 'extreme right' was hardly used in the Weimar Republic, it has been applied here (following McGowan) as an umbrella term for the subsequent considerations as this political camp fits today's definition (anti-pluralist, anti-parliamentary, anti-Semitic, authoritarian, and racist). See McGowan, 'The Extreme Right', p. 249.

¹⁰¹ R. Wulle, *Die Sendung des Nordens. Der Sinn des deutschen Freiheitskampfes*, Leipzig, Koehler, 1931, p. 195.

¹⁰² Throughout this work, the word *völkisch* is used as an adjective or adverb and designates an underlying rationale in which the *Volk* and its racial value is the decisive point of reference.

¹⁰³ G. Feder, 'Betrachtungen zum Youngplan', *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte*, vol. 1, no. 6, 1930, pp. 249-262, here p. 253.

¹⁰⁴ See R. Jung, *Der nationale Sozialismus. Seine Grundlagen, sein Werdegang, seine Ziele*, Munich, Deutscher Volksverlag, 1922, p. 5.

Europe shaped by such a new Germany.¹⁰⁵ By preventing Germany from uniting all the members of its *Volk* in one state and by wreaking havoc through defying Europe's intrinsic differences, the Versailles system had become the basic problem. Its foundation, "the corrosive western idea of the nation-state with its firm centralism"¹⁰⁶, had no regard for the different personalities of each *Volk*.¹⁰⁷ By contrast, the *Reich* – allegedly the epitome of Germany's character¹⁰⁸ – was a national as well as a supranational concept that transcended nations and borders, but accommodated the geographical and economic unity of Europe.¹⁰⁹ Hence, casting this idea in a concrete political form that complied with the "laws of our existence and its historical region"¹¹⁰ was not only an act of German self-determination but also the solution to Europe's disorder. In this way, the political right translated a German political, economic, and spiritual dominance into a common European interest, while Germany's *völkisch* awakening provided the necessary power, and history allegedly proved the *Reich's* capability in this respect.¹¹¹ Accordingly, the supranational dimension of a *völkisch Reich* justified many different objectives: Some strove for autarky either through an exchange of manufactured goods for agricultural products from the East,¹¹² or through a "völkisch imperialism", which was to "ensure a healthy and powerful existence of the German *Volk*."¹¹³ Others envisaged a German-led federation of autonomous states in *Mitteleuropa*, or wanted to unite all blood-related nations in a "Pan-Germanic League"¹¹⁴ or a *Großgermanenland* (Greater Germanic

¹⁰⁵ See W. Darré, 'Adelserneuerung oder Neuadel', *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte*, vol. 2, no. 17, 1931, pp. 337-347, here pp. 343-344; A. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, Munich, Eher, 1935, p. 1. *Mein Kampf* was originally published in 1925.

¹⁰⁶ H. Krebs, *Paneuropa oder Mitteleuropa?*, Munich, Eher, 1931, p. 28.

¹⁰⁷ See K. Loesch, 'Paneuropa - Völker und Staaten', in K. Loesch (ed.), *Staat und Volkstum*, Berlin, Deutscher Schutzbund Verlag, 1926, pp. 7-50, here p. 50.

¹⁰⁸ See G. Ipsen, 'Das Erbe des Reiches', in F. Büchner (ed.), *Was ist das Reich? Eine Aussprache unter Deutschen*, Oldenburg, Stalling, 1932, pp. 58-66, here p. 66.

¹⁰⁹ See E. Kundt, 'Nationalitätenproblem und europäischer Friede', *Europäische Revue*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1928/1929, pp. 949-955, here p. 955.

¹¹⁰ See Ipsen, 'Erbe des Reiches', p. 66.

¹¹¹ See H. Grimm, 'Das Reich als Raum und Geschichte', in F. Büchner (ed.), *Was ist das Reich? Eine Aussprache unter Deutschen*, Oldenburg, Stalling, 1932, pp. 13-19, here p. 14; Feder, 'Youngplan', p. 249; H. Danzig-Langfuhr, 'Der Ordensstaat Preußen und das Dritte Reich', *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte*, vol. 3, no. 30, 1932, pp. 415-421, here p. 418.

¹¹² See Krebs, *Paneuropa oder Mitteleuropa*, p. 9; G. Gründel, *Die Sendung der jungen Generation. Versuch einer umfassenden revolutionären Sinndeutung der Krise*, Munich, Beck, 1932, p. 389; E. Kalckreuth, 'Westeuropäische Zollunion - Osteuropäische Zollunion?', in H. Heiman (ed.), *Europäische Zollunion. Beiträge zu Problem und Lösung*, Berlin, Hobbing, 1926, pp. 83-95, here p. 90.

¹¹³ A. Rosenberg, 'Raumpolitik', *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte*, vol. 3, no. 26, 1932, pp. 193-200, here p. 199.

¹¹⁴ Eberz, 'Europäisches Selbstbewußtsein', p. 188.

Land)¹¹⁵. However, since borders in Central Europe were stable and Germany had dropped out of the race for territories overseas, the extreme right in Germany largely projected the achievement of its aims onto the East.¹¹⁶

The hopes and expectations the German extreme right cherished were not pinned on a particular concept of Europe but more diffusely on a fundamentally different mind-set, on which a new European order should rest. Its starting-point was the German *Volk*, which had to become aware of its blood ties that constituted its community. The necessary precondition for this breakthrough of a new, *völkisch* thinking was the marginalisation of the Jewish population.¹¹⁷ As an allegedly racially and spiritually alien people, they were not only excluded from the *Volk* but also blamed for the imposition of liberalism and materialism onto Europe as well as for the crisis-ridden order these ideas inspired.¹¹⁸ Thus, a *völkisch* renewal would become the long overdue historical watershed:¹¹⁹

Europe as an essence hitherto only existed as an empty construct of ideas for theoretical and material wishes, it even evolved into a mere appendix of a bigger global construct [...]. These wishes have been washed away now and a more original, more powerful essence from the well of human creativity and culture takes possession of Europe in order to reorganise it.¹²⁰

This thinking rejected the existing “anti-European”¹²¹ system, which ignored the different *völkisch* worldviews that were deeply rooted in blood and soil.¹²² Instead, a Europe in diversity – the result of all *Völker* recollecting their nature, their “harmonic entity”¹²³ – promised a brighter and more peaceful future.¹²⁴ In principle, every nation

¹¹⁵ See Krebs, *Panuropa oder Mitteleuropa*, p. 28; Wulle, *Sendung des Nordens*, p. 216.

¹¹⁶ See e.g. *ibid.*, p. 213; Kalckreuth, ‘Zollunion’, p. 94; Wulle, *Sendung des Nordens*, p. 213; Rosenberg, ‘Raumpolitik’, p. 199.

¹¹⁷ See Vogel, *Das neue Europa*, p. 164.

¹¹⁸ See Gründel, *Sinndeutung der Krise*, p. 339; Krebs, *Panuropa oder Mitteleuropa*, p. 3-4; H. Graml, *Reichskristallnacht. Antisemitismus und Judenverfolgung im Dritten Reich*, Munich, Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1988, pp. 54-55; For a detailed account of National Socialist anti-capitalism, its contemporary context, and its significance, see C. Szejnmann, ‘Nazi Economic Thought and Rhetoric During the Weimar Republic: Capitalism and its Discontents’, *Politics, Religion & Ideology*, vol. 14, no. 3, 2013, pp. 355-376.

¹¹⁹ See H. Voß, ‘Zeitenwende’, *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte*, vol. 3, no. 32, 1932, pp. 492-497, here p. 494.

¹²⁰ R. Maltzahn, ‘Sinn und Bedeutung des Europa-Kongresses in Rom’, *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte*, vol. 3, no. 33, 1932, pp. 549-551, here p. 551.

¹²¹ Rosenberg calls it an “europawidriges” system. A. Rosenberg, ‘Europa in Rom’, *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte*, vol. 3, no. 33, 1932, pp. 529-537, here p. 531.

¹²² See A. Rosenberg, ‘Blut, Boden, Persönlichkeit’, *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte*, vol. 3, no. 32, 1932, pp. 481-484, here p. 484.

¹²³ Gründel, *Sinndeutung der Krise*, p. 339.

¹²⁴ See H. Srbik, ‘Reichsidee und Staatsidee’, in F. Büchner (ed.), *Was ist das Reich? Eine Aussprache unter Deutschen*, Oldenburg, Stalling, 1932, pp. 66-70, here p. 70; A. Rosenberg, ‘Krisis

was to develop its very own political, social, and economic forms in accordance with the nature of its *Volk* and race.¹²⁵ However, due to its population size, its economic weight, its cultural development, and its political experience, Germany was to take the leading role.¹²⁶ A Europe reorganised in this way would gear its policy towards true values: *Volk*, race, and nation. By eradicating everything weak and alien – particularly the allegedly corrosive influence of Jewry –, and by attracting the positive and healthy parts of Europe, the “primacy of blood over the life-endangering emancipation of money”¹²⁷ would strengthen Europe.¹²⁸ This turnaround would not only stop the process of degeneration and initiate a process of invigoration but also turn Europe into a stronghold against Western arbitrary egalitarianism and the communist menace lurking in the East.¹²⁹ However, for some right-wing activists this stronghold did not serve solely defensive purposes. They advocated a thrust eastwards – as an “expression of a *völkisch* will to power and to future”¹³⁰ – which was to satisfy the alleged need for *Lebensraum* and to accomplish the presumed mission to civilise the East.¹³¹

All the hopes and aims the German extreme right pursued depended on meeting one necessary requirement: the creation of a new Germany.

We all talk about the coming Third Reich. We long for it and we fight for it, and in addition we *völkisch* activists believe that the precondition for the Third Reich is not the overthrow of the state, but the overthrow of the soul.¹³²

Only if Germany found its way back “to German spirit, German nature”¹³³ could it regain its strength and thus secure its future.¹³⁴ Again, this genuinely German thinking was defined in clear contrast to the corrosive ideas allegedly brought into the

und Neugeburt Europas’, *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte*, vol. 3, no. 33, 1932, pp. 537-544, here p. 544.

¹²⁵ See Jung, *Der nationale Sozialismus*, p. 89.

¹²⁶ See A. Dix, *Schluß mit “Europa”! Ein Wegweiser durch Weltgeschichte zu Weltpolitik*, Berlin, Mittler & Sohn, 1928, p. 79.

¹²⁷ Eberz, ‘Europäisches Selbstbewußtsein’, p. 188.

¹²⁸ See Maltzahn, ‘Europa-Kongress’, p. 551.

¹²⁹ See Rosenberg, ‘Europa in Rom’, p. 536.

¹³⁰ J. Wotschke, ‘Deutsche Ostsiedlung - seit 7 Jahrhunderten’, *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte*, vol. 3, no. 26, 1932, pp. 203-208, here p. 208.

¹³¹ See K. Motz, ‘Die Weltherrschaftsidee des letzten Jahrtausends und ihre Ablösung durch den organischen Staatsgedanken’, *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte*, vol. 3, no. 26, 1932, pp. 200-203, here p. 203.

¹³² Wulle, *Sendung des Nordens*, p. 189.

¹³³ Jung, *Der nationale Sozialismus*, p. 5.

¹³⁴ See A. Rosenberg, ‘Um die Erfüllung’, *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1930, pp. 1-5, here p. 2.

world by the Jews: the spiritual aberrations of individualism and egoism as well as communism's unnatural affront to every form of European culture.¹³⁵ Instead, it valued togetherness and community:

We National Socialists strive for the Third Reich, that very *Reich* of the Germans, in which all kinsmen of German blood find their home. It shall become a *Reich* in which the German *Volk* amalgamates into a sensible and lively unity and thus combines the multiplicity of the single *Volksgenossen* [comrades of the *Volk*] into one living body.¹³⁶

If this body wanted to stand its ground, it had to be steeled. Accordingly, the German extreme right not only called for an extermination of all alien elements but also for racial purification.¹³⁷ Defined by blood and improved by racial selection, such a Germany would constitute a monolithic community that understood being German as a duty, a privilege, and an authority.¹³⁸ This combination of all forces in a 'Jew-free' *Volksgemeinschaft* would automatically spawn a leader that embodied and executed its will, thus enabling it to fulfil its global mission the misguided world was awaiting.¹³⁹ Thus, "the entire cultured world", the *Abendland*, and the "good and the future of Europe" depended on the "reinvigoration of Germany through the enormous forces of its revolution"¹⁴⁰.

Overall, for the extreme right in Germany, the *Volk* was paramount. Their objectives, their hopes, and the ways to realise both, revolved around the *Volk* and entailed the rejection of Western values and their alleged spiritual fathers, the Jews. Their terminology, however, is unspecific and their arguments were rather felt than logically developed, so that what constituted an objective to some was for others merely a step on the way. Nevertheless, they found a common ground. The German extreme right hoped for Germany's rebirth through a new thinking which would inspire and create a new organic European order. This Europe was to channel its ambitions eastwards and to subject all economic, societal, and political interests to the one paramount value, the German *Volk*.

¹³⁵ See Rosenberg, 'Europa in Rom', p. 532; L. Haase, 'Marxismus und Nationalsozialismus', *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1930, pp. 202-221, here p. 204.

¹³⁶ Darré, 'Neuadel', pp. 343-344.

¹³⁷ See L. Hasse, 'Die Auferstehung des Abendlandes', *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte*, vol. 2, no. 13, 1931, pp. 135-139, here p. 139.

¹³⁸ See Grimm, 'Das Reich', p. 14.

¹³⁹ See Gründel, *Sinndeutung der Krise*, pp. 362, 434.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 362.

2.2 Germany's 'Rebirth' and 'Adolescence' in Europe (1933-1939)

That we Germans are scattered across the world, but unlike the Jews always remain firmly rooted in the soil, makes the awakening of the community of blood in our *Volk* a revolutionary event which is relevant for every state and every nation individually. We are not appearing in Geneva as a minority plaintiff, but as the historic bearer of a new development among alien territorial states; the initiative is in our hands, even if the truncheon is in the hands of others. It is the newly shaped *Reichsauftrag* [imperial mission] of the Germans; its inexorability has not changed – to live and to fight from within ourselves, from the depths of our *Volkstum*; now it is not solely for us.¹⁴¹
(Anonymous author, 1933)

After the 30th January 1933, Germany changed fast and dramatically. Within a few weeks after Hitler became chancellor, the National Socialist regime deprived parliament of its power, banned other parties, smashed the trade unions, and imprisoned dissidents. National Socialist control became more extensive the more the so-called 'National Revolution' was pushed on. One aspect of this increasing *Gleichschaltung* was the tightened grip on the press. Newspapers and magazines were shut down right away, or kept in check through the *Schriftleitergesetz*. This silencing of opposing opinions contributed to a different tenor in the German discourse on the future of Europe.

The National Socialist 'seizure of power' sparked enough enthusiasm among many Germans for them to abandon the gloomy depictions of the *status quo*:

The victorious German freedom movement is a new form of nationalism that bursts out from the deepest instinct of our blood, from the experience of our native soil, and from the awareness of the *Volksgemeinschaft*. It will reorganise our *völkisch* life under the leadership of a consistent national idea, the idea of the community (therefore socialist), and free it from the pressure that is weighing on it. Against liberalism, which has been the companion of the idea of the nation in the 19th century, the National Socialist renewal movement takes up the same fighting stance as against Marxism.¹⁴²

Thus, at a time in which the only alternatives had been "sinking into bolshevist night or rebirth from its own nature"¹⁴³, Germany had made the right decision by uniting its *Volk* along a third way between the misleading and divisive ideas of both the East and the West.¹⁴⁴ National Socialism had brought the fundamental truth, the biological

¹⁴¹ 'Das Reich als Gegenwart', *Europäische Revue*, vol. 9, no. 2, 1933, pp. 527-533, here p. 533.

¹⁴² F. Braun, *Deutschlands Schicksalswende 1913-1933 in geopolitischer Darstellung*, Dresden, Ehlermann, 1934, p. 4.

¹⁴³ F. Zoepfl, *Das Reich als Schicksal und Tat*, Freiburg, Herder, 1937, p. 583.

¹⁴⁴ See G. Wirsing, *Deutschland in der Weltpolitik*, Jena, Diederichs, 1933, pp. 184-185.

foundation of the German *Volk*, to the fore again, breathed new life into it, and was about to ‘organically’¹⁴⁵ forge it into a *Volksgemeinschaft*.¹⁴⁶ Understood as a racially, socially and ideationally homogeneous community sworn to a higher cause, its constitution produced outsiders.¹⁴⁷ Particularly for the Jews, widely perceived not only as a different race but also as the spiritual fathers of the two dominant alien ideologies – Jewish Bolshevism and Jewish Plutocracy –, there was no room in the German *Volksgemeinschaft*.¹⁴⁸ In Goebbels’ words, it was the Jewish influence that had “corrupted our race, caused our ethics to begin to rot, undermined our morals, and broken our power.”¹⁴⁹ Thus, separating them from the ‘truly German’ *Volk* was a crucial part of aligning Germany politically and essential to reaping the rewards this reorganisation seemed to promise. In this way, the idea of the *Volksgemeinschaft* unleashed a dynamic of exclusion and made a Germany without Jews imaginable, desirable, and ultimately necessary if the German nation wanted to restore its power and glory.¹⁵⁰ Only a racially sound, spiritually renewed, and united Germany – that is a Germany without Jews – would be able to stand “before Europe, not as the unknown giant anymore, but as a grim will raised to safeguard its clear-cut rights.”¹⁵¹

However, Germany’s ‘rebirth’ was not only an internal matter, it was to be the prelude for a new Europe. Amidst a world shaped by *Großräume*, it was essential to consolidate the European *Schicksalsgemeinschaft* (community of destiny) politically

¹⁴⁵ See A. Günther, ‘Die europäische Bedeutung des Nationalsozialismus’, *Deutsches Volkstum*, vol. 2, 1933, pp. 715-719, here p. 716.

¹⁴⁶ See W. Daitz, *Volks- und Großraumwirtschaft*, 1938, p. 60; W. Haas, *Europa will leben. Die nationalen Erneuerungsbewegungen und Wort und Bild*, Berlin, Batschari, 1936, p. 7.

¹⁴⁷ See E. Jünger, ‘Untergang oder neue Ordnung’, *Deutsches Volkstum*, vol. 1, 1933, pp. 413-419, here p. 418; Wirsing, *Deutschland in der Weltpolitik*, p. 178; M. Clauss, *Deutsche Wende in Europa*, 1934, p. 215; Haas, *Europa will leben*, 1936, p. 8.

¹⁴⁸ See e.g. U. Herbert, ‘Traditionen des Rassismus’, in L. Niethammer et al., *Bürgerliche Gesellschaft in Deutschland. Historische Einblicke, Fragen, Perspektiven*, Frankfurt a.M., Fischer, 1990, pp. 472-488, here p. 486; M. Postone, ‘Nationalsozialismus und Antisemitismus - Ein theoretischer Versuch’, in D. Diner (ed.), *Zivilisationsbruch - Denken nach Auschwitz*, Frankfurt a.M., Fischer, 1988, pp. 242-254, here p. 245.

¹⁴⁹ Goebbels cited in Graml, *Reichskristallnacht*, p. 105.

¹⁵⁰ See M. Wildt, *Hitler's Volksgemeinschaft and the Dynamics of Racial Exclusion*, New York, Berghahn Books, 2012; A. Confino, *A World Without Jews. The Nazi Imagination from Persecution to Genocide*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2014, p. 111. Since the Jews were imagined as the originators of everything ‘bad’ in the world, the realisation of the ‘good’ necessitated a solution to the so-called Jewish question. See R. Rürup, *Emanzipation und Antisemitismus. Studien zur ‘Judenfrage’ der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975, p. 91; Herbert, ‘Traditionen des Rassismus’, p. 483.

¹⁵¹ Clauss, *Deutsche Wende in Europa*, p. 9.

and economically.¹⁵² Just as Germany had developed its middle ground between Western capitalism and Eastern communism out of its very nature, Europe had to recollect its character and to shape its unification and cooperation accordingly.¹⁵³ Since diversity was one of the most characteristic features of Europe, most publications aimed for a coexistence of the European states, in which every nation enjoyed freedom and cultural autonomy without being patronised by another state.¹⁵⁴

In the consciousness of a National Socialist, national freedom and development of the *Volkstum* and its culture are fundamental demands from which he cannot deviate without abandoning himself. When talking about the *Reich* as a higher aggregation, he means safeguarding the nations and ethnic groups in their natural sphere of life.¹⁵⁵

While the *Anschluss* of Austria was considered to be in accordance with this call for national self-determination, further imperialist ambitions were not – National Socialism was after all no a export article.¹⁵⁶ However, the *Völker* of Europe would only be equal in metaphysical terms because the “difference in numbers, historical development, geographical position, blood-wise strength, and mental qualities presuppose an earthly hierarchy which is not arbitrary.”¹⁵⁷ According to the German press, Germany, the land of the middle, was to keep Europe balanced as its geographical, economic, and cultural superiority destined it to lead, not to rule, Europe.¹⁵⁸

Economically, different variations of *Mitteleuropa* and of a *Großraumwirtschaft* dominated the voiced visions of Europe-to-be. Intensifying cooperation was deemed imperative if Europe did not want to find itself crushed between the “ashlars of the new global economic organisation”¹⁵⁹. Luckily, Europe was perfectly suited for a ‘*Großwirtschaftsraum*’: Central Europe’s industry and the agrarian Southeast were com-

¹⁵² This point of view was widely held. See e.g. K. Rohan, *Schicksalsstunde Europas*, Graz, Leykam, 1937, pp. 419-420; A. Reithinger, *Das wirtschaftliche Gesicht Europas*, Stuttgart, Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1936, p. 10. Some authors also demanded a sound Christian fundament. See e.g. C. Eschweiler, ‘Die Kirche im neuen Reich’, *Deutsches Volkstum*, vol. 1, 1933, pp. 451-458; A. Winning, *Europa. Gedanken eines Deutschen*, Berlin, Eckart, 1938, p. 11.

¹⁵³ See U. Hassel, *Deutschlands und Italiens europäische Sendung*, Cologne, Petrarca, 1937, p. 9.

¹⁵⁴ See A. Dix, *Raum und Rasse in Staat und Gesellschaft*, Berlin, Edwin Runge, 1934, pp. 46-47.

¹⁵⁵ Rohan, *Schicksalsstunde Europas*, p. 366.

¹⁵⁶ See E. Heymann, ‘Zwischeneuropa versteift sich’, *Deutsches Volkstum*, vol. 2, 1933, pp. 636-645, here p. 644; Haas, *Europa will leben*, p. 8.

¹⁵⁷ E. Jung, *Sinndeutung der deutschen Revolution*, Oldenburg, Stalling, 1933, p. 96.

¹⁵⁸ See F. Avemarie, ‘Zur Ideengeschichte des Dritten Reichs’, *Deutsches Bildungswesen*, vol. 14, 1935, pp. 201-207, here p. 204; K. Wirth, *Der großdeutsche und der mitteleuropäische Traum von 1815 bis 1938*, Würzburg, Triltsch, 1938, p. 28. For a different view, see K. Rohan, ‘Europäische Revolution’, *Europäische Revue*, vol. 9, no. 2, 1933, pp. 513-527, here pp. 526-527.

¹⁵⁹ Daitz, ‘Volks- und Großraumwirtschaft’, p. 75.

plements by nature.¹⁶⁰ Deepening this exchange pattern instead of battling for shares on the world market would benefit all participants.¹⁶¹ Europe would increase agricultural output and align it to its needs, while the agrarian states would develop into ready markets for manufactured goods.¹⁶² Allegedly, this constellation had nothing to do with the international division of labour practised within the “inorganic global exchange of goods”¹⁶³ because it naturally accrued from the respective country’s very own potential and “*Lebensgesetzlichkeit*” (law of life)¹⁶⁴. Furthermore, the reliance on secure and nearby markets had another convenient side effect: autarky. By limiting the effects of a potential naval blockade, it safeguarded the independent existence of Europe.¹⁶⁵ For many, the scenario of being cut off from overseas trade once again was not a far-fetched spectre, but a legitimate fear: “Autarky and settlement [...] are not ends in themselves but means of the *Volk* and the state in the battle to maintain and expand its own *Lebensraum*. German Socialism is, as long as the *Reich* is struggling for its grandeur, a battle order, not an order of peace.”¹⁶⁶

The National Socialist revolution and all it could stand for fanned the hopes many Germans pinned on the *Reich* and *Großraumwirtschaft* that they envisaged. Since Germany had already leveraged a new thinking between liberalism and communism, these first steps promised to evolve into an historical turning-point. Germany would finally live up to its calling by assuming the leading role in Europe, to which it was entitled, and provide Europe with a sound basis for peaceful agreement.¹⁶⁷ A Europe resting on the ‘organic’ pillars of *Volk* and *Raum* could settle even highly controversial matters amicably.¹⁶⁸ Furthermore, such an order would not only ensure peace and security by bringing the European peoples together.¹⁶⁹ It would also restore Europe’s former greatness by remedying the causes for its decline. While some

¹⁶⁰ See H. Aust, ‘Deutschland und der Südosten’, *Der deutsche Volkswirt*, vol. 12, no. 37, 1938, pp. 1789-1790, here p. 1789.

¹⁶¹ See H. Strauch, *Die Idee der Großraumwirtschaft in der Handelspolitik der Gegenwart*, Würzburg, PhD Thesis, 1938, pp. 1-9; Wirsing, *Deutschland in der Weltpolitik*, p. 59.

¹⁶² See Reithinger, *Das wirtschaftliche Gesicht Europas*, p. 63

¹⁶³ Strauch, *Großraumwirtschaft*, p. 1.

¹⁶⁴ W. Daitz, ‘Großraumwirtschaft’, in W. Daitz (ed.), *Der Weg zur völkischen Wirtschaft*, Berlin, Verlag der Deutschen Technik, 1938, pp. 44-52, here, p. 51.

¹⁶⁵ See A. Ringer, ‘Zur Frage der deutschen Außenhandelspolitik’, *Der deutsche Volkswirt*, vol. 7, no. 49, 1933, pp. 1414-1416, here p. 1414.

¹⁶⁶ E. Huber, ‘Deutscher Sozialismus’, *Deutsches Volkstum*, vol. 2, 1934, pp. 925-929, here p. 929.

¹⁶⁷ See Wirsing, *Deutschland in der Weltpolitik*, 1933, pp. 184-185; H. Krüger, ‘Der moderne Reichsgedanke’, *Die Tat*, vol. 25, no. 2, 1933/34, pp. 703-715, 795-804, here p. 804; Günther, ‘Europäische Bedeutung des Nationalsozialismus’, pp. 718-719.

¹⁶⁸ See Krüger, ‘Der moderne Reichsgedanke’, p. 804; Rohan, ‘Europäische Revolution’, p. 513.

¹⁶⁹ Jung, *Sinndeutung der deutschen Revolution*, p. 97.

hoped for the fascist movements in Germany and Italy to revive Europe's "genetic material", Christian faith,¹⁷⁰ others argued that Europe's degeneration was a racial issue:

The ideologically justified breeding and preservation of lunatics, idiots, Jewish bastards or mulattoes is threatening the cultural strength of all nations [...]. But Europe has always developed defensive forces against assaults on the roots of its strength.¹⁷¹

By linking racial purity not only to the cultural value and to the power of a *Volk* but also the threat of both to a racial degeneration resulting from misguided ideals, this statement by Alfred Rosenberg gets to the heart of the German tradition of *völkisch* racism and expands it, including its anti-Semitic stance, to a European level.¹⁷² Analogous to the alleged German 'rebirth' through the creation of a *Volksgemeinschaft*, the Nordic and Germanic elements in Europe were to be strengthened.¹⁷³ The inferior residue, by contrast, was declared a societal burden, a threat to a thriving culture, and an impairment of the superior racial substance, hence an obstacle standing in the way of the reinvigoration of Europe.¹⁷⁴ In this reading, the National Socialist practice of forced sterilisation of mentally and physically handicapped people evolved into a role model for Europe.¹⁷⁵ Yet again, however, curbing the spiritual and biological influence of the Jewish population was of more importance to leading Nation Socialists. According to Goebbels, Hitler was determined to expel them not just from Germany, but from Europe entirely.¹⁷⁶ In this way, the National Revolution with its anti-Jewish legislation and discrimination figured as a trailblazer for the overdue *völkisch* renewal of Europe. After all, the Germanic essence of the continent, in a biological and spiritual sense, had to reclaim its due status if Europe – just as

¹⁷⁰ Rohan, *Schicksalsstunde Europas*, pp. 322, 356.

¹⁷¹ A. Rosenberg's speech 'Verteidigung des deutschen Kulturgedanken', 1938, printed in A. Rosenberg (ed.), *Tradition und Gegenwart. Reden und Aufsätze 1936-1940*, Munich, Eher, 1941, pp. 146-153, here pp. 150-151.

¹⁷² See H. Greive, *Geschichte des modernen Antisemitismus in Deutschland*, Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1983, p. 81.

¹⁷³ See Herbert, 'Traditionen des Rassismus', p. 480.

¹⁷⁴ In the wake of Darwinist ideas and genetics being transferred on human beings, the eugenic idea of improving societies by racial selection and purification had gained ground internationally since the 1880s. See Kühl, *Internationale der Rassisten*; P. Becker, *Sozialdarwinismus, Rassismus, Antisemitismus und Völkischer Gedanke. Wege ins Dritte Reich Teil II*, Stuttgart, Thieme, 1990, p. 502-504; H. Moghareh-Abad, 'Rassenhygiene/Eugenik. Ideologisches Prädispositiv und Handlungsmotivation zum Genozid', in W. Michalka (ed.), *Der Zweite Weltkrieg. Analysen, Grundzüge, Forschungsbilanz*, Munich, Piper, 1989, pp. 798-813, here p. 798-799.

¹⁷⁵ See M. Burleigh, *Die Zeit des Nationalsozialismus. Eine Gesamtdarstellung*, Frankfurt a.M., Fischer, 2000, pp. 303, 408.

¹⁷⁶ See Goebbels cited in P. Burrin, *Hitler und die Juden. Die Entscheidung für den Völkermord*, Frankfurt a.M., Fischer, 1989, p. 52.

Germany – wanted to stand its ground against “culture-destroying bolshevism”¹⁷⁷ as well as against the onslaught of corrosive Western ideas.¹⁷⁸ Immunised in this way, Europe would have a future once more: It would be able to live up to its global mission and would become the world’s heart and mind again.¹⁷⁹

Germany had to take the first essential step towards this new European order. As long as it was unarmed, separated from parts of its *Volk*, politically divided, and crisis-ridden, it was impossible to remedy Europe’s shortcomings.¹⁸⁰ It seemed that the National Revolution had brought Germany back on track because everyone started to put their heart and soul into this *Geisteskampf* (spiritual fight).¹⁸¹ Together with a National Socialist upbringing, this development would invigorate the German-Nordic racial core of the *Volk*, reveal its intrinsic nature, and, ultimately, evoke “the eternal strengths of the German *Volk*’s past and enable it to new sacrifices and services.”¹⁸² The more all Germans acted in concert domestically, the more weight their united voice would carry internationally.¹⁸³ Therefore, the so-called National Revolution was a step towards two ends: a new Germany and a new Europe.

The European repercussions of the German development were envisaged in two different ways. For some, the spirit of the German revolution would automatically win the upper hand because it would prove superior. Fascist Italy and Kemalist Turkey were following the same path and had already reorganised their *völkisch* life in accordance with their *Lebensgesetzlichkeit* (laws of life).¹⁸⁴ Others, however, called for a more proactive approach. They saw no need to confine the effects of the national revolution to the persuasive power of its success, but wanted to give the German

¹⁷⁷ Winning, *Europa*, p. 73.

¹⁷⁸ See E. Kolbenheyer, ‘Die nationale Revolution und das Aufleben des deutschen Geistes’, *Deutsches Volkstum*, vol. 2, 1933, pp. 533-540, here p. 533.

¹⁷⁹ See Hassel, *Europäische Sendung*, pp. 9-19; Dix, *Raum und Rasse*, p. 45.

¹⁸⁰ See Heymann, ‘Zwischeneuropa’, pp. 644-645.

¹⁸¹ See A. Rosenberg’s speech ‘Revolution und Erfüllung’, 1936, printed in A. Rosenberg (ed.), *Tradition und Gegenwart. Reden und Aufsätze 1936-1940*, Munich, Eher, 1941, pp. 25-30, here p. 28.

¹⁸² W. Daitz, ‘Völkisch Haltung der Wirtschaft – Wirtschaftspolitik als Teil der Kulturpolitik’, in W. Daitz (ed.), *Der Weg zur völkischen Wirtschaft*, Berlin, Verlag der Deutschen Technik, 1938, pp. 108-189, here 137-138.

¹⁸³ See Braun, *Schicksalswende*, p. 5.

¹⁸⁴ See Jung, *Sinndeutung der deutschen Revolution*, pp. 98-101; H. Hager, ‘Die Entwicklung der faschistischen Rassenpolitik’, *Die Tat*, vol. 30, no. 2, 1938/1939, pp. 660-665, here p. 665.

Volk the *Lebensraum* it supposedly needed – peacefully through cooperation or by force.¹⁸⁵

Accordingly, the *Anschluss* of Austria in 1938 sparked enthusiasm because *Großdeutschland* had been a persistent dream among many nationalists and the imaginary centrepiece of a new Europe. It solidified Germany's intermediate position between East and West and could become the "magnetic field and *Ordnungszelle* [cell of order] of a thriving *Mitteleuropa*"¹⁸⁶. After Germany had annexed the Sudetenland and established the 'Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia', some Germans were convinced that a new age was dawning.¹⁸⁷

So today the treason of Versailles is getting what it deserves, as its *europawidrig* [anti-European] constructs vanish, as the inflicted wounds are partly starting to heal, and the Germany body, after shaking off the coercion of a remorseless imperialism, now starts to stretch in its former strength; fully aware that only thereby a true pacification of the European continent is made possible in cooperation with all those who likewise realise today's fate within their *Lebensraum* and started to carpenter a new Europe after the downfall of the *Abendland*.¹⁸⁸

Overall, the 'Third Reich' and the National Revolution were hailed as the breakthrough of a new thinking. As a renunciation of the allegedly misguided values of the French Revolution and its aftermath, including the Treaty of Versailles and democracy as such, it was to become the starting-point of a new European Order. The *völkisch* knowledge and belief system, which lay at the core of this new thinking, called for the reorganisation of all aspects of life along the lines of a racial understanding of Germandom. As a structuring principle on the European level, this *völkisch* thinking went hand in hand with well-established economic thought patterns that envisaged an allegedly natural division of labour in which the exchange of Central Europe's manufactured goods for raw materials and foodstuffs from Southeastern Europe figured prominently. This constellation still promised peace, prosperity,

¹⁸⁵ See Dix, *Raum und Rasse*, pp. 156-157; Huber, 'Deutscher Sozialismus', p. 929; Hitler's intention to conquer *Lebensraum* is well documented. See e.g. Hitler's memorandum on the Four Year Plan, August 1936, printed in W. Michalka (ed.), *Deutsche Geschichte, 1933-1945. Dokumente zur Innen- und Außenpolitik*, Frankfurt a.M., Fischer, 2002, pp. 110-112; Note on a meeting in the Reich Chancellery (the so-called Hoßbach-protocol), 5 November 1937, printed in *ibid.*, pp. 140-142.

¹⁸⁶ W. Thiele, *Die Idee der Großraumwirtschaft in Geschichte und Politik*, Berlin, Dittert, 1938, p. 158. See also Wirth, *Der mitteleuropäische Traum*, p. 115.

¹⁸⁷ See G. Wirsing, 'Das neue Europa', *Die Tat*, vol. 30, no. 2, 1938/1939, pp. 433-445, here pp. 433-434.

¹⁸⁸ A. Rosenberg, 'Deutschland, Europa und – England', 1939, printed in A. Rosenberg (ed.), *Tradition und Gegenwart. Reden und Aufsätze 1936-1940*, Munich, Eher, 1941, pp. 245-253, here pp. 252-253.

and enough political power to stand up to the other large integrated *Großräume*. Even though these two lines of reasoning did not produce a clear-cut vision of Europe-to-be, it was undisputed that the ‘Jew-free’ German *Volksgemeinschaft*, as the champion of this new thinking, was to spearhead the reorganisation of Europe along these economic and *völkisch* lines and to preside over the result.

2.3 The Dream Takes Shape – German Notions of Europe on the Eve of the War

This time, we will establish the order in the new Europe.¹⁸⁹ (Karl Hermann Frank, 1939)

When Germans spoke of Europe before 1933, they spoke of an economic unity, of a natural geographical affiliation, a political entity, a cultural identity, a racial community, a spiritual singularity, or a common destiny. Depending on the respective political standpoint, the need to remodel Europe and its prospective organisation were justified differently, but all these concepts for a new European order had in common that they expected their idea of Europe to vouch for peace, power, and prosperity.

German socialists and social democrats advocated a unified Europe because they considered prosperity key to successful socialist policies. Overcoming the fragmentation of Europe by bringing together industrial and agrarian economies in a customs union, promised economic growth. Socialists expected that this peaceful economic cooperation would strengthen socialism, facilitate a redistribution of wealth, and pave the way for a deeper European integration. A democratic reconciliation between Germany and France was supposed to kick-start this project (see chapter 2.1.1).

German liberals and democrats supported the idea of a European Unification out of concern for the position of Europe within a world increasingly shaped by large political and economic entities. In order to stay competitive and prosperous, the current fragmentation and nationalist egoisms had to make way for a large common market and peaceful cooperation. The means to reach such a Europe were disputed, but the end, a democratic and supranational polity, became widely accepted in this political camp (see chapter 2.1.2).

Among German conservatives there was much more disagreement. Their calls for a reorganisation of Europe put Germany at the heart of any prospect of reversing the

¹⁸⁹ Speech by Karl Hermann Frank in Prague, 2 December 1939, RGVA, 1488, 1, 31.

current decline. If Europe, threatened from the Bolshevik East and the economically dominant West, wanted to stand its ground, French spiritual and political dominance had to be replaced by a German hegemony. Economically, a German-dominated *Mitteleuropa*, uniting German industrial potential and the agrarian economies in the East and Southeast, promised prosperity by strengthening 'natural' linkages. Politically, Germany, the 'heart of Europe', was supposed to produce a new genuinely European thinking and – in this new unifying and pacifying spirit – unite Europe in a 'Third *Reich*'. Since a powerful Germany was the key element of this development, overcoming the Treaty of Versailles and accomplishing the *Anschluss* of Austria were to be the prelude (see chapter 2.1.3).

The extreme right in Germany also demanded a spiritual renewal. For them, however, the decisive point of reference was the racially defined German *Volk*. Since the Treaty of Versailles stood in the way of politically uniting all people of German blood, the current European order had to make way for a *Reich* that transcended nations and accommodated the different personalities of each *Volk* as well as the geographical and economic unity of Europe. Regardless of whether its proponents expected this *Reich* to provide the basis for an exchange of manufactured goods for agricultural products or to become a 'Pan-Germanic League', its realisation depended on a Europe-wide *völkisch* redefinition of politics, society, and economics. This new Europe would gear its policies towards values – *Volk*, race, and nation – not profits. Germany, as the champion of this rethinking, had to initiate and to spearhead this development (see chapter 2.1.4).

After the National Socialist seizure of power in 1933, the limits of what could be said about Europe-to-be narrowed. When Germans spoke about Europe now, they still spoke of an economic unity, of a natural geographical affiliation, a political entity, a cultural identity, a racial community, a spiritual singularity, and a common destiny. And Europe still figured as a promise of peace, power, and prosperity. However, many of these categories and expectations were now bound by *völkisch* thinking and were stripped of their roots in democratic values.

The so-called National Revolution, revolving around the convictions that a *Volk* is defined by blood and that there existed a hierarchy of races, contrasted liberal individualism and communist levelling down with the idea of a *Volksgemeinschaft*. By uniting all people of German blood in a homogenous community sworn to a higher

cause, Germany had led by example. Other European *Völker* were supposed to follow suit and should also put their very own nature at the heart of their spiritual and political renewal. This vision of Europe and its *völkisch* diversity supposedly provided the ideal basis for economic cooperation. The agrarian states complemented the industry of Europe by nature and the *völkisch* qualities of the European peoples assigned the matching roles in this 'organic' division of labour. As an autarkic *Großwirtschaftsraum* and a peaceful coexistence of the various *Völker*, Europe would have taken a big step towards restoring its former greatness by remedying the causes for its decline. However, in the *völkisch* reading, racial degeneration had contributed greatly to the recent loss of significance. Thus, the Nordic and Germanic elements in Europe were to be strengthened, while the rest, particularly the Jewish population, stood in the way of a European reinvigoration. So the German promotion of racial purity and the actual enlargement of the *Reich*, through the *Anschluss* and the creation of the 'Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia', substantiated the German claim for the leading role in the envisaged new Europe (chapter 2.2).

Overall, the National Socialist seizure of power made *völkisch* thinking and its racism the *raison d'état*. This advent of a new doctrine at the highest level of German politics marks a watershed in the European discourse in many respects. The discursive dominance of the *völkisch* knowledge and belief system, guaranteed by physical violence, terror, and censorship, made it impossible to voice certain notions of Europe. A German reconciliation with France became unthinkable and unjustifiable because France was regarded as the country of origin of the previously dominant but misguided ideas that had led to racial degeneration, spiritual aberration, and Europe's decline. One epitome of France leading Europe astray was the spread of democracy; a political concept that National Socialists suspected to be a Jewish plot and against the nature of the European *Völker*. Accordingly, notions of Europe-to-be as a democratically legitimised supranational polity above equal states could not be expressed anymore. Instead, the 'Third Reich' and the National Revolution were hailed as the breakthrough of a new thinking, and the *Volksgemeinschaft*, which excluded all alleged non-Germans, was to become the structuring principle on European level as well. In this way, the National Socialist seizure of power silenced several previously important elements of the European discourse in Germany and amplified *völkisch* thought patterns and arguments.

Naturally, this thought pattern of the *Volk* having to become the pivotal element of all spheres of life did not grow out of thin air. It could tie in with a long-standing and well-established knowledge and belief system. Initially, the Romantic period had spawned a *völkisch* thinking in which Paul de Lagarde's dictum that "Germanism lies not within the blood but in the character"¹⁹⁰ was the decisive factor. In this understanding a *Volk* "signified the union of a group of people with a transcendental 'essence'". And this essence was "fused to man's innermost nature", "represented the source of his creativity, his depth of feeling, his individuality, and his unity with other members of the Volk."¹⁹¹ In the second half of the 19th century the rediscovery of the allegedly most pure and most noble, thus superior, Aryan or Nordic race, specified and substantiated this essence by redefining the *Volk* along racial lines.¹⁹² The theories of Arthur de Gobineau and Houston Stewart Chamberlain, who had set out to prove scientifically that races were the driving forces of history and that their purity was a decisive factor for their success, translated this *völkisch* thinking into a possible utopia or a gloom and doom scenario.¹⁹³ Racial degeneration spelled decline, while racial purification and selection promised to improve mental faculties, performance, and virtuousness of the individual and thus the *Volk*. The social implications of this notion gained ground not only in Germany but internationally. Eugenic societies all over the world strove to better their societies.¹⁹⁴ However, this "phantasm of purity"¹⁹⁵ and its biologicistic conception produced the idea of alien elements poisoning or infesting the *Volkskörper*.¹⁹⁶ With regard to the Jewish population – often blamed for all unpopular developments of modernity like liberalism, democracy, capitalism, and communism¹⁹⁷ – this logic culminated in a Manichean view of the world in Germany. Realising the 'good' was only possible by annihilating the 'bad'.¹⁹⁸ From a *völkisch* perspective, the 'good' was ingrained in the Germanic soul and had to be

¹⁹⁰ G. Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology. Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich*, New York, Grosset & Dunlap, 1964, p. 33.

¹⁹¹ Ibid. p. 4.

¹⁹² See Graml, *Reichskristallnacht*, p. 73-75.

¹⁹³ See U. Puschner, *Die völkische Bewegung im wilhelminischen Kaiserreich. Sprache - Rasse - Religion*, Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2001, pp. 77-82; Greive, *Antisemitismus*, p. 79; F. Neumann, *Behemoth. Struktur und Praxis des Nationalsozialismus 1933-1944*, Frankfurt a.M., Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1977, pp. 136-141.

¹⁹⁴ See Kühl, *Internationale der Rassisten*.

¹⁹⁵ See P. Sarasin, *'Anthrax' - Bioterror als Phantasma*, Frankfurt a.M., Suhrkamp, 2004, p. 158.

¹⁹⁶ Thus, the exclusion of 'others' was, in a very biological way, considered necessary for a healthy body politic.

¹⁹⁷ See e.g. Graml, *Reichskristallnacht*, pp. 54-55; Burleigh, *Nationalsozialismus*, pp. 56, 117.

¹⁹⁸ See Postone, *'Antisemitismus'*, p. 245; S. Breuer, *Die Völkischen in Deutschland. Kaiserreich und Weimarer Republik*, Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2008, p. 45.

brought to the fore by a national revolution which would unite the *Volk* in the political, societal, and economic expression of its shared intrinsic qualities.¹⁹⁹ Thus, the National Socialist promise of creating a *Volksgemeinschaft* aroused enthusiasm among proponents of this thinking and initiated a process of exclusion.²⁰⁰ As a consequence, this knowledge and belief system, for which the racially defined *Volk* and its ascribed qualities were the basic principles, shifted the focus on the great Germanic achievements of the past and rejected most modern developments due to their allegedly non-Germanic origin.

In this way, National Socialism and the *völkisch* thinking it promoted, rendered impossible any affirmative reference to the French Revolution and its repercussions. Stripped of all aspects that touched on the political principles of freedom and equality, several German notions of Europe lost some of their features but one broadly shared core element was far from being changed beyond recognition. Already before 1933, the demand to intensify European cooperation as well as the imagined functioning principles of this common market constituted a common ground of all political camps. The economic consolidation of Europe as the necessary precondition for political power was deemed inevitable in a world increasingly dominated by several *Großräume*.²⁰¹ In this line of thought, a united and prosperous Europe was imagined to be on par with the economically threatening United States in the West and the widely feared communist Soviet Union in the East. In this mixture of survival instinct and self-defence mechanism, the adversaries also became role models which compelled Europe to deepen integration. The economic backbone that was envisaged for this European economy was an supposedly natural division of labour, in which the exchange of Central Europe's manufactured goods for raw materials and foodstuffs from Southeastern Europe figured prominently.²⁰² Before and after 1933, this basic constellation promised to provide a stable basis for European economic cooperation, which would bring about a more prosperous, peaceful, and powerful continent that could take on the other global powers.

¹⁹⁹ See Mosse, *Crisis of German Ideology*, p. 34-36.

²⁰⁰ See Wildt, *Volksgemeinschaft*; M. Steber and B. Gotto, 'Volksgemeinschaft. Writing the Social History of the Nazi Regime', in M. Steber and B. Gotto (eds.), *Visions of Community in Nazi Germany: Social Engineering and Private Lives*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014, pp. 1-25, here pp. 2-3.

²⁰¹ For socialists and social democrats, however, restoring power the power of Europe was not an end in itself. For them, it was a means to strengthen socialism. See chapter 2.1.1.

²⁰² Even some Socialists favoured such a division of labour (chapter 2.1.1).

This thought pattern of an inherently complementary European economy consisted of variations and reiterations of well-established and thus validated concepts. On the one hand, the demands for an economic reorganisation could rely on arguments with a long tradition in German *Mitteleuropa* concepts.²⁰³ Already in the first half of the 19th century, Friedrich List, a liberal who is usually considered the most important spiritual father of the *Mitteleuropa* idea,²⁰⁴ argued for a *mitteleuropäisch Wirtschaftszone* (Central European Economic Zone).²⁰⁵ It was supposed to act as a counterbalance to other large economic areas by uniting complementary agricultural and industrial regions into a balanced economic structure with a single market.²⁰⁶ This rationale of a European self-assertion through cooperation and prosperity resonated with Konstantin Frantz's plans for a European federation²⁰⁷ as well as with Paul de Lagarde's reinterpretation of *Mitteleuropa* from a strongly nationalist and anti-Semitic standpoint.²⁰⁸ It substantiated Walther Rathenau's call for a customs union in *Mitteleuropa* as an alternative way to secure essential resources in a world that had already been divided up,²⁰⁹ and it co-authored Friedrich Naumann's best-seller titled *Mitteleuropa*, in which he argued for a confederation of Central European states as a counterbalance to the rise of the United States and of Russia.²¹⁰ On the other hand, a relatively young field of scholarship validated this thinking in continents and emphasised the interdependence of politics and soil.²¹¹ Political geography or geopolitics – usually associated with Friedrich Ratzel, Rudolf Kjellén, and in Germany with Karl Haushofer and his son Albrecht, started to combine geography and political sci-

²⁰³ Elvert and Freymond have pointed out the compatibility of *Mitteleuropa* ideas and National Socialist concepts. Elvert, *Mitteleuropa*, pp. 216-233, Freymond, *Réorganisation Économique*, p. 204.

²⁰⁴ See e.g. J. Elvert, "Irrweg Mitteleuropa". Deutsche Konzepte zur Neugestaltung Europas aus der Zwischenkriegszeit', in H. Duchhardt and M. Malgorzata (eds.), *Vision Europa. Deutsche und polnische Föderationspläne des 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhunderts*, Mainz, von Zabern, 2003, pp. 117-137, here p. 119.

²⁰⁵ See B. Strath, 'Mitteleuropa. From List to Naumann', *European Journal of Social Theory*, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 171-183, here p. 173.

²⁰⁶ See W. Abelshauser, "Mitteleuropa" und die deutsche Außenwirtschaftspolitik', in C. Buchheim, M. Hutter and H. James (eds.), *Zerissene Zwischenkriegszeit. Wirtschaftshistorische Beiträge*, Baden-Baden, Nomos, 1994, pp. 263-286, here p. 266; Meyer, *Mitteleuropa*, pp. 12-14.

²⁰⁷ See Strath, 'Mitteleuropa', p. 179-180.

²⁰⁸ See Meyer, *Mitteleuropa*, p. 31.

²⁰⁹ See W. Mommsen, 'Die Mitteleuropaidee und die Mitteleuropaplanungen im Deutschen Reich vor und während des Ersten Weltkrieges', in R. Plaschka et al. (eds.), *Mitteleuropa-Konzeptionen in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Vienna, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1995, pp. 3-24, here pp. 11-12; Elvert, *Mitteleuropa*, p. 36.

²¹⁰ See P. Hoeres, 'Nationalismus, Europäismus und Universalismus in den Diskursen des Ersten Weltkrieges', in M. Schöning and S. Seidendorf (eds.), *Reichweiten der Verständigung. Intellektuellen-diskurse zwischen Nation und Europa*, Heidelberg, Winter, 2006, pp. 11-133, here p. 115.

²¹¹ See A. Hahnemann, *Texturen des Globalen. Geopolitik und populäre Literatur in der Zwischenkriegszeit 1919-1939*, Heidelberg, Winter, 2009, p. 17; Neumann, *Behemoth*, 1977, p. 176.

ences during the heyday of imperialism. This doctrine established a thinking, in which states and their geographical space were interpreted in a biological manner. Very much like plants, states were considered organisms that were rooted in a certain soil and were striving to grow.²¹² Given this analogy, it is no wonder that Darwin's reading of the evolution as the survival of the fittest found its way into geopolitical thinking.²¹³ This imagery could not only easily be coupled with *völkisch* convictions but also translated politics into a constant struggle for space.²¹⁴ This worldview shifted the focus onto global developments and urged states to expand their *Lebensraum* [living space]; according to Haushofer that is the land available to a country.²¹⁵ Thus, geopolitical thinking could lend weight to the rejection of the Treaty of Versailles, underpin demands for colonies, make the case for economic expansion in the *Mitteleuropa* tradition, or justify the unification of all people of Germanic blood. Not least because of its versatility, it became a "hegemonic discursive formation"²¹⁶ in interwar Germany.²¹⁷

This discursive congruence of geopolitical thinking and *Mitteleuropa* ideas makes clear why the basic economic principles of the latter found its way into most German interwar notions of Europe. The promise of peace, power and prosperity – and in many cases of a German dominance – was not bound to a certain political system or a specific geographical scope, but to a large-scale economic conception. And this conception could be loaded with different hopes and expectations.²¹⁸ Thus, the image of Europe as an economic entity based on a division of labour between industrial and agrarian countries tied in with long-standing and widespread ideas, fears, plans, and intentions. In discourse-analytical terms, the historical depth and the acceptability of these conceptions set the "conditions of emergence of statements".²¹⁹ They enabled Germans to speak and think of Europe in a certain way and made this kind of statements legitimate and valuable contributions to the discursive construction of Europe.

²¹² See N. Werber, *Geopolitik zur Einführung*, Hamburg, Junius, 2014, pp. 50-51.

²¹³ See P. Reuber, *Politische Geographie*, Paderborn, Schöningh, 2012, p. 74.

²¹⁴ See *ibid.*, pp. 77-80, 85.

²¹⁵ See G. Stoakes, *Hitler and the Quest for World Dominion. Nazi Ideology and Foreign Policy in the 1920s*, Leamington Spa, Berg, 1986, p. 149.

²¹⁶ Reuber, *Politische Geographie*, p. 84.

²¹⁷ See Werber, *Geopolitik*, p. 57.

²¹⁸ See Reuber, *Politische Geographie*, p. 84; Elvert, 'Irrweg', pp. 117-118; Meyer, *Mitteleuropa*, p. 3.

²¹⁹ Foucault, *Archeology*, p. 127; see also chapter 1.2.

At the same time, however, the political and geographical openness of this economic concept made it adaptable and susceptible to reinterpretation. The National Socialist exclusion of socialist and democratic meanings went hand in hand with the entrenchment of a *völkisch* rationale (see above). The economic cooperation of Europe was now supposed to benefit the people of valuable blood and to safeguard their political, economic, and spiritual independence from other global powers. Even though far less people subscribed to this reading than to the envisaged economic core of Europe, it offered links that accommodated ideas from other political camps. The German claim to a leading role in Europe could not only be justified by racial superiority but could also be deduced from its economic weight, its cultural achievements, its historical merits, or some metaphysical calling. The racially grounded rejection of communism and capitalism as Jewish plots was partly congruent with the vilification of these ideologies as unnatural, anti-cultural, devoid of values, or morally reprehensible. The exclusion of the Jewish population first from the German *Volks-gemeinschaft* and ultimately from Europe could not only be vindicated in racial terms but also by means of religion-fed resentments, perceptions of otherness, and ascriptions of responsibility for the evils of modernity.²²⁰ From a *völkisch* point of view, the call for autarky, finally, was a necessity for a *Volk* fighting for *Lebensraum*. For others it was a reaction to growing protectionism, a lesson learned from the First World War, a European alternative to overseas colonies, or the pertinent reaction to the rise of other large economic entities.²²¹ Thus, the inscription of *völkisch* convictions into the European discourse under the auspices of National Socialism did not necessarily exclude all other notions of Europe. In fact, the *völkisch* line of reasoning produced aims that were congruent with several core elements of other knowledge and belief systems.

Overall, the German notions of Europe during the interwar period drew upon a rich discursive reservoir that offered knowledge about and interpretations of the world, the state, the nation, the *Volk*, race, culture, politics, and economics. Two of these

²²⁰ See eg. Confino, *A World Without Jews*, p. 8; Sarasin, *Anthrax*, p. 141.

²²¹ See e.g. Kalckreuth, 'Zollunion', pp. 94-95; Kleineibst, 'Europäisch', p. 741; R. Pannwitz, *Die Deutsche Idee Europa*, Munich, Carl, 1931, p. 59; Krebs, *Panuropa oder Mitteleuropa*, p. 9.

interpretative frames²²² particularly gained in importance after the National Socialist seizure of power.

On the one hand, a widely held basic interpretive pattern construed Europe as a *Großraum* primarily along economic lines of reasoning. The ideal-typical European narrative of this frame had its starting-point in the economic fragmentation of Europe which was perceived as highly problematic. It argued that Europe had to overcome its disunity. Only a large integrated economic area would enable Europe to stand its ground in a world increasingly shaped by *Großräume*. Due to its natural structure, Europe was ideally suited to form its own economic *Großraum*; a *Großwirtschaftsraum*. Bringing together the agrarian states with industrialised countries would create an international division of labour in which every nation could easily market its core products to the benefit of all. The industrialised countries would win a sales market for their manufactured goods and a secure supply of foodstuffs and raw materials, while the agrarian states would be able to import machinery, so that they could produce and sell more foodstuffs and raw materials thus increasing their own wealth. Constituting the backbone of political power and cultural influence, an independent, thriving, and prosperous European economy would help Europe to reclaim its former status. In a Europe reorganised in this way, Germany would automatically assume a leading role because of its economic weight.

On the other hand, *völkisch* convictions told a different story. An ideal-typical *völkisch* perspective had its starting-point in a racial understanding of *Volk* and the conviction that *Völker* were not equally valuable. It analysed and problematised Europe on racial grounds. The argument that emanated from this interpretive frame saw the cause for the recent decline of Europe in the divergence between the natural intrinsic qualities of the European *Völker* and the current economic, political, and spiritual paradigms; particularly in Germany, where the most valuable race constituted the *Volk*. Because of the racial degeneration and the subversive effects of alien elements – like the Jews – the European *Völker* had become too weak to defy the unnatural ways of life that had been imposed on them. Thus, the European *Völker* had to free themselves from these shackles, to rediscover and to nurture their true

²²² The concept of ‘interpretative frames’ as the structuring principles of a discourse have been taken from Keller. He defines them, following Meuser and Sackmann, as “modes of perception and interpretation of the social world, schemes of ordering experiences [Erfahrungsaufordnung] and horizons of possible experiences, and means to cope with problems that call for actions [Handlungsprobleme].” Keller, *Müll*, p. 38.

nature, and to reorganise all spheres of life accordingly. In this way, Europe would consist of racially and spiritually homogeneous and thus strong *Völker*. Headed by its most noble people, the purified, reinvigorated, and strong Germanic *Volk*, this Europe could not only reclaim its due global status but was also entitled to an adequate *Lebensraum*.

These two interpretive frames, one emanating from *völkisch* convictions and one based on economic considerations, shaped the German discourse on Europe shortly before and during the Second World War. They provided the interpretive repertoires and semantic fields to speak about Europe in a certain way and, due to their roots in long-standing and well-established discourses, they lent substance to certain arguments, motives, thoughts, and images. At the same time, these underlying knowledge and belief systems defined what was 'good', 'right', 'true', 'sensible', and 'logical', thus disqualifying a wide range of competing views and opinions that took equality, diversity, and nation-states for granted.

3. Planning a New Order

In this struggle, Germany is fighting primarily for itself, for safeguarding and improving the lives of its people, for its future, but also for a new Europe and a just world order. The point of this struggle cannot be that in a few years further shocks and violent conflicts occur, that this continent's restlessness perpetuates itself in favour of non-European powers. Europe must finally find a permanent form of unity. The time has come to establish a stable order that guarantees our part of the world continuous prosperity.¹ (*Hauptschulungsamt* of the NSDAP, 1940)

After unleashing war in September 1939, National Socialist Germany conquered large parts of Europe within less than a year. Since the *Reich* already informally controlled the countries in Southeastern Europe, it now in effect ruled most of continental Europe. This newly gained dominance gave rise to considerations on the continent's future. Before long, the heterogeneous interwar struggle for interpretational sovereignty over the new European order that was to replace the Versailles system rekindled and – given the realistic prospect of being able to implement it – was continued more vigorously than ever. These calls for a 'New Order', a 'New Europe', or a reorganisation of Europe never fell silent during the course of the war, but they metamorphosed. Depending on the prospects of military victory, on the extent of the Germany sphere of influence, and on political priorities, planning for a post-war order oscillated between megalomaniac concepts of domination and a European system based on autonomy and voluntary cooperation.

This chapter reconstructs German plans for a European post-war order and traces the changes they underwent. It is structured by two caesuras: the attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941 and the defeat of the Sixth Army at Stalingrad in January 1943. Even though the second turning-point is not as clear-cut and as decisive as is widely assumed, the discourse on the future of Europe was closely linked to the course of the war. While the initial victories seemed to open up "Unlimited Possibilities Made Feasible by the Sword" (chapter 3.1) and unleashed a planning euphoria,² the attack on the Soviet Union widened the geographical and ideological scope of the voiced thought patterns and arguments. The discourse was now marked by "The Rise of Racism and the Growing Needs of All-Out War" (chapter 3.2). The section

¹ The *Hauptschulungsamt* of the NSDAP on the *Reich* and German leadership in Europe, November 1940, BArch, R 49, 3120, p. 169.

² See H. Neulen, 'Deutschland', in H. Neulen (ed.), *Europa und das 3. Reich. Einigungsbestrebungen im deutschen Machtbereich 1939-1945*, Munich, Universitas, 1987, pp. 21-68, here p. 25.

“The Impending Defeat Curtailing Nazi Dreams” (chapter 3.3), finally shows that not until the prospects of winning the war dwindled did German officials resort to more moderate concepts and started to trim back – or at least cloak – their ambitions.

3.1 Unlimited Possibilities Made Feasible by the Sword (1939-1941)

Now that the *Führer* has freed Europe from its outdated universalistic bonds through the sharpness of the German sword, the European family of peoples can reshape itself into a more productive, crisis-proof and free order, within its common *Lebensraum* [living space] and in accordance with the natural weightings of its *Völker* [peoples]. A new continental European spirit of community will arise –not from persuasive-sounding theories, but primarily out of the practical economic cooperation of European peoples which is necessary if in future they wish to survive independently from territorially and racially alien powers.³ (Werner Daitz, 1941)

By the summer of 1940, the ‘German sword’ had brought large parts of Europe under its direct control. Additionally, many countries had allied themselves with the *Reich* or officially kept a neutral stance. Thus, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact left the United Kingdom as the only remaining obstacle to Germany enjoying absolute omnipotence in Europe. Trying to get rid of this last remnant of the old European power system, the German *Luftwaffe* fought the ‘Battle of Britain’ to prepare the ground for an invasion, while German institutions, officials, and companies pondered over the New Order that was to succeed the one that was dying.

However, Germany’s long tradition of striving for hegemony over the continent had never produced a widely accepted solution. By 1939, the National Socialist seizure of power had narrowed down the scope of what could be said about Europe, but the two dominant interpretive frames (see chapter 2.3) still left enough argumentative leeway for the German discourse on Europe to produce competing visions of what Europe should look like once Germany had won the war. Three aspects of Europe-to-be became the focal points of the resulting frictions: The problem of “Defining Europe” (chapter 3.1.1) revolved around borders and peoples and can be seen as an attempt to discursively establish an answer the fundamental questions of where Europe ended, where Germany’s borders lay, and who was supposed to be a part of what. Within this newly defined Europe, German officials saw the *Reich* “Pulling the

³ W. Daitz, ‘Geleitwort’, in Gesellschaft für europäische Wirtschaftsplanung und Großraumwirtschaft e.V. (ed.), *Das Neue Europa. Beiträge zur Nationalen Wirtschaftsordnung und Großraumwirtschaft*, Dresden, Meinhold, 1941, pp. 12-13.

Strings” (chapter 3.1.2). However, depending on the rationale that substantiated the German claim for leadership, the degree of German control envisaged varied: The apprehension that too much coercion could put off some states clashed with the fear that being too lax would jeopardise Germany’s leading role. A German economic dominance, by contrast, was unsuspicious of both. German companies, which National Socialist officials called on to perpetuate Germany’s supremacy, picked up this essential part of almost all German notions of Europe during the interwar period. They jumped on the bandwagon and started “Preparing for the Post-War Market” (chapter 3.1.3).

3.1.1 Borders and Peoples – Defining Europe

The consequences of Versailles have been eliminated. Thus, the Greater German *Reich* has the opportunity to integrate and to settle German people in its space that hitherto had to live in foreign lands, and also within its spheres of interest to shape the settlement of *Volksgruppen* [racial groups], so that better demarcation lines can be achieved between them.⁴ (Adolf Hitler, October 1939)

Shortly after the attack on Poland, National Socialist *völkisch* beliefs came to the fore and shaped German notions of Europe-to-be. However, since its military and political supremacy made it possible for Germany to redraw the European map as it saw fit, there was an abundance of options available. In addition to the *völkisch* line of argument, an economic interpretive frame informed the German perspective on the defeated and dominated territories (see chapter 2.3). What kind of reasoning prevailed in the end depended on the economic importance, the population, and the history of the region in question.

A central demand that emanated from *völkisch* convictions was to leave no part of the German *Volkstum* outside of the *Reich*.⁵ Heinrich Himmler, in his role as Commissioner for the Strengthening of German Nationhood,⁶ was charged with uniting all

⁴ Hitler’s decree on the consolidation of German *Volkstum*, 7 October 1939, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Polen*, pp. 126-127.

⁵ See memorandum of Stuckart, 14 June 1941, printed in W. Schumann and L. Nestler (eds.), *Europa unterm Hakenkreuz. Die faschistische Okkupationspolitik in Frankreich (1940-1944)*, Berlin, VEB Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1990, pp. 111-113.

⁶ When Heinrich Himmler was appointed Commissioner for the Strengthening of the German Nationhood in October 1939, he already was the head of the SS (*Reichsführer SS*) and the head of the German police. However, for this study his responsibility for all Germanisation and resettlement measures in the occupied territories is of particular importance. For further biographical information,

people of German blood in the *Reich* and eliminating the influence of all parts of the population that posed a threat to the *Volksgemeinschaft* and the *Reich*.⁷ While these concerns for the German *Volk* left some room for interpretation regarding the racial value of many people, they produced one clearly identifiable obstacle to a racial homogenisation: the Jewish population.⁸ In search for an answer to this 'Jewish Question', National Socialist officials initially targeted a territorial solution. In this respect, many of them pinned their hopes on the idea of turning the General Government into a dump for all people standing in the way of the creation of a racially and spiritually consistent German population.⁹ While Heydrich wanted to create a kind of reservation for Jews under German administration, Göring expected the General Government to become home not only to the Jewish population of Poland but also to all Jews from Germany.¹⁰ A few months later, however, Germany's military success in the West opened up new territorial options. The Jews within the German sphere of influence could now be deported to "Africa or some colony".¹¹ This vague geographical idea was soon specified. Madagascar, a destination suggested by Paul de Lagarde in the 19th century and already picked up by many National Socialists before the war, became the concrete yet unrealistic focal point of the German considerations.¹² In a memorandum, Franz Rademacher, a diplomat and SS-*Obersturmführer* in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,¹³ for example, weighed several options. One of them was deporting "all Jews from Europe" to a Madagascar mandated by Ger-

see P. Longerich, *Heinrich Himmler*, Munich, Siedler, 2008; J. Ackermann, 'Heinrich Himmler – "Reichsführer-SS"', in R. Smelser and R. Zitelmann (eds.), *Die Braune Elite. 22 biographische Skizzen*, Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1989, pp. 134-158; J. Fest, *Das Gesicht des Dritten Reiches. Profile einer totalitären Herrschaft*, Munich, Piper, 1963, pp. 156-174.

⁷ See Hitler's decree on the consolidation of German *Volkstum*, 7 October 1939, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Polen*, pp. 126-127.

⁸ See G. Aly, "'Judenumsiedlung'" - Überlegungen zur politischen Vorgeschichte des Holocaust', in U. Herbert, *Nationalsozialistische Vernichtungspolitik 1939-1945*, Frankfurt a.M., Fischer, 1998, p. 75. Himmler distinguished four grades of 'Germanness'. See Himmler's decree on the examination and segregation of the population in annexed Poland, 12 September 1939, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Polen*, pp. 186-188.

⁹ See memorandum of the NSDAP office of Racial policy on the treatment of the population of the former Polish territories, 25 November 1939, BArch, NS 2, 56, pp. 243-256.

¹⁰ See Longerich, *Politik der Vernichtung*, pp. 254, 268.

¹¹ Himmler, 15 May 1940, cited in A. Mayer, *Der Krieg als Kreuzzug. Das Deutsche Reich, Hitlers Wehrmacht und die 'Endlösung'*, Reinbek, Rowohlt, 1989, p. 303.

¹² See Aly and Heim, *Vordenker der Vernichtung*, p. 258; Longerich, *Himmler*, p. 273; note on a meeting on economic and currency matters, 24 July 1940, BArch, R 52 II, 229, pp. 2-10.

¹³ From 1941 until 1943, Rademacher, was responsible for the 'Jewish Question' within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. See E. Klee, *Das Personenlexikon zum Dritten Reich. Wer war was vor und nach 1945?*, Frankfurt a.M., Fischer, 2003, p. 476.

many.¹⁴ This potential Europe-wide solution found Hitler's support. To a Hungarian diplomat, he emphasised the need to get rid of the Jews in all of Europe, and to Mussolini, he considered Madagascar a viable option.¹⁵ However, as long as Great Britain dominated the seas, shipping the Jewish population of Europe to Madagascar was out of the question. Nevertheless, these plans not only underline how the German tradition of *völkisch* thinking developed a European dimension (see chapter 2.2) which structured German notions of Europe-to-be but they also demonstrate that the vision of a Europe free of Jews became an imaginable and essential part of the New Order.¹⁶

However, from these *völkisch* principles German officials deduced additional Europe-wide demands: Not only should all European states reorganise their life in accordance with their respective *völkisch* nature, but the emerging *Volksgemeinschaften* also were to become loyal parts of this new "European community of peoples". According to Werner Daitz,¹⁷ this demanded "from each of its people the same discipline that the national community imposes on each of its citizens."¹⁸ By reorganising Europe along *völkisch* lines, Germany – in this reading of the latest events – had rendered the political ideas of the 19th century obsolete.¹⁹ Under the umbrella of a powerful Germany that united all people of German blood, the European *Völker* could rediscover and nurture their true nature and live together in freedom.²⁰ Freedom, however, did not mean equality in a *völkisch* vision of Europe. The *Reichsgruppe Industrie*, an association representing the entire German industry, for example, translated the *völkisch* hierarchy into an economic one, when it wanted to see "the multitude of simple, inferior, and apparently primitive work" outsourced to

¹⁴ Longerich, *Politik der Vernichtung*, pp. 274-275; Aly and Heim, *Vordenker der Vernichtung*, pp. 257-265.

¹⁵ See P. Burrin, *Hitler und die Juden*, p. 96.

¹⁶ See Confino, *A World without Jews*, p. 164; L. Gruchmann, *Der Zweite Weltkrieg*, Munich, Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1974, p. 206.

¹⁷ Even though Werner Daitz joined the NSDAP in 1931 and represented the NSDAP in the *Reichstag* from 1933 onwards, he did not hold any crucial office during the war. However, he had agitated for a *Großraumwirtschaft* since the mid 1930s and in 1939 he founded the Gesellschaft für Europäische Wirtschaftsplanung und Großraumwirtschaft e.V. Many prominent National Socialists (e.g. Werner Best, Herbert Backe, Roland Freisler) joined this organisation. See E. Stockhorst, *Fünftausend Köpfe. Wer war was im Dritten Reich*, Velbert, Blick+Bild, 1967, pp. 96-97.

¹⁸ Daitz on the reorganization of Europe on a racial and territorial basis, printed in Lipgens, *Documents on the History of European Integration*, pp. 80-81.

¹⁹ See chapter 2.3.

²⁰ See document entitled 'The Purpose of the War', 11 June 1940, BArch, R 49, 3120, pp. 80-81.

“so-called *Hilfsvölker* [assistant peoples] (predominantly Slavs etc.)”²¹ in the new European order. In the eyes of Hans Kehr,²² this *völkisch* hierarchy was in accordance with the idea of a *Großwirtschaftsraum*, in which the industrial centre engaged in division of labour with its agrarian periphery.²³

The Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, however, did not fit this bill. From a *völkisch* perspective, its population ranked low on the hierarchy of races, but economically it was home to a highly developed industry. When Hitler had established the Protectorate, he had set a *völkisch* tone for German notions of its future. He declared Bohemia and Moravia to be German *Lebensraum* and ascribed its previous problems to the “arbitrarily united *Völkergruppen* [groups of *Völker*]”. Thus, the *Reich* would re-establish “the foundations of a sensible central European order” and foster peace and social welfare.²⁴ Accordingly, many considered the Protectorate to be a role model for “the political reorganisation of the entire land mass between Reval and Constantinople”²⁵. Its heterogeneous *völkisch* structure was a problem that had to be rectified. For Karl Hermann Frank²⁶ and many others the Protectorate was indeed a part of the German “*völkischen Lebensraum*”²⁷, but its population was only partly fit for Germanisation. Thus, Bohemia and Moravia were regarded important battlefields in Germany’s *Volkstumskampf*.²⁸ However, for the other ongoing *Kampf*, the war, the

²¹ Memorandum by the *Reichsgruppe Industrie*, 1 August 1940, printed in Eichholtz and Schumann, *Anatomie des Krieges*, pp. 272-274.

²² From 1938 onwards, Hans Kehr was a general advisor in special tasks in the Ministry of Economics. In this position he was responsible for management and rationing of raw materials in the occupied territories. In 1943 he became the head of the planning and raw materials office in the Ministry for Armaments and War Production. See H. Weiß, *Biographisches Lexikon zum Dritten Reich*, Frankfurt a.M., Fischer, 1998, p. 259; Stockhorst, *Fünftausend Köpfe*, pp. 228-229.

²³ See speech by Kehr before the chamber of industry and commerce in Lower Lusatia, 9 September 1940, BArch, R 11, 107, pp. 1- 17.

²⁴ Hitler’s decree on the ‘Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia’, 16 March 1939, printed in W. Schumann and L. Nestler (eds.), *Nacht über Europa. Vol. 1: Die faschistische Okkupationspolitik in Österreich und der Tschechoslowakei (1938-1945)*, Cologne, Pahl-Rugenstein, 1988, pp. 103-106.

²⁵ Memorandum for von Weizsäcker, 19 July 1939, printed in *ibid.*, pp. 122-124; see also memorandum by Kundt, October 1938, printed in *ibid.*, pp. 95-96; Karl Hermann Frank in Prague, 2 December 1939, RGVA, 1488, 1, 31.

²⁶ After the creation of the Protectorate, Karl Hermann Frank, who had joined the NSDAP in 1919 and the SS in 1938, became the higher SS- and police officer in Bohemia and Moravia and at the same time a secretary of state for the *Reichsprotektor*. He kept these posts under von Neurath, Heydrich, and Frick, but after Heydrich’s death in May 1942, he factually ruled the Protectorate instead of the official *Reichsprotektor*. See Klee, *Personenlexikon zum Dritten Reich*, p. 160; Weiß, *Biographisches Lexikon zum Dritten Reich*, 1998, pp. 127-128.

²⁷ Memorandum by K.H. Frank, 28 August 1940, printed in V. Král (ed.), *Die Vergangenheit warnt. Dokumente über die Germanisierungs- und Austilgungspolitik der Naziokkupanten in der Tschechoslowakei*, Prag, Orbis, 1960, pp. 65-72.

²⁸ See notes by Hofmann on a journey to the Protectorate, 13 September 1940, BArch, NS 2, 140, pp. 3-5.

economic output of the protectorate promised considerable contributions.²⁹ Thus, German officials were willing to abstain from carrying out resettlement measures for the time being, but they started preparatory planning.³⁰ Nevertheless, the head of the Protectorate, Konstantin von Neurath,³¹ opposed the erection of an aircraft factory near Budweis as well as plans to integrate the Protectorate into neighbouring German *Gaue* with the argument of *Volkstumspolitik*.³² Hitler also held on to the idea of germanising the Protectorate. To speed up this process, he opted for an assimilation of suitable Czechs.³³ Thus, the two dominant interpretive frames clashed with regard to the Protectorate without producing a clear victor. The vision of a *völkisch* reorganisation dominated the envisaged future but economic interests kept the discursive dominance of these considerations at bay.

In Poland, by contrast, German economic interests were minor, while the *völkisch* interpretive frame identified the local population as inferior and as a problem. Hence, Poland soon became the spotlight of German *Lebensraum* fantasies. In view of the former Polish territories, the NSDAP (National Socialist German Workers' Party) Office of Racial Policy, an institution which propagated population policy and racial hygiene,³⁴ declared that the objective of German policy

²⁹ See report by the *Rüstungsinspektion* Prague, 15 April 1939, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Österreich und der Tschechoslowakei*, pp. 114-115; notes on a meeting of the *Rüstungsinspektion* Prague, 24 January 1940, printed in *ibid.* pp. 137-138.

³⁰ See e.g. Jöhlen's propositions on land policy in the Protectorate, 14 December 1939, BArch, NS 2, 140, pp. 179-197; Memorandum by K.H. Frank, 28 August 1940, printed in Král, *Die Vergangenheit warnt*, pp. 65-72; letter by Pancke to Himmler, 4 May 1940, BArch, NS 2, 140, pp. 31-33; letter to Pancke, 31 May 1940, BArch, NS 2, 140, pp. 29-30; notes by Hofmann on a journey to the Protectorate, 13 September 1940, BArch, NS 2, 140, pp. 3-5; letter by the *Oberlandrat* of Brno concerning the settlement of German artisans in the Protectorate, 7 November 1940, RGVA, 1458, 10, 11.

³¹ Konstantin von Neurath had been Germany's Foreign Minister between 1932 and 1938, before he was appointed *Reichsprotector*. He is usually considered an old-school diplomat. Thus, he is one example for Germany's traditional elites coming to terms with the National Socialist regime. Despite severely cutting back the Czech autonomy, Neurath was replaced with Reinhard Heydrich in September 1941 because Hitler deemed Neurath too soft. See R. Wistrich, *Wer war wer im Dritten Reich. Ein biographisches Lexikon*, Frankfurt a.M., Fischer, 1988, p. 251-252. For a thorough biography see L. Lüdicke, *Constantin von Neurath. Eine politische Biographie*, Paderborn, Schöningh, 2014.

³² See Neurath's submission to Hitler, 10 May 1941, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Österreich und der Tschechoslowakei*, pp. 170-171; report to the Germany department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 19 August 1940, printed in *ibid.*, pp. 149-150.

³³ See letter by Ziemke to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 5 October 1940, printed in *ibid.*, pp. 158-159.

³⁴ For an overview of its international activities between 1933 and 1939 see Kühl, *Internationale der Rassisten*, pp. 125-157.

must be the creation of a racial and thus mental-spiritual and *völkisch*-political consistent German population. From this follows that all elements not fit for Germanisation have to be ruthlessly eliminated.³⁵

In this memorandum, elimination meant the expulsion of over 5 million Poles and Jews to those parts of Poland that neither Germany nor the Soviet Union had annexed, the General Government.³⁶ Arthur Greiser,³⁷ *Gauleiter* in the *Warthegau*, spoke for many when he picked up the theme of safeguarding racial purity and demanded to erect a “German east-wall of flesh and blood”³⁸ to shield the German *Volk* from this collecting basin of all unwanted and non-German people.³⁹ Moreover, all the potential threats to the expansion of the *Volksgemeinschaft*⁴⁰ into the annexed parts of Poland were to be weakened by killing or deporting their ruling class. The Jewish population was to be separated by concentrating them in ghettos.⁴¹ The rest of the population in the General Government was in for a life with low living standards, without education, and slave labour for the German *Herrenmenschen*. According to Himmler, it would be enough if they learned “simple maths up to 500, writing their name, the doctrine that it is divine law to obey Germans and to be honest, hard-working, and well-behaved.”⁴² The desired result would be a leaderless, cultureless, and largely inferior *Arbeitsvolk* (working people) at Germany’s disposal.

The region’s economic structure was supposed to reflect this strict *völkisch* distinction between German lands and the General Government. On the one hand, eco-

³⁵ Memorandum by the NSDAP office of racial policy, 25 November 1939, BArch, NS 2, 56, pp. 243-256.

³⁶ See *ibid.*

³⁷ Arthur Greiser was a racist hardliner who, according to Kershaw, was in several instances the “initiator and originator of barbaric measures against Poles and Jews”. See I. Kershaw, ‘Artur Greiser - Ein Motor der Endlösung’, in R. Smelser, E. Syring and R. Zitlmann (eds.), *Die Braune Elite II. 21 Weitere Biographische Skizzen*, Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1993, pp. 116-127, here p. 117.

³⁸ Cited in V. Liulevicius, *The German Myth of the East: 1800 to the Present*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 190.

³⁹ See e.g. Rauff’s note on a meeting with Heydrich, 21 September 1939, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Polen*, pp. 119-120; first draft of Meyer on the Germanisation of the annexed territories, printed in *ibid.* pp. 159-160.

⁴⁰ See e.g. the *Akademie für Deutsches Recht* on the legal aspects of German Polish policy, January 1940, printed in *ibid.*, pp. 156-159; note on a talk with Heydrich, 8 September 1939, printed in *ibid.* pp. 113.

⁴¹ See Rauff’s note on a meeting with Heydrich, 21 September 1939, printed in *ibid.*, pp. 119-120; letter by Heydrich to the heads of the *Einsatzgruppen*, 21 September 1939, BArch RW 19, 251, pp. 19-26.

⁴² Memorandum by Himmler on the treatment of alien races in the East, 15 May 40, printed Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Polen*, pp. 171-172.

conomic policy was considered an instrument for strengthening the German race;⁴³ on the other hand, Göring wanted it employed as a means to organise the races hierarchically:

While in the former regions the building up and development of the economy, the preservation of its production capacity and stocks and the fastest, most complete incorporation into the German economy possible is to be pursued, all raw materials, secondary materials, machines et cetera have to be taken out of the territories of the General Government for the German war economy. All firms which are not absolutely essential for the makeshift bare survival of the inhabitants are to be transferred to Germany [...].⁴⁴

However, at the turn of the year 1939/1940 there was a rethink. In the words of Hans Frank,⁴⁵ the General Government, which he ruled, was now to be regarded as a *Nebenreich* (auxiliary *Reich*).⁴⁶ By becoming a part of the *Reich* in this way,⁴⁷ its face would change:

The General Government, as we know it and as we developed it, will be considerably richer, happier and will receive more support and, first of all, it will be *entjudet* ['dejewified']. However, it will also lose its sight of a still predominant Polish life; because together with the Jews, the Poles will leave this territory. The *Führer* is determined to turn this territory into a purely German land in the course of 15 to 20 years.⁴⁸

Hand in hand with this reorientation – made possible not least because Madagascar had succeeded the General Government as the territorial solution to the 'Jewish Problem' – went a new economic course: Whilst the Poles were still regarded as inferior and cheap "workers of an alien race"⁴⁹ serving the German *Herrenmenschen*, investments were announced in order to contribute "to strengthening the German

⁴³ See e.g. letter by Kühnen concerning foreign investments in Litzmannstadt (Łódź), 9 December 1940, HAC, 500/29978-2001.BE, unnumbered; Wilhelm Keitel on the war-economic exploitation of the occupied Polish territories, 27 September 1939, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Polen*, pp. 125-126.

⁴⁴ Letter by Göring to Frank, 19 October 1939, printed in *ibid.*, pp. 132-133.

⁴⁵ Hans Frank was a jurist, who joined the NSDAP and the SA in 1923. He also participated in the Beer Hall Putsch. On 26 October 1939 Hitler appointed him Governor General for those parts of Poland which had not been incorporated into the *Reich*. For his role there see D. Schenk, *Hans Frank. Hitlers Kronjurist und Generalgouverneur*, Frankfurt a.M., Fischer, 2006; C. Kleßmann, 'Hans Frank - Parteijurist und Generalgouverneur in Polen', in R. Smelser and R. Zitelmann (eds.), *Die Braune Elite. 22 biographische Skizzen*, Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, pp. 41-51; also chapter 3.3.1.

⁴⁶ See speech by Frank, 2 February 1940, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Polen*, pp. 165-166.

⁴⁷ See notes on a conference on economic and currency matters, 24.07.1940, BArch, R 52 II, 229, pp. 2-10.

⁴⁸ Speech by Frank in front of the government of the General Government, 25 March 1940, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Polen*, pp. p. 195.

⁴⁹ Himmler on German settlement policy in the East, 24 August 1940, BArch, NS 19, 3282, pp. 1-8.

war potential”.⁵⁰ Thus, the future of former Poland in a German New Order was constantly defined by both interpretive frames. As long as its *völkisch* composition was considered problematic, its economy was to reflect the inferiority of its population. As soon as the General Government was earmarked for germanisation, like the annexed territories before, its economic prospects changed accordingly.

In the West, *völkisch* beliefs prefigured a different line of thought. It revolved less about concerns and more about the “good Nordic-Germanic imprint”⁵¹ that, according to an anonymous memorandum, large parts of the population exhibited. Accordingly, these people were to be won over, while all “racially, genetically, and socially unfit” people were to be expelled into what would be left of France.⁵² And a lengthy memorandum for Hitler, authored by the *völkisch* journalist Reismann-Grone, deemed the Dutch racially sound and saw potential in the Flemish, but no possibility for Wallonia except Germanisation.⁵³ Others advised wiping the ‘racially disparate’ Belgian state off the map entirely.⁵⁴ The prime focus of German *Volkstumspolitik* in the West, however, rested on Luxembourg and Alsace-Lorraine. The former should be “regained for the German *Volkstum*”⁵⁵ by incorporating it into the *Reich*, while the latter – being former German land – was to become “*kerndeutsch* [German to the core] forever”⁵⁶. Accordingly, the economic line was to treat these regions as if they were parts of the *Reich*.⁵⁷ For Belgium and the Netherlands, German planning stipulated close cooperation (see chapter 3.1.2). In the Dutch case, the aim was to “get

⁵⁰ Speech by Major General Bührmann, 6 June 1940, BACh, R 52 II, 228, pp. 2-9. See also Bormann’s notes on Hitler’s remarks on Polish workers, 2 October 1940, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Polen*, pp. 191-192. conference of Governors, 11 September 1940, BACh, R 52 II, 229, pp. 11-32.

⁵¹ Memorandum on questions of the Northern and Western space, 23 September 1940, printed in W. Schumann and L. Nestler (eds.), *Europa unterm Hakenkreuz. Die faschistische Okkupationspolitik in Belgien, Luxemburg und den Niederlanden (1940-1945)*, Berlin, VEB Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1990, pp. 117-118.

⁵² See *ibid.* In October 1940, more than 20.000 Jews from Alsace, Lorraine, Baden, and Palatinate were indeed deported into unoccupied France. See Mayer, *Krieg als Kreuzzug*, p. 300.

⁵³ See memorandum by Reismann-Grone for Hitler, 20 June 1940, printed in R. Opitz (ed.), *Europastrategien des deutschen Kapitals 1900-1945*, Cologne, Pahl-Rugenstein, 1977, pp. 690-694.

⁵⁴ See memorandum on questions of the Northern and Western space, 23 September 1940, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Belgien, Luxemburg und den Niederlanden*, pp. 117-118.

⁵⁵ Circular by Lammers concerning Luxembourg, 27 October 1940, BACh, R 3101, 30.839, pp. 169-170.

⁵⁶ Appeal for the expulsion of all French citizens, October 1940, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Frankreich*, p. 129. See also record of discussion at Göring’s headquarters, 19/20 June 1940, printed in Lipgens, *Documents on the History of European Integration*, pp. 56-57; document on the regularisation of currency questions, 2 July 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 10.

⁵⁷ See notes on a conference concerning the economic relations with the occupied countries, 6/11 September 1940, BACh, R 3101, 33.284, pp. 6-7.

on with the Dutch on good terms”⁵⁸ but simultaneously to strengthen German influence “by all possible means”.⁵⁹ After all, it was to “stay dependent on Germany forever.”⁶⁰ Thus, German visions of the West reflected the *völkisch* interpretive frame. The idea of creating racially homogeneous populations shaped the German considerations on where to set the borders, on which areas to annex, and even on Belgium’s right to exist.

As the Danes and Norwegians also ranked high in the National Socialist racial hierarchy, the *völkisch* repertoire of arguments and thoughts entitled them to a privileged position in Europe-to-be. This becomes apparent, for example, in a speech by Alfred Rosenberg.⁶¹ To him, they were part of the Greater Germanic space that was to play a special role in the “*gesamtkontinentalen Schicksalsgemeinschaft* [pan-European community of destiny]”⁶². Himmler also tapped the *völkisch* knowledge and belief system, when he saw commonalities in the Germanic “blood that flows through our veins and that enables us to stand our ground in Europe, to develop a culture, to demonstrate strength.”⁶³ Thus, instead of fighting a *Volkstumskampf*, National Socialist officials like *Reichskommissar* Josef Terboven in Norway focussed on winning over the local population for the New Order.⁶⁴ Again, the economic conceptions reflected the alleged racial value. Norway and Denmark – and possibly Sweden – were not considered inferior suppliers of labour and raw materials, but were to form an integral part of the *Großraumwirtschaft*.⁶⁵ Norway’s prospective role in Europe’s organic division of labour, for example, was assigned in accordance with its *Lebens-*

⁵⁸ Report by Wiehl on a meeting, 12 June 1940, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Belgien, Luxemburg und den Niederlanden*, pp. 100-101.

⁵⁹ Record of discussion at Göring’s headquarters, 19/ 20. June 1940, printed in Lipgens, *Documents on the History of European Integration*, pp. 56-57.

⁶⁰ Breyhan’s record of a meeting, 24 October 1940, BArch, R 2, 344, pp. 109-113.

⁶¹ As Alfred Rosenberg published his racial theory in the book ‘Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts’ and was, from 1934 onwards, responsible for the spiritual and philosophical education of the NSDAP, he is often depicted as the chief ideologue of National Socialism. In July 1941, Rosenberg was appointed head of the *Reich* Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories. In this position, he was responsible for the general policy in the East and the *Reichskommissare* Erich Koch (Ukraine) and Hinrich Lohse (Ostland) formally were his subordinates. See R. Bollmus, ‘Alfred Rosenberg – “Chefideologe” des Nationalsozialismus?’, in R. Smelser and R. Zitellmann (ed.), *Die Braune Elite. 22 biographische Skizzen*, Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1989, pp. 223-235.

⁶² Speech by Rosenberg on the ‘Nordic community of fate’, 9 July 1940, printed in Menger et al., *Expansionsrichtung Nordeuropa*, pp. 78-79.

⁶³ Speech by Himmler on occasion of the foundation of the Norwegian SS, 21 May 1941, printed in *ibid.*, pp. 101-102.

⁶⁴ See notes on a conference in Oslo, 28 November 1940, BArch, R 2501, 7014, pp. 19-26.

⁶⁵ See notes by Böhme on political and administrative measures for the occupation of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, 26 February 1940, printed in Menger et al., *Expansionsrichtung Nordeuropa*, pp. 58-62.

raum. It was to supply fish, hydroelectric power, and aluminium.⁶⁶ However, being Germanic did not mean being free. Germany's claim to orchestrate European cooperation also included Denmark and Norway.⁶⁷ Possible means to this end were binding these countries contractually and giving German companies the opportunity to gain a foothold in the North through the expropriation of the Jewish population.⁶⁸ Thus, the two dominant German traditions of imagining Europe ascribed clear-cut roles to the Nordic countries in the New Order. Their allegedly valuable blood determined their belonging, while their *völkisch* qualities, their *Lebensraum*, and their economic strengths defined their role in the envisaged organic division of labour.

However, the defining elements of the National Socialist discourse on Europe did not produce clear-cut prospects for all countries in the German sphere of influence. France, for example, was neither racially nor economically an essential part of the New Order. Here, the prime concern of German officials was marginalising France. For decades, Germans had blamed France for inventing and promoting the allegedly unnatural ideas that had led to racial degeneration, spiritual aberration, and thus Europe's decline.⁶⁹ Hence, it seemed sensible to prohibit "[e]very form of government that seems suitable to restore France's strengths [...]. In Europe, Germany is in charge."⁷⁰ Apart from this principle, the future of France remained vague.⁷¹ The ideas voiced extended from annexing large – primarily the economically valuable – parts to splitting it up into several autonomous states.⁷² Other officials eyed its economic potential. According to Hermann Göring, the Plenipotentiary for the Vier-

⁶⁶ See e.g. letter by Terboven to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 26 February 1941, BAArch, R 901, 113657, unnumbered; Landfried's memorandum on the preconditions and prospects of European cooperation, 10 May 1941, BAArch, R 2501, 7018, pp. 165-170.

⁶⁷ Denmark, however, was supposed to be the test run "for a European *Großraum* policy on the basis of cooperation and voluntariness." Report on a trip to Copenhagen, 26 April 1940, BAArch, R 26 II, 76, unnumbered; Notes on questions of an economic reorganisation of Europe, 15 July 1940, BAArch, R 2501, 7017, pp. 106-112.

⁶⁸ See report by Renthe-Fink to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 22 June 1940, printed in Menger et al., *Expansionsrichtung Nordeuropa*, pp. 74-75; report by the *Reichsgruppe Industrie* on Denmark, August 1940, printed in *ibid.*, p. 83; Report by the *Reichsgruppe Industrie* on Norway, February 1941, printed in Eichholtz and Schumann, *Anatomie des Krieges*, pp. 315-316.

⁶⁹ See chapters 2.1.3, 2.1.4, 2.2 and 2.3.

⁷⁰ From an orientation for the *Reich* press conference, 9 July 1940, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Frankreich*, p. 117.

⁷¹ According to Schmidt, the military administrations that had been set up in France and Belgium reflect this indecision. Presentation of Schmidt, November 1940, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Belgien, Luxemburg und den Niederlanden*, pp. 130-131.

⁷² See Elaboration of the Ministry of Economics, October 1940, printed in Hass and Schumann, *Anatomie der Aggression*, pp. 108-115; memorandum on questions of the Northern and Western space, 23 September 1940, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Belgien, Luxemburg und den Niederlanden*, pp. 117-118.

jahresplan and as such the most powerful German Official in the field of economics,⁷³ France could provide cheap imports due to its undervalued currency.⁷⁴ For the *Wirtschaftsgruppen*, the sector-specific organisations of the German economy, France was a promising export market in the prospective *Großraumwirtschaft* and a competitor that could now be tamed.⁷⁵ Others demanded the harnessing of the French potential for the war effort as a part of “the systematic utilisation of the entire European space.”⁷⁶ Thus, France, held responsible for most ills of modernity, was excluded from Europe-to-be due to its un-*völkisch* spirit. However, its economic potential, which had previously often been imagined as a part of the potential economic nucleus of European integration, still aroused interest.⁷⁷

For Germany’s perspective on Hungary, Yugoslavia, Romania, and Bulgaria the long tradition of German *Mittleuropa* ideas and their well-established focus on this region provided far more thought patterns and arguments than the *völkisch* knowledge and belief system. Max Illgner, a management board member of IG Farben, considered Southeastern Europe German *Lebensraum*, but in his reading, the term *Lebensraum* denoted “a sphere of mutual economic supplementation”.⁷⁸ Anton Reithinger, head of the economic department of the IG Farben, took the same line. In his eyes, there were *völkisch* problems to solve in the region – its frontiers disregarded its racial composition –, but his primary concern was the economy. Accordingly, he called for investments into local agriculture to intensify the exchange of manufactured goods for their foodstuffs and raw materials. In this way, the Southeast would contribute its share to freeing the European *Großraumwirtschaft* from its dependence on the world market.⁷⁹ Two organisations institutionalised these arguments and thought patterns: the *Mittleuropäischer Wirtschaftstag*, founded in 1931 as an interest group of Ger-

⁷³ Because of his plentitude of power he has been called the ‘economic dictator’ of National Socialist Germany. See e.g. A. Kube, ‘Hermann Göring - Zweiter Mann im “Dritten Reich”’, in R. Smelser and R. Zitelmann (ed.), *Die Braune Elite. 22 biographische Skizzen*, Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1989, pp. 69-83, here p. 74.

⁷⁴ See conference minute from the Ministry of Finance, 9 October 1940, BArch, R 2, 344, pp. 75-80.

⁷⁵ See report by the *Reichsgruppe Industrie* on France, March, 1941, printed in Eichholtz and Schumann, *Anatomie des Krieges*, pp. 320-324.

⁷⁶ From a record of the German armistice commission, 4 October 1940, printed in *ibid.*, pp. 125-126.

⁷⁷ See chapters 2.1.1 and 2.1.2.

⁷⁸ Speech by Illgner, 2 September 1940, printed in Eichholtz and Schumann, *Anatomie des Krieges*, p. 92.

⁷⁹ See speech by Reithinger on Southeastern Europe, 9 May 1940, BArch, R 8119 F, 24.152, unnumbered. In the eyes of many German officials, the Southeastern states had already become an essential part of the *Großraumwirtschaft*. See notes of Ritter, 1 June 1940, printed in Opitz, *Europa-strategien*, pp. 674-677.

man industry, and the *Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft*, founded in 1940 in order to coordinate economic policy towards the Southeastern Europe.⁸⁰ However, even though this trade pattern promised to make the European *Großraumwirtschaft* “as autarkic as possible”,⁸¹ it carried a risk in Göring’s eyes: In accordance with the *Forschungsstelle Wehrwirtschaft*, a subdivision of his Four Year Plan Organisation (*Vierjahresplanbehörde*), he argued that by developing agriculture and industry, Germany ultimately thwarted its own efforts to intensify the desired exchange because the necessary rise in living standards would also increase prices.⁸² Thus, the way Germans talked about Southeastern Europe was largely predefined by categories, arguments, and thoughts that stemmed from German *Mitteleuropa* ideas and their imagined basic economic pattern.⁸³ The *völkisch* composition of the region was perceived as problematic but not as a pressing issue.

Africa was another area that was to fulfil the primarily economic function of supplementing Germany and its *Großraumwirtschaft*. For many German officials acquiring colonies and aligning them with German needs was crucial, or even “an unconditional necessity” if Germany wanted “to safeguard the future of the German *Volk*”.⁸⁴ By reclaiming its former colonies and adding the Dutch, the Belgian, and parts of the French and British possessions in Africa, Germany could create a huge colonial empire.⁸⁵ The *Wehrmacht*, for example, expected that the exports of these colonies would not only benefit nutrition and industry in Germany but also serve the purpose of

⁸⁰ For more information on the *Mitteleuropäischer Wirtschaftstag*, see C. Freytag, *Deutschlands ‘Drang nach Südosten’. Der Mitteleuropäische Wirtschaftstag und der ‘Ergänzungsraum Südosteuropa’ 1931-1945*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012; For more information on the *Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft*, see Aly and Heim, *Vordenker der Vernichtung*, pp. 332-337.

⁸¹ Hermann’s material on the mining industry in the Southeast, May 1941. RGVA, 1458, 29, 126.

⁸² See letter by Göring with an attached report by the *Forschungsstelle für Wehrwirtschaft*, 25 January 1941, printed in K. Drechsler, H. Dress and G. Hass, ‘Europapläne des deutschen Imperialismus im Zweiten Weltkrieg’, *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, vol. 7, 1971, pp. 916-931, here pp. 924-927.

⁸³ See chapter 2.3.

⁸⁴ Speech by Prenzel at the department for colonial policy at the NSDAP, 2 May 1940, BArch, R 2501, 6839, pp. 300-323. See also circular by Funk concerning colonial questions, 24 July 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, p. 8; report by the economic department of the *Reichsbank* on the development of the world economy after the war, 25 January 1940, BArch, R 2501, 6612, pp. 467-472.

⁸⁵ See report by the economic department of the *Reichsbank* on the currency questions in German colonies, 17 April 1940, BArch, R 2501, 6839, pp. 296-299.

exporting colonial goods to the German-ruled European *Großwirtschaftsraum*, of expanding Germany's share in world trade, of improving Germany's status as a world power, the prestige of German people, and their gentlemanly experience.⁸⁶

Instead of integrating them into the world market, however, the *Reichsbank* wanted to turn the German colonies into a “methodically developed *Ergänzungsraum* [supplemental area] for the mother country.”⁸⁷ And as long as it did not run contrary to German interests the local population would be allowed to keep their customs and practices.⁸⁸ In this respect, the German dominance in Europe widened the scope of what could be said. Overseas colonies, a dream that many Germans had already given up, were not only an option again, but an economic ‘necessity’. However, this notion still fitted into the economic pattern of supplementing industry with sources of foodstuffs and raw materials.

Overall, the National Socialist discursive construction of Europe and its boundaries was not shaped by political conceptions or cultural categories. These dimensions had largely already been silenced before the war.⁸⁹ Now, they only served as grounds for exclusion – as in the case of France and its allegedly anti-European spirit – or as second-order indicators that suggested racial kinship. The *völkisch* notion that racial similarities expressed themselves in appearance, mentality, and cultural traditions, strengthened National Socialists in their conviction that the Nordic states and parts of the populations in the West belonged to the racially valuable core of the New Order. Thus, the two interpretive frames that had become dominant after 1933 determined the discursive construction of Europe-to-be. Giving meaning to the incorporation of states and regions in which ‘valuable blood’ could be found or for which some historical claim as German *Lebensraum* could be construed, the *völkisch* knowledge and belief system created a limited geographical scope with a racially homogeneous and ‘Jew-free’ population. The established patterns of economic thinking, however, transcended these limits. For the sake of autarky, prosperity, and power the geographical scope of an industrialised European core area and its *Ergänzungsraum* (supplemental area) could be widened at will. Thus, the two dominant rationales produced two concentric circles within the German discourse on

⁸⁶ Colonial Order of the *Wehrmacht*, 1 January 1941, BArch MA, RW 19, 518, pp. 72-87.

⁸⁷ Letter by the economic department of the *Reichsbank* to Dr. Worbs, 21 May 1941, BArch, R 2501, 6839, p. 676.

⁸⁸ See draft of a colonial law, August 1940, BArch, R 2501, 6839, pp. 434-436.

⁸⁹ See chapter 2.3.

a new European order. Both had their centre in Germany. Europe-to-be consisted of a Germanic core⁹⁰ and a primarily economically defined periphery. Within these limits, the congruence of aims and the relativity of certain basic principles allowed arguments that varied the size and the form of these circles, but all concepts had to be rooted in one of these basic patterns.⁹¹ This leeway made it possible to voice ideas of the *Reich*, as they substantiated the German claim to leadership and promised to accomodate different *Völker* under one umbrella, *Mitteleuropa* ideas because they destined Germany to lead Europe and promoted the same economic pattern, and *Großraum* concepts, which picked up geopolitical arguments and coupled them with economic prosperity and political independence.

All these different geographical visions of Europe-to-be were informed by long-standing and well-established knowledge and belief systems. Decades of wishful thinking and some 'scientific' underpinning had validated them, and National Socialist terror and oppression had narrowed down the limits of what could be said. As a result, two dominant systems, a *völkisch* and an economic one, defined what could be voiced legitimately; they determined how 'good', 'true', 'right', or 'sensible' certain notions were. Every notion touching on concepts like equality, freedom, democracy, diversity, or free trade had been dismissed as aberration running contrary to the true nature of the European *Völker* (see chapter 2.3). In this way, the valid repertoire of arguments and motives shrank but repetition stabilised its dominant elements. So when Germany actually ruled large parts of Europe, the *völkisch* and the economic interpretive frame shaped the envisaged prospects of all countries in the German New Order. In cases in which both rationales coincided or in which only one proved valid, the future seemed clear and could hardly be contested: The Southeast formed an integral part of Europe, despite being irrelevant from a *völkisch* point of view. As an *Ergänzungsraum* (supplemental area), however, it was economically indispensable. The territories Germany had lost to Poland after the First World War, in contrast,

⁹⁰ For Volkmann all concepts for a new Europe emanated from the basic idea of a "Germanic-racial settlement area as Greater-German core area". H. Volkmann, *Luxemburg im Zeichen des Hakenkreuzes. Eine politische Wirtschaftsgeschichte 1933 bis 1944*, Paderborn, Schöningh, 2010, p. 98.

⁹¹ See e.g. memorandum by the Reich Statistical Office on the post-war supply of raw materials in the *mitteleuropäisch*-Greater-German economic area, July 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 110; letter by Kehrl, 12 August 1940, printed in Opitz, *Europastrategien*, pp. 751-754; speech by Pietzsch on the European Goßraumwirtschaft, 15 October 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 17; memorandum by Daitz on establishing a *Reichskommissariat für Großraumwirtschaft*, 31.05.1940, printed in H. Neulen (ed.), *Europa und das 3. Reich. Einigungsbestrebungen im deutschen Machtbereich 1939-1945*, Munich, Universitas, 1987, pp. 72-75.

were annexed as German *Lebensraum* right away. Even though their economic relevance was confined to Upper Silesia's industry, these areas were to be won back entirely for the German *Volk* by getting rid of its Polish and Jewish population. The Netherlands, Denmark, and Norway combined 'valuable blood' and a relevant economy, so that no fundamental *völkisch* or economic interventions seemed necessary. They were to be a part of the racial and economic core of the new Europe led by Germany.

Controversies were possible, however, where both kinds of arguments pointed into different directions: with the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, the National Socialist regime had conquered lands they considered German *Lebensraum*. However, the Protectorate was also home to a modern and potent industry and its skilled workforce. Hence, the economically grounded fear of potentially obstructing German economic interests faced the *völkisch* justification for a policy of Germanisation and resettlement. This conflict of aims created a discursive leeway for debate, just as the lack of any compelling line of reasoning did. In the case of France, Germany's *völkisch* interests were confined to Alsace-Lorraine, and the economic ones to the iron ore deposits there. Accordingly, France's future borders and its status within the New Order were subject to a different set of arguments: military considerations, historical memories, or the wish to render Germany's hegemony incontestable.

Thus, the New Order discourse before the attack on the Soviet Union allowed for a certain variety of concepts, but no single geographical version of Europe-to-be won the upper hand. The *völkisch* and the economic interpretive frames set discursive limits and produced two different but vague mainstreams within the discourse on Europe: The vision of a racially and spiritually homogeneous Europe 'free of Jews' was not always congruent with the economically construed vision of a specialized and autarkic *Großraumwirtschaft*. The two interpretive frames either reinforced or contradicted each other and thus either discursively stabilised the status of a country in the National Socialist New Order, or put it up for interpretation.

3.1.2 Currency and Trade – Pulling the Strings in Europe

National Socialism had solved the problems of unemployment, of raw material procurement, of raising living standards, of excluding Jewry and of pricing and social policy in its own way. Those sensible economic principles that had been developed by National Socialism would from now on have to radiate out into the European space.⁹² (Notes on a speech by Schlotterer, June 1940)

Gustav Schlotterer – as head of the department of *Vorbereitung und Ordnung* (preparation and ordering) in the Ministry of Economics in charge of key issues concerning the *Großraum* – was one of many who believed that Germany's successes since 1933, including the marginalisation of its Jewish population, proved that the 'sensible' National Socialist principles could serve as a role model for a new European order. Geared towards and led by Germany, Europe could finally stand up to the other great global powers. This long-standing and well-established theme of German economic concepts for Europe (see chapter 2.3) prompted considerations on how best to perpetuate the current state of affairs beyond the end of the war. The *völkisch* and the economic interpretive frame left room for a discourse that oscillated between oppression, voluntary cooperation, and informal domination.

One central motive, that had already shaped many *Mitteleuropa* ideas and to which geopolitics had lent additional credence, shaped the considerations of many German officials: the apparent trend towards larger but walled-off markets would, according to leading *Reichsbank* employees for example, surely culminate in a world divided into several "economic empires", *Großraumwirtschaften*.⁹³ Germany's sphere of influence had to become one of them.⁹⁴ For this purpose, "the German-dominated parts of Europe will have to be merged into an economic unity"⁹⁵ as existed in Russia, Japan, the United States, and Great Britain. Although Hans Kehrl saw Europe well on its way to this goal, he also pointed out the pending organisational problems.⁹⁶ Joseph Goebbels, *Reich* Minister of Propaganda, also thought in global categories. He believed that the European *Völker* were beginning to understand that their reser-

⁹² Notes on a speech by Schlotterer, 18 June 1940, BArch, R 2501, 6612, pp. 621-629.

⁹³ See economic department of the *Reichsbank* on the worldwide economic developments after the war, 25 January 1940, BArch, R 2501, 6612, pp. 467-472.

⁹⁴ See economic department of the *Reichsbank* on currency problems after the end of the war, 20 June 1940, BArch, R 2501, 7015, pp. 49-65.

⁹⁵ Memorandum of the *Reich* Chancellery on the organisation of German economy, 9 July 1940, printed in Lipgens, *Documents on the History of European Integration*, pp. 57-59.

⁹⁶ See Kehrl's speech before the chamber of industry and commerce in Lower Lusatia, 9 September 1940, BArch, R 11, 107, pp. 1- 17.

vations were “basically family quarrels, compared to the major questions the continents have to solve.”⁹⁷ Given “German organisational talent and German commercial diligence”, the Ministry of Economics was confident that the *Reich* would succeed in “developing the natural powers and natural resources of Europe in a way that it will be a match for every other economic constellation of powers.”⁹⁸ Thus, National Socialist officials considered the creation of a *Großraumwirtschaft* not only feasible but also, just like Daitz, “absolutely essential”⁹⁹ if Europe wanted to be able to stand up to the other major powers in the modern world. This thinking tied in with a long German tradition of economic notions of Europe that attached value to the interdependence of geographical scope, economic prosperity, and political power.

However, German experiences during the First World War and the Great Depression had added another requirement to this line of reasoning. If the German-led *Großwirtschaftsraum* wanted to be on a par with the other economic great powers, it had to be able to survive without them. Thus, the objective of becoming economically self-sufficient had gained additional weight and now shaped much of Germany’s economic perspective on its new sphere of influence.¹⁰⁰ Reports analysed Luxembourg, Belgium, and the Netherlands from this perspective, whereas the *Wehrmacht* Office of Military Economics and Armaments emphasised the gaps that Denmark, Norway, and Sweden would fill.¹⁰¹ Overall, the *Forschungsstelle für Wehrwirtschaft* asserted, Germany was able to cover large parts of its war-economic needs in *Mitteleuropa*.¹⁰² However, wrenching these economies from their previous trade networks was expected to create problems.¹⁰³ Nonetheless, Karl Ritter, a German dip-

⁹⁷ Speech by Goebbels on a reception with Czech journalists and creative artists, 11 September 1940, RGVA, 1488, 1, 31.

⁹⁸ Memorandum on a *Mitteleuropäische Wirtschaftsunion*, 21.06.1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 41.

⁹⁹ Memorandum by Daitz on establishing a *Reichskommissariat für Großraumwirtschaft*, 31 May 1940, printed in Neulen, *Europa und das 3. Reich*, pp. 72-75.

¹⁰⁰ See Volkmann, ‘Europäische Dimension’, pp. 19-20; E. Teichert, *Autarkie und Großraumwirtschaft in Deutschland 1930-1939. Außenwirtschaftliche Konzeptionen zwischen Wirtschaftskrise und Zweitem Weltkrieg*, Munich, Oldenbourg, 1984, pp. 102-104, 138-140, 177-179; chapter 2.3.

¹⁰¹ See e.g. economic department of the *Reichsbank* on ‘What can we expect from Holland?’, 20 May 1940, printed in Opitz, *Europastrategien*, pp. 656-658; Economic department of the *Reichsbank* on ‘What can we expect from Belgium?’, 30 May 1940, BArch, R 2501, 6846, pp. 50-57; letter to Schlöterer on the opportunities and consequences of a customs and economic union with Belgium, Luxembourg, Netherlands, and Norway, 3 July 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 10; Wehrmacht office of military economics and armaments on the economies of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, 10 April 1940, printed in Menger et al., *Expansionsrichtung Nordeuropa*, pp. 68-69.

¹⁰² See *Forschungsstelle für Wehrwirtschaft* on the possibilities of covering the demand for raw materials in *Mitteleuropa*, 28 February 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 70.

¹⁰³ See economic department of the Dresdner Bank on the economic structure of Scandinavia, 13 April 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 23.

lomat, advocated their integration into German “*Großraum* policy”. Ultimately, after “systematic work for decades”, this would pay off.¹⁰⁴ Even though a European *Großraumwirtschaft* with its African colonies would still not result in complete autarky,¹⁰⁵ the idea of securing the continent’s vital supply and the “German raw material and foodstuffs base in Europe”¹⁰⁶ by systematically developing certain regions and adjusting their economies played a crucial role in National Socialist plans for a New Europe. Thus, the dominant economic knowledge and belief system not only prefigured the demands for a European *Großraumwirtschaft* as a means to more economic and political influence but also specified one of its key elements: autarky.

Additionally, the New Order promised to solve a more recent German economic problem. Its problematic position on the world market.¹⁰⁷ Due to the overvalued *Reichsmark*, Germany lacked the foreign currency to pay for imports, while its exports were too expensive to find buyers without subsidies. Within a German-led *Großwirtschaftsraum* relying on fixed exchange rates, however, the *Reichsmark* would not only regain its function as a medium of exchange but would become the centre of gravity for the European monetary system.¹⁰⁸ In this way, Schlotterer, for example, expected a reorganised Europe to free Germany from its “enormous economic constriction” by opening up “a larger sphere of activity on the economic and financial side” for the *Reich*.¹⁰⁹ According to him, this lack of economic *Lebensraum* had caused the war, but he was sure that “Germany has to and will outgrow its current borders”¹¹⁰. Albert Pietzsch, head of the *Reich Chamber of Commerce*, voiced a similar expectation. In his eyes, the abolition of Europe’s internal trade restrictions would not only unleash Germany’s economic potential but all of Europe’s.¹¹¹ Thus, Germany’s current problems contributed to solidifying the predominant economic interpretive frame. Instead of searching for a solution in free trade or new trade part-

¹⁰⁴ Notes by Ritter on the new situation in the Nordic states, 11 May 1940, printed in Menger et al., *Expansionsrichtung Nordeuropa*, pp. 73-74.

¹⁰⁵ See notes by the Economic department of the *Reichsbank* on a speech by Schlotterer on future foreign trade, 18 June 1940, BArch, R 2501, 6612, pp. 621-629.

¹⁰⁶ Albrecht’s note on a meeting of the *Reichsgruppe Industrie*, 19 June 1940, printed in Opitz, *Europastrategien*, pp. 684-685.

¹⁰⁷ See Abelshauser, ‘Mitteleuropa’, pp. 284-285; Teichert, *Autarkie und Großraumwirtschaft*, p. 31.

¹⁰⁸ See memorandum on a ‘*Mitteleuropäische Wirtschaftsunion*’, 21.06.1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 41.

¹⁰⁹ Notes of the Economic department of the *Reichsbank* on a speech by Schlotterer on future foreign trade, 18 June 1940, BArch, R 2501, 6612, pp. 621-629.

¹¹⁰ Albrecht’s note on a meeting of the *Reichsgruppe Industrie*, 19 June 1940, printed in Opitz, *Europastrategien*, pp. 684-685.

¹¹¹ See speech by Pietzsch on the European *Goßraumwirtschaft*, 15 October 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 17.

ners outside of Europe, the already appealing vision of *Großwirtschaftsraum* evolved into a panacea for long-standing aspirations and recent problems alike.

One of the core features of this vision of economic integration, however, was the German claim to assume the leading role at the heart of this autarkic and thriving *Großwirtschaftsraum*. For decades, many German *Mitteleuropa* and *Reich* ideas for a reorganisation of Europe had found different reasons why Germany was to preside formally or informally over any new European order.¹¹² Accordingly, the words of Walther Funk, the *Reich* Minister of Economic Affairs and head of the *Reichsbank*, in a meeting at the Ministry of Economics sound bold but fit in seamlessly into the established discourse on Europe.

Germany now possesses the political power in Europe to reorganise the economy according to its needs. The political will to exercise this power exists. This means that the countries have to align themselves with us. The economies of the other European countries have to adapt to our needs.¹¹³

Funk was by no means the only one who measured the success of the New Order by its benefits for Germany. While Karl Ritter hoped for a German economic supremacy, Anthon Reithinger wanted to cement Germany's "military, defence-economically, and ethically" predominant role.¹¹⁴ Göring found that it was "imperative to expand the German sphere of influence in Europe and the rest of the world as far as possible and to give the German *Volk* [...] the highest possible living standard."¹¹⁵ And in Schlotterer's vision of a New Order, Germany was the economic master, the rest of Europe "Germany's front yard"¹¹⁶. Thus, the discourses that shaped the way German officials spoke about the economic future of Europe produced a narrow 'discursive formation'. Europe had to become a powerful, autarkic, and German-led *Großwirtschaftsraum* to remedy its minor and its global shortcomings.

Nevertheless, this general notion of Europe-to-be still left room for debate about its realisation and its specifics. Schlotterer, for example, opposed views that imagined a

¹¹² See e.g. S. Breuer, *Anatomie der Konservativen Revolution*, Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1995, p. 104; H. Hecker, *Die Tat und ihr Osteuropa-Bild 1909-1939*, Cologne, Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1974, p. 145; Elvert, *Mitteleuropa*, p. 70; chapter 2.3.

¹¹³ Note on a meeting in the Ministry of Economics, 22 July 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 8.

¹¹⁴ Notes on Reithinger's memorandum on 'The Foundations of Europe's Economic Reconstruction', 30 August 1940, BArch, R 2501, 7017, pp. 211-218. See also note on a meeting concerning the European *Großwirtschaftsraum*, 25 May 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 10.

¹¹⁵ Letter by Göring to Funk concerning the continental- and *Großraumwirtschaft*, 17 August 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 9, or BArch R 2501, 1017, p. 210.

¹¹⁶ Note on a speech by Schlotterer, 29 July 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 8.

Europe in which “we simply dictate what has to be done; that means that we see things solely from the angle of a one-sided German interest.”¹¹⁷ Instead, he favoured European cooperation on the basis of mutual agreements and shared interests.¹¹⁸ Nonetheless, many National Socialist officials insisted on “keeping an advisable distance between the *Reich* and other protected states”¹¹⁹: “The general aim that Germany has to achieve in post-war Europe is to accomplish a large degree of economic independence while simultaneously increasing the living standard by boosting the supply.”¹²⁰ Max Kretschmann, a *Reichsbank* manager, expressed the same thought pattern, when he admitted that such a use of the occupied territories “is in the first place supposed to serve self-interests [...]. In the second place, however, it helps the occupied territories at the same time.”¹²¹ Thus, for German officials the creation of a New Europe was – to a differing degree – a matter of potential benefits for the *Reich*; or in Walther Funk’s words:

The decisive factor has to be to intertwine the European economies and the Greater German economy as completely and closely as possible. In doing so, all measures improving the fulfilment of German demand and resulting in an increased influence of the German economy in the different countries have to be prioritised, while conversely all measures being irrelevant from the point of view of our own Greater German interests, can preferably remain undone or can be postponed.¹²²

In order to meet all the German expectations, Europe had to be reorganised:

Europe’s unbearable economic atomisation and chaos has to be ended. It is economic madness if every country, no matter how small, tries to produce everything from trouser buttons to locomotives and if it fosters dwarf-industries for this purpose that have no right to exist and can only be kept alive with subsidies, import restrictions, or excessive tariffs. For everyone’s sake, a sound division of labour between the countries of the European space, which are – by

¹¹⁷ Speech by Schlotterer on a meeting of the *Großen Beirats der Reichsgruppe Industrie*, 3 October 1940, CZA, 3737, pp. 2992-3021. Eichholtz’s extracts of this document are deceptive. The quote above is cited, but Schlotterer’s objection that views like this are wrong is missing. See the version printed in Eichholtz and Schumann, *Anatomie des Krieges*, pp. 289-296.

¹¹⁸ See *ibid.*

¹¹⁹ A draft by Smagon for SS-Sturmbannführer Hahn, 20 February 1941, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Österreich und der Tschechoslowakei*, pp. 163-164.

¹²⁰ Note on a meeting in the Ministry of Economics, 22 July 1940, printed in Hass and Schumann, *Anatomie der Aggression*, pp. 67-75.

¹²¹ Kretschmann on German currency policy in the occupied territories, 23 December 1940, BAArch, R 2501, 7014, pp. 83-94.

¹²² Letter by Funk to Göring concerning the continental- and *Großraumwirtschaft*, 6 August 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 9.

location and structure – bound to an economic *Schicksalsgemeinschaft* [community of destiny], has to replace this exaggerated autarkism.¹²³

For the *Reich* Chancellery, a Europe unimpeded by tariffs and subsidies provided the opportunity to “produce more efficiently and to concentrate highly productive firms at favourable locations to get rid of inefficient businesses”¹²⁴. A memorandum from the Ministry of Economics expressed similar arguments, when it held that the creation of “a *mitteleuropäische* economic union is not only possible but also beneficial, even necessary for Greater Germany and the countries involved in order to arrive at an organic economic reorganisation of Europe.”¹²⁵ Thus, the general principle of a powerful, autarkic, and German-led *Großwirtschaftsraum* turned the current economic structure of Europe into a pressing problem. For its solution, German officials fell back on the well-established and allegedly natural concept of an intra-European division of labour that divided Europe up into regions with competitive industries worthy of preservation and countries that were to act as suppliers of foodstuffs and raw materials.¹²⁶

The idea of an ‘organic’ division of labour, gave significance to what Germans attributed to a certain region or *Volk*. The economic as well as the *völkisch* knowledge and belief system shaped the German perspective and helped to assign the roles in the envisaged New Order. The participants of a meeting in the Ministry of Economics, for example, agreed that the industrialised and allegedly racially sound Western countries were to keep their economies, except for “inefficient or superfluous industries”,¹²⁷ which had to vanish. Applying the same logic, Emil Wiehl, head of the department of economic policy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, emphasised Norway’s huge potential for hydroelectric power and energy-intensive industries and expected the Netherlands to supply its trade navy and to play a bridging role to India.¹²⁸ The Dutch industry should keep working, just as the Belgian one. After all, according to

¹²³ Draft for Funk’s speech on occasion of the opening of the Vienna trade fair, 27 August 1940, BArch, R 2501, 6428, pp. 84-104.

¹²⁴ Memorandum by the Reich Chancellery on the organisation of German economy, 9 July 1940, printed in Lipgens, *Documents on the History of European Integration*, pp. 57-59.

¹²⁵ Memorandum on a *Mitteleuropäische Wirtschaftsunion*, 21.06.1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 41.

¹²⁶ See chapter 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3.

¹²⁷ Report on a meeting by the department for mining in the Ministry of Economics, 7 September 1940, BArch, R 3101, 30.839, pp. 107-109.

¹²⁸ See report by Wiehl, 12 June 1940, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Belgien, Luxemburg und den Niederlanden*, pp. 100-101.

Schlotterer, Germany did not aspire to monopolise European industries.¹²⁹ Friedrich Landfried, state secretary in the Ministry of Economics, similarly assumed that “a mutual give and take should lead to an economically sound balance”¹³⁰ between the economies. However, there was one problem. Due to the war, many European states had lost access to vital supplies and Germany was not able to fill this void.¹³¹ Most of them needed goods that were also in short supply in the Reich: foodstuffs, animal fodder, raw materials, and machinery. In this respect, many German officials shared the hope of Carl Clodius in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that trade with Russia, but primarily with the Southeast, would provide a remedy.¹³²

The economies in the Southeast, the traditional projection surface for German economic hopes, promised to supplement the German and Central European economy perfectly. According to Reithinger, there were many who considered them a “cure-all for Germany’s foreign trade”¹³³. However, if these states were to nourish the rest of Europe, one had to get the most out of them by increasing their output through investments and opening up their markets for manufactured goods.¹³⁴ For this purpose, as Tilo Freiherr von Wilmowsky, chairman of the *Mitteeuropäische Wirtschaftstag*, pointed out, German commitment was necessary: “The marriage between chimney and plough can only be a happy one if it is contracted to last. In Germany, too, we are still in the state of engagement.”¹³⁵ Thus, the vision of a division of labour along racial lines and locational advantages created an industrial core area which depended on external supplies. Confining potential solutions to the continent, the demand for autarky and well-established thought patterns shifted the German view and the discourse on Europe towards the East and Southeast. These regions had con-

¹²⁹ See protocol of a meeting of the advisory board of the *Reichsgruppe Industrie*, 3 October 1940, printed in Eichholtz and Schumann, *Anatomie des Krieges*, pp. 289-296.

¹³⁰ Speech by Landfried on occasion of opening the autumn fair in Cologne, 15 September 1940, BArch, R 2501, 7017, pp. 233-245.

¹³¹ See economic department of the *Dresdner Bank* on Scandinavia’s economic structure, 13 April 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 23.

¹³² See notes of Clodius, 30 May 1940, printed in Opitz, *Europastrategien*, pp. 663-668; notes on speech by Schlotterer, 29 July 1940, BArch, R 2501, 7017, pp. 113-114.

¹³³ Speech by Reithinger on Southeastern Europe, 9 May 1940, BArch, R 8119 F, 24.152, unnumbered.

¹³⁴ See *Mitteeuropäischer Wirtschaftstag* on Southeastern Europe as supplemental area for Germany, 17 November 1939, RGVA, 1458, 29, 123.

¹³⁵ Speech by Wilmowsky on the Vienna conference of the *Mitteeuropäischer Wirtschaftstag*, 2 September 1940, printed in Opitz, *Europastrategien*, pp. 760-764.

stantly figured as a projection surface of German economic hopes and aspirations for decades.¹³⁶

Even though the idea of bringing European industry together with agrarian countries had been a long-standing constant in German notions of Europe, the loss of vital overseas imports posed a practical problem for the autarkic *Großraumwirtschaft*: balancing supply and demand without relying on principles of an ‘unnatural’ free market economy. The National Socialist solution to this problem was systematic planning. According to the economic department of the *Reichsbank*, the *Großraumwirtschaft* would

be much more than a mere community of economic interests. It will be a consistent political economy in which the rhythm of the economy, the direction of production and the organisation of the economy will be determined by the German executive.¹³⁷

In this way, German officials wanted to stop the “free play of market forces” to avoid “unnecessary competition”. Instead, every country should get its “natural and sensible share”¹³⁸ in an “economic area which will, due to generous planning, work without business cycles”¹³⁹. Thus, the National Socialist rejection of capitalism, which was at least partly driven by anti-Semitism,¹⁴⁰ ruled out the possibility to speak out in favour of a free market system within the European *Großraumwirtschaft*. Its internal division of labour had to be modelled on the proven National Socialist state-orchestrated role model, as practiced in Germany.

However, the *status quo* left a lot to be desired. The shortage of foreign currencies hampered intra-European trade and bilateral clearing accounts were nothing but makeshift.¹⁴¹ Hence, German institutions discussed several options intended to in-

¹³⁶ See e.g. K. Thörner, “‘Der ganze Südosten ist unser Hinterland’ - Deutsche Südosteuropapläne von 1840 bis 1945, Freiburg, ca. 1990; Freytag, *Drang nach Südosten*, pp. 22-28; Hecker, *Osteuropa-Bild*, p. 169; chapter 2.3.

¹³⁷ The economic department of the *Reichsbank* on the question of reorganising the German currency after the war, 4 July 1940, BArch, R 2501, 7015, pp. 224-234.

¹³⁸ Speech by Landfried on occasion of opening the autumn fair in Cologne, 15 September 1940, BArch, R 2501, 7017, pp. 233-245.

¹³⁹ Note on a meeting in the Ministry of Economics, 22 July 1940, printed in Hass and Schumann, *Anatomie der Aggression*, pp. 67-75.

¹⁴⁰ See Szejnmann, ‘Nazi Economic Thought’; Postone, ‘Antisemitismus’, p. 251.

¹⁴¹ Since Schacht’s ‘New Plan’, the shortage of foreign currencies had been circumvented by bilateral agreements that imports and exports should not be paid for directly but charged against each other on a clearing account. For Germany, two major problems arose out of the bilateral clearing system: Firstly, Germany imported far more than it exported so that it accumulated large debts. This undermined the willingness to export to Germany. Secondly, Germany’s hunger for goods took them out of the trading partner’s economy, while the local central bank paid the exporter without receiving Ger-

tensify Europe's internal trade under the auspices of Germany. In this debate, the general principle of a powerful, autarkic, and German-led *Großwirtschaftsraum* based on a state-orchestrated division of labour, which included the Eastern and Southeastern, set the aims but also the boundaries of valid arguments, thoughts, and concepts. The German claim to leadership and its economic interests, in particular, proved pivotal. According to the Ministry of Economics, any solution had to prioritise German needs: "For now, it is essential that the single countries increase their supplies for Germany instead of supporting each other."¹⁴²

This discursively constructed objective and the redrawing of discursive boundaries that went hand in hand with its solidification becomes apparent, for example, in May 1940, when several leading National Socialist officials discussed the future of Europe. They all agreed that the current customs, price, and trade policies were not enough to create a *Großraumwirtschaft*. Ultimately, Germany had to become the centrepiece of a European customs and monetary union.¹⁴³ Thus, Schlotterer expressed a widely accepted thought when he declared that the "most important future task for German trade policy was to unite Europe in an economic union under German leadership and to eliminate all constraints like tariffs, currency differences, and varying economic policies."¹⁴⁴ As the war offered the opportunity to dismiss the reservations of other countries and to install the *Reichsmark* as leading currency, he was convinced that now was the time for action.¹⁴⁵ However, a customs and currency union carried one crucial risk:

the creation of a common European market under German leadership [...] shall and must not lead to an alignment of social living standards. For some highly developed and racially related *Völker*, like the Scandinavians and the Dutch, an adjustment to German norms might be pos-

man payments. Thus, Germany factually exported inflationary tendencies. See W. Boelcke, 'Die europäische Wirtschaftspolitik des Nationalsozialismus', *Historische Mitteilungen*, vol. 5, 1992, pp. 194-232, here p. 226.

¹⁴² Note on a meeting in the Ministry of Economics on questions concerning the economic reorganisation of Europe, 15 July 1940, BArch, R 2501, 7017, pp. 106-112.

¹⁴³ See note on a meeting concerning the European *Großwirtschaftsraum*, 25 May 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 10. Schlotterer, Ritter, Clodius, Imhoff, Gramsch, Schultze-Schlutius, and others attended this meeting.

¹⁴⁴ Notes by the Economic department of the *Reichsbank* on a speech by Gustav Schlotterer on future foreign trade, 18 June 1940, BArch, R 2501, 6612, pp. 621-629; notes by Clodius, 30 May 1940, printed in Opitz, *Europastrategien*, pp. 663-668.

¹⁴⁵ See Albrecht's note on a meeting of the *Reichsgruppe Industrie*, 19 June 1940, printed in *ibid.*, pp. 684-685.

sible. An alignment of socially and racially inferior *Völker*, like those of the Balkans, to the German living standard would be politically unbearable and economically unreasonable.¹⁴⁶

Thus, the undisputed ultimate goal of a German-led European market had to be brought in line with Germany's wish for cheap labour, foodstuffs, raw materials, and the racial appraisal of the European *Völker*.¹⁴⁷ The *Reichsbank* suggested introducing fixed exchange rates as a first step on the long way to a currency and customs union. Until then, trade agreements should help to plan and coordinate Europe's production and demand.¹⁴⁸ An unsigned memorandum in the files of the Ministry of Economics, however, still argued for the abolition of all internal tariffs as soon as possible: "a customs union still is a means, and a necessary and elemental means at that, to create a common economic area."¹⁴⁹ Price controls and industrial agreements could cushion eventual initial disruptions. Even though several expert reports Schlotterer received saw no legal or economic obstacles barring this way,¹⁵⁰ Europe's disparate financial and economic policies as well as the racial inequality led to a rethinking: "the debate about a reorganisation of Europe must not be confined to a currency and customs union."¹⁵¹ Thus, the well-established concept that *Mitteleuropa* ideas had suggested for decades as the solution to Germany's economic constriction, a currency and customs union, was discarded in the discourse due to its tendency to align the living standards in all participating countries. Such a development ran contrary to the German claim to leadership, the desired prioritisation of German interests, and the envisaged congruence between the alleged racial value of a *Volk* and the prospective economic role it was supposed to play in the *Großraumwirtschaft*.

Accordingly, German officials pondered alternatives that would live up to the standards that have discursively been established. Egon Wagemann, director of the *Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung*, pointed to a possible solution: By redes-

¹⁴⁶ Memorandum on the realisation of the continental economy, second half of 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 68.

¹⁴⁷ See note on a speech by Schlotterer at the *Reichsgruppe Industrie*, 19 June 1940, CZA, W54, pp. 133-135.

¹⁴⁸ See economic department of the Reichsbank on currency problems after the end of the war, 20 June 1940, BArch, R 2501, 7015, pp. 49-65.

¹⁴⁹ Memorandum on a *Mitteleuropäische Wirtschaftsunion*, 21 June 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 41.

¹⁵⁰ See letter to Schlotterer concerning the creation of a *mitteleuropäischen* economic union, 2 July 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 10; letter to Schlotterer concerning the opportunities and results of a customs and economic union, 3 July 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 10.

¹⁵¹ Notes on questions of the economic reorganisation of Europe, 15 July 1940, BArch, R 2501, 7017, pp. 106-112.

igning the clearing system, Germany could “more efficiently combine the foreign trade needs of its war economy with the needs of the countries in its sphere of influence and with the preparations for a European *Großwirtschaftsraum*.”¹⁵² Even though his version of a multilateral European clearing system was rejected because it would give rise to trade relations between smaller states instead of fostering German imports,¹⁵³ the principal idea attracted attention. For the economic department of the *Reichsbank*, a multilateral European central clearing¹⁵⁴ system promised to ensure “smooth monetary transactions within the *Großraum* and to pave the way for a future merging of currencies at the same time.”¹⁵⁵ Additionally, all European trade would be billed in Berlin and in *Reichsmark*. In this way, a multilateral European central clearing system would not only turn Berlin into the financial and commercial control room but also increase the willingness of European exporters to supply Germany. Furthermore, this system would underpin the dominant position of the *Reichsmark* and “organically prepare the European *Großwirtschaftsraum*”¹⁵⁶ by fostering and deepening the interlocking of the economies. At the end of July 1940, Funk announced his decision on Europe’s future payment system in a letter to Göring.¹⁵⁷ He dismissed the idea of creating a customs or currency union:¹⁵⁸

I assume that the integration of the occupied territories into the Greater German economy and the construction of a European continental economy under German leadership will not happen with a single political act, by signing a treaty for customs or currency union for example, but that the objective has to be reached by means of a series of single measures which shall immediately be, and partly already have been, initiated.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵² Suggestions for a currency order in the European economic block, undated, RGVA, 1458, 29, 8. Even though the document is undated and does not contain the name of its author, it is highly likely that Ernst Wagemann made these suggestions in the early summer of 1940. In a note on a meeting concerning the economic reorganisation of Europe, Wagemann and his three suggestions are discussed at length. Notes on questions of the economic reorganisation of Europe, 15 July 1940, BAArch, R 2501, 7017, pp. 106-112.

¹⁵³ See *ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ For details on the functioning of the multilateral clearing, see Boelcke, *europäische Wirtschaftspolitik*, 1992, pp. 225-226; Buggeln, ‘Währungspläne’, p. 60.

¹⁵⁵ The economic department of the Reichsbank on monetary transactions in the *Großraumwirtschaft*, 20 July 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 68.

¹⁵⁶ Guidelines on the upgrade of the German clearing system to a European central clearing, 30 July 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 10.

¹⁵⁷ See Funk on the economic reorganisation of Europe 25 July 1940, BAArch, R 2501, 7017, pp. 116-126.

¹⁵⁸ Nevertheless, Germany made efforts to create a customs and currency union with Denmark, which ultimately failed. For a summary of the negotiations, see Buggeln, ‘Währungspläne’, p. 65-71.

¹⁵⁹ Letter by Funk to Göring concerning the European *Großraumwirtschaft*, 6 August 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 9.

Thus, the vision of an autarkic, German-led *Großwirtschaftsraum* had an important impact on the decision-making process. The hopes and expectations of German officials, which were pinned on it, defined the objective and the *völkisch* dimension together with the supremacy of German interests confined the potential options. This constellation disqualified the concept of uniting large parts of Europe in a customs and currency union, so that the more recent idea of a central clearing system overturned a constant that had occupied centre stage in *Mitteleuropa* concepts for decades.

The decision for a system that guaranteed smooth intra-European monetary transactions, however, did not yet ensure that Europe's output could be steered in accordance with the wishes of the *Reich*.¹⁶⁰ While Kehrl, for example, was confident that "this problem, just like all other difficult problems, will be solved by the *Führer* ordering a solution"¹⁶¹, the *Reichsbank* trusted in political agreements "to co-ordinate the output of the single national economies"¹⁶². Funk officially pinned his hopes on the convincing effects of mutual benefits: Germany would gain "a maximum of consumption to increase prosperity"¹⁶³, whereas the other states would win a long-term secure sales market if they attuned their output to German needs. Internally, however, Funk was more outspoken and demanded

control over cross-national European trade and of European goods traffic with non-European states by means of government agreements reached by using the German instruments of power.¹⁶⁴

In Schlotterer's statements, both thought patterns resurfaced. On the one hand, he insisted that "it cannot be tolerated that individual countries act at will. They have to be told that they belong to the European community at German (and Italian) disposition."¹⁶⁵ On the other hand, Schlotterer warned of "threatening and violating others". Europe's cooperation had to be the result of conviction and single systematic meas-

¹⁶⁰ See note on a meeting in the Ministry of Economics, 22 July 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 8.

¹⁶¹ Kehrl's speech before the chamber of industry and commerce in Lower Lusatia, 9 September 1940, BArch, R 11, 107, pp. 1- 17.

¹⁶² Economic department of the Reichsbank on currency problems after the war's end, 20 June 1940, BArch, R 2501, 7015, pp. 49-65.

¹⁶³ Funk on the economic reorganisation of Europe, 25 July 1940, BArch, R 2501, 7017, pp. 116-126.

¹⁶⁴ Letter by Funk to Göring concerning the European *Großraumwirtschaft*, 6 August 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 9.

¹⁶⁵ Note on a speech by Schlotterer, 29 July 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 8.

ures.¹⁶⁶ An anonymous document entitled 'Guidelines for a continental European economic block' illustrates these German efforts. Unless Germany benefitted in some way, there should be no exchange of goods between third countries. By processing payments in Berlin, by signing trade agreements, and by operating trade using German merchants, carriers, financing, and insurances, Germany could exercise control over both the intra- and extra-European exchange of goods.¹⁶⁷ Thus, the imaginations of the prospective intra-European trade that was to accompany the new monetary order resorted to more traditional thought patterns within the German discourse on Europe: informal control and formal treaties should guarantee that European production lived up to German expectations.

For Hermann Göring, by contrast, the future *Großraumwirtschaft* was not the only valid point of reference. He pointed out the current necessities and wanted to "get as many goods as possible to Germany during the war."¹⁶⁸ Thus, tariffs – impeding trade and raising the costs of imports – had to go. However, there was a third reason why tariffs were to be abolished: "Abstaining from tariffs practically paves the way for a customs union and thus creates a situation to which we aspire for the future greater European economy."¹⁶⁹ Göring's political power turned these considerations into directives. A committee of representatives from National Socialist Germany's leading economic institutions was formed which was supposed to elaborate solutions for "those difficulties concerning tariffs" that hampered "the intensification of the exchange of goods and the preparation of a *Großraumwirtschaft*."¹⁷⁰ Hence, even though Göring's wish to abolish tariffs might have stemmed primarily from his concerns for the war economy, there was no way around the discursive hegemony of the envisaged *Großraumwirtschaft*. This becomes apparent in his statements as well as in the documents of the committee he initiated. However, as long as both rationales shared the aim of monopolising European trade, their reconciliation was unproblematic and discursively stabilised the objective itself.

¹⁶⁶ See note by Albrecht on presentations on the situation of the German foreign trade sector, 28 August 1940, CZA, W54, pp. 70-78.

¹⁶⁷ See guidelines for a continental European economic block, 4 October 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 10.

¹⁶⁸ Göring on the abolishment of tariffs between the Netherlands, Belgium, Norway, and the occupied parts of France, 31 August 1940, BArch, R 2, 344, pp. 73-74.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Note by Imhoff on the first meeting of the interdepartmental technical tariffs commission, 6 September 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 9.

Overall, the idea of a *Großraumwirtschaft* that had gained ground in the 1930s became the economic model for the future of Europe in 1940. Heavily drawing on well-established aspects of geopolitics, *Mitteleuropa* ideas, and *völkisch* convictions,¹⁷¹ it evolved into the discursively dominant point of reference. Now speaking of a new economic European order meant speaking of a powerful, autarkic, prosperous, German-led *Großwirtschaftsraum* whose internal division of labour was based on natural circumstances and an ascribed *völkisch* aptitude. This specification of the New Order discarded several lines of reasoning, set a clear-cut objective, turned the unsatisfactory *status quo* into a pressing problem, and narrowed down the available options for a solution. These effects of the vision of a *Großraumwirtschaft* on the discourse on Europe become apparent in the National Socialist debate about how to intensify the exchange of goods in Europe. While the discussion of the topic at the highest levels of the regime already attests to the importance of the *Großraumwirtschaft* as an objective, the course of the debate exhibits its constraining impact. Instead of realising a decades-old demand of generations of *Mitteleuropa* proponents, German officials abandoned the idea of a European customs and currency union. They opted for a central clearing system because it promised to invigorate European cooperation and to put German wartime and post-war needs first. Moreover, this solution won the upper hand because it also constituted an actual renunciation of the liberal economic system and perpetuated an economic hierarchy that supposedly reflected the unequal racial values of the participating *Völker*. Having deeper roots in the two discursively dominating economic and *völkisch* knowledge and belief systems, the concept of a European *Großraumwirtschaft* and its core, the central clearing system, became the incontestable economic leitmotif of the New Order.

¹⁷¹ See e.g. Freytag, *Drang nach Südosten*, pp. 54-61; chapter 2.3.

3.1.3 Interlocking¹⁷² and Takeovers – Preparing for the Post-War Market

Gentlemen! You can see from the remarks that I have made on this problem that we envisage the European *Großraumwirtschaft* being developed essentially as a result of the initiative of private business. As a state, we can of course make economic agreements. We can establish a customs and a currency union or implement a transfer agreement. However, this can only involve a general regulation and will remain in abeyance if not supported by private business itself.¹⁷³ (Gustav Schlotterer, October 1940)

National Socialist concepts for a new European order were designed to secure German influence beyond the end of the war. However, German officials such as Schlotterer feared that the *Reich* might fall short of completely controlling the European economy if German businesses did not animate the political measures enacted. The central clearing system was supposed to establish the *Reichsmark* as the leading currency in Europe, to monopolise trade in Berlin, and to perpetuate the desired economic hierarchy. However, having to rely on steady political coercion in order to align the economies of Europe and to intensify their trade relations could be the basis neither for permanent cooperation nor for persistent German domination. Thus, German political institutions tried to get private companies on board for the New Order. Since most German businesses were discontented with the European economic system anyway, they seized the opportunity to participate in the discursive construction of the future of Europe and readily voiced their concepts of Europe-to-be. In this way, the discourse started to revolve around the questions of how, when, and where German companies should underpin the New Order. Its arguments, thought patterns, and limits were future-oriented and stemmed from the well-established economic and *völkisch* knowledge and belief systems. They attest to the significance of the discursively constructed *Großwirtschaftsraum*.

The more confident German officials were of a quick German victory, the more significance they gave to considerations on the future. In December 1939, General Thomas, head of the *Wehrmacht* Office for Military Economics and Armaments, spoke to the *Reichsgruppe Industrie*. He called upon them to “turn Germany into one big and mighty armament plant” because “now it is a matter of life and death for the

¹⁷² German officials usually spoke of “*wirtschaftliche Verflechtung*”. This term is hard to translate. Even though it could also be translated as ‘economic interconnection’ or ‘economic interpenetration’, the thesis follows Aalders’ choice of words and uses his expression of ‘interlocking’. See Aalders, ‘Economic Penetration’.

¹⁷³ Speech by Schlotterer on a meeting of the *Große Beirat der Reichsgruppe Industrie*, 3 October 1940, CZA, 3737, pp. 2992-3021.

German *Volk*. But we want to live and thus we have to win.”¹⁷⁴ A few months later, in June 1940, the political expectations sounded different; less martial, more like the promise of a land of milk and honey for German businesses. It seemed that the Ministry of Economics wanted to reorganise Europe in cooperation with industry. Schlotterer asked the foreign trade committee of the *Reichsgruppe Industrie* to gather information on all obstacles “that have impeded their [German businesses’] expansion in Europe. A lack of cooperation with foreign countries, annoying competitors, unsatisfactory positions in international federations, troubling international patents, licences etc.” could be a thing of the past. In the future, “a truly European industrial policy is possible and necessary.”¹⁷⁵ Thus, the future, as a point of reference, started to outweigh the present. The war was no longer a matter of life and death but the prelude to a future that was to be shaped right now.

However, the objective of a German-led *Großraumwirtschaft*, as an essential element of this future, created concrete problems that triggered a search for solutions. The initial eagerness of German companies to expand, for example, threatened to thwart German planning. Göring, who, in principle, promoted the expansion of Germany’s economic influence, opposed uncoordinated acquisitions: “German industry’s attempts to take over companies in the occupied territories now have to be quashed harshly.”¹⁷⁶ Everywhere in the occupied Western territories,¹⁷⁷ Germany faced the dilemma described in a report on the Netherlands:

for the time being one cannot expect private negotiations about buying shares or taking over Dutch firms to be successful; and if these negotiations are supposed to be carried out under pressure of German offices, it is to be feared that the Dutch side might initiate measures that will obstruct the achievement of German objectives. As long as the Dutch do not see clearly that a close interlocking with the German industry is necessary and also beneficial for them, they cannot be converted to voluntary agreements.¹⁷⁸

Since the confiscation of shares and expropriations violated international law and the Hague Convention, the Ministry of Economics suggested issuing a decree that re-

¹⁷⁴ Speech by General Thomas before the *Reichsgruppe Industrie*, 4 December 1939, BArch MA, RW 19, 1287, pp. 1-8.

¹⁷⁵ Albrecht’s note on a meeting of the *Reichsgruppe Industrie*, 19 June 1940, printed in Opitz, *Europastrategien*, pp. 684-685.

¹⁷⁶ Note on a meeting presided by Göring, 20 June 1940, printed in *ibid.*, pp. 682-683.

¹⁷⁷ See e.g. report by Eicke entitled ‘What can we expect from Belgium’, 30 May 1940, BArch, R 2501, 6846, pp. 50-57.

¹⁷⁸ Report on possibilities of interlocking German and Dutch industries, July 1940, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Belgien, Luxemburg und den Niederlanden*, p. 104.

stricted the transfer of shares, prohibited any relocation of company headquarters, and obliged shareholders to report.¹⁷⁹ However, these measures did not expand German influence beyond companies that could legally be confiscated as enemy property.¹⁸⁰ The founding of European cartels and syndicates, on the other hand, offered a legal and hardly intrusive way to align production with the *Reich's* demands.¹⁸¹ Explicitly referring to Göring's directive that "the foundations for a close economic cooperation and interlocking have to be created already at this stage", Funk also expected "the creation of an organisation of the economy modelled on German principles"¹⁸² to bring German politics closer to the sought-for influence. Thus, the German claim to economic dominance in the European *Großwirtschaftsraum* posed concrete problems. In search for a formally legal and permanent solution to them, German officials resorted to National Socialist principles and the underlying knowledge and belief systems.

One aspect of the alleged German role model in particular got the hopes of German officials up: 'Aryanisation'¹⁸³. By expropriating Jewish businesses in the occupied territories and by transferring them into German hands, National Socialist Germany expected to kill two birds with one stone. On the one hand, depriving the Jewish population of their means of existence would accelerate their emigration and thus contribute to a territorial solution to the 'Jewish Question' (see chapter 3.1.1).¹⁸⁴ On the other hand, these businesses offered the opportunity for Germany to gain a foothold in the occupied territories, and in third countries, in spite of the widespread re-

¹⁷⁹ See note on a meeting in the Ministry of Economics, 14 June 1940, printed in Schumann, *Griff nach Südosteuropa*, pp. 81-82.

¹⁸⁰ See note on the currency question and the possibilities of dispossession in occupied France, 2 July 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 10.

¹⁸¹ See letter to Schlotterer concerning the opportunities and results of a customs and economic union with Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Norway, 3 July 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 10.

¹⁸² Letter by Funk to Seyß-Inquart, 17 July 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 8.

¹⁸³ Despite the terms problematic vagueness – while it initially only denominated the transfer of Jewish property, it has been applied to all material aspects of the persecution of the Jewish population –, it will be used in this study for want of a better alternative. See C. Goschler and P. Ther, 'Eine entgrenzte Geschichte. Raub und Rückerstattung jüdischen Eigentums in Europa', in C. Goschler and P. Ther (eds.), *Raub und Restitution. 'Arisierung' und Rückerstattung des jüdischen Eigentums in Europa*, Frankfurt a.M., Fischer, 2003, pp. 9-25, here pp. 9-10. For more information on the process of 'Aryanisation', see chapter 4.1.1.

¹⁸⁴ See e.g. letter by Heydrich to the heads of the *Einsatzgruppen*, 21 September 1939, BArch RW 19, 251, pp. 19-26. The emigration of Jews was not prohibited until October 1941. See Burrin, *Hitler und die Juden*, p. 151.

luctance to comply with the German wish for economic integration.¹⁸⁵ Reconciling aspects from both dominant interpretive frames, *völkisch* thinking and economic considerations, this approach constitutes an important point of contact between the vision of a 'Jew-free' Europe and the economic reorganisation of the continent.¹⁸⁶ This congruence gave universal meaning to anti-Jewish policies in the occupied territories and immunised these steps against any objections: The *völkisch* vision of a Europe free of Jews as well as the German claim to leadership were beyond dispute: 'Aryanisation' made sense to German officials as it promised to bring the *Reich* closer to both.

However, transferring Jewish businesses into German hands did not suffice to establish the desired degree of German dominance. Thus, German officials searched for further options and called on private businesses to get active in the name of the sought-for *Großraumwirtschaft*. In a speech on its basic principles, Schlotterer picked up Göring's and Funk's claim to German leadership and made them an issue of private business.

Just like England we have to ensure that the smaller states cannot get out of the economic interlocking with Germany without severe crises. It is the *Reichsmarschall's* [Göring's] wish that Germany firmly uses its influence on the most important European companies. Possibilities to do so are acquisition of shares, interlocking through staffing policy, founding new companies, and cartel policy. It is essential to install Germans or German-friendly persons into the management of big businesses [...]. But one also has to be anxious to transfer large stocks smoothly.¹⁸⁷

Schlotterer emphasised that there was no time to lose: "these are not questions of tomorrow but of today".¹⁸⁸ Göring apparently shared this objective. He informed the *Reichskommissar* in Norway, Josef Terboven, and the Military Governor in Belgium, Alexander von Falkenhausen, that measures had to be taken immediately to "consolidate German economic supremacy in Europe".¹⁸⁹ By freeing the necessary capital transactions from all restrictions and by constraining the rights of disposal of the

¹⁸⁵ See e.g. notes on a conference concerning the economic relations with the occupied countries, 6 and 11 September 1940, BArch, R 3101, 33.284, pp. 6-7; letter by the Ministry of Economics to the *Wirtschaftsgruppen*, 29 November 1940, CZA, No. W 23.

¹⁸⁶ In contrast to Aly and Heim, for whom the 'Aryanisations' abroad were primarily a part of Germany's efforts to modernise Europe economically, this interpretation suggests that it was the congruence of aims that reinforced this course of action. See Aly and Heim, *Vordenker der Vernichtung*, pp. 43-47.

¹⁸⁷ Notes on a speech by Schlotterer, 29 July 1940, BArch, R 2501, 7017, pp. 113-114.

¹⁸⁸ Note on a speech by Schlotterer, 29 July 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 8.

¹⁸⁹ Circular of Göring, 1 August 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 10.

current owners, he intended to enable German private business to take over important local companies and to acquire shares of businesses in third countries.¹⁹⁰ Hence, the Ministry of Economics and the *Vierjahresplanbehörde* pursued similar goals. In a letter to Funk, Göring emphasised again that

already before the end of the war the Dutch and the Belgian, and in the second instance the Norwegian and Danish, economies have to be penetrated by German capital as intensively as possible. And vice versa, the Dutch and Danish interests have to be offered the opportunity for economic operation and investment in Germany in order that before long a mutual economic interconnection and an alignment of interests is created. [...] Furthermore, I ask you to foster the acquisition of dominating economic positions in third countries which are in French, Dutch, Belgian, Danish, or Norwegian possession by all means and already during the war.¹⁹¹

Thus, the general principle of a German-led *Großraumwirtschaft* initiated and framed considerations on how to convert the current German military dominance into a permanent economic hegemony. By August 1940, they had yielded results. The German line in regards to “interlocking the European economies with the Greater German economy under German leadership”¹⁹² consisted of several measures: The organisation of European private business should be modelled on the German system, foreign companies were to be included in German cartels and syndicates, the transfer of Jewish property into German hands, the most important European businesses should be controlled by German shareholders, and Germans were to hold crucial economic positions.¹⁹³ Obviously, all these potential solutions were not only intended to expand German economic influence but were also based on one role model: Germany. What Schlotterer had called the “sensible economic principles” of National

¹⁹⁰ See letter by Göring on economic policy measures, 2 August 1940, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Belgien, Luxemburg und den Niederlanden*, pp. 104-105.

¹⁹¹ Answer by Göring to a letter by Funk concerning the *Großraumwirtschaft*, 17 August 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 9.

¹⁹² Letter by Funk to Göring concerning the *Großraumwirtschaft*, 6 August 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 9.

¹⁹³ See letter to Schlotterer concerning the reorganisation of the European economy, 1 August 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 8; internal circular by Landfried concerning cartels in the context of a reorganisation of the European economy, 27 August 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 10; notes on a conference concerning the economic relations with the occupied countries, 6 and 11 September 1940, BArch, R 3101, 33.284, pp. 6-7; circular of the *Commerzbank* to its branches, 24 October 1940, printed in Eichholtz and Schumann, *Anatomie des Krieges*, pp. 299-300. An anonymous document from the Ministry of economics entitled ‘guidelines for a continental European economic block’ states: “in the single countries we have to strive for the creation of a new economic elite, which adopts our political and most of all economic line of thought and which is connected to the Greater German Reich by interest and by organisation.” Guidelines for a continental European economic block, 4 October 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 10.

Socialism were indeed supposed to “radiate out into the European space”¹⁹⁴. Germany set out to make its economic system and its *völkisch* rationale standard practice in the New Order.

The activities and statements of the *Reichsgruppe Industrie* reflected the future-oriented general principle of a German-led *Großwirtschaftsraum* and the limits it imposed. Schlotterer’s thoughts and arguments, for example, reverberated in its internal documents:

The economic reorganisation of Europe cannot be carried out on the basis of the bayonet and the army boot, but [only] on the basis of private agreements. The military success created the background for generous but purposeful negotiations. The sword of Damocles is dangling over the other countries now in form of peace negotiations.¹⁹⁵

Furthermore, the *Reichsgruppe* gathered information on Europe’s industries and cartels “in order to prepare a European industry policy and a *Großraumwirtschaft*”,¹⁹⁶ and sent a delegation to the Netherlands to explore the willingness to adopt the German organisational model.¹⁹⁷ Thus, it was not only fully aware of the regime’s aims and expectations but also willing to live up to them:

Particularly for the future, it is essential to energetically and determinedly tackle the upcoming major tasks as service to *Volk* and state [...] in the National Socialist spirit. The state cannot refrain from leading. However, it will have less reason to interfere the more businessmen and the institutions of economic self-governance are recognising and meeting the needs of the National Socialist state leadership.¹⁹⁸

However, the *Reichs-* and *Wirtschaftsgruppen* did not just hand down instructions and wishes from above. They also voiced their own concerns and objectives. Already in June 1940, the *Reichsgruppe Industrie* had sent a circular to the *Wirtschaftsgruppen*, its sector-specific sub-chapters, in which it prompted them to analyse the economies of Denmark, Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, and France, before carrying on with Hungary, Switzerland, Finland, and England. The circular pointed out that the Ministry of Economics was particularly interested in

¹⁹⁴ See the introductory quote in chapter 2.1.2 that cites notes on a speech by Schlotterer, 18 June 1940, BAArch, R 2501, 6612, pp. 621-629.

¹⁹⁵ Note on a meeting of the *Reichsgruppe Industrie*, 4 September 1940, printed in Opitz, *Europasstrategien*, pp. 771-776.

¹⁹⁶ Report by Guth, chief executive of the *Reichsgruppe Industrie*, to Zangen, 15 July 1940, printed in *ibid.*, pp. 702-703.

¹⁹⁷ See report by Koppen on a trip to the Netherlands, 12 July 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 8.

¹⁹⁸ Memorandum of the *Reichsgruppe Industrie*, 1 August 1940, printed in Eichholtz and Schumann, *Anatomie des Krieges*, pp. 272-274.

matters of fact that have impeded the sale of our goods in these countries, and in suggestions of how – after all political questions have been cleared up – a systematic and beneficial co-operation with the relevant industries in these territories could be made possible in the future.¹⁹⁹

In these reports, the *Wirtschaftsgruppen* were supposed to point out the interests of German industry; they responded promptly and their answers lay within the discursively established boundaries and picked up central themes from the dominant interpretive repertoires.

The *Wirtschaftsgruppe Feinmechanik und Optik*, for example, emphasised that Germany's precision engineering and optical industry was unrivalled. Thus, all they asked for was free access to all European markets and influence on local business organisations.²⁰⁰ Fully aware that many smaller competitors would not survive the end of subsidies and tariff walls, the *Wirtschaftsgruppe* brought forward two arguments to pre-empt any concerns. Firstly, if these countries were not supposed to pursue an independent military policy, there was no need for them to sustain their own precision engineering and optical industry anyway.²⁰¹ And, secondly,

[i]f through this supremacy of the German precision engineering and optical industry a regression of the other precision engineering and optical industries in the European area occurs, such a development is consistent with a desirable division of labour among European industry.²⁰²

This was not the only instance in which the proposals of the *Wirtschaftsgruppe* picked up central themes and arguments of the New Order discourse. Its suggestions promised to underpin the German claim for leadership in Europe, to harmonise regulations and norms, and to grant Germany control over Europe's output. Additionally, the German precision engineering and optical industry even aligned its wish for exports with the need for autarky: "Civil production for the domestic market and for exports must have the highest extent possible in order to have enough capacity for armaments production in every case of emergency."²⁰³ In one respect, however,

¹⁹⁹ Circular of the *Wirtschaftsgruppe Feinmechanik und Optik*, 25 June 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 10.

²⁰⁰ See report by the *Wirtschaftsgruppe Feinmechanik und Optik* on the precision engineering and optical industry in Belgium, July 1940, CZA, 18933; report by the *Wirtschaftsgruppe Feinmechanik und Optik* on the precision engineering and optical industry in Yugoslavia, undated, BArch, R 13 VI.

²⁰¹ See memorandum by Albrecht, head of the *Wirtschaftsgruppe Feinmechanik und Optik*, July 1940, printed in Eichholtz and Schumann, *Anatomie des Krieges*, pp. 262-269.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Memorandum by Albrecht, head of the *Wirtschaftsgruppe Feinmechanik und Optik*, 8 October 1940, CZA, W23, pp. 717-721.

the *Wirtschaftsgruppe* opposed the discursively established notion of the economic future of Europe. It refused to buy shares and to take over companies abroad because of their inferiority.²⁰⁴ Overall, the German precision engineering and optical industry was not eager to expand, but its arguments, demands, and thoughts fitted in seamlessly with the discursive mainstream. By redefining its own aims as contributions to realising the general principle of German-led European *Großraumwirtschaft*, instead of arguing with profits, markets, or competitors, its demands could claim to be sensible and legitimate.

German heavy industry found itself in a different position as it faced serious competition. Accordingly, it relied on a different line of argument. After the German military victory in the West, the *Reich* ruled over a region with huge iron ore deposits of high quality; a perfect supplement for the rich coal deposits in Germany. Thus, the *Wirtschaftsgruppe* of the Iron and Steel Producing Industry wanted to see both combined within Germany. Besides increasing autarky by freeing Germany from the need for imports by ship, this step promised additional benefits:

By uniting the iron ore and coal deposits, Germany can secure peace and prevent France from rearmament. Economically, Germany can strengthen its international standing by exporting not only coal but also iron in large quantities to foreign *Völker*. Politically, the European states have to come to terms with this reorganisation.²⁰⁵

However, in a joint letter to Walther Funk, the *Gutehoffnungshütte*, *Hoesch*, *Klöckner*, *Krupp*, *Mannesmann*, and the *Vereinigte Stahlwerke* announced that during the war they would refrain from any claims to iron works in Luxembourg or iron ore mines in Lorraine, as long as nobody else was allowed to take them over and as long as they would get their share of the output. After the war, dispossessed owners were to get their former property back, while the leftover iron ore mines should form a pool, accessible to the entire Germany industry.²⁰⁶ The *Wirtschaftsgruppe* of the Iron and Steel Producing Industry took a similar line. It intended to “incorporate the iron ore deposits into the Greater German economic area” and pointed out that, in this respect, national economic considerations clearly had priority over matters of owner-

²⁰⁴ See *ibid.*

²⁰⁵ Note on a speech by Reichert, head of the *Wirtschaftsgruppe* of the Iron and Steel Producing Industry, 14 June 1940, printed in D. Eichholtz, *Geschichte der deutschen Kriegswirtschaft 1939-1945. Vol. I: 1939-1941*, Berlin, Akademie-Verlag, 1984, pp. 295-298.

²⁰⁶ See protocol by Poensgen on a meeting, 7 June 1940, printed in Eichholtz and Schumann, *Anatomie des Krieges*, pp. 257-259.

ship. Accordingly, it suggested grouping the iron works in the Saar region, in Lorraine, and in Luxembourg for the sake of cost-effectiveness, and assigning them iron ore deposits which would ensure 75 years of supplies. If the works were to be distributed among German industry, however, the former owners and the *Reichswerke Hermann Göring* should have the prior claim.²⁰⁷ Thus, although the *Großraumwirtschaft* was not the expressed leitmotif in the heavy industrial sector, its arguments and thoughts reveal the significance of the discursive requirements. Europe-to-be featured a German dominance, autarky, and a marginalised France. By uniting Lorraine's iron ores and German coal, France would be sidelined, while German heavy industry would become self-sufficient and unrivalled – provided the *Reichswerke* left something over for private businesses.

The *Wirtschaftsgruppe* Automobile Industry also tackled the new economic order immediately. Apart from passing on the enquiries about hindrances for German sales in Europe, the *Wirtschaftsgruppe* pushed for a reorganisation of the French automobile industry modelled on the German system and promoted the idea of co-operation between French, Italian, and German manufacturers.²⁰⁸ For Rudolf Egger, head of the *Wirtschaftsgruppe*, it was “natural that Germany claimed the leading role in this cooperation.”²⁰⁹ However, all manufacturers would benefit from the emerging market of the “future Greater-European economic area”²¹⁰, as it offered a unique chance:

Today we have an opportunity which will rarely, maybe never recur. Let us seize this advantageous moment to make the necessary preparations. I am convinced that this will be beneficial not only for the fatherland but also for the entire *Großraumwirtschaft*.²¹¹

Because one could not “afford to have different countries following different principles and guidelines in the field of motorisation”, the *Wirtschaftsgruppe* founded, with Hitler's approval, a “preliminary commission for the cooperation of the European automobile industry”.²¹² Consisting of industrialists from Germany, France, and Italy,

²⁰⁷ See draft of a suggestion for the distribution of the smelting works in Lorraine, Luxembourg, and South Belgium by the *Wirtschaftsgruppe* of the Iron and Steel Producing Industry, 19 July 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 10.

²⁰⁸ See activity report by the *Wirtschaftsgruppe* Automobile Industry, 12 August 1940, DBA, 9.32; activity report by the *Wirtschaftsgruppe* Automobile Industry, 12 November 1940, DBA, 9.32.

²⁰⁹ Protocol of the meeting of the advisory board of the *Wirtschaftsgruppe* Automobile industry, 4 December 1940, DBA.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Protocol of the meeting of the advisory board of the *Wirtschaftsgruppe* Automobile Industry, 10 March 1941, DBA.

this commission was intended one day to become a permanent *Europa-Auto-Komitee* and part of a larger organisation that would deal with every aspect of European motorisation. Until then, its efforts focussed on a common nomenclature and common standards of production.²¹³ General von Schell, Plenipotentiary for Motor Transport, shared this view but emphasised German dominance:

After the war, we will have a completely different economic area; we will have a completely different political and thus economic standing than before the war. [...] We will have an enormous economic area, which we will have to supply, but which also obligates us. We will not think German in these matters anymore, but European. [...] We will not become European politically, but we will have to embrace and to penetrate Europe from a German point of view.²¹⁴

Thus, the organisational body of the German automobile industry was in line with the discursively established cornerstones of the prospective European *Großraumwirtschaft*. For the *Wirtschaftsgruppe* the future spelled European cooperation in a harmonised market modelled on the German organisational system and under German leadership, so that European industry could defy competitors from the United States.²¹⁵

Overall, the concept of a German-led *Großwirtschaftsraum* had created pressure to increase German economic influence in Europe (see chapter 3.1.2). With the end of the war seemingly within reach, this pressure grew and it shifted the focus onto preparations for the future. In their search for solutions, German officials were discursively bound to the *Großraumwirtschaft* in two ways: Its features set the objectives and its underlying knowledge and belief systems limited the available options. In this way, the expropriation of Jewish property became an obvious and sensible solution to expand the German influence. The other measures that were officially promoted were also taken from the repertoire of tools that had been tried and trusted in National Socialist Germany. Thus, the intention to advance German economic influence in Europe by introducing the German organisational system of the economy, by including foreign companies in German-led cartels and syndicates, by installing

²¹³ In the cases of headlamps, hydraulic brakes, and the naming of steel types, these efforts were successful and the German propositions were accepted. Activity report by the *Wirtschaftsgruppe* Automobile Industry for June 1940, 12 July 1941, DBA, 9.33. Similar efforts were made in the electrotechnical industry. See H. Wandschneider, 'Pläne der deutschen Elektrokonzerne zur "Neuordnung der Europäischen Wirtschaft" im Zweiten Weltkrieg', *Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, vol. 4, 1970, pp. 219-243.

²¹⁴ Speech by general von Schell to the *Wirtschaftsgruppe* Automobile Industry, 4 September 1940, DBA, 9.28.

²¹⁵ See *ibid.*

Germans in economic key positions, and by taking over foreign enterprises, also contributed to transferring the dominant German knowledge and belief systems onto the New Order.

German private businesses contributed to this development. By using the same rhetoric, deploying the same arguments, and by seemingly striving for the same ends, their umbrella organisations accepted the rules of the discourse and stabilised them. They tailored their concepts to an internationally competitive, widely autarkic German-dominated European economic area, a *Großwirtschaftsraum*. Furthermore, the *Wirtschaftsgruppen* were willing to make use of the toolbox offered by politics. Depending on the market position of the respective branch, they favoured a different set of instruments, but ultimately the new European order for which they wanted to deploy it was very much in line with the discursively hegemonic concept: a larger market in a more German Europe.

3.2 The Rise of Racism and the Growing Needs of All-Out War (1941-1943)

Overall, here in these Eastern spaces the old colonial idea applies. However, in contrast to the earlier colonisation by the Teutonic Knights and the Baltic Barons this colonisation is borne by us, by blood [...].²¹⁶ (Reinhard Heydrich, October 1941)

The German attack on the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941 had a major impact on the New Order discourse. Until then, National Socialist Germany had mostly conquered countries with developed industries and people that seemed racially sound to National Socialist officials. Accordingly, *völkisch* considerations did not seem to be a pressing issue compared to ensuring the smooth economic integration and domination of these territories.

With parts of the Soviet Union, however, Germany conquered what National Socialist officials deemed vast agricultural territories inhabited by inferior people and ruled by a Jewish-Bolshevist elite. Here, the National Socialist *völkisch* dream of “creating *Lebensraum*” (chapter 3.2.1) for Europe’s Germanic people came into its own. Despite the *völkisch* interpretive repertoire gaining momentum, Europe-to-be was still conceptualised as a *völkisch* as well as an economic New Order. Economically, the

²¹⁶ Heydrich on the basic principles of the National Socialist reorganisation of Europe, 2 October 1941, printed in C. Madajczyk (ed.), *Vom Generalplan Ost zum Generalsiedlungsplan*, Munich, Saur, 1994, pp. 20-22.

integration of the Newly Occupied Eastern Territories into Europe-to-be was driven by imaginations of “colonisation and exploitation” (chapter 3.2.2). However, the longer the war went on and the less likely a quick military victory became, the more German officials refrained from viewing the East solely as a source of foodstuffs, raw materials and cheap labour. The war and its necessities inspired and legitimised different concepts of Europe that also referred to the two dominant interpretive frames. In these “appeals and warnings” (chapter 3.2.3), appeasing and winning over the population took priority over ruthless *völkisch* and economic policies.

3.2.1 Extermination and Starvation – Creating *Lebensraum*

The essential aim of this military campaign against the Judaeo-Bolshevist system is the complete annihilation of Asiatic influence and its instruments of power in the European cultural sphere. This creates tasks for the troops that go beyond traditional one-sided soldiery. In the East the soldier is not just a fighter according to the rules of warfare, but also the bearer of an implacable *völkisch* idea and the avenger of all the bestialities that have been inflicted on the German and racially similar *Volkstum*.²¹⁷ (Walter von Reichenau, October 1941)

In the eyes of leading National Socialists, the German attack on the Soviet Union was not only a clash of two ideologies but also the enforcement of the Germanic peoples’ righteous claim for adequate *Lebensraum*; a concept that combined aspects of the well-established geopolitical and *völkisch* knowledge and belief systems.²¹⁸ The countless atrocities National Socialist Germany committed in the “newly Occupied Eastern Territories” were driven by this *völkisch* aspect of the envisaged New Order and the conviction that Jews and Slavs were racially inferior. Accordingly, in German planning the local population amounted to nothing more than being part of the Jewish-Bolshevist threat, an obstacle occupying Germanic *Lebensraum*, and inconvenient additional mouths to feed. Thus, the *völkisch* interpretive frame gave meaning to killing them, letting them starve to death, expelling or resettling them.

²¹⁷ Order of von Reichenau, 10 October 1941, printed in W. Schumann and L. Nestler (eds.), *Europa unterm Hakenkreuz. Die faschistische Okkupationspolitik in den zeitweilig besetzten Gebieten der Sowjetunion (1941-1944)*, Berlin, VEB Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1991, p. 203.

²¹⁸ See e.g. R. Zitlmann, ‘Zur Begründung des “Lebensraum”-Motivs in Hitlers Weltanschauung’, in W. Michalka (ed.), *Der Zweite Weltkrieg. Analysen, Grundzüge, Forschungsbilanz*, Munich, Piper, 1989, pp. 551-567; Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, pp. 19-23; H. Schultz, ‘Versuch einer Historisierung der Geographie des Dritten Reiches am Beispiel des geographischen Grossraumdenkens’, in M. Fahlbusch, M. Rössler and D. Siegrist (eds.), *Geographie und Nationalsozialismus*, Kassel, 1989, pp. 1-75, here, p. 14; H. Graml, ‘Rassismus und Lebensraum. Völkermord im Zweiten Weltkrieg’, in K. Bracher, M. Funke and H. Jacobsen (ed.), *Nationalsozialistische Diktatur 1933-1945. Eine Bilanz*, Düsseldorf, Droste, 1983; Neumann, *Behemoth*, p. 170; chapter 2.3.

In the European territories Germany had occupied before June 1941, the *völkisch* knowledge and belief system had produced notions of a *völkisch* reorganisation of Europe, which did not change after the German invasion of the Soviet Union. Still, the territories that were declared German *Lebensraum* were to be germanised, while the allegedly Germanic states should be won over for a common future. This stabilisation and internalisation of *völkisch* meaning, produced statements like the one in this letter by an unknown member of the SS:

one thing is certain already today, namely that, for primarily racial and secondarily territorial reasons, in a new Europe the Germanic states will be bound closely to us; i.e. that in a new Europe a Greater Germanic power bloc, centred in the *Reich*, will be the core of the eastwardly enlarged continent. This notion necessarily arises from the fundamental idea of National Socialism, the idea of blood and race.²¹⁹

Reinhard Heydrich – SS-*Obergruppenführer*, chief of the *Reich* Security Main Office, since September 1941 head of the Protectorate, and since 31 July 1941 in charge of the solution to the “Jewish Question in the German sphere of influence in Europe”²²⁰ – expressed similar beliefs and pursued the same vision of Europe-to-be. In his eyes, Norway, the Netherlands, Flanders, Denmark, and Sweden had been deformed “by bad political leadership and the influence of Jewry”²²¹, but ultimately they belonged to Germany and would merge into the *Reich*. Thus, the *völkisch* idea of a Germanic European core still defined the German notions of a New Order (see chapter 3.1.1).

This general principle called for more specific planning for the regions in the German sphere of influence. In Alsace-Lorraine, Josef Bürckel, head of the civil administration in Lorraine and *Gauleiter* of the *Westmark*,²²² considered “the increase and the stabilisation of the German *Volkstum*”²²³ the paramount targets. Wilhelm Stuckart, a jurist and SS-*Standartenführer* who had helped shape the Nuremberg Laws,²²⁴ wanted to see the population of Alsace-Lorraine treated like “fully-fledged members

²¹⁹ Letter by an unknown SS-member to SS-*Brigadeführer* Reeder, 7 October 1941, BAArch, NS 19, 1548, pp. 1-6.

²²⁰ Decree of Göring cited in Longerich, *Politik der Vernichtung*, p. 290.

²²¹ Speech by Heydrich on the basic principles of the reorganisation of Europe, 2 October 1941, printed in Madajczyk, *Generalplan Ost*, pp. 20-22.

²²² See Wistrich, *Biographisches Lexikon*, pp. 47-48.

²²³ Bürckel on the basic principles for rural settlement in Lorraine, 14 October 1941, printed in Madajczyk, *Generalplan Ost*, pp. 418-440.

²²⁴ See Weiß, *Biographisches Lexikon*, p. 452.

of the German *Volksgemeinschaft* in the interest of a “smooth Germanisation”.²²⁵ Karl Hermann Frank, state secretary of the *Reichsprotektor*, and Reinhard Heydrich, who had succeeded Neurath in this Position, emphasised that the Protectorate belonged to the *Reich* now.²²⁶ Thus, it had to be germanised.²²⁷ As part of German efforts to get rid of most Poles in the annexed parts of former Poland, the *Sicherheitsdienst*, a department of the *Reich* Security Main Office, suggested several measures of “*völkisch* annihilation” to “break the biological power of the Polish *Volk*”.²²⁸ In the General Government, *SS-Hauptsturmführer* and *Oberregierungsrat* in Gdansk, Helmut Müller,²²⁹ supported the idea of “smothering the Polish people economically and racially” by creating pressure from two sides through German settlements in the West and East.²³⁰ All these concepts were in accordance with Himmler’s thoughts and beliefs. For him, the “strengthening of a *blutlich* [blood-wise] superior German *Volkstum*” was the primary objective in “the new German East.”²³¹

Getting rid of all Jews in the General Government was an integral part of this “ethnic parting of races and *Völker* which is necessary for the reorganisation of Europe”.²³² Not only for Himmler this vision of a *völkisch* New Order was inextricably linked with the ‘Jewish Question’. Picking up the well-established theme of Jews as fire-brands,²³³ Hitler blamed the Jews for the inner conflicts of Europe: “If there were no more Jews in Europe, nothing would hamper the unity of the European states anymore.”²³⁴ Heydrich also perceived them as troublemakers “who definitely had to dis-

²²⁵ Letter by Stuckart to the supreme *Reich* authorities, 5 November 1941, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Frankreich*, p. 183.

²²⁶ See speech by Heydrich in the Czernin Palace, 2 October 1941, printed in Král, *Vergangenheit warnt*, pp. 122-133; letter by K.H. Frank to Goebbels, 14 January 1942, BArch, R 55, 1337, pp. 20-22.

²²⁷ See speech by Heydrich on the Germanisation of the population in the Protectorate, 4 February 1942, printed in Madajczyk, *Generalplan Ost*, pp. 467-470.

²²⁸ Suggestions of the SD chapter Łódź, 25 August 1941, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Polen*, pp. 203-204; See also von Schauroth’s note on questions that had to be answered before the *Generalplan Ost* could be revised, 8 July 1942, printed in Madajczyk, *Generalplan Ost*, pp. 152-154.

²²⁹ See Stockhorst, *Fünftausend Köpfe*, p. 300.

²³⁰ See report by Müller to Hoffmann, 15 October 1941, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Polen*, pp. 208-209.

²³¹ Himmler’s guidelines for the planning and design of cities in the integrated Eastern territories, 30.01.1942, BArch, R 90, 132, pp. 1-11.

²³² Decree of Himmler, 19 July 1942, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Polen*, p. 227.

²³³ See e.g. Greive, *Antisemitismus*, p. 73.

²³⁴ Hitler, 22 July 1941, cited in Longerich, *Politik der Vernichtung*, p. 427. For a similar statement, in which Hitler accuses Europe’s Jewish population of agitating against Germany, see Mayer, *Krieg als Kreuzzug*, p. 465.

appear from Europe.”²³⁵ On the European level, the alleged racial and spiritual otherness of Europe’s Jewish population, which had already informed their exclusion from the *Volksgemeinschaft* (see chapter 2.2), translated into a very concrete objective: the “complete *Entjudung* [‘dejewification’] of Europe.”²³⁶ Thus, inspired by the *völkisch* knowledge and belief system, National Socialist Germany kept pursuing the plan of creating homogenous nations within a European *Reich*. And this Europe-to-be would be ‘free of Jews’.

In the allegedly Germanic countries, the *völkisch* concept of winning the ‘blood brothers’ of the German people over for the common cause still prevailed, even though this hope had been repeatedly dashed. In Norway, the German attack on the Soviet Union had led to strikes reportedly initiated by “Marxist elements”, while efforts “to demonstrate the brutality of Bolshevism” had not yielded the desired effect. On the contrary, the number of acts of sabotage rose and a newly created legion of the SS could hardly find volunteers.²³⁷ In Denmark, Hitler complained, the democratically elected government had “shown nothing but bad faith” and the population had “insulted and mistreated volunteers” for a Danish Free Corps.²³⁸ Sweden, as an allegedly racially valuable *Volk* also a potential member of the Germanic community, did not even bother to outlaw its Communist Party.²³⁹ And in the Netherlands, *Reichskommissar* Arthur Seyß-Inquart was at the end of his tether:

With the beginning of this year, it has become clear that the Dutch *Volk* now also has to choose sides in the fight of National Socialist Germany for a reorganisation of Europe. [...] Those who still do not see, or do not want to see, have forfeited their right to have a say in the political sphere.²⁴⁰

Nevertheless, Seyß-Inquart and other German officials did not abandon all hope. Having put the Dutch National Socialists in power, Seyß-Inquart expected them to

²³⁵ Heydrich, 6 November 1941, cited in Burrin, *Hitler und die Juden*, p. 145.

²³⁶ Werner Best in the summer of 1941, cited in Longerich, *Politik der Vernichtung*, p. 436.

²³⁷ See report by the department for public enlightenment and propaganda at the *Reichskommissar* for the occupied Norwegian territories for 1941/42, printed in Menger et al., *Expansionsrichtung Nordeuropa*, pp. 123-124.

²³⁸ See notes by von Grundherr on Hitler’s instructions for the newly appointed commander in Denmark, von Hanneken, 3 October 1942, printed in *ibid.*, pp. 142-143.

²³⁹ See Ribbentrop’s cable to the German envoy in Stockholm, 21 January 1942, printed in *ibid.*, pp. 124-125.

²⁴⁰ Speech by Seyß-Inquart on occasion of the 10th annual meeting of the Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging, 14 December 1941, printed in A. Seyß-Inquart, *Vier Jahre in den Niederlanden. Gesammelte Reden*, Amsterdam, Volk und Reich, 1944, pp. 80-85.

become the nucleus of a Dutch rethinking.²⁴¹ Joachim von Ribbentrop, the German Minister of Foreign Affairs, informed Renthe-Fink's successor as Plenipotentiary for the *Reich* in Denmark, Werner Best,²⁴² that the "German objective towards Denmark is the conquest of the country from within".²⁴³ And Josef Terboven promised the Norwegians a rosy future if they finally embraced the idea of becoming members of a Germanic community.²⁴⁴ Thus, the *völkisch* conviction that the true nature of the common blood that all Germanic people shared would ultimately assert itself in a Greater Germanic *Reich* proved strong enough to maintain its discursive dominance despite being repeatedly frustrated by several major setbacks.

In several other respects, however, the attack on the Soviet Union had a major impact on the German New Order discourse. The widening geographical scope also redrew the discursive boundaries as it opened up new fields of application for the two dominant interpretive frames. Anti-Communist creeds mixed with anti-Semitism, expectations of foodstuffs and raw material supplies, the sense of racial superiority, dreams of additional *Lebensraum*, and plans for future settlement areas for the German '*Volk ohne Raum*'²⁴⁵ took up considerably more room than before. All these hopes, plans, and expectations were informed by the established *völkisch* or economic knowledge and beliefs and they converged in the identification of one serious obstacle: the local population. This congruence specified an alleged problem, rendered it hardly contestable, and gave meaning to searching for definitive solutions.

In the eyes of many National Socialists, the Jewish population in the Newly Occupied Eastern Territories was the most pressing problem. Jews were not only considered notorious incendiaries but the German tradition of blaming Jews for the ills of modernity also had produced the notion of Jewish-Bolshevism and an understanding of the Soviet Union as system in which a Jewish-Bolshevist elite dominated the inferior

²⁴¹ See speech by Seyß-Inquart on occasion of the 11 year jubilee of the Nationalsozialistische Bewegung, 13 December 1942, printed in *ibid.*, pp. 107-113.

²⁴² Werner Best was a jurist and SS-*Obergruppenführer*, who had worked closely with Heydrich and had headed the *Amt I* (Organisation, Administration, Law) in the *Reich* Security Main Office from 1939 to 1940. See Wistrich, *Biographisches Lexikon*, pp. 26-28. For more information on Best, see Herbert's excellent biography: Herbert, Best.

²⁴³ Ribbentrop's instructions for Best, 27 October 1942, printed in Menger et al., *Expansionsrichtung Nordeuropa*, pp. 142-143.

²⁴⁴ See speech by Terboven, 8 December 1942, printed in *ibid.*, pp. 147-148.

²⁴⁵ See Himmler's speech to the leading personnel of the SS-Division *Das Reich*, 19 June 1942, printed in Opitz, *Europastrategien*, pp. 894-898.

Slavic population.²⁴⁶ This notion not only allowed for a distinction between communism as a political doctrine and the people it had oppressed but it also fused two powerful elements of the dominating knowledge and belief systems, anti-Semitism and anti-communism. Accordingly, the guidelines for the behaviour of German troops in the Soviet Union issued by the *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* in May 1941 already indicated that the army would not be squeamish:

Bolshevism is the deadly enemy of the National Socialist German *Volk*. Germany's fight is directed against this ideology and its bearers. [...] This fight demands a ruthless and energetic crackdown on bolshevist agitators, franc-tireurs, Jews, and the complete elimination of every active or passive resistance.²⁴⁷

Field Marshal General Walter von Reichenau voiced similar convictions when he declared the German soldiers bearers of an “implacable *völkisch* idea”, who fought for the “extermination of all Asian influences on the culture of Europe” and for “the hard but just atonement of the Jewish *Untermenschen*”.²⁴⁸ General Hermann Hoth ordered the “merciless extermination” of “Bolshevist-Jewish agitators” because they were “the intellectual kingpins of Bolshevism” and “hostile to *Volk* and culture”.²⁴⁹ For General Erich Hoepner this war was not only part of the old fight of Germanics against Slavs but also a defence against Jewish-Bolshevism. Accordingly, he demanded that “every combat operation, in its conception and execution, has to be guided by the iron will to annihilate the enemy remorselessly and completely. In particular, there is no mercy for the bearers of the current Russian-Bolshevist system.”²⁵⁰ In this way, the notion of Bolshevism being the rule of Jews over the Slavic masses and the image of Jews as hostile agitators trickled down through the army hierarchy and translated into mass murder. Millions of soldiers were now encouraged to fight the Bolshevist threat by cracking down on the allegedly racially alien and spiritually corrosive Jewish population of the Soviet Union.

²⁴⁶ See e.g. G. Hirschfeld, ‘Nazi Germany and Eastern Europe’, in E. Mühle (ed.), *Germany and the European East in the Twentieth Century*, Oxford, Berg, 2003, pp. 67-90, here pp. 67-70; R. Giordano, *Wenn Hitler den Krieg gewonnen hätte. Die Pläne der Nazis nach dem Endsieg*, Hamburg, Rasch und Röhring, 1989, pp. 26-27; Postone, ‘Antisemitismus’, p. 245; chapter 2.2.

²⁴⁷ Guidelines of the *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* for the behaviour of German troops in the Soviet Union, 19 May 1941, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik Sowjetunion*, pp. 134-135.

²⁴⁸ Order of von Reichenau, 10 October 1941, printed in *ibid.*, p. 203.

²⁴⁹ General Hoth, November 1941, cited in Burleigh, *Nationalsozialismus*, p. 601.

²⁵⁰ General Hoepner, 4 May 1941, cited in J. Förster, ‘Zum Rußlandbild der Militärs’, in H. Volkmann (ed.) *Das Russlandbild im Dritten Reich*, Cologne, Böhlau, 1994, pp. 141-163, here p. 147.

However, the German distinction between a Jewish-Bolshevist ruling class and the population it oppressed did not translate into a mission to liberate the rest of the local population. In the *völkisch* interpretive frame the Slavic population counted as inferior and in the economic interpretive frame it stood in the way of meeting the needs of the superior German *Volk*. Accordingly, it was not only military personnel which called for drastic measures. The agriculture department of the *Wirtschaftsstab Ost*²⁵¹, headed by Hans-Joachim Riecke, demanded that despite the negative effects of the war on agricultural output, two thirds of the food supply for the army had to come out of the newly occupied territories right away: "Since Germany and Europe need these surpluses by all means, as a consequence the consumption [of the local population] has to be reduced." As a result, "[m]any tens of millions of people will become superfluous in this area and will die or have to migrate to Siberia."²⁵² During the following months, Göring repeatedly upheld this line of reasoning and its "tough but unavoidable consequences".²⁵³ In the eyes of Himmler, this remorseless course of action was justified because "this war was, for the first time, a really brutal war of *Völker*. A race-war", in which there were only two options: "Russia's extermination, or ours". Consequently, Germany could not afford to show mercy in its fight against "this commissar, leading this material, this mass, these *Rohstoffmenschen* [raw material people] or better *Untermenschen* [subhumans]".²⁵⁴ Erich Koch, *Reichskommissar* in Ukraine, spelled out how *völkisch* beliefs justified every measure: "For the mindset of the Germans in the *Reichskommissariat* the point of view is essential that we are dealing with a *Volk* that is inferior in every respect."²⁵⁵ Thus, the German perception of and perspective onto the East was shaped by the *völkisch* degradation of the local

²⁵¹ Göring had approved the creation of the *Wirtschaftsstab Ost* – an idea of General Thomas – to ensure a consistent economic policy in the Newly Occupied Eastern Territories. Headed by military personnel, its aim was to extract as much raw materials and foodstuffs from these territories as possible. Therefore, its subchapters (*Chefgruppen*) were led by experts from the respective *Reich* ministries. Hans-Joachim Riecke, head of department in the Ministry of Nutrition and Agriculture, was in charge of the *Chefgruppe* Agriculture, and Gustav Schlotterer, head of department in the Ministry of Economics, led the *Chefgruppe* Economics. See explanatory note of the *Wirtschaftsstab Ost* on the purchase of food and feeding stuff in the occupied Eastern territories, March 1942, BArch MA, RW 19, 758, unnumbered; Klee, *Personenlexikon zum Dritten Reich*, pp. 496, 541.

²⁵² Guidelines of the agriculture department of the *Wirtschaftsstab Ost* for economic policy in the territories of the Soviet Union, 23 May 1941, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik Sowjetunion*, pp. 135-143.

²⁵³ Göring on the basic principles of economic policy in the occupied Eastern territories, 18 November 1941, BArch, R 58, 225, unnumbered; Göring's order concerning the distribution of agricultural products, BArch MA, RW 31, 203, unnumbered.

²⁵⁴ Himmler's speech to the leading personnel of the SS-Division *Das Reich*, 19 June 1942, printed in Opitz, *Europastrategien*, pp. 894-898.

²⁵⁵ Notes on a meeting in Rivne, 28 August 1942, BArch, R 6, 70, pp. 15-18.

population as well as an idealisation of the German *Volk* and the nature of the war it was fighting. In this way, German needs and interests unfettered the imaginable and justifiable options. In the discourse on the future of Europe, now even the death of millions seemed sensible and expedient if it furthered the German purposes.

In addition to supporting the German war for a New Order, the Newly Occupied Eastern Territories also were supposed to become a part of it. As such, they were subject to German considerations on how to harmonise the *Völker* in Europe and thus to German population policy. Since most people in the East ranked low in the National Socialist racial hierarchy, many German plans advocated measures to marginalise or to get rid of the local population. For the Baltic States, for example, Erhard Wetzel, special department head for racial policy in the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories,²⁵⁶ recommended “scrapping the racially unwanted parts of the population”²⁵⁷ by means of industrial work. In all of the Eastern territories, he reckoned that around 46 to 51 million people would have to be expelled. In former Poland alone, he wanted to get rid of 16 to 31 million people, and expressed disappointment that one could “not solve the Polish question by liquidating the Poles like the Jews”.²⁵⁸ Accordingly, he, like many others, came out in favour of Germanising what he considered the racially valuable parts of the population and advocated debilitating measures for the rest: Propaganda in the former Soviet Union should point out the benefits of fewer children and birth control, while abortions should go unpunished and measures against infant mortality were to remain undone.²⁵⁹ In addition to curbing the “biological power” of the population, Koch wanted to restrict the access to education for Ukrainians.²⁶⁰ The idea of slowing down the reproduction of the allegedly inferior Slavs and to keep them on a low level also becomes apparent in statements of Hitler and Himmler:²⁶¹ “That would be the task: to exploit them for Germany, to keep them down so that they will never be able to harm us; and then expel them at some point so we can settle Germans there.”²⁶² Thus, German popula-

²⁵⁶ See Klee, *Personenlexikon zum Dritten Reich*, p. 673.

²⁵⁷ Wetzel’s report on a meeting in the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories, 7 February 1942, printed in Madajczyk, *Generalplan Ost*, pp. 38-41.

²⁵⁸ Wetzel’s memorandum on the *Generalplan Ost*, 27 April 1942, printed in Opitz, *Europastrategien*, pp. 868-894.

²⁵⁹ See *ibid.*

²⁶⁰ Notes on a meeting in Rivne, 28 August 1942, BArch, R 6, 70, pp. 15-18.

²⁶¹ See Hitler’s table talk, 21 January 1942, printed in Opitz, *Europastrategien*, p. 858.

²⁶² Himmler’s speech on a meeting of SS- and police force leaders, 16 September 1942, printed in *ibid.*, pp. 921-930.

tion policy was inspired by arguments and visions from the *völkisch* interpretive frame. In the New Order, the East was to be home to flourishing racially valuable Germanic blood. For this purpose, it had to be safeguarded from the harmful influence of inferior people through spatial separation and their debilitation.

The same arguments and visions prompted considerations on how to deal with the allegedly valuable blood that could be found in the East. Since the *völkisch* knowledge and belief system did not provide a clear definition, racial value lay in the eye of the beholder, so that there was some leeway for different opinions. While there was a broad consensus on the racial value of Estonians and Latvians, who seemed overall fit for Germanisation, only Rosenberg took up the stance that the “Ukrainians belonged to the European family of nations and are strongly interspersed with Germanic blood.”²⁶³ Koch, in contrast, took a different view: “It is nonsensical to apply the nationality principle and to absorb the Ukraine into the European family of nations. The Ukraine has never belonged to Europe.”²⁶⁴ According to Konrad Meyer’s calculations – Meyer was a SS-*Oberführer* and an agronomist who, as the head of the planning office at the Commissioner for the Strengthening of German Nationhood, played a leading role in devising the *Generalplan Ost* – there were about 2.5 million people of German blood in the East, so that approximately 4.85 million German settlers were needed.²⁶⁵ Wetzel, on the other hand, put forward a different line of *völkisch* reasoning. He spoke for generally lower standards in relation to Germanisation because losing this many Germans would hollow out the *Reich* itself, increase its need for foreign labour, and thus open the floodgates for “European racial miscegenation”.²⁶⁶ For an anonymous memorandum, the *völkisch* interpretive repertoire led to yet another conclusion. It emphasised that Germany’s focus in the East had to be the Germanisation of “the soil, not of *fremdvölkisch* people”²⁶⁷. And in Himmler’s

²⁶³ Rosenberg on the treatment of Ukrainians, 22 November 1941, BArch, R 6, 69, pp. 126-128. One appraisals of the Baltic *Völker* can be found, for example, in von Schaubert’s note on questions that had to be answered before the *Generalplan Ost* could be revised, 8 July 1942, printed in Madajczyk, *Generalplan Ost*, pp. 152-154. In the already cited report by Wetzel on a meeting February 1942, however, only a fraction of the Baltic states’ population was deemed fit for Germanisation. Wetzel’s report on a meeting in the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories, 7 February 1942, printed in *ibid.*, pp. 38-41.

²⁶⁴ Koch cited in Dallin, *German Rule in Russia*, p. 165.

²⁶⁵ See Meyer’s summary of the *Generalplan Ost*, 28 May 1942, BArch, NS 19, 1739, pp. 5-10.

²⁶⁶ Wetzel’s memorandum on the *Generalplan Ost*, 27 April 1942, printed in Opitz, *Europastrategien*, pp. 868-894.

²⁶⁷ Memorandum on the provision of people for the Germanisation of new settlement areas in the East, June 1942, printed in Madajczyk, *Generalplan Ost*, pp. 138-150.

concept of a “Germanic *Reich* of German Nation”, the “lost Nordic-Germanic-Aryan blood particles” within the population of the East “either had to be won over, or to be beaten to death.”²⁶⁸ Thus, the *völkisch* interpretative frame suggested a vaguely defined problem: To some extent, there was racially valuable blood in the East that had to be strengthened. This consensus, together with the incontestable precedence of German needs and the paradigm of *völkisch* segregation, put the problem itself beyond dispute thus shifting the German considerations on the future of the East in the New Order towards the specifics of potential solutions.

Most of these proposals for a solution stipulated a *völkisch Flurbereinigung*²⁶⁹ (ethnic consolidation) consisting of large-scale settlement and resettlement schemes that were supposed to create *Lebensraum* for supposedly racially valuable people at the expense of the allegedly inferior rest. Alfred Rosenberg, the Minister for the Occupied Eastern Territories, for example, had a clear-cut notion of Germany’s policy in the East. The *Ostland* – this “new frontier between Germany and Slavdom”²⁷⁰ – was to become a part of the Greater German *Reich* because “700 years of history have largely aligned the local population with Europe and [...] integrated this region into the Greater Germanic *Lebensraum*.”²⁷¹ With this well-established reference to the history of Teutonic Knights and the Hanseatic League, he called for the Germanisation of the racially suitable parts of the population in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Belorussia and the resettlement of unwanted elements.²⁷² Ukraine, in contrast, was to become a free state and a close ally of the Greater German *Reich*, whereas he envisaged the allegedly formerly German Crimea as a German Riviera, densely settled with Germans.²⁷³ However, it was Himmler, bestowed with “special tasks on be-

²⁶⁸ Himmler’s speech on a meeting of SS- and police force leaders, 16 September 1942, printed in Opitz, *Europastrategien*, pp. 921-930.

²⁶⁹ Hitler used the word *Flurbereinigung* [land consolidation] in a speech in September 1939, shortly after the attack on Poland. See Wildt, ‘Völkische Neuordnung’, p. 1.

²⁷⁰ Note on a meeting in the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories, 30 October 1941, BArch, R 6, 107, pp. 2-17.

²⁷¹ Rosenberg’s instructions for a *Reichskommissar* in *Ostland*, 8 May 1941, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik Sowjetunion*, pp. 131-132.

²⁷² See *ibid.* Similar historical references can be found in: draft by the economic department of the Reichsbank for a speech by Funk on the occasion of the East fair in Königsberg, 12 October 1941, BArch, R 2501, 7018, pp. 236-261; Reinhard Heydrich on the basic principles of the National Socialist reorganisation of Europe, 2 October 1941, printed in Madajczyk, *Generalplan Ost*, pp. 20-22.

²⁷³ See note on a meeting in the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories, 30 October 1941, BArch, R 6, 107, pp. 2-17; Rosenberg’s instructions for a *Reichskommissar* in Ukraine, 7 May 1941, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik Sowjetunion*, pp. 128-131.

half of the *Führer* that follow from the final fight between two contrary political systems”²⁷⁴, who enjoyed Hitler’s confidence in regard to questions of future settlements:

I know exactly how far I have to go, but after this the entire East will be Germanic – primarily Germanic. [...] We do not have to worry about that now. I will not talk about it. I have delegated that to my Himmler and he will take care of it.²⁷⁵

Indeed, he did: Under his auspices, several experts pondered on the questions of how, when, and where Germanic people should settle in the East.²⁷⁶ The *Generalplan Ost* reflected the results of these considerations. According to Konrad Meyer, German settlement policy would focus on Luxembourg, Alsace-Lorraine, Lower Styria, and Upper Carniola, in the West and South, while the former Polish territories, Western Lithuania, Ingria, and the Crimea would take precedence in the East.²⁷⁷ Furthermore, he adopted Hans Joachim Riecke’s idea of subordinating several former Kolkhozes to a German-led agricultural centre along the projected transport axes towards the Crimea and Ingria.²⁷⁸ In this way, he wanted to “ingrain German *Volkstum* with the soil and to secure its biological existence for good amidst an alien environment”.²⁷⁹ These “pearls of settlement” – as Himmler called them – should become the nucleus for “Germanic people to proliferate, to thrive, and to grow strong”.²⁸⁰ Thus, just like before the invasion of the Soviet Union, the *völkisch* knowledge and belief system and its ambiguous but incontestable distinction between valuable and inferior blood turned every region in the East in which Germans were living or had ever lived into German *Lebensraum*. For National Socialist officials, this – discursively established – appraisal justified and necessitated a *völkisch* reorganisation of the territories in question as part of the overarching reorganisation of Europe. For this purpose, Germany was willing to spend 55 billion *Reichsmark* on the settlement of five million Germanic people in the occupied Eastern territories within the next 25 years.²⁸¹

²⁷⁴ Guidelines issued by Keitel, 13 March 1941, printed in *ibid.*, pp. 123-125.

²⁷⁵ Letter by Berger to Himmler, 10 April 1942, BArch, NS 19, 3898, pp. 37-39.

²⁷⁶ For a concise account of this planning, see Aly and Heim, *Vordenker der Vernichtung*, pp. 394-440.

²⁷⁷ See letter by Meyer to Kammler, 18 April 1942, printed in Madajczyk, *Generalplan Ost*, pp. 47-48.

²⁷⁸ See Meyer’s notes on a speech by Riecke, 23 February 1942, printed in *ibid.*, pp. 41-42.

²⁷⁹ Meyer on the legal, economic, and spatial foundations of the build-up East, June 1942, printed in Opitz, *Europastrategien*, pp. 898-908.

²⁸⁰ Himmler’s speech on a meeting of SS- and police force leaders, 16 September 1942, printed in *ibid.*, pp. 921-930

²⁸¹ See Meyer’s summary of the *Generalplan Ost*, 28 May 1942, BArch, NS 19, 1739, pp. 5-10.

As designated German *Lebensraum*, these areas were also subject to the *völkisch* imperative requirement of racial and spiritual homogeneity. That meant that not only large parts of the local but also all the Jewish population had to go.²⁸² Initially, German officials pinned their hopes in this respect on a yet-to-be-conquered region east of the Urals, which succeeded Madagascar as a possible territorial solution to the ‘Jewish Question’. In September 1941, for example, the *Einsatzgruppe C* welcomed the flight of many Ukrainians from the advancing *Wehrmacht* as a “costless deportation of hundreds of thousands of Jews” which constituted a “considerable contribution to towards solving the ‘Jewish Question’ in Europe.”²⁸³ Given the large number of Jews in its area, the *Einsatzgruppe B*, which was also operating behind the front-line to kill the Soviet ruling class and its alleged Jewish kingpins, likewise assumed that deportation was the only viable solution to the ‘Jewish Question’.²⁸⁴ However, by the end of the year, a quick military victory had become unlikely, so German officials pondered alternatives. In November 1941, Alfred Rosenberg, for example, spoke of the “biological eradication of the entire Jewry in Europe” which could be carried out either by deportation “or other means of eradication”.²⁸⁵ In January 1942, Hitler saw only two options. The war would end either with the annihilation of the Aryan *Völker* or with the disappearance of Jewry from Europe. By May 1942, National Socialist Germany had made its decision. According to Heydrich, the “death penalty” had been imposed on “all of European Jewry”.²⁸⁶ Thus, the *völkisch* interpretive frame, which had conceptually paved the way from the vision of a ‘Jew-free’ German *Volks-gemeinschaft* to a Europe ‘free of Jews’, had set the Jews as the ‘problem’ and initiated a search for solutions.²⁸⁷ When expelling them proved unfeasible German officials fell back on alternatives to realise this – from a *völkisch* point of view, imperative – part of the New Order. Inspired by the killing of mentally and physically handicapped people in the context of the T4 programme and the mass murders of Jews

²⁸² See J. Connelly, ‘Nazis and Slavs: From Racial Theory to Racist Practice’, *Central European History*, vol. 32, no. 1, 1999, pp. 1-33, here p. 10.

²⁸³ See Detail of the *Einsatzgruppe C*, 12 September 1941, cited in Longerich, *Politik der Vernichtung*, p. 358.

²⁸⁴ *Einsatzgruppe B*, 23 July 1941, cited in Burrin, *Hitler und die Juden*, p. 124.

²⁸⁵ Alfred Rosenberg, 18 November 1941, cited in Longerich, *Politik der Vernichtung*, p. 448.

²⁸⁶ See Heydrich, May 1942, cited in *ibid.*, p. 495.

²⁸⁷ Confino puts forward a similar argument. See Confino, *A World Without Jews*, p. 164.

as the alleged kingpins of Bolshevism,²⁸⁸ they started to kill the Jewish population of Europe systematically.

Overall, the vision of a New Order changed dramatically with the German invasion of the Soviet Union. However, in the areas Germany had already ruled before June 1941, the effects were marginal. Despite setbacks, National Socialist officials clung to the idea of creating a racially homogeneous Greater German *Reich* – forming the core of a future ‘Jew-free’ Greater Germanic *Reich* that comprised all nations of allegedly valuable blood. Under German leadership, they would make use of the primary production of the racially inferior states which surrounded them, including the Newly Occupied Eastern Territories.

There, the impact of Operation Barbarossa on the New Order discourse cannot be overestimated. Before June 1941, ‘the East’ denoted the former Poland and ended at the Soviet border. Now, the Eastern boundaries of Europe were open to interpretation. Apart from dissolving previous geographical limits, the attack on the Soviet Union set up new discursive constraints and nullified others: with respect to the Newly Occupied Eastern Territories, the *völkisch* interpretative frame, particularly the *völkisch* ascriptions that discursively reinforced the need to distinguish between ‘valuable’ and ‘worthless’ blood, gained a hegemonic position in the discourse. On the one hand, this narrowed down the limits of what could be said about the status of the East in the New Order: notions of the East as a group of independent countries liberated from communism or the imagination of the people of the East constituting *Völker* in their own right – thoughts that Rosenberg for example voiced to some extent – were marginalised by the discursive mainstream. The *völkisch* ‘truth’ about the East that this mainstream discursively constructed, on the other hand, created several new problems and freed the German search for solutions of all boundaries. The alleged inferiority of the local population made letting them starve to death seem righteous if German interests called for it, justified the deportation of millions of people as necessary for the sake of racial and spiritual homogeneity, and provided a social-Darwinist and a historic legitimisation for the German claim to additional *Lebensraum* that outweighed the right to live of other *Völker*. Moreover, National Socialist anti-communism, which the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact had previously muted, now started to come fully into its own, so that the *völkisch* notion of Bolshevism be-

²⁸⁸ See e.g. Thamer, *Verführung und Gewalt*, p. 699.

ing the rule of Jews over the Slavic masses gained interpretational sovereignty within the German discourse. At first, this reading rationalised calls for the elimination of all adult male Jews in the Newly Occupied Eastern Territories. However, when the fantasies of deporting all European Jews to a territory east of the yet-to-be defined Eastern border of Europe dashed against the resistance of the Red Army, the perception of Jews as a threat and the established vision of *völkisch* homogenous Europe set the Jewish population as a dangerous and urgent problem. Again, the proposals for a solution pushed the boundaries. The discursively stabilised vision of a Europe free of Jews translated into the systematic physical extermination of millions of people.

3.2.2 Colonisation and Exploitation – Ruling the East

The result is therefore a great technical preparation, involving economic policy, urban construction and a policy for *Volkstum* and settlement. [...] Inaugurating the whole of this work is the inauguration of a century's work. Over the next years, we can definitely make a big start, but it will be our children and our grandchildren that will see the results.²⁸⁹ (Alfred Rosenberg, October 1941)

The tasks National Socialist officials saw as pending in the Newly Occupied Eastern Territories were not just of a *völkisch* nature. In order to turn these regions into valuable parts of Europe, they had to be reorganised economically. Since there was no indispensable industry, but an allegedly inferior population, essential raw materials, and huge agricultural potential, National Socialist plans destined the East – with recourse to trade patterns popularised through *Mitteleuropa* ideas – to supplement the prospective Germanic industrial core of Europe. By de-industrialising the Eastern territories and by keeping living standards and wages low, Germany wanted not only to shift the focus of the local economy onto the export of foodstuffs, raw materials, and labour but also wanted the economy to reflect the alleged inferiority of the local population. Integrated into Europe in this way, these European colonies would increase autarky.

Despite the *völkisch* interpretive frame gaining momentum, Europe-to-be was still also conceptualised as an economic New Order. In a large part, the discursive con-

²⁸⁹ Note on a meeting in the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories, 30 October 1941, BArch, R 6, 107, pp. 2-17.

struction of Europe kept revolving around the creation and optimisation of a *Großraumwirtschaft*.²⁹⁰ Herbert Backe, who led the Ministry of Nutrition and Agriculture from 1942 onwards,²⁹¹ for example, published a book in which he called for a European economy that freed the continent from its dependence on the liberal world economy.²⁹² In Funk's public speeches, the *Großraumwirtschaft* was a constant topic.²⁹³ Scientists held lectures on Europe's economic future and its features, or – like several German economists – teamed up to “forge the tools that shall help to prepare the implementation of the European *Großraumwirtschaft*.”²⁹⁴ A certain Alfred Oesterheld traced the “historical and current foundations of the *Großraumwirtschaft*”²⁹⁵, and the many activities of Werner Daitz's *Gesellschaft für europäische Wirtschaftsplanung und Großraumwirtschaft* even incurred the disapproval of the Ministry of Economics.²⁹⁶ After all, planning and creating the new Europe was still considered a matter of politics. Despite having to sustain the German war effort, Göring also kept concerning himself with the “organic preparation of the European *Großwirtschaftsraum*”.²⁹⁷ Several German Ministries discussed a new tariff system for the “economic reorganisation of Europe”,²⁹⁸ and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs appreciated a deal struck between Sweden and Finland on their lumber industry as a “contribution to the establishment of a European *Großwirtschaftsraum*”²⁹⁹. The *Ar-*

²⁹⁰ Kletzin analyses the publications on Europe as a *Großwirtschaftsraum* in detail. Kletzin, *Rasse und Raum*, pp. 168-209.

²⁹¹ Before 1942, Backe had been state secretary and in the Ministry of Nutrition and Agriculture and head of the department for nutrition in the *Vierjahresplanbehörde*. See J. Lehmann, ‘Herbert Backe - Technokrat und Agrarideologe’, in R. Smelser, E. Syring and R. Zitelmann (ed.), *Die Braune Elite II. 21 Weitere Biographische Skizzen*, Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1993, pp. 1-12.

²⁹² See H. Backe, *Um die Nahrungsfreiheit Europas. Weltwirtschaft oder Großraum*, Leipzig, Goldmann, 1942.

²⁹³ See draft by the economic department of the Reichsbank for a speech by Funk on the occasion of the East-fair in Königsberg, 12 October 1941, BArch, R 2501, 7018, pp. 236-261.

²⁹⁴ H. Bechtel, ‘Vorwort’, in Verein deutscher Wirtschaftswissenschaftler (ed.), *Europäische Grossraumwirtschaft. Vorträge gehalten auf der Tagung zu Weimar vom 9.-11. Oktober 1941*, Leipzig, Meiner, 1942, pp. III-V. See also inaugural lecture by Ferdinand Fried at the University of Prague, 19 November 1941, printed in Opitz, *Europastrategien*, 1977, pp. 833-836; talk by Benning on European currency questions at the Berlin business school, 10 March 1942, RGVA, 1458, 29, 61.

²⁹⁵ A. Oesterheld, *Wirtschaftsraum Europa*, Berlin, Stalling, 1942, p. 13.

²⁹⁶ See letter by Funk to the advisory board of the *Wirtschaftsgruppe* for fine mechanics and optics, 17 January 1942, CZA, W54, p. 1.

²⁹⁷ Göring's letter accompanying the guidelines for the development of the clearing system, 24 July 1941, RGVA, 1458, 29, 10; Göring on the basic principles for trusteeships in the occupied Eastern territories, 20 May 1942, BArch, R 3101, 31.142, pp.193-194.

²⁹⁸ Note on the results of a departmental meeting, 29 September 1941, BArch, R 2, 10382, pp. 44-45.

²⁹⁹ Memorandum of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 23 January 1942, printed in Menger et al., *Expansionsrichtung Nordeuropa*, pp. 125-126. For the Ministry's New Order policy in Finland, see M. Jonas, ‘Alternativpolitik und Diplomatie. Das Auswärtige Amt und Nordeuropa im Zweiten Weltkrieg’, *Historische Zeitschrift*, vol. 293, no. 3, 2001, pp. 667-707.

beitswissenschaftliches Institut of the German Labour Front devised several memoranda on Europe, which “today is not a purely geographical concept anymore, but already a consistently led political entity that – under Germany’s protection – is about to become a *Großwirtschaftsraum*.”³⁰⁰ Thus, the economic interpretive frame and the general principle it had discursively established in the 1930s, the *Großraumwirtschaft*, still informed all economic aspects of the German discourse on Europe.

This vision shaped the German view of the East and thus its discursive integration into the New Order. For many, the Newly Occupied Eastern Territories were to play an important part in this *Großraumwirtschaft*. In July 1941, Hermann Josef Abs, director of the foreign department and member of the board of directors of the Deutsche Bank, gave a speech in which he addressed several aspects of the European economy. He not only talked about expanding multilateral clearing, the common European market, and his appraisal of post-war international trade, but also about how the integration of large parts of the former Soviet Union into Europe would bring the continent closer to autarky.³⁰¹ Otto Bene, a diplomat representing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the German occupation regime in the Netherlands, claimed to be echoing Hitler when he specified his version of this idea. He pointed out that it was an absurdity that in the

East of the European continent, there was a large empire with almost inexhaustible natural resources and raw materials [...], while in the densely populated Central and Western European countries there was a shortage of raw materials. Thus, it was essential to make the resource-rich areas of the European East completely accessible for the populous West.³⁰²

Rosenberg took the same line. According to him, the

Eastern territories are not destined to lead a life on their own; in fact, they are a part of the Greater German and European *Lebensraum* and have their tasks within it. [...] In the context of an organic division of labour in the European *Großwirtschaftsraum*, the occupied territories are to provide surpluses of agricultural products and commercial raw materials.³⁰³

³⁰⁰ Memorandum of the *Arbeitswissenschaftliches Institut der Deutschen Arbeitsfront* on European agricultural and raw materials policy, August 1942, RGVA, 1458, 29, 83.

³⁰¹ See speech by Abs to the trade policy committee of the Reich Economic Chamber, 17 July 1941, printed in Eichholtz and Schumann, *Anatomie des Krieges*, pp. 345-348.

³⁰² Bene’s amendatory report on Hitler’s remarks on spatial policy, 2 October 1941, printed in Madajczyk, *Generalplan Ost*, pp. 416-417. Hewel’s record of a conversation between Hitler and the Finnish Foreign Minister Witting in November 1941 contains similar remarks. They are printed in Lipgens, *Documents on the History of European Integration*, pp. 93-94.

³⁰³ Rosenberg’s economic guidelines for the occupied Eastern territories, April 1942, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik Sowjetunion*, pp. 280-281.

These arguments and thought patterns surface in many other statements on the future of the Eastern territories: for Giselher Wirsing, a SS-Sturmbannführer who had been an influential journalist in the Conservative Revolutionary movement,³⁰⁴ the “German-European and the Russian economic areas notably supplement each other”³⁰⁵. Thus, the integration “into Europe’s overall economy”,³⁰⁶ which Hellmut Körner, head of the department for nutrition and agriculture in the *Reichskommissariat Ukraine*, demanded, would finally make Europe economically independent. According to the agricultural department of the *Wirtschaftsstab Ost*, the Caucasus, for example, was to supply oil, cotton, manganese, copper, silk, and tea.³⁰⁷ The role of the Baltic States, by contrast, was determined by their agricultural character. They were supposed to supply foodstuffs.³⁰⁸ In this respect, however, the highest hopes of many National Socialist officials rested on the resource-rich and fertile soil of Ukraine – “this large foundation for raw materials and food-stuffs”.³⁰⁹ In accordance with the expectation that Ukraine, together with Southeastern Europe and France, could make up for the European shortage of corn,³¹⁰ the political guidelines for Ukraine declared that the

ultimate economic objective has to be to naturally develop Ukraine into the granary of Europe. On the other hand, the entire Eastern space will become the main sales market for Western European industry, whose products will be paid for in agricultural products and raw materials.³¹¹

In principle, Erich Koch argued similarly. However, in his version, economic planning exhibited its racial hierarchy more plainly:

³⁰⁴ Some of his publications have been cited in chapter 2.1.3. For more information see Weiß, *Biographisches Lexikon*, p. 491-492.

³⁰⁵ Wirsing’s confidential memorandum on the future of German rule in Russia, August 1942, printed in Opitz, *Europastrategien*, pp. 909-920.

³⁰⁶ Speech by Körner, 1942, BArch MA, RW 19, 1251, pp. 31-35.

³⁰⁷ See guidelines of the agricultural department of the *Wirtschaftsstab Ost* for economic policy in the territories of the Soviet Union, 23 May 1941, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik Sowjetunion*, pp. 135-143.

³⁰⁸ See e.g. von Schaubroth’s guidelines on evaluating the economy in Germanic countries, 12 October 1942 printed in Madajczyk, *Generalplan Ost*, pp. 181-183; draft by the economic department of the *Reichsbank* for a speech by Funk on occasion of the opening of the autumn fair in Königsberg, 12 October 1941, BArch, R 2501, 7018, pp. 236-261.

³⁰⁹ Heydrich on the basic principles of the National Socialist reorganisation of Europe, 2 October 1941, printed in Madajczyk, *Generalplan Ost*, pp. 20-22.

³¹⁰ See memorandum of the *Arbeitswissenschaftliches Institut der Deutschen Arbeitsfront* on a European agricultural and raw materials policy, August 1942, RGVA, 1458, 29, 83.

³¹¹ These guidelines are cited in a letter to Leibbrandt concerning German Ukraine policy, 21 November 1941, BArch, R 6, 69, pp. 123-125.

For the post-war period, the Russian space from Chernyshevskoye to Vladivostok will be the sole sales market for German industry. Of course, we will not deliver high-quality products, but ordinary kitsch is good enough for these people.³¹²

Hence, the prospective role of the Newly Occupied Eastern Territories within the European *Großraumwirtschaft* was clear-cut: the dominant interpretive frame only allowed for one way to speak about the future of the East in an economically reorganised Europe. The Newly Occupied Eastern Territories were unanimously envisaged as an integral part of the European *Großraumwirtschaft* that was supposed to contribute to the autarky and the prosperity of the continent – in the trade pattern deeply engrained in German economic concepts for Europe for decades³¹³ – by selling foodstuffs and raw materials in exchange for manufactured goods. If the East was integrated into intra-European trade in this way, the *Reichsbank* expected that “the German *Volk* and with it the new Europe will have the *Lebensraum* which guarantees an enduring political and economic upward trend.”³¹⁴ So – in Hitler’s words – ultimately,

the future did not belong to the ridiculous half-civilized America, but to the newly arisen Europe that would also definitely prevail with its people, its economy and its intellectual and cultural values, on condition that the East was made to serve the European idea and not work against Europe.³¹⁵

Thus, after June 1941, the economic dimension of the German discourse on the future of Europe was still shaped by the well-established repertoire of interpretations that had informed German economic thinking for decades. These arguments, motives, and thought patterns had discursively constructed a New Order that was imagined and expressed as a German-led, autarkic, and powerful *Großwirtschaftsraum*, engaged in a supposedly natural division of labour (see chapter 2.3 and 3.1.2). Due to the discursively ascribed qualities of the land and the people in the East, there was only one way to integrate the Newly Occupied Eastern Territories into this New Order. As suppliers of raw materials and foodstuffs for the Germanic industrialised core area, they would contribute to realising the hopes and expectations pinned on an economic new European order.

³¹² Notes on a meeting in Rivne, 28 August 1942, BArch, R 6, 70, pp. 15-18.

³¹³ See e.g. chapter 2.3.

³¹⁴ Draft by the economic department of the *Reichsbank* for a speech by Funk before the High Command of the navy, 6 November 1942, BArch, R 2501, 7008, pp. 421-438.

³¹⁵ Schmidt’s record of a conversation between Hitler and Count Ciano at Hitler’s headquarters, 25 October 1941, printed in Lipgens, *Documents on the History of European Integration*, p. 89.

This discursively designated role of the occupied Eastern territories, supplying Europe with foodstuffs and raw materials, was additionally cemented by the congruence between long-term New Order planning and its war-related short-term needs. The agricultural department of the *Wirtschaftsstab Ost*, for example, argued for redirecting their output towards Europe because industry in Belgium, France, and Germany was more important than Russian industry – for the war and the post-war economy.³¹⁶ When Göring specified the main economic tasks in the East, he also pointed out the congruencies between German interests during and after the war: Agricultural products and oil were to take absolute precedence.³¹⁷ However, if one wanted to maximise German benefits, the *Arbeitswissenschaftliches Institut* of the German Labour Front argued, the “primitive exploitation economy” had to make way for “a systematic adaptation of the economic structure to the needs of the German Volk”³¹⁸. Ideally, “the creation of the *Großwirtschaftsraum* Europe in its principal points” had to be tackled right away. Because

under a purposeful economic leadership, a united Europe constitutes a stronghold that is impregnable for any opponent. Even if all measures are tailored to the needs of war for the time being – no matter whether the coal mines in Northern France are concerned, or the ore mines in the Ukraine –, it is essential, however, that all measures taken due to the war do not impede the upcoming peacetime development, but help to prepare it if possible.³¹⁹

Even in April 1942, when winning the war had already become his “paramount short-term objective”, Rosenberg concluded that “overall, the same tasks arise for the war-time as well as for the more distant future”: the Newly Occupied Eastern Territories were to supply foodstuffs and raw materials for Europe.³²⁰ Thus, in the East, German economic long-term planning and short-term war needs pointed into the same direction, so that the intention of opening up a rich reservoir of primary production for the

³¹⁶ See guidelines of the agricultural department of the *Wirtschaftsstab Ost* for economic policy in the territories of the Soviet Union, 23 May 1941, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik Sowjetunion*, pp. 135-143.

³¹⁷ See Göring’s confidential guidelines for the economic exploitation of the territories to be occupied, June 1941, printed in Eichholtz and Schumann, *Anatomie des Krieges*, pp. 333-335. Riecke made a similar point with respect to agriculture. Speech by Riecke at a press conference in the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern territories, 23 February 1942, BArch, R 6, 408, pp. 36-42.

³¹⁸ Memorandum of the *Arbeitswissenschaftliches Institut* of the German Labour Front on the utilisation of the conquered territories by the German Volk, December 1941, BArch, R 6, 602, pp. 11-20.

³¹⁹ Memorandum of the *Arbeitswissenschaftliches Institut der Deutschen Arbeitsfront* on European agricultural and raw materials policy, August 1942, RGVA, 1458, 29, 83. In respect of German settlement plans, however, the memorandum did distinguish between short-term considerations and long-term objectives.

³²⁰ Rosenberg’s economic guidelines in the occupied Eastern territories, April 1942, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik Sowjetunion*, pp. 280-281.

European *Großraumwirtschaft* became a crucial and incontestable aspect of the German discourse on the future of Europe.

This congruence of short-term needs and long-term planning discursively solidified in a vision of the East as a de-industrialised agrarian economy that the *Reich* was orchestrating according to its needs. Göring translated this notion into an official objective: “In the long run, the Newly Occupied Eastern Territories will be exploited from a colonial angle and with colonial means.”³²¹ As early as May 1941, the agricultural department of the *Wirtschaftsstab Ost* had suggested giving up all industry in the East – except for the one in the Donetsk region – in order to redirect the excess foodstuffs to the industrialised West.³²² Göring repeatedly confirmed this course. In June 1941, he reemphasised that industrial plants were not to be reconstructed unless they served the German interest in raw materials and foodstuffs.³²³ After all, the target was to increase war-relevant output – namely corn, oilseed crops, mineral oil, light metals, agricultural machinery, and transport – not to generally revive the economy, as he informed other *Reich* authorities a month later.³²⁴ In November 1941, he issued guidelines for German economic policy in the occupied Eastern territories, which characterised the East’s industrial prospects accordingly:

III. The focus of all economic work is on foodstuffs and raw material output. [...]

IV. Processing is only considered as far as it is absolutely necessary. [...]

V. A noteworthy industry for commodities and finished products must not develop in the occupied Eastern territories.³²⁵

According to Hermann von Hanneken, undersecretary of state in the Ministry of Economics and plenipotentiary for the iron and steel industry in the *Vierjahresplanbehörde*, this stance reflected Hitler’s standpoint. At a meeting that the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern territories had arranged to coordinate German planning for the East, he told the attendants

³²¹ Göring’s guidelines for economic policy on the occupied Eastern territories, 18 November 1941, BArch, R 58, 225, unnumbered.

³²² See guidelines of the agricultural department of the *Wirtschaftsstab Ost* for economic policy in the territories of the Soviet Union, 23 May 1941, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik Sowjetunion*, pp. 135-143.

³²³ See Göring’s confidential guidelines for the exploitation of the Soviet Union’s territories that were to be occupied, June 1941, printed in Eichholtz and Schumann, *Anatomie des Krieges*, pp. 333-335.

³²⁴ See Göring’s directive for the Minister of Economics and other *Reich* institutions, 7.07.1941, BArch MA, R 26 I, 13, pp. 1-4.

³²⁵ Göring’s guidelines for economic policy on the occupied Eastern territories, 18 November 1941, BArch, R 58, 225, unnumbered.

that the *Führer* generally did not want any processing industry to be created or to be maintained in the Eastern territories. The entire procedure of industrial processing shall take place in the *Reich*, while the Eastern territories would be the reservoir of raw materials for the the economy of the *Reich*.³²⁶

Not even after the German offensive had ground to a halt in the Russian winter of 1941/42 did National Socialist officials alter this course.³²⁷ In fact, acting and planning on this maxim did not change until the so-called *Iwan-Programm* began in early summer 1942. Thus, the discursive dominance of arguments that designated the Newly Occupied Eastern Territories as caterer for German needs did not only rest on the well-established concept of a *Großraumwirtschaft* and the congruence between short-term necessities and long-term planning. This vision was additionally upheld by the official backing it received from leading National Socialist officials.

Furthermore, with respect to the Newly Occupied Eastern Territories, the economic and the *völkisch* interpretive frame proved highly compatible. Hence, the notion that the racial value of a *Volk* ought to be reflected in its economic tasks within the projected intra-European division of labour additionally added to the deeper discursive entrenchment of visions that saw the East as a reservoir of cheap foodstuffs, raw materials, and labour. In Heydrich's notion of Europe, for example, 'valuable blood' had to be won over. On the other hand, there were the

Eastern territories, which are partly populated by Slavs; these are the territories where one has to know that kindness is only perceived as weakness, these are the territories where the Slav himself does not want to be treated equally, where he is used to the master not associating with him. Hence, these are the territories we have to lead and to keep in the East. These are the territories in which, after the military operations deep into Russia, far up to the Urals, once a German upper class has to be established for our purposes in a clear form of leadership as raw material base, as workers, as workers for great, also cultural, tasks, as helots, to put it drastically [sic].³²⁸

³²⁶ Note on a meeting in the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories, 30 October 1941, BArch, R 6, 107, pp. 2-17.

³²⁷ See speech by Schlotterer at a press conference in the Ministry for the occupied Eastern territories, 23 February 1942, BArch, R 6, 408, pp. 36-42.

³²⁸ Heydrich on the basic principles of the National Socialist reorganisation of Europe, 2 October 1941, printed in Madajczyk, *Generalplan Ost*, pp. 20-22. The last sentence of the quoted text is grammatically wrong in the German original. Thus, others have translated it more freely in order to arrive at a more understandable version: "These, therefore, are the regions, where a German upper stratum must be established in a very clear form of leadership; following the military development, deep into Russia and far up to the Urals, these regions are to serve us as a raw material base and their inhabitants as workers for great and cultural tasks, as helots, to put it very drastically." Cited in J. Poprzeczny, *Odilo Globocnik, Hitler's man in the East*, Jefferson, McFarland, 2004, p. 185.

While Hitler ultimately envisaged a repetition of what happened after the conquest of America,³²⁹ many National Socialist officials wanted to cash in on the local population in the short-run. Heydrich defended employing Ukrainians as auxiliary police as a temporarily sensible measure,³³⁰ and Göring wanted to harness the qualification of the local workers for hard manual labour for the *Reich*: “German skilled workers belong in armaments production. Shovelling and breaking stones is not their task; that is what the Russian is there for.”³³¹ However, assigning work to Russians – he insisted – must not lead to “social aspirations” of any kind in the “Russian colonial territory”. Accordingly, toiling for Germany was to be rewarded with “sufficient, species-appropriate nutrition” and “a little pocket money” at most.³³² After all, it was Hitler’s wish to use the profits yielded in the East compensating for the costs of the war. Additionally, this wage differential had the convenient side effect of curbing private consumption, thus countering inflationary tendencies.³³³ While the Ministry of Economics intended to act on this maxim by cutting back German staff in the *Ostgesellschaften* for the sake of higher profits, the *Arbeitswissenschaftliches Institut* elaborated a *völkisch* justification for the difference in price and wage levels.³³⁴ The hierarchy of *Völker* defined the economic function of the East in the “*Großwirtschaftsraum* Europe”: While among Germans nobody enriched themselves at the expense of another,

it is something completely different if National Socialism demands such a surplus value of *Völker* that have proven – due to their cultural backwardness – inferior to the German nation; especially because this surplus value is the return service for political protection by the *Reich*. To what extent such a demand is ethically justifiable is not to be analysed here. [...] In plain

³²⁹ See note by Köppen on Hitler’s table talk, 17 October 1941, printed in Madajczyk, *Generalplan Ost*, pp. 22-23.

³³⁰ See note on an informal meeting between Heydrich and Meyer, 4 October 1941, BArch, NS 19, 1734, pp. 2-7.

³³¹ Göring’s circular concerning the employment of Soviet-Russians, 14 November 1941, RGVA, 1458, 40, 39.

³³² Ibid.; all of these views reverberated in the guidelines Göring issued a few days later: Göring on the basic principles of economic policy in the occupied Eastern territories, 18 November 1941, BArch, R 58, 225, unnumbered.

³³³ See explanatory note by the *Wirtschaftsstab Ost* on the purchase of food and feeding stuff in the occupied Eastern territories, March 1942, BArch MA, RW 19, 758, unnumbered; von Krosigk’s note on a meeting on the administration, economy, and finances of the Eastern territories, 9 November 1942, BArch, R 58, 225, pp. 253-255.

³³⁴ See memorandum of the *Arbeitswissenschaftliches Institut der Deutschen Arbeitsfront* on European agricultural and raw materials policy, August 1942, RGVA, 1458, 29, 83.

language, this means that the ruled territories have to deliver more goods to the *Reich* than they receive.³³⁵

Thus, German *völkisch* contempt merged with arguments taken from the economic interpretive repertoire and solidified into notions in which the population of the East was at best to be the cheap labour force of Europe that supplied foodstuffs and raw materials thus yielding enough profits for Germany to pay for the costs of the war.³³⁶

At worst, they were left to starve to death because the German needs trumped the right to live of the local population in National Socialist reasoning (see chapter 3.2.1). After all, the needs of the German population and of the Wehrmacht were considered paramount for the time being.³³⁷ Hence, “securing the surpluses [was] the ultimate objective”³³⁸ of many German officials.³³⁹ They abided by this course; just as did Göring, who was well aware of the consequences: in the East,

the urban population can obtain only marginal quantities of foodstuffs. For the large cities (Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev) nothing at all can be done for now. The resulting consequences are tough, but unavoidable.³⁴⁰

Accordingly, the lives of the local population hardly played a role when the question of how to “produce as much agricultural products as possible”³⁴¹ triggered some controversy. Göring was willing to live temporarily with the Kolkhoz, this remnant of the detested “Bolshevist system” because he feared that reforms would jeopardise agricultural production.³⁴² Hitler, by contrast, took privatisations for industrious and hard-working people into consideration, but ruled out any changes if they impeded agricul-

³³⁵ Memorandum of the *Arbeitswissenschaftliches Institut der Deutschen Arbeitsfront* on the utilisation of the conquered territories by the German *Volk*, December 1941, BArch, R 6, 602, pp. 11-20.

³³⁶ The *Reich* Minister of Finances also wanted the Eastern territories to bear the costs of the war. Circular by von Krosigk on the administration, economy, and finances in the occupied Eastern territories, 4 September 1942, BArch, NS 19, 939, pp. 3-8.

³³⁷ See Göring’s decree on the distribution of agricultural products in the occupied territories, 1 December 1942, BArch MA, RW 31, 203, unnumbered.

³³⁸ Guidelines of the agricultural department of the *Wirtschaftsstab Ost* for economic policy in the territories of the Soviet Union, 23 May 1941, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik Sowjetunion*, pp. 135-143.

³³⁹ See e.g. Göring’s confidential guidelines for the exploitation of the Soviet Union’s territories that were to be occupied, June 1941, printed in Eichholtz and Schumann, *Anatomie des Krieges*, pp. 333-335; letter by the *Vierjahresplanbehörde* to the head of the *Wehrwirtschafts- und Rüstungsamtes* at the *Wehrmacht* High Command, 11 August 1941, BArch MA, RW 31, 127, pp. 392-398.

³⁴⁰ Göring’s guidelines for economic policy on the occupied Eastern territories, 18 November 1941, BArch, R 58, 225, unnumbered.

³⁴¹ Göring on the basic principles of economic policy in the occupied Eastern territories, 18 November 1941, BArch, R 58, 225, unnumbered.

³⁴² See letter by the *Vierjahresplanbehörde* to the *Wehrmacht* High Command, 14 August 1941, BArch MA, RW 31, 127, pp. 380-390.

tural output or concerned prospective German settlement areas.³⁴³ While Rosenberg's ministry and parts of the military argued that land ownership could be used as an incentive to increase cooperation,³⁴⁴ others objected to the dissolution of the Kolkhozes: Count Yorck von Wartenburg, an employee of the War Economic Office, for example, warned that the "want-less and lazy Ukrainians" would only take care of their own land then.³⁴⁵ For Hermann Ebhardt, who worked in the *Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt*, the Kolkhozes were the ideal form of agriculture in the East.³⁴⁶ And Heinrich Schöne, *Generalkommissar* in Volhynia and Podolia, was fairly content with the current results. He saw no need to "tackle such ticklish matters"³⁴⁷. Thus, even though the vision of the East as the supplier of foodstuffs, raw materials, and cheap labour was discursively stabilised by a number of factors, it exhibited rudiments of differing arguments and thought patterns with respect to the question of the Kolkhozes. Discursively this disagreement was made possible by a sacrosanct and superordinate point of reference: Germany. The German *Volk* had spearheaded the *völkisch* revolution and championed the allegedly necessary *völkisch* and economic reorganisation of Europe by means of the current war. Thus, the intention to maximise German benefits, could not be challenged by any argument, motive, or thought pattern that the two dominant interpretive frames provided. Nothing that was of detriment to Germany and its war effort could claim to be 'good', 'right', 'sensible', or 'true'. By being bound to this rule, the German discourse on the future of Europe allowed for disagreement on the appropriate means but not on the ends.

Overall, after the invasion of the Soviet Union, the economic dimension of German discourse on the future of Europe was still shaped by the same interpretive frame that had already gained a hegemonic position before June 1941. Its repertoire of arguments, motives, and thought patterns had discursively constructed an economic New Order that was imagined and expressed as a German-led, autarkic, and powerful *Großwirtschaftsraum*, engaged in a supposedly natural division of labour. Due to the racial and economic qualities ascribed to them, the Newly Occupied Eastern Ter-

³⁴³ See note on a speech by Rosenberg before Hitler, 29 September 1941, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik Sowjetunion*, pp. 200-201.

³⁴⁴ For a more detailed analysis of the arguments brought forward against the political course in the occupied Eastern territories, see the following chapter.

³⁴⁵ Memorandum by Yorck von Wartenburg on the future of the Ukrainian Kolkhoz, May 1942, BArch, NS 2, 59, pp. 28-33.

³⁴⁶ See Ebhardt's comment on the memorandum of von Wartenburg, 20 May 1942, BArch, NS 2, 59, pp. 34-36.

³⁴⁷ Letter by Schöne to Leibbrandt, 5 February 1942, BArch, R 6, 69, pp. 142-147.

territories were integrated into this New Order as suppliers of raw materials, foodstuffs, and labour for the Germanic industrialised core area of Europe.³⁴⁸ This notion was discursively stabilised by its reconciliation of short-term needs and long-term planning, its backing through leading National Socialist officials, and its compatibility with the dominant *völkisch* vision of a racial hierarchy within Europe that was to be reflected in the assigned economic roles. Thus, the economic as well as the *völkisch* interpretive frame constructed a clear-cut, stable, and an almost unassailable New Order that set narrow limits for the possible ways of speaking about the future of the East: The Eastern territories, as a colony or a surrogate colony,³⁴⁹ were supposed to cater for the *Wehrmacht*, the more valuable population, and its factories in a powerful German-led Europe. To live up to this role, the alleged *Untermenschen* in the former Soviet territories did not need any industry, so that the meagre remains of what Stalin's scorched-earth policy had left of the already scanty industry in the East were deemed dispensable. In one respect, however, this dominant notion left some discursive leeway for legitimate disagreement. The principle itself could not be doubted but the best way to realise it was up for discussion. Thus, objections could be legitimately voiced, as long as they differed only in means but still subscribed to the same paramount aim – getting the most out of the East.

3.2.3 Appeals and Warnings – Winning the Population

Thus it would not only be completely inconsistent but also very short-sighted to want to treat people whom we have liberated from Bolshevism and whom we wish to integrate into the 're-ordering' of Europe and who moreover are Aryans, like negroes or slaves.³⁵⁰ (Alfred Rosenberg, November 1941)

With regard to the Newly Occupied Eastern Territories, the *völkisch* and the economic dimension of the German New Order discourse were very much in line. They boiled down to the vision of an inferior colony.³⁵¹ Politically impotent and subject to

³⁴⁸ According to Zitelmann, these motives had informed the attack on the Soviet Union in the first place. See Zitelmann, 'Lebensraum', p. 562.

³⁴⁹ The demand to find alternative ways to secure essential resources in a world that had already been divided up had already played a prominent role in many *Mitteleuropa* concepts. See chapter 2.3.

³⁵⁰ Rosenberg on the treatment of Ukrainians, 22 November 1941, BArch, R 6, 69, pp. 126-128

³⁵¹ When the words 'colony' and 'colonial' are used in this study, they serve as an umbrella term for the general National Socialist notion of a territory inhabited by supposedly inferior people, who are to supply cheap foodstuffs and raw materials. This use does not imply an actual continuity between German colonial policy and its policy and the National Socialist occupation policies. For an analysis of

German arbitrariness, the population in the East was destined to serve European needs. Nevertheless, there were voices that challenged this discursive mainstream by means of the arguments and thoughts that the *völkisch* and economic interpretive repertoires provided. Additionally, the military situation and its exigencies opened up new argumentative repertoires, which these appeals and warnings utilised as discursive leverage to make their 'truth' count.

One line of reasoning that led to a slightly different vision of the East in the New Order had its starting-point in the discursive distinction between the Jewish-Bolshevist regime and the Slavic people it had oppressed (see chapter 3.2.1). Consequently, it assumed that the Soviet regime was not very popular among the local population, so that Germany had the chance to cash in on its anti-communist stance. The *Wehrmacht* High Command, for example, wanted its campaign against the "Jewish-Bolshevist regime" depicted as liberation of the population from "the tyranny of the Soviets". However, the rhetoric should stay unspecific enough not to raise everyone's hopes.³⁵² A meeting of high-ranking National Socialist officials, including Hitler, exhibits the same thought pattern. As "liberators", one would not make "enemies prematurely and unnecessarily."³⁵³ Heydrich, by contrast, did not content himself with lulling the population into a false sense of security. He expected that "appropriate propaganda" could win over the population for "active measures against the Soviet regime".³⁵⁴ Otto Bräutigam, head of the political department in the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern territories, nourished still higher hopes:

It would run through the entire Soviet Union like an electrical spark, if the word was that the Germans dissolved the collectives. The impact on the Red Army could not be overestimated. Even to the simplest Red Army soldier it would become clear that fighting against Germany meant fighting for the maintenance of the hated collectives and against restoring private property.³⁵⁵

these continuities, see S. Baranowski, *Nazi Empire. German Colonialism and Imperialism from Bismarck to Hitler*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011. For reflections on a colonial perspective on the 'Third Reich', see B. Kundrus, 'Kontinuitäten, Parallelen, Rezeptionen. Überlegungen zur "Kolonialisierung" des Nationalsozialismus', *Werkstatt Geschichte*, vol. 43, 2006, pp. 45-62.

³⁵² See directives of the *Wehrmacht* High Command, June 1941, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik Sowjetunion*, pp. 153-155.

³⁵³ Bormann's record of a meeting on National Socialist aims in Eastern Europe, 16 July 1941, printed in Lippgens, *Documents on the History of European Integration*, pp. 85-86.

³⁵⁴ Heydrich's report on the Soviet Union, 26 July 1941, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik Sowjetunion*, pp. 172-173.

³⁵⁵ Bräutigam on the agricultural collectives in the Soviet Union, 6 August 1941, BArch, R 6, 87, pp. 14-17.

In September 1941, Karl Megerle, in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs responsible for propaganda abroad, put these topics into a European context. Apart from depicting the German invasion as a fight for the future of Europe, he advised the press to emphasise that Germany wanted to win “back for Europe enormous spaces which the Bolsheviks had alienated from the point of view of nationality, economy, and culture”.³⁵⁶ Thus, as early as the first month of the war against the Soviet Union, a concept found its way into the German discourse on Europe that took into account the hopes and wishes of the local population in the East. Even though it was tailored to propagandistic purposes, this idea made it possible to imagine and to speak about a different kind of New Order and linked it to military benefits.

This connection between ‘liberation’ and voluntary cooperation was frequently underpinned by personal experiences. In the early days of its Eastern campaign, the *Wehrmacht* troops were indeed greeted with enthusiasm in many places.³⁵⁷ According to Theodor Oberländer, a Professor and exponent of the German *Ostforschung* who worked in the intelligence corps of the army, the *Abwehr*, after having been drafted in 1939, the Ukrainians pinned high hopes on their liberation by German troops.³⁵⁸ And “in the Caucasus Bolshevism has prepared the ground for us in a way that could not be better for Germany.” As the people detested Bolshevism, all Germany needed to do to “successfully integrate the Caucasus into the New Europe” was introducing an agrarian reform, concede some autonomy, and grant religious and cultural freedom.³⁵⁹ A memorandum by the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories held that the willing cooperation of Ukrainians was even easier to maintain. Abstaining from seizing their property and letting them have a minimum of food, clothes, and living space would suffice.³⁶⁰ Thus, many German officials were convinced that the unpopularity of the Communist regime played into the hands of the National Socialist cause. Even relatively small measures promised to yield enormous economic and military benefits.

³⁵⁶ Megerle on positive themes for press and propaganda, 27 September 1941, printed in Lipgens, *Documents on the History of European Integration*, pp. 87-89.

³⁵⁷ See Mazower, *Nazi Rule*, p. 158.

³⁵⁸ See Oberländer on preconditions for the safety of supplies and the highest extraction of foodstuff surpluses in Ukraine, 28 October 1941, BArch, R 6, 69, pp. 69-77. For more information on Oberländer see e.g. Aly and Heim, *Vordenker der Vernichtung*, p. 92-96.

³⁵⁹ Oberländer on Germany and the Caucasus, October 1941, printed in Zeitgeschichtliche Forschungstelle Ingolstadt (ZFI) (ed.), *Der Osten und die deutsche Wehrmacht. Sechs Denkschriften aus den Jahren 1941-1943 gegen die NS-Kolonialthese*, Asendorf, MUT-Verlag, 1987, pp. 15-50.

³⁶⁰ See document ‘Ukraine policy’, 11 November 1941, BArch, R 6, 69, pp. 28-29.

However, by the end of 1941, when many officials noticed that the mood of the population was about to turn, this discursive linking of the military prospects to the wellbeing and contentment of the people in the conquered territories created the need to do something against this development. In a letter to Field Marshall General von Bock, commander-in-chief of the Army Group Centre, a certain Major Ilberg, for example, blamed the deteriorating material situation and the retention of state property for this development. At the same time, he pointed out that the attitude of the local population did matter for Germany, as the war in the East would take longer than previous campaigns.³⁶¹ This fear of wasting a unique opportunity while the urgency to seize it grew reverberated in many statements. In order to spare “the most valuable German *Lebensgut* [literally: ‘life-stock’]”, the Army High Command wanted to exhaust all possibilities to win over the population and to undermine the will to resist. Therefore, the “Russian masses have to be persuaded that the abolition of the uncomfortable and detested Bolshevik form of government is of real advantage to them.”³⁶² According to top army staff, there were two measures that would make them see the benefits: “Dissolution of the Kolkhoz and the restoration of private property.”³⁶³ Other officials and institutions also pinned high hopes on tackling these problem areas. The agricultural department of the *Wirtschaftsstab Ost*, for example, argued that “settling the Kolkhoz question to the satisfaction of everyone”³⁶⁴ was the only way to restore the initially positive attitude of the local population. A document from within the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories identified the gap between German words and deeds as the fundamental problem. Even though the *Reich* was claiming to wage this war for the sake of “European culture”, it hesitated to restore one “characteristic cornerstone of European life”: private property.³⁶⁵ Thus, by the winter of 1941/42, the notion of an inferior population supplying foodstuffs, raw materials, and labour – discursively shaped and enthroned by the dominant *völkisch* and economic interpretive frames – started to be cast into doubt. Several institutions and officials

³⁶¹ See letter by Major Ilberg to Field Marshal General von Bock, 1 December 1941, BArch MA, RW 31, 103, unnumbered.

³⁶² Note on a speech that the army High Command sent to the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories, 9 December 1941, BArch, R 6, 139, p. 5.

³⁶³ Letter by the army High Command to the Minister for the Occupied Eastern Territories, 13 December 1941, BArch, R 6, 139, p. 1.

³⁶⁴ Letter by the agricultural department of the *Wirtschaftsstab Ost* to the *Wirtschaftsinspektion Süd* concerning the ‘Kolkhoz question’, 29 December 1941, BArch MA, RW 31, 103, unnumbered.

³⁶⁵ Note on a final settlement of property questions in *Ostland*, 22 January 1942, BArch, R 6, 88, pp. 9-10.

voiced concerns that referred to the gap between the official National Socialist claim to liberate the people in the East from the clutches of Bolshevism and actual German Eastern policy.

However, this line of reasoning was not the only available starting-point for criticism of the current German occupation policy in the Eastern territories and its premises. A different reading of the racial qualities of the European *Völker* also arrived at a different vision of a New Order. Rosenberg, for example, brought forward *völkisch* arguments and called for a differentiated view on the *Völker* of the former Soviet Union.³⁶⁶ In his eyes, the Ukrainians stood out: “The Ukrainians belong to the European family of people and are heavily interspersed with Germanic blood. They have produced remarkable cultural and scientific achievements.”³⁶⁷ Accordingly, he and his Ministry assigned a special role to Ukraine. In this war, which “held a new concept of our continent and decisively advanced Europe eastwards”,³⁶⁸ Ukraine – as a country traditionally opposed to the rule of Russia – was to join the fight. After the war, an economically and culturally thriving Ukraine could become a European stronghold against the Russian pan-Slavic idea.³⁶⁹ Hence, Rosenberg pictured Ukraine as “an inextricable part of Europe-to-be” and wanted “its population educated by us to this European community of destiny.”³⁷⁰ However, as noted earlier, this appreciation of Ukrainians did not gain ground. Only von Reichenau shared the criticism that “one could not treat an important European country that matched the Balkans in terms of history and culture like an object of colonial exploitation and at the same time try to win it as an ally”.³⁷¹ The disagreement of others with the discursively established *völkisch* course amounted to nothing more than the demand to treat Russians “like fully-fledged human beings.”³⁷² Thus, the *völkisch* interpretive frame allowed for differing racial appraisals of the East that arrived at different notions of a *völkisch* Europe. These thoughts and arguments could be voiced, but since their claim to

³⁶⁶ See Bormann’s record of a meeting on National Socialist aims in Eastern Europe, 16 July 1941, printed in Lipgens, *Documents on the History of European Integration*, 1985, pp. 85-86.

³⁶⁷ Rosenberg on the treatment of Ukrainians, 22 November 1941, BArch, R 6, 69, pp. 126-128.

³⁶⁸ Rosenberg’s instructions for the *Reichskommissar* in Ukraine, 18 November 1941, BArch, R 6, 69, pp. 103-116.

³⁶⁹ See notes on Ukraine policy, 20 September 1941, BArch, R 6, 69, pp. 23-24.

³⁷⁰ Rosenberg’s notes on the psychological treatment of the population in the occupied Eastern territories, 23 March 1942, BArch, R 3101, 31.142, pp.15-21.

³⁷¹ Von Reichenau’s memorandum on the ‘Ukraine question’, 26 January 1942, BArch MA, RW 31, 203, unnumbered.

³⁷² Von Unruh’s report for the Army High Command, 23 November 1941, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik Sowjetunion*, pp. 226-228.

‘truth’ could not stand up to the discursively constructed and widely accepted ‘knowledge’ about the inferiority of Ukrainians, this reinterpretation could not seriously contest the thought patterns and beliefs that were underpinning German considerations on how to rule in the East.

The economic knowledge and belief system also allowed for a different line of reasoning. Given the German war effort, these economic arguments carried more weight within the discourse. One of the proponents of this line of criticism was Theodor Oberländer, who emphasised how important the oil deposits in the Caucasus region were for Germany. Since voluntary cooperation by the locals would make it much easier to conquer and run the wells, he suggested winning the population over by agrarian reforms and abstaining from “colonial rhetoric”.³⁷³ With regard to Ukraine, he suggested unleashing the initiative of the population by setting incentives, granting credits, and creating a form of agricultural self-administration.³⁷⁴ Many others voiced similar arguments and thoughts. Rosenberg expected “voluntary cooperation, not draconian punishments”³⁷⁵ to yield the best results in Ukraine. Ilberg suggested distributing farmland and granting economic freedom because he deemed the prospect of wealth to be the best incentive for hard work.³⁷⁶ Colonel Ernst-Anton von Krosigk, chief of staff of the I. Army Corps, even let Göring know about the absurdity of German policy: Even though German authorities depended on the cooperation of the locals, German officials kept mistreating and disappointing them.³⁷⁷ The German failure to restore private property carried particular weight. In addition to curbing private initiative, it – according to the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories – also undermined German credibility as “declared champion of *abendländisch* [occidental] culture and legal standards”.³⁷⁸ Wirsing claimed that there was an obvious solution: Germany was interested in increasing agricultural output, and the Russians – in their “striking primitive joy over property and possession of any kind”³⁷⁹ – wanted

³⁷³ Oberländer on Germany and the Caucasus, October 1941, printed in ZFI, *Der Osten und die deutsche Wehrmacht*, pp. 15-50.

³⁷⁴ See Oberländer on preconditions for the safety of supplies and the highest extraction of foodstuff surpluses in Ukraine, 28 October 1941, BArch, R 6, 69, pp. 69-77.

³⁷⁵ Rosenberg on the treatment of Ukrainians, 22 November 1941, BArch, R 6, 69, pp. 126-128.

³⁷⁶ See letter by Major Ilberg to General Field Marshal von Bock, 1 December 1941, BArch MA, RW 31, 103, unnumbered.

³⁷⁷ Letter by Colonel von Krosigk to Göring, 1 January 1942, RGVA, 700, 1, 66.

³⁷⁸ Letter by the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories to Göring, May 1942, BArch, R 6, 88, pp. 21-22, 23-29.

³⁷⁹ Wirsing's confidential memorandum on the future of German rule in Russia, August 1942, printed in Opitz, *Europastrategien*, pp. 909-920.

exactly the same as long as it paid off for them. In addition to fostering the war effort, a certain Paul Heuss argued that the distribution of land would channel the will to work into the right sectors, thereby creating the agrarian and de-industrialised territory that was to be integrated “into the large European economic process”.³⁸⁰ Thus, the economic interpretive frame, particularly the will to maximise output and German benefits, opened up the possibility to differ from the course that had discursively been set as ‘right’ and ‘good’. Since these calls for a rethink demanded a different treatment of the local population in the East, they implicitly challenged the *völkisch* dimension of the New Order for the sake of its economic optimisation. Due to this rootedness in the predominant economic knowledge and belief system, this kind of thoughts and arguments were at least partly ‘true’ and ‘right’, thus carrying discursive weight.

Another line of argument which also questioned the political course in the East utilised a different interpretive repertoire. Instead of referring to the *völkisch* and economic foundations of the envisaged New Order, it argued with military benefits and necessities. It claimed that a different, more ‘sensible’, policy would weaken the morale of the Red Army, minimise the death toll of the *Wehrmacht*, pacify the areas behind the front line, and secure German supply routes – appealing prospects for a country at war. Even though Bräutigam’s optimism, already mentioned, that the promise of land ownership would quickly thin out the Red Army’s ranks did not meet with a broad positive response, the thought that a more considerate policy would benefit the war effort was widely held.³⁸¹ Oberländer hoped for less problematic maintenance of supplies if one fed the local population decently, while General Walter von Unruh expected the promise of a bright future to weaken the support for partisans.³⁸² The Army High Command also wanted to focus on the front, not the rear:

In the occupied territories, it is essential to maintain peace and order with a minimum of security forces, despite the deteriorating economic situation. Winning over the population in the

³⁸⁰ Memorandum of Heuss on the question of land distribution in the East, 1 December 1942, BArch MA, RW 31, 103, unnumbered.

³⁸¹ See Bräutigam on the agricultural collectives in the Soviet Union, 6 August 1941, BArch, R 6, 87, pp. 14-17; One of the positive responses was Walter’s memorandum on measures to end the war against the USSR quickly and to maintain German rule over the Russian space permanently, 16 February 1942, BArch, R 6, 431, pp. 70-79.

³⁸² See Oberländer on preconditions for the safety of supplies and the highest extraction of foodstuff surpluses in Ukraine, 28 October 1941, BArch, R 6, 69, pp. 69-77; von Unruh’s report for the Army High Command, 23 November 1941, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik Sowjetunion*, pp. 226-228.

occupied territory and undermining the will to resist in the Soviet area has to be targeted by all means.³⁸³

Hans Stieler von Heydekampf, head of the *Wirtschaftsinspektion Süd*,³⁸⁴ warned that Germany was running out of time. The issue of the Kolkhozes had to be tackled and exploited propagandistically right away. To support his argument, he quoted the views of a captured Russian officer, who had told him that

[i]n case of a satisfactory solution of the land question a German victory is certain; the solution will quickly become known beyond the frontlines. In case Germany fails to present a solution, there will be so many partisans in Russia next year that Germany will not be able to help itself.³⁸⁵

Similar fears and warnings reverberated in Krosigk's letter to Göring, a report by the head of the *Wirtschaftsstab Ost* to Herbert Backe, a memorandum by von Reichenau, and several other statements, including a circular Rosenberg sent to the *Reich's* highest authorities.³⁸⁶ In June 1942, even the head of the Eastern department in the Ministry of Propaganda, Eberhard Taubert, joined these calls for a change in occupation policy: "To me it seems that the undoubted [negative] effect of our policy in the East on the mood in Europe is another argument for changing this policy."³⁸⁷ Oberländer took the same line when he postulated:

It is still possible to win areas and *Völker* which are absolutely essential for the viability of Europe in a blood-saving way with the aid of external forces. However, in this respect, the political necessities have to be adjusted to the military necessities.³⁸⁸

At the turn of the year 1942/43, an employee of the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories summed up the stance of the Wehrmacht Commanders. For them, a change in policy "has become a categorical demand and its fulfilment is decisive for

³⁸³ Note on a speech that the army High Command sent to the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories, 9 December 1941, BArch, R 6, 139, p. 5.

³⁸⁴ The *Wirtschaftsinspektionen* in the Eastern territories were subordinated bodies of the *Wirtschaftsstab Ost*. They operated in the territories that were ruled by the *Wehrmacht* and were responsible for the economic exploitation of the land. See introduction to BArch MA, RW 31.

³⁸⁵ Von Heydekampf on the solution of the 'Kolkhoz question', 31 December 1941, BArch MA, RW 31, 103, unnumbered.

³⁸⁶ See letter by Colonel von Krosigk to Göring, 1 January 1942, RGVA, 700, 1, 66; Letter by the head of the *Wirtschaftsstab Ost* to Backe, 12 January 1942, BArch MA, RW 31, 103, unnumbered; Von Reichenau's memorandum on the 'Ukraine question', 26 January 1942, BArch MA, RW 31, 203, unnumbered; Rosenberg's circular concerning the denotation of the occupied Eastern territories as German colonial territory, 17 March 1942, BArch, R 3101, 31.142, pp. 80-81.

³⁸⁷ Taubert on the effects of the Eastern policy on the mood in Europe, 12 June 1942, BArch, R 55, 567, p. 33.

³⁸⁸ Oberländer on the occupied Eastern territories and the future course of the war, 9 November 1942, printed in ZFI, *Der Osten und die deutsche Wehrmacht*, pp. 85-101.

victory.”³⁸⁹ Thus, the beneficial effects these appeals and warnings expected from a more considerate German occupation policy in the East were no longer linked to the two dominant interpretive frames. The repertoire of arguments did contain some economic considerations but stripped them of their long-term perspective. And even though this thought pattern did not fit into the discursively constructed *völkisch* ‘truth’, its short-term horizon and the urgency that *Wehrmacht* experts ascribed to it made it increasingly militarily ‘sensible’. The longer the war went on, the more discursive weight this line of reasoning gained: What started out as a matter of making the tasks of the *Wehrmacht* easier was turned into an absolutely vital question for National Socialist Germany.

Overall, the imagination of the East as a crucial part of the future *Großwirtschaftsraum*, whose allegedly inferior population was to supply foodstuffs, raw materials, and labour, still dominated the German discourse on the future of Europe. However, by the end of 1941, a set of arguments and thought patterns was already starting to emerge that cast doubt on the reasonableness of ruthlessly subjugating and exploiting the East and its people. These appeals and warnings took into account the hopes and wishes of the local population, thus implicitly and explicitly challenging a core element of the New Order that had been discursively shaped and stabilised by the dominant *völkisch* and economic interpretive frames (see chapter 3.2.1 and 3.2.2). Depending on the underlying knowledge and belief system, the discursive weight of these deviating lines of reasoning varied. While a reinterpretation of the racial value of Ukrainians – as suggested by Rosenberg – was too far away from the established ‘truth’ to gain ground, the intent to maximise output and German benefits was already endowing many aspects of the New Order with meaning. Accordingly, the question of how best to achieve this aim was legitimate even if it contemplated treating allegedly inferior people more considerately. German propaganda had opened that door, when it had picked up the idea of cashing in on the widespread rejection of the Bolshevik system and made the hopes, expectations, and favourable attitudes of the local population a valid and expressible category of thinking. The discursively most powerful line of reasoning took its thoughts and arguments from a different interpretive repertoire: A more considerate policy promised short-term mili-

³⁸⁹ Internal additional report to the protocol of a meeting with the Commanders of the *Heeresgebiete* in December, 8 January 1943, BArch, R 6, 139, pp. 13-14.

tary benefits. Even though the pursuit of such a policy boiled down to a different New Order, its rationale became more 'true', 'right' and 'sensible' the longer the war dragged on. In this way, numerous appeals and warnings emerged that were rooted in different knowledge and belief systems. They established a new way of speaking about the local populations within the discourse on the future of Europe. However, these arguments and thought patterns were not yet powerful enough to dethrone the currently dominant New Order. After all, the two dominant interpretive frames had discursively shaped and stabilised a concept that not only promised to reconcile German short-term needs with its long-term objectives but also *völkisch* with economic necessities. Hence, it took a different development to reconfigure the New Order discourse – the prospect of losing the war.

3.3 The Impending Defeat Curtailing Nazi Dreams (1943-1945)

And just as the National Socialist movement around Adolf Hitler stepped up to fight the red front and the reactionaries, so today the whole of Germany is in the forefront of the struggle for Germany and Europe that has been forced upon us, as a united block of fanatical fighters. 'Germany, awake!' has become 'Europe, awake!' and Europe is waking up and rubbing its eyes as if after a deep sleep. It is mobilising its forces and joining the ranks of a common defensive front, in profound acknowledgement that it is not just about Germany, but about everything, about the life of the peoples of this continent [...].³⁹⁰ (Anton Reinthaller, June 1944)

By 1943, the quick victories of the Wehrmacht were a thing of the past. Soviet Russia had halted its advance, had started to win battles and seized the military initiative more and more. In the German corridors of power, officials responded to the deteriorating military situation by exhausting all possibilities of increasing the war effort. Step by step all spheres of life were tailored to all-out war.

Being convinced that Germany and Europe would be doomed if the Allies were victorious, German officials increasingly subordinated everything to the war effort. While the German discourse on the future of Europe had been shaped by *völkisch* and economic thoughts and arguments, this process of "Getting Priorities Straight" (3.3.1) narrowed down all considerations to one rationale: winning the war. Since the *Reich* alone would not stand a chance, the economic dimension of the New Order gained ground. German officials increasingly resorted to the immobilised war-economic po-

³⁹⁰ Speech by Reinthaller on the historical mission of the European peasantry, 16 June 1944, RGVA, 1458, 29, 106.

tential in Europe and “Europeanising the War Economy” (3.3.2) became the order of the day. This reconfiguration of the discourse left German officials with two options: Forcing Europe into compliance within the desired European community, which jointly fought ‘Jewish-plutocracy’ and ‘Jewish-Bolshevism’, or giving the European states something worth fighting for. Hence, as appealing concepts for Europe-to-be promised to make the German cause a European one, drafting more considerate notions of Europe became one way of “Keeping the Dream Alive” (3.3.3). Alternatively, the initially envisaged New Order could be retained by condoning the suggested concessions as temporary means to the actual end. In this way, the allied armies, which were cutting the German sphere of influence down to size, kept broadening the spectrum of the New Order discourse; until ultimately the German struggle for a new Europe became an unrealistic dream again.

3.3.1 War and its Necessities – Getting Priorities Straight

Total war is thus the order of the day. We have to put an end to bourgeois squeamishness [...]. The threat confronting us is gigantic. Our struggle against this threat must therefore also be gigantic. The hour is now upon us to remove the kid gloves and bandage the fists. A cursory and superficial exploitation of the rich war potential of our own country but also of the significant areas of Europe that are at our disposal, is no longer acceptable.³⁹¹ (Joseph Goebbels, February 1943)

In his infamous *Sportpalast* speech in February 1943, Minister of Propaganda Josef Goebbels called for all-out war and the handpicked audience responded with frenetic exultation. They cheered at the prospect of exhausting all possibilities to achieve the victory in this decisive war. The calls for a more considerate policy for the sake of the war effort, which had been voiced by numerous appeals and warnings (chapter 3.2.3) a few months earlier, had found considerably less favour. Since victory was long in coming, however, their thoughts and arguments increasingly gained ground. Ultimately, war necessities outweighed all other lines of reasoning, so that the course of the war brought National Socialist Germany back from discretionary post-war planning along *völkisch* and economic lines to the here and now of practical politics. The New Order still played a role, as one means to the end of winning the war.

³⁹¹ Speech by Goebbels in the *Sportpalast*, 18 February 1943, printed in Eichholtz and Schumann, *Anatomie des Krieges*, pp. 421-422.

Germany's defeat in Stalingrad was not a major turning-point in regards to the New Order. The critical voices which had accompanied German occupation policy for years still tried to make themselves heard. They continued to bring forward the same arguments and justified their opposition in the same ways as previously. For "imperative military reasons", the High Command of the Army Group South, for example, called for an occupation policy that was able to "maintain peace and security"³⁹². Riecke demanded a reconsideration because it was "urgently required to conserve and to increase the will to work among the *fremdvölkisch* [alien] rural population."³⁹³ And a certain Zimmermann³⁹⁴ reported a broad agreement on "the thought that the power of Bolshevism can only be broken by the active engagement of the local population."³⁹⁵ However, instead of casting doubt on the validity of the dominant *völkisch* and economic interpretive repertoires, the need for a rethink was regularly passed off as "most valuable assistance to the German war effort"³⁹⁶ that would "shorten the war and spare German blood"³⁹⁷. This line of reasoning gained ground within the discourse as more and more officials reiterated these thoughts and arguments that linked the military prospects of success to the idea of attracting the support of the population in the occupied territories. Governor General Hans Frank, for example, concluded a memorandum in which he argued for a different political course in the General Government, with the pledge: "My *Führer*, please understand my remarks as the vehement desire to bring about an important assistance for the German *Volk* in this hardest time of its struggle for existence."³⁹⁸ Like him, numerous others were now willing to be "more considerate towards the mentalities and wishes of the European *Völker*",³⁹⁹ if that was the price to pay for a German victory. Thus,

³⁹² Guidelines of the High Command of the Army Group South for the treatment of civilians in the area of operations, 17 February 1943, BArch, R 6, 140, pp. 20-24.

³⁹³ Letter by Riecke to the *Vierjahresplanbehörde*, 13 January 1943, BArch, NS 19, 982, pp. 3-5.

³⁹⁴ Even though the respective documents do not contain the first name, it is most likely that Job Zimmermann authored this report. After a restructuring of the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories in November 1942, he became chief press officer. See introduction of BArch, R 90.

³⁹⁵ Zimmermann's supplement to the protocol of a meeting of commanders of the army territories on 18 December 1942, 4 January 1943, BArch, NS 19, 1704, pp. 61-62; Letter by Körner to Bergmann, 20 February 1943, BArch, R 6, 139, pp. 28-31.

³⁹⁶ Rosenberg on two years of German Ukraine policy, 14 May 1943, BArch, R 6, 70, pp. 119-125.

³⁹⁷ Memorandum by von der Milwe-Schroeden, May 1943, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik Sowjetunion*, pp. 422-425; similarly: memorandum of Angelus on German policy in the *Ostland*, 15 March 1943, BArch, R 6, 76, pp. 38-44.

³⁹⁸ Frank's memorandum on the treatment of the Polish *Volkstum*, 19 June 1943, BArch, R 52 II, 12a, pp. 1-23.

³⁹⁹ Note by von Renthe-Fink, 9 September 1943, printed in Hass and Schumann, *Anatomie der Aggression*, pp. 198-203.

German occupation policy – delineated by the discursively hegemonic combination of the *völkisch* and the economic interpretive frame (see chapter 3.2.1 and 3.2.2) – was increasingly considered counterproductive. Instead of ruthlessly exploiting the inferior populations of Europe, taking their wellbeing into account seemed more and more ‘right’ and ‘reasonable’. After all, this approach promised to save valuable German blood by shortening the war.

To dethrone a vision that was not only discursively stabilised by the two dominant interpretive frames, but also deeply rooted in long-standing traditions of German thinking, it needed a powerful alternative. The more the military situation deteriorated, the more power one specific fear wielded over the discourse: the doomsday scenario of losing the war. Its starting-point was a conviction that Hitler shared: “if this war were to be lost, a restoration of Europe would be impossible”, “because the best races of the world would be annihilated at one blow.”⁴⁰⁰ Amidst a war in which both enemies supposedly were bent on exterminating Europe and its uniqueness, this assessment became powerful. Oberländer saw Germany defending the ‘Occident’ (*Abendland*) against the “anti-cultural military machine of Bolshevism”⁴⁰¹ and against the Americans, the other “deadly threat” whose victory would bring “materialism and *völkisch* decomposition”⁴⁰². The *Arbeitswissenschaftliches Institut* shared this fear:

In the fight against plutocracy and Bolshevism, the German *Reich* is the shield bearer of our continent. The fate of the continent depends on its victory; its victory will decide on the principles by which the European *Völker* will live. It is clear what plutocracy and Bolshevism will bring: A plutocratic victory means the rule of trust capital over the European *Völker*; a Bolshevik victory inevitably means the annihilation of European culture.⁴⁰³

Others painted similar pictures of horror scenarios in case of a German defeat. Richard Riedl,⁴⁰⁴ an Austrian diplomat, economic politician, and advocate of European

⁴⁰⁰ Note by Bormann on a meeting between Mussert and Hitler, 9 January 1943, BArch, NS 6, 161, pp. 3-14.

⁴⁰¹ Memorandum of Oberländer on ‘Alliance or Exploitation’, 22 June 1943, printed in ZFI, *Der Osten und die deutsche Wehrmacht*, pp. 120-127.

⁴⁰² Oberländer’s 24 theses on the situation, 15 March 1943, printed in *ibid.*, pp. 107-117.

⁴⁰³ Arbeitswissenschaftliches Institut der Deutschen Arbeitsfront, *Die soziale Neuordnung Europas*, Berlin, 1944, p. 6.

⁴⁰⁴ During the interwar period, Richard Riedl had advocated the idea of the United States of Europe, while he authored memoranda on Eastern Europe and a European economic federation during the war. See chapters 2.1.2, 3.3.3, and B. Riehle, *Eine neue Ordnung der Welt. Föderative Friedenströrien im deutschsprachigen Raum zwischen 1892 und 1932*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009, pp. 92-93.

economic integration, feared the dependence on alien ideologies,⁴⁰⁵ while SS-*Obergruppenführer* Gottlob Berger⁴⁰⁶ and the publications of the SS-*Hauptamt*, which he headed, emphasised the role of Jewry in this attempt to destroy “the entire *abendländische* culture”⁴⁰⁷, “2500 years of cultural unity”, and “*völkisch* self-assertion”.⁴⁰⁸ Less *völkisch* in his tone, but equally sure of the devastating consequences of defeat, Walter Labs, who worked in the main department administration of the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories, saw Europe threatened in its very existence.⁴⁰⁹ Hence, the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle*, a SS-*Hauptamt* since June 1941, virtually put the National Socialist perception of this war into a nutshell when it concluded: “Germany will be victorious together with Europe, or Europe will be annihilated together with Germany.”⁴¹⁰ Thus, the war and its perception in Germany discursively created an all-or-nothing situation: At the end of the war, either Germany and its New Order would be standing tall or Germany and its New Order would be no more. Since this dichotomy also heavily tapped into the *völkisch* interpretive reservoir by translating the current war into a fight between the German *Volk* and Jewry, it knew no middle ground. In this way, the discourse was bound to one means and one conceivable end: The future of Europe could only be the German New Order and there was only one way it could come true: by winning the war.

The unconditional objective of winning the war instituted a new powerful interpretive frame. It provided meaningful thought patterns and arguments that justified an analysis of all aspects of German policy to see if it stood up to close scrutiny from a war-economic angle. Measured by this new discursively established yardstick, the expediency of German occupation policy in the Eastern territories seemed particularly doubtful. A collection of statements gathered by Ernst Köstring, the General leading

⁴⁰⁵ See Riedls memorandum on ‘Ways for a *Entbolschewisierung* [de-bolshevication] and *Entrussung* [de-russification] of the Eastern space’, March 1943, printed in Opitz, *Europastrategien*, 1977, pp. 948-954; Riedl’s memorandum ‘Ways to Europe. Thoughts on an Economic Federation of European States’, 1944, BArch, R 8119 F, 339, pp. 19-67.

⁴⁰⁶ Gottlob Berger was also Himmler’s liaison in the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories and the head of the *Germanische Leitstelle*, which recruited foreign volunteers for the *Waffen-SS*. See Weiß, *Biographisches Lexikon*, pp. 37-38.

⁴⁰⁷ Memorandum ‘On the way to a Germanic *Reich*’, 1944, NS 19, 3987, 161, pp. 1-25.

⁴⁰⁸ SS-*Hauptamt* on the ‘Truth about the Soviet-regime’, 27 July 1944, BArch, NS 31, 419, pp. 17-39.

⁴⁰⁹ See suggestions of Labs, 26 June 1944, printed in Hass and Schumann, *Anatomie der Aggression*, pp. 222-229.

⁴¹⁰ The *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* on clearing deficits and trading cheques, 1 June 1943, RGVA, 1458, 29, 138.

the *Osttruppen*,⁴¹¹ suggested a complete turnaround: the *Reich* should officially renounce its colonial aims to allay the fear of the local population that “their cooperation contributed to the enslavement of their people”,⁴¹² install a committee as the future Russian government, and muster an army of Russians that fought side by side with the *Wehrmacht*. Otherwise, it was illusory to hope for the support of the Russian population.⁴¹³ Rosenberg also expected National Committees and the promise of some autonomy to “bolster the front by creating and deploying native military formations”,⁴¹⁴ and many military commanders believed that a “complete renunciation of previous methods” was “of war-deciding importance”.⁴¹⁵ Others did not go quite as far. The *Wannsee Institut*, a research institution within the foreign intelligence service of the *Reich* Security Main Office (*SD-Ausland*), was in agreement with Riedl when it expected that a “just solution of the agrarian question, which accommodated the desires of the population”,⁴¹⁶ would suffice to win them over. And Goebbels, naturally more concerned with German rhetoric, tried “to spare German blood and to achieve victory”⁴¹⁷ by making German officials aware of a contradiction: “One cannot call the people of the *Ostvölker*, which hoped for their liberation through us, beasts, barbarians etc. and then expect them to take an interest in our victory.”⁴¹⁸ Thus, the necessities of war started to reshape the New Order discourse by fuelling and legitimising considerations of alternative political courses in the East. The voiced thoughts, arguments, and conclusions were far from unanimous, but the wellbeing of the local population started to count for something. Due to the new interpretive frame defined by the war effort, the former Slavic *Untermenschen* had become valuable enough to be worth being won over.

⁴¹¹ The *Osttruppen* consisted of Prisoners of War and volunteers from the occupied Eastern territories. See R. Müller, *An der Seite der Wehrmacht. Hitlers ausländische Helfer beim ‘Kreuzzug gegen den Bolschewismus’ 1941-1945*, Berlin, Links, 2007, p. 215.

⁴¹² Excerpt from the appendix to No. 318/43 geh. General of the *Osttruppen*, 1943, BArch, R 6, 139, pp. 2-4.

⁴¹³ See *ibid.*

⁴¹⁴ Zimmermann’s supplement to the protocol of a meeting of commanders of the army territories on 18 December 1942, 4 January 1943, BArch, NS 19, 1704, pp. 61-62.

⁴¹⁵ Zimmermann’s additional internal report on the protocol of a meeting of commanders of the army territories on 18 December 1942, 8 January 1943, BArch, R 6, 139, pp. 13-14.

⁴¹⁶ Comment of the Wannsee Institut on Riedl’s memorandum on the Russian question, July 1943, BArch, R 58, 237, pp. 1-16.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁸ Goebbels’ directives for the *Reichsleiter*, *Gauleiter*, and *Gaupropagandaleiter*, 15 February 1943, BArch, NS 8, 130, pp. 80-82.

The growing importance of the necessities of war left their mark on the New Order discourse in a second way. It made possible new ways of speaking by separating means and ends. Hans Frank, for example, spelled out this distinction very clearly. He wanted his memorandum on the treatment of the Polish *Volkstum* to be understood solely as a means to foster the war effort:

In my remarks, I have not commented on the long-term objectives which the German leadership will realise after the victorious end of the struggle for existence. However, it seems to me that a lot of harm has been done by trying to realise short-term and long-term objectives either at the same time or without appropriate coordination and without soberly weighing the realistic possibilities.⁴¹⁹

In January 1944, he depicted this differentiation between the current necessities and the prospective German policy even more explicitly:

Once we have won the war, I do not care if mincemeat is made out of the Poles and the Ukrainians and everything that roves about here; it does not matter what happens. However, at this point, the only important thing is that we succeed in keeping almost 15 million people of a *Volk* that is turning against us in peace, order, work, and discipline.⁴²⁰

This distinction between long-term goals and necessary short-term adjustments reverberated in numerous statements. Oberländer, for example, highlighted that his suggestions could be realised without “the frequently feared and undesired final decision on German Eastern policy”.⁴²¹ Riecke’s defence of the privatisation of farmland argued with the “utmost performance for the duration of the war” and the settlement space, which could “always be vacated after the war”.⁴²² Because one had to distinguish “between ideal objectives, which cannot be achieved immediately, and the steps which lead to these ideal objectives”, Martin Bormann, head of the NSDAP Chancellery and as his personal secretary a gatekeeper regulating access to Hitler,⁴²³ wanted to see the occupied territories calmed and treated decently. After all, they should “not keep military forces busy but, on the contrary, contribute to increas-

⁴¹⁹ Frank’s memorandum on the treatment of the Polish *Volkstum*, 19 June 1943, BAArch, R 52 II, 12a, pp. 1-23.

⁴²⁰ Speech by Frank to the leaders of the NSDAP in the district Kraków, 14 January 1944, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Polen*, p. 292.

⁴²¹ Memorandum of Oberländer on ‘Alliance or Exploitation’, 22 June 1943, printed in ZFI, *Der Osten und die deutsche Wehrmacht*, pp. 120-127.

⁴²² Letter by Riecke to Gerhard Klopfer, state secretary in the *Reich* chancellery, 19 July 1943, BAArch, NS 19, 3863, pp. 6-10.

⁴²³ See J. Lang, ‘Martin Bormann - Hitlers Sekretär’, in R. Smelser and R. Zitelmann (ed.), *Die Braune Elite. 22 biographische Skizzen*, Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1989, pp. 1-14.

ing our military potential.”⁴²⁴ And Alfred Frauenfeld, the former General Commissar for Crimea,⁴²⁵ criticised the policy of his superior Erich Koch. He argued that if one had the choice between antagonising the people by politically following one’s true intentions or taking a slight detour that promised positive effects on propaganda and the course of the war, there was no doubt that one had to choose the latter.⁴²⁶ Thus, the war effort made it possible to bring forward arguments against the current German political course without getting a reputation for doubting the valid knowledge and belief systems and the long-term New Order notions they had produced. Anything that promised short-term benefits for the war effort could now be voiced. This focus on the here and now profoundly changed the German New Order discourse. Not only did it increase the discursive value of short-term considerations at the expense of long-term planning but it also opened up new possibilities of speaking about Europe.

These new ways of speaking about Europe also altered the way the future of Europe could be imagined and expressed. Because of the increasing invalidation of long-term considerations, the New Order was no longer on everyone’s lips. And due to the predominance of the war effort paradigm, potentially counter-productive long-term schemes were hardly justifiable anymore, while thoughts and arguments gained ground that transformed the New Order from what was a nightmare for the subjugated peoples into something they could support, or at least live with. While some – Erich Köstring for example – saw the need to counter the “white negroes” theme of Soviet propaganda with a German acknowledgement of the people in the East “as equal part of the European population under self-government”,⁴²⁷ the High Command of Army Group South expected a successful framing of the expectations of the local populations to be a decisive step towards victory.⁴²⁸ Hans Frank argued that “if

⁴²⁴ Letter by Bormann, 10 September 1943, printed in Drechsler, Dress and Hass, ‘Europapläne’, p. 931.

⁴²⁵ Despite his title, he actually only ruled over the hinterland. The planned takeover of the peninsular never took place. H. Umbreit, ‘Die Deutsche Herrschaft in den besetzten Gebieten’, in Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt (ed.), *Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg, Vol. 5.2: Organisation und Mobilisierung des Deutschen Machtbereichs*, Stuttgart, Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1999, pp. 3-272, here p. 40.

⁴²⁶ See Frauenfeld’s memorandum on the problems of the occupied Eastern territories’ administration, 10 February 1944, BArch, NS 19, 1478, pp. 2-38.

⁴²⁷ Excerpt from the appendix to No. 318/43 geh. General of the Osttruppen, 1943, BArch, R 6, 139, pp. 2-4.

⁴²⁸ See guidelines of the High Command of the Army Group South for the treatment of civilians in the area of operations, 17 February 1943, BArch, R 6, 140, pp. 20-24.

the Polish *Volk* is supposed to adopt the war aims of the Axis as its own in the fateful struggle of Europe”, one had to convince them that compared to Russia, “the Germans will apply a bright and better principle for Europe.”⁴²⁹ The diplomat Rudolf Rahn, who represented the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris and Rome, made a similar point. He deemed the promotion of an appealing vision for the future “a political and propagandistic tactic, which would spare blood”. After all, “nice gestures are cheap and can be extremely effective.”⁴³⁰ Melitta Wiedemann, a journalist and editor of the journal *Die Aktion – Kampfblatt für das Neue Europa*, worried that the German “silence on the future shape of the new Europe is interpreted as absolute proof of our ill-will”. Therefore, she demanded, “we now have to seize the idea of *Panuropa* [Pan-European Union], realise it with our means, and guarantee the German lead in a contented Europe.”⁴³¹

Melitta Wiedemann was neither the first nor the only one for whom actions spoke louder than words. In several instances, concrete planning reflected the integrative effects German officials expected from realising an acceptable New Order. One memorandum, for example, demanded the creation of a customs and currency union with semi-autonomous Baltic States.

Regarding foreign affairs and in the interests of a new Europe, this European solution will have tremendous propagandistic effects and appeal; and it will be the foreign policy figure-head of Greater Germany for the North and East. With great immediate effects we can now anticipate the later development, practically demonstrate a part of the new Europe, and at the same time solidify our anti-Bolshevist mission [...].⁴³²

Several other memoranda – mainly originating in the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories – contributed to this reinterpretation of the New Order. They argued for self-administration in Estonia because “it would spare much German blood and demonstrate to the world how the *Reich* practically wants to and does lead the new Europe”,⁴³³ or wanted to declare Estonia’s and Latvia’s independence as an acknowledgement of their merits and “at the same time as an incentive for even greater

⁴²⁹ Frank’s memorandum on the treatment of the Polish *Volkstum*, 19 June 1943, BArch, R 52 II, 12a, pp. 1-23.

⁴³⁰ Notes of Rahn, 19 August 1943, printed in Hass and Schumann, *Anatomie der Aggression*, pp. 191-195.

⁴³¹ Letter by Wiedemann to Koherr, 5 October 1943, printed in Neulen, *Europa und das 3. Reich*, pp. 137-141.

⁴³² Memorandum on the integration of the former Baltic States into the New Europe, 6 January 1943, BArch, R 90, 10, unnumbered.

⁴³³ Memorandum on German policy in Estonia, 15 June 1943, BArch, R 6, 76, pp. 38-44.

dedication to the common struggle against Bolshevism.”⁴³⁴ However, Bräutigam added, generosity was crucial in this context. If German attempts fell short, they would neither mobilise additional potential for the war effort, nor send a signal. They would only be interpreted “as a tactical concession, as weakness”.⁴³⁵ Thus, the interpretive repertoire that the war effort offered reshaped the German discourse on the future of Europe. The New Order was not freed of its roots in the *völkisch* interpretive frame entirely – as the focus on the Baltic States, which were considered relatively racially sound (see chapter 3.2.1), reveals –, but it was now increasingly tailored to its anticipated perception. Europe-to-be was now considered ‘right’ and ‘sensible’ if it promised to shorten the war by attracting support.

In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, similar considerations led Ribbentrop and Cécil von Renthe-Fink – former Plenipotentiary in Denmark and 1943/44 envoy in Vichy France – to develop the idea of proclaiming a European federation after the next major military victory. Apart from allaying fears among allies and neutrals, the prospect of a united Europe would also weaken the combat power of the United States and Russia, while facilitating the recruiting of volunteers.⁴³⁶ Hence, this European federation would help to mobilise all “European forces as much as possible for our victory and create a situation that disencumbers us internally and strengthens us externally”⁴³⁷ without barring the way to a “Greater Germanic *Reich* at the end of the war”⁴³⁸. However, these thoughts faced a fundamental dilemma: a New Order that cemented the German hegemony could hardly be passed off as a fair one. Thus, the only prospect that could be offered was “that every *Volk* would have its due status in Europe-to-be”.⁴³⁹ Thus, New Order planning in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs not only exhibits all aspects of the changes the discourse underwent after 1943 it also reveals the discursive constraints that still limited what could be said about Europe.

⁴³⁴ Draft for a *Führer* decree on the creation of the independent states of Estonia and Latvia, 30 September 1943, BArch, R 6, 67, pp. 38-51.

⁴³⁵ Note by Bräutigam, 4 October 1943, BArch, R 6, 67, pp. 54-56.

⁴³⁶ See note by Ribbentrop on a European federation, 21 March 1943, printed in Neulen, *Europa und das 3. Reich*, pp. 106-110.

⁴³⁷ Note by Renthe-Fink, 9 September 1943, printed in Hass and Schumann, *Anatomie der Aggression*, pp. 198-203.

⁴³⁸ Note by Ribbentrop on a European federation, 21 March 1943, printed in Neulen, *Europa und das 3. Reich*, pp. 106-110.

⁴³⁹ Ribbentrop’s guidelines for the work of the Europe committee, 5 April 1943, printed in Opitz, *Europastrategien*, pp. 954-956.

The German claim to leadership and the *völkisch* interpretive frame still made it impossible to promote Europe as union of free and equal nations.

However, all these discursive developments met prominent opposition by a different line of reasoning. It also took its arguments and thoughts from the interpretive frame that the war effort had endowed with meaning, but arrived at different conclusions. For the time being, Hitler, for example, considered promises useless, as even “the best declaration would fail to win over the population and would not force them to see reason”⁴⁴⁰. At the moment, one could not even win over the Germanic *Völker* due to the war. Therefore, it would be misguided to be considerate, just as it would be wrong to proclaim the “United States of Europe” as a “New Order manoeuvre”.⁴⁴¹ Göring adopted this stance as his own and spread the word:

It is a fundamental mistake to assume that we would be able to win over the population by treating them leniently. We cannot win the population over for the aims of the reorganisation of Europe before the end of the war.⁴⁴²

Both clung to the idea that the “aim of our fighting has to remain the creation of a unified Europe” and that “Europe [...] can only be clearly organised by the Germans”,⁴⁴³ but they deemed it impossible to reconcile German short-term needs with its long-term aims. Therefore, the current credo had to be that

all measures have to be seen from the perspective of bearing the burden of war. Every step that ensures easing this burden is right, and every step that endangers an easement is wrong.⁴⁴⁴

Thus, the war effort had gained a hegemonic position in the German discourse on Europe. All German officials shared the common ground of winning the war. However, this rationale allowed for a broad spectrum of arguments and thoughts. And despite the efforts of Hitler and Göring to seize the interpretational sovereignty over what was ‘useless’, ‘misguided’, ‘wrong’, or a ‘mistake’, the discursive mainstream

⁴⁴⁰ Note by Bormann of a meeting between Mussert and Hitler, 9 January 1943, BArch, NS 6, 161, pp. 3-14.

⁴⁴¹ Record of a meeting on measures for total war in the occupied territories, 28 April 1943, RGVA, 700, 1, 78.

⁴⁴² Protocol of a meeting with representatives of occupation authorities, 28 April 1943, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Frankreich*, pp. 266-267. This could be the same document as above, but my notes on both show no overlaps.

⁴⁴³ Remarks of Hitler quoted in Goebbels’ diary, 8 May 1943, printed in R. Reuth, *Joseph Goebbels. Tagebücher 1924-1945*, Munich, Piper, 1992, p. 1929.

⁴⁴⁴ Protocol by Bormann on Hitler’s comment on the quarrel between Rosenberg and Koch, 10 June 1943, BArch, R 58, 1005, pp. 9-16.

established a different 'truth'. It stipulated that the support of the subjugated people might help to win the war, so that attempts at winning them over were 'sensible' and 'right'.

Overall, the 'truth' that winning over the local population would improve the military prospects of success, which the appeals and warnings had constructed already before 1943 (see chapter 3.2.3), started to change the German discourse on Europe profoundly. Together with and reinforced by the all-or-nothing dichotomy between victory or doom that increasingly gained ground, it gave additional meaning to thoughts and arguments that favoured a more considerate course, while it discarded the complete disregard of the local populations, which the pursuit of the established *völkisch* and economic long-term objectives entailed. By separating short-term necessities and long-term objectives, which the previously dominant vision of a New Order had promised to reconcile, this reconfiguration of the discourse was additionally facilitated. In this way, it became possible not only to criticise the current German occupation policies in Europe but also to advocate New Order concepts that offered a brighter future to the subjugated people; even if they had earlier been classified as racially inferior *Untermenschen*. Arguments and thought patterns that previously would have counted as challenges of the established knowledge and belief system could now be brought forward as long as they claimed to serve the war effort. Nevertheless, the discourse on Europe and its future was still subject to restrictions. The German claim to European leadership and the *völkisch* truth of the inequality of races could still not be defied. Hitler's and Göring's attempts to set the definitions for what was 'right' and 'wrong' with respect to the war effort, however, did not prove binding within the discourse.⁴⁴⁵ Both refused to rely on the diffuse hope that loosening the reins might make Europe see reason. In their eyes, Europe had to be forged into the desired war-economic block by force.

⁴⁴⁵ Hitler's futile attempts to prohibit all post-war planning also indicate the limited influence of high ranking officials on the discourse. See Boelcke, 'Europäische Wirtschaftspolitik', p. 229; Herbst, *Ordnung der Wirtschaft*, pp. 179, 389.

3.3.2 Carrots and Sticks – Europeanising the War Economy

In the context of the tasks assigned to the planning office, it is necessary to focus to a greater degree than before on the entire economic area available to us. Where *Großraum* planning promises war-economic benefits, the planning has to be expanded from the *Reich* territory to the German sphere of influence to the economic spheres of our allies as well as of neutral states. The limits and the sequence of this expansion is determined by their value for the achievement of victory. There is no room for any planning that does not bring us closer to victory.⁴⁴⁶ (Hans Kehrl, December 1943)

Three and a half years after Schlotterer had called for an expansion of National Socialist economic principles concerning Germany's sphere of influence (see chapter 3.1.2), Kehrl – now head of the Planning and Raw Materials Office in the Ministry for Armaments and War Production – reiterated the demand. At the end of the year 1943, he and other German officials were dissatisfied with the functioning of the *Großraumwirtschaft*. However, given the appraisal of the war (see chapter 3.3.1) and the deteriorating military situation, intensifying European economic cooperation had discursively been translated into a matter of survival. This reorientation towards the short-term necessities of the war allowed for two different lines of reasoning: For the war effort's sake, one could either speak out for concessions to the subjugated peoples that promised voluntary cooperation, or one could call for an even more uncompromising course that was meant to force Europe into compliance.

The war, which was allegedly fought for the very existence of Germany, Europe, and the Aryan race, reinforced the point of leaving no stone unturned in order to achieve victory. Unlocking the war-economic potential of Europe, however, was a stone not far to seek. Within the German discourse on Europe, economic cooperation had always figured as a means to turn Europe into a global power that would be capable of standing up to any other *Großraum* (see chapter 2 and 3.1.2). Accordingly, German officials not only advocated streamlining the entire German economy but also spoke out in favour of roping in the European economies for war. In February 1943, Goebbels, for example, instructed leading officials accordingly:

For victory, we not only have to mobilise all somehow available forces of the German *Volk* but also those of the *Völker* that inhabit the countries we have occupied and conquered in the

⁴⁴⁶ Circular by Kehrl, 6 December 1943, BArch, R 3, 1975, pp. 2-6.

course of the war. All forces of the European continent, particularly those of the Eastern *Völker*, have to be employed in the fight against Jewish-Bolshevism.⁴⁴⁷

He was not the only one who turned to Europe as a last resort. The *Reichsbank* pointed out that “the *Reich* depends on utilising the economies of the European countries as much as possible to meet the war requirements.”⁴⁴⁸ The planning office (*Planungsamt*) in the Ministry of Armament and War Production emphasised that, given Allied military pressure, it was crucial “to obtain all somehow available goods from occupied and allied countries.”⁴⁴⁹ Despite the new heights in armaments output, which Albert Speer, Minister of Armament and War Production, repeatedly proclaimed,⁴⁵⁰ the *Hauptabteilung* III in the Ministry of Economics demanded further increases. Apart from other measures, it recommended the complete exhaustion of all reserves that still existed in the occupied territories.⁴⁵¹ Thus, the long-standing discursive link between European power and economic cooperation now came fully into its own. Germany faced a war-economic problem, the economic superiority of its enemies, and in search for a solution, it resorted to existing knowledge and belief systems. Apart from being a discursively established long-term objective, the alignment of the European economies in a *Großraumwirtschaft* now also figured as a pressing short-term necessity within the German discourse on Europe.

However, the *Großraumwirtschaft* still left a lot to be desired. A look around Europe left some National Socialist officials disillusioned. According to Hitler, the occupied territories had not yet realised the gravity of the situation.⁴⁵² With regard to the Southeastern states, the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* underlined this view. There still were

governments that would not be in power anymore if it were not for the *Reich*, but which have mobilised merely a fraction of the production of their countries. Governments which either out of a lack of will or humble capabilities, abstain from sparing no effort to help feed and supply

⁴⁴⁷ Circular by Goebbels to the *Reichsleiter*, *Gauleiter*, and *Gaupropagandaleiter*, 15 February 1943, BArch, NS 8, 130, pp. 80-82.

⁴⁴⁸ The economic department of the *Reichsbank* on economic problems in the occupied territories, 15 May 1944, BArch, R 2501, 7012, pp. 135-148.

⁴⁴⁹ Report by the *Planungsamt* on the economic situation 1943/44, 12 July 1944, BArch, R 3101, 33.640, pp. 10-15.

⁴⁵⁰ Speer's figures were massaged though. See R. Müller, *Der Manager der Kriegswirtschaft. Hans Kehrl: Ein Unternehmer in der Politik des 'Dritten Reiches'*, Essen, Klartext, 1999, p. 144; Tooze, *Ökonomie der Zerstörung*, pp. 634-676.

⁴⁵¹ See note on a meeting of the department heads and the heads of division of the *Hauptabteilung* III, 29 July 1944, BArch, R 3101, 33.011, pp. 17-18.

⁴⁵² See record of a meeting on measures for total war in the occupied territories, 28 April 1943, RGVA, 700, 1, 78.

Europe's central home front, namely Germany's, Europe's most diligent workers, namely Germany's, the *Volk* that paid the highest price in blood in Europe, namely the Germany's [...].⁴⁵³

The *Planungsstab Europa* (planning staff Europe) in the Ministry of Armaments and War Production, newly created to advance Europe-wide economic planning and headed by Arnold Köster, arrived at the same conclusion, but found that Germany had to take at least part of the blame:

In the occupied territories, an active willingness to aid Germany in its fight for the freedom of Europe exists only on a very limited scale. This observation shows that Germany has not managed to lead the occupied territories in the sense of a European economic order but has, with more or less skill or success, administered them as an occupation force! [...] Germany has not been able to unite the European states in a war-economic fighting community in accordance with the tough necessities of war.⁴⁵⁴

Hence, Arnold Köster spoke for many National Socialist officials when he took the view that "Germany still bore the brunt of the war" while one could observe "an almost peacetime life and a peacetime economy in other European countries."⁴⁵⁵

There was another side to this coin though: The lack of mobilisation of the European economies offered enormous potential, which many National Socialist officials were determined to put into the service of the German war effort. Convinced that many occupied *Völker* still enjoyed a carefree life, Hitler intended to let them feel the hardships of the war by squeezing out more workers and deliveries.⁴⁵⁶ Kehrl was also convinced that there were plenty of goods; they just trickled out into the hidden economy. Accordingly, he called on the *Reichsbeauftragte* to move in on the existing black markets that were seen as a decisive hindrance to "sustainably utilising the occupied countries' economies".⁴⁵⁷ And Fritz Sauckel, appointed General Plenipotentiary for Labour Deployment in March 1942, demanded that "the European *Völker* have to provide manpower for the Reich", to the degree that Germany sent soldiers

⁴⁵³ The *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* on clearing deficits and trading cheques, 1 June 1943, RGVA, 1458, 29, 138.

⁴⁵⁴ Memorandum on European economic planning, 13 September 1943, BArch, R 3, 1941, pp. 181-187.

⁴⁵⁵ Kehrl's manuscript for the *Europakränzchen*, 16 December 1943, BArch, R 3, 1940, pp. 173-177.

⁴⁵⁶ See protocol of a meeting with representatives of occupation authorities, 28 April 1943, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Frankreich*, pp. 266-267.

⁴⁵⁷ Letter by Kehrl on rationing and fighting black markets, 22 June 1943, BArch, R 3101, 32.294, pp. 139-140.

into “Europe’s struggle for freedom”.⁴⁵⁸ After a journey through the occupied Western territories, a certain Bauer also highlighted the existence of “considerable free capacities” and the widespread “willingness to take on German contracts”,⁴⁵⁹ which the *Hauptabteilung* III in the Ministry of Economics’ was eager to use by generally increasing the outsourcing of German production.⁴⁶⁰ Thus, the perception became established that Europe did not yet live up to its potential and could do much more to satisfy the war economy’s insatiable hunger for workers, goods, and money. However, the different appraisals of who had to answer for this shortcoming of the *Großraumwirtschaft* were crucial because they constituted a discursive watershed: if one blamed the unwillingness of the respective country for the refusal to take part in this allegedly decisive struggle, force seemed a viable and ‘sensible’ option to increase ‘cooperation’. If one ascribed the insufficient mobilisation of the European economies to German failures, organisational improvements and suitable incentives suggested themselves as remedies.

For Speer, the necessary Europeanization of the war economy was a matter of coordination and organisation. Being in charge of “exhausting all possibilities to increase armaments capacities in the occupied countries”, he pinned his hopes on standardisation, simplifying administration, and streamlining. In the case of France, he was confident of having created “the organisational preconditions for an exhaustive and systematic utilisation of the war-relevant capacities” by attuning the French to the German economy and by integrating France into a “European overall planning”.⁴⁶¹ In a memorandum on European economic planning, by contrast, the author – probably Arnold Köster – lamented that an “organisation for practical European economic planning does not exist yet, just as a European economic policy is missing.”⁴⁶² However,

⁴⁵⁸ Protocol of a meeting, 13 July 1943, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik Sowjetunion*, pp. 460-463.

⁴⁵⁹ Report on a journey to France, Belgium, and the Netherlands, 15 January 1944, RGVA, 1458, 29, 28.

⁴⁶⁰ See note on a meeting of the department heads and the heads of division of the *Hauptabteilung* III, 7 June 1944, BArch, R 3101, 33.011, p. 31.

⁴⁶¹ Letter by Speer concerning the war-economic utilisation of France, 1 June 1943, RGVA, 1458, 29, 24.

⁴⁶² Remarks on European economic planning, undated, BArch, R 3, 1941, pp. 194-196. This document precedents other texts in the otherwise chronologically ordered file. Furthermore, a later memorandum on European economic planning, which was – according to Roth – written by Köster, picks up several formulations and thoughts of this text. Thus, it seems safe to assume that these remarks originated in the late summer of 1943, and were probably also authored by Köster. See K. Roth,

[the] mobilisation of the economic powers calls for European economic planning under German leadership!

The willingness of the European states (occupied, allied, and neutral countries) to make major sacrifices for the common struggle for existence can only be achieved by drawing on all loyal and well-meaning forces and by a planning that also takes into account non-German concerns.⁴⁶³

For both purposes, the planning office in the Ministry of Armaments and War Production created a '*Planungsstab Europa*'. By manning it with German officials and foreign figures, Köster hoped to get suggestions on how to better utilise the respective countries in the "overall interest of Europe", hints where hidden synergies could lie, and promotional effects for the idea of a "European economic community".⁴⁶⁴ Kehrl's intention to cash in on the war-economic benefits that the German sphere of influence offered found its expression in the creation of a *Europakränzchen*.⁴⁶⁵ Consisting of the staff of the planning office and German industrialists, this informal committee was supposed to be a platform for socialising and an international exchange of ideas which promised to foster cooperation in the medium-term and ultimately to lead to "common planning for war and peace" in the long run.⁴⁶⁶ Thus, the leading officials in the Ministry of Armaments and War Production exemplify one line of reasoning that the discourse on Europe produced under the growing pressure of the war effort. It subscribed to the short-term horizon established by the dichotomy of victory or doom and expected organisational improvement and thoughtfulness to yield the desired effects.

A second line of reasoning declared Europe's meagre contribution to the war effort a matter of trade policy. By abolishing most trade barriers, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories intended to increase the flow of goods and to make trade more efficient.⁴⁶⁷ Additionally backed by the Ministry of Nutrition and Agriculture, the Ministry of Economics, and Göring, Ludwig Imhoff, an un-

'Wirtschaftliche Vorbereitungen auf das Kriegsende und Nachkriegsplanungen', in D. Eichholtz et al. (eds.), *Geschichte der deutschen Kriegswirtschaft 1939-1945. Band III: 1943-1945*, Berlin, Akademie-Verlag, 1996, pp. 509-611, here p. 525.

⁴⁶³ Köster's memorandum on European economic planning, 13 September 1943, BArch, R 3, 1941, pp. 181-187.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁵ See circular by Kehrl, 6 December 1943, BArch, R 3, 1975, pp. 2-6.

⁴⁶⁶ See Kehrl's manuscript for the *Europakränzchen*, 16 December 1943, BArch, R 3, 1940, pp. 173-177.

⁴⁶⁷ See Schmerling's note on a talk with Ter Nedden, 29 January 1943, BArch, R 3, 3262, unnumbered.

dersecretary in the Ministry of Economics, revived his plans for optimising European tariffs in December 1943. Explicitly picking up the ideas of a memorandum from September 1941,⁴⁶⁸ he advocated reforms that were supposed to

bring about a preferably unimpeded exchange of the respective products; they serve the purpose of mobilising and pooling the economic forces of Europe and therefore are war-relevant; The expectation that these measures – particularly the preferential tariffs – will have a positive effect in the post-war period does not change this.⁴⁶⁹

However, a certain Wucher, whom the *Reich* Chancellery had consulted in this matter, denied Imhoff's claim to war-relevance outright. In his eyes, post-war planning was inappropriate at the moment and nothing was hampering German trade.⁴⁷⁰

Given that Germany's staggering clearing deficits evolved into a major obstacle to intensifying trade, others did not subscribe to this appraisal. Slovakia, for example, refused to take on contracts as long as they were to be paid in *Reichsmark*. Since political reasons obstructed one possible solution to this problem, the creation of a customs and currency union,⁴⁷¹ the Ministry of Economics saw two alternatives remaining: One could either sell shares in German companies to Slovakia, or do without the country's exports.⁴⁷² For the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle*, this reluctance was a matter of trust. For this reason, "faith in Adolf Hitler has to be transferred bit by bit even to the small producers."⁴⁷³ Concretely, the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* proposed substituting cash payments with vouchers. With the help of "colourfully illustrated catalogues", these promises for the future would inspire the producers with the confidence that working for Germany paid off. In this way, these coupons would become a "weapon of the European home front".⁴⁷⁴ Kehrl also blamed the waning faith in Germany's victory for the growing reluctance of sovereign states to supply their exports on credit. On the one hand, he wanted to increase German creditworthiness by

⁴⁶⁸ See memorandum on ways to a European cooperation in the field of tariffs, September 1941, RGVA, 1458, 29, 40.

⁴⁶⁹ Imhoff on the cooperation of the European states in the field of tariffs, 17 December 1943, BArch, R 2, 10382.

⁴⁷⁰ See letter by Wucher to Brack concerning the relevance of a cooperation of European countries in the field of tariffs, 19 February 1944, BArch, R 2, 10382.

⁴⁷¹ The *Reichsbank* arrived at the same conclusion. See H. James, 'Post-War German Currency Plans', in C. Buchheim, M. Hutter and H. James, Harold (eds.), *Zerissene Zwischenkriegszeit. Wirtschaftshistorische Beiträge*, Baden-Baden, Nomos, 1994, pp. 205-218, here pp. 215-217.

⁴⁷² See notes on a meeting in the Ministry of Economics, 27 May 1943, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Österreich und der Tschechoslowakei*, p. 214.

⁴⁷³ The *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* on clearing deficits and trading cheques, 1 June 1943, RGVA, 1458, 29, 138.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid.

redefining the clearing deficit. It was “not a German, but a European debt”, as the war was “not fought solely for Germany, but for all European states”⁴⁷⁵. However, since there was no way around paying allied and neutral states in foreign currency, on the other hand, he promoted the idea of selling the shares of German companies abroad. Apart from generating convertible currency, this measure would increase the buyers’ interest in and support for Germany.⁴⁷⁶ The *Reichsbank*, however, saw intra-European trade hamstrung by an unsolvable problem:

The fundamental reasons for the economic difficulties in the occupied territories are the result of the European countries being largely cut off from their natural foreign trade relations, while being very intensively harnessed by Germany for the sake of strengthening its war potential. Hence, major tensions of the supply situation necessarily arose. As long as these causes cannot be remedied, one cannot expect a fundamental improvement.⁴⁷⁷

Despite this pessimistic diagnosis, the *Reichsbank* saw no cause for concern. The deliveries of the occupied countries had increased every year and they still would if one kept carrying on as before.⁴⁷⁸ Thus, the well-established economic interpretative frame still shaped the way German officials spoke about Europe. Barriers to its internal trade, had been identified as a crucial problem decades ago. Now, overcoming them posed the same challenges – customs issues and monetary questions – but became increasingly pressing. The traditional concept of a European customs and currency union served as a theoretical benchmark when the clearing system, established as a panacea in 1940, was problematised as a two-edged sword: it allowed more exploitation the less autonomy a territory enjoyed,⁴⁷⁹ but linked the willingness to export to the confidence in a German victory. Hence, in the discourse, short-term necessity and the long-term objective of creating a functioning European *Großraumwirtschaft* now depended on the support of the other European nations.

The same thought pattern becomes apparent in statements about the insufficient output of the European economies. After all, before Germany could get its hands on goods, they had to be produced. In this respect, many officials blamed German oc-

⁴⁷⁵ Kehrl’s manuscript for the *Europakränzchen*, 16 December 1943, BArch, R 3, 1940, pp. 173-177.

⁴⁷⁶ See *ibid.*

⁴⁷⁷ The economic department of the *Reichsbank* on economic problems in the occupied territories, 15 May 1944, BArch, R 2501, 7012, pp. 135-148.

⁴⁷⁸ See *ibid.*

⁴⁷⁹ McElligott demonstrates that the Southeastern states successfully defied German demands. See A. McElligott, ‘Reforging Mitteleuropa in the Crucible of War. The Economic Impact of Integration under German Hegemony’, in P. Stirk (ed.), *Mitteleuropa. History and Prospects*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1994, pp. 129-159, here p. 141.

cupation policy for having contributed to a lower economic output than was possible, particularly in the Eastern territories. While Germany increasingly depended on the support of the local population, German policy undermined its cooperativeness, instead of inciting the “will to work and productivity”.⁴⁸⁰ Oberländer brought forward similar arguments and criticised German shortsightedness in Ukraine: Even though “the New Europe cannot be established without the voluntary cooperation of the Slavs”,⁴⁸¹ he argued that Koch was attempting to “degenerate a European *Volk* forcefully”, and the “boundless settlement plans” thwarted “the achievement of war-relevant short-term objectives”⁴⁸² because they “give rise to partisans and cost blood”⁴⁸³. In the words of Rosenberg this line of reasoning sounded even more pragmatic:

If the political interest of the German *Volk* commandingly calls for an activation of the potential that lies idle in the Ukrainian *Volk*, and for roping them in for the shortening of the war and the safeguarding of the leading position of the *Reich* in the new Europe, then strengthening the Ukrainian *Volk* has to be promoted by all means up to the desired degree.⁴⁸⁴

In a letter to *SS-Obergruppenführer* Kaltenbrunner, since January 1943 head of *Reich* Security Main Office, Hans Frank expressed a similar thought with regard to the General Government. If the “interests of the Greater German *Reich*” called for it, he was willing to pursue a “productive policy towards the Polish *Volksgruppe*; that is a policy that mobilises them, preferably, entirely for our tasks and causes.”⁴⁸⁵ When commenting on Frank’s suggestions to Himmler, Kaltenbrunner partly sided with this standpoint. He spoke out in favour of a “firm but fair” policy which refrained from defamatory propaganda and victimisation and kept the long-term objectives in mind.⁴⁸⁶ In this sense, the economic interpretive frame gave additional meaning to the thoughts and arguments that the critics of the German occupation policy in East had voiced since 1941. With respect to the war effort and the functioning of the *Groß-*

⁴⁸⁰ Letter by Körner to Bergmann, 20 February 1943, BArch, R 6, 139, pp. 28-31. See also guidelines of the High Command of the Army Group South for the treatment of civilians in the area of operations, 17 February 1943, BArch, R 6, 140, pp. 20-24.

⁴⁸¹ Oberländer’s 24 theses on the situation, 15 March 1943, printed in ZFI, *Der Osten und die deutsche Wehrmacht*, pp. 107-117.

⁴⁸² Memorandum of Oberländer on ‘Alliance or Exploitation’, 22 June 1943, printed in *ibid.*, pp. 120-127.

⁴⁸³ Oberländer’s 24 theses on the situation, 15 March 1943, printed in *ibid.*, pp. 107-117.

⁴⁸⁴ Rosenberg on two years of German Ukraine policy, 14 May 1943, BArch, R 6, 70, pp. 119-125.

⁴⁸⁵ Letter by Frank to Kaltenbrunner concerning policy in the General Government, 14 August 1944, BArch, R 52 II, 12a, pp. 24-33.

⁴⁸⁶ See Kaltenbrunner’s comment on Frank’s suggestions for a new policy in the General Government, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Polen*, pp. 321-322.

raumwirtschaft, the policy of ruthlessness, particularly in the East, seemed even more 'wrong', 'unreasonable', and self-defeating.

In this way, the war effort now underscored the criticisms that had accompanied German occupation policy in the East from the outset (see chapter 3.2.3). Consequently, the calls for reforms grew louder within the discourse. They were voiced in different variations, with slightly differing emphases, but with growing vehemence. There was hardly a memorandum, note, or letter that did not stress the importance of pushing on with agrarian reforms and privatisation and of improving the lot of the local population and Eastern workers.⁴⁸⁷ Without rectifying the nutrition and the legal security of the people, higher outputs were deemed illusory. Additionally, German social and cultural policy fanned fears, as the *Wirtschaftsstab Ost* explained:

the fatal phrase of the 'white negro' can be heard even from simple peasants. As a consequence of the lacking political vision, all German measures that have a burdening effect on the individual are interpreted by the population in the context of a colonial idea.⁴⁸⁸

One of these measures was the German practice of simply rounding up people and deporting them in order to fill the gaps drafted Germans had left in factories and on farms. While the High Command of Army Group A suggested putting the entire process on a voluntary or at least legal basis, Rosenberg condoned the necessary violence to achieve the set quotas, but wanted the Eastern workers to be treated in a manner that created "a feeling of security".⁴⁸⁹ Gottlob Berger argued analogously because "the German *Reich* will be reliant upon the cooperation of the inhabitants of these territories later on" and if they came back "with the utmost esteem for Germany and the German nature", they would "willingly work for us and will become propagandists of our cause".⁴⁹⁰ A certain Härlin promoted a similar idea. When he ad-

⁴⁸⁷ See e.g. letter by Körner to Bergmann, 20 February 1943, BArch, R 6, 139, pp. 28-31; Letter by Riecke to Klopfer, 19 July 1943, BArch, NS 19, 3863, pp. 6-10; special order on the treatment of the civilian population, 26 February 1943, BArch, R 6, 140, pp. 39-41; the High Command of the Army Group Middle on the treatment of the civilian population, 14 March 1943, BArch, R 6, 140, pp. 47-48; note by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Germany's policy in the East, 14 January 1943, BArch, NS 19, 3758, pp. 6-10; memorandum on the integration of the former Baltic States into the New Europe, 6 January 1943, BArch, R 90, 10, unnumbered.

⁴⁸⁸ Monthly report by the *Wirtschaftsstab Ost* on the economic situation, 19 February 1943, BArch, R 3101, 15335, pp. 2-33.

⁴⁸⁹ Rosenberg's circular concerning the recruitment of workers, 15 August 1943, BArch, R 6, 140, p. 91. The suggested legal basis would have been an official obligation to work. See guidelines of the High Command of the Army Group South for the treatment of civilians in the area of operations, 17 February 1943, BArch, R 6, 140, pp. 20-24.

⁴⁹⁰ Letter by Berger to the Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, 14 March 1944, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik Sowjetunion*, pp. 541-542.

addressed the executive officers of a tank army, he pointed out that the behaviour of the occupation forces was an essential part of integrating the Southeastern states into “the common efforts of the European defensive war”:⁴⁹¹

The reorganisation of Europe, for which we fight, [...] starts with us, starts with the German *Wehrmacht*, which is the primary representative of the *Reich* everywhere. We have to set an example of the New Order in a way that it seems desirable. How can we demand that they believe in the new Europe, that they take a stand for it, and that they vigorously embrace it, if we do not demonstrate it to them, if we do not succeed in showing them its principles, its style quite plainly by virtue of our conviction and our faith?⁴⁹²

Thus, the ‘usual suspects’ kept calling for a change in German occupation policy in order to activate the people’s will to work. However, under the pressure of an increasingly threatening war, more and more voices joined this chorus, so that their thoughts and arguments entrenched themselves firmly in German discourse on Europe. In this line of reasoning, the possibility of gaining war-economic benefits outweighed *völkisch* objections and made a policy based on incentives ‘sensible’.

However, the carrot was not the means of choice of all National Socialist officials. Some decided in favour of the stick. For Ernst Leyser, Commissioner General of the district Zhytomyr, for example, there was no alternative to “utmost rigidity” because Germany simply was not able to pacify the occupied territories through higher rations.⁴⁹³ Hitler’s line of argument exhibited a similar rationale. He declared that a more considerate policy and the hopes pinned on such a rethink were “foolish and unrealistic”. Without drastic measures,

every possibility to muster workers for the *Reich* would cease, every export of foodstuffs to the *Reich* would cease as well as any enforced delivery quota. On the other hand, we have to be aware that force is the only way to get deliveries because we cannot offer goods in return, as we do not produce commodities like that anymore. [...] We are subject to the harsh principle of war; this principle demands that we get foodstuffs and labour out of the Ukraine. Only puny generals can believe that we could win workers with nice phrases.⁴⁹⁴

⁴⁹¹ Talk by Härlin to executive officers of a tank army, 20 October 1943, BAArch, R 3, 3262, unnumbered.

⁴⁹² See *ibid.*

⁴⁹³ Letter by Leyser to Rosenberg, 12 February 1943, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik Sowjetunion*, pp. 387-389.

⁴⁹⁴ Protocol by Bormann on Hitler’s comment on the quarrel between Rosenberg and Koch, 10 June 1943, BAArch, R 58, 1005, pp. 9-16.

In his eyes, the harsh principle of war had stretched the German *Volk* to the limit and, after all, “we do not want to treat the Ukrainians better than our own *Volk*.”⁴⁹⁵ Koch’s opposition to a more considerate policy was particularly directed at new guidelines, which were to improve the treatment of Eastern Workers. For him, the NSDAP was “still the leading order of the German *Volk*”. Therefore, nobody could expect it to “treat the *Fremdvölkischen* [members of an alien race] courteously”.⁴⁹⁶ Thus, the war effort also provided a different set of arguments and thoughts that translated into forcing Europe into living up to the war-economic requirements by an even harsher treatment of the subjugated people. In this line of reasoning, Germany could not afford to show any material or verbal good will. In the *völkisch* knowledge and belief system, concessions were uncalled-for anyway.

The growing dominance of the war effort in the German discourse on Europe also made itself felt at home. A few years ago, Europe was, as “Germany’s front yard”⁴⁹⁷ (see chapter. 3.1.2), at the disposal of private companies. Now, German businesses were called upon to abandon all concerns about post-war competition or competitive advantages. Addressing the self-administration of German businesses, Walther Schieber, deputy to Speer in the Ministry of Armaments and War Production, denounced “egoistic aims or post-war intentions” and promised to take actions against that kind of behaviour, but to reward selfless engagement.⁴⁹⁸ Kehrl also prioritised war-economic benefits over concerns about potential future competition,⁴⁹⁹ but it was Köster who formulated this demand the plainest:

The reluctance that our industry imposes on itself towards other countries with regard to potential competition in peacetime, has to be broken. By handing over inventions, experiences, and licences, productive forces have to be encouraged and developed [...]. Generally, the objective has to be to do our utmost to promote the economic interlocking of the *Reich* and other continental countries – for example through shareholding – as well as between third countries because the reciprocity of cooperation will result in a higher output.⁵⁰⁰

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁶ Letter by Koch to Bormann, 23 September 1944, BArch, R 55, 21347, pp. 1-5.

⁴⁹⁷ Note on a speech by Schlotterer, 29 July 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 8.

⁴⁹⁸ Talk by Schieber at a meeting of the *Ausschüsse* and *Ringe*, 5 July 1943, RGVA, 1458, 29, 24.

⁴⁹⁹ Note on Kehrl’s remarks, 8 November 1943, BArch, R 13 VI, 55, unnumbered; See also E. Dickert, *Die ‘Nutzbarmachung’ des Produktionspotentials besetzter Gebiete durch Auftragsverlagerungen im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, Trondheim, PhD Thesis, 2014, p. 131.

⁵⁰⁰ Köster’s proposal for the mobilisation of the European economic capacities, 19 September 1943, BArch, R 3, 1941, pp. 188-193.

In this way, the dominance of the war effort in the German discourse on Europe also affected German private business. Its short-term horizon and its unconditionality ran contrary to the long-term hopes and wishes they had pinned on the New Order (see chapter 3.1.3). This contradiction undermined their arguments and thoughts, silenced them in the discourse, and turned them into a hindrance to a powerful *Großwirtschaftsraum* that had to be forced to compliance.

Overall, German discourse on Europe was increasingly dominated by thought patterns and arguments that were rooted in the war-economic interpretive frame. Instead of revolving around an ever more distant Europe-to-be, statements on Europe increasingly exhibit a focus on the here and now and the unconditional objective of winning the war (see chapter 3.3.1). European economic cooperation had figured as a promise of power within the discourse for decades, before it was specified in the idea of a *Großwirtschaftsraum* in the 1930s (see chapter 2.3), which was elevated to the dominant economic guiding principle in 1940 (see chapter 3.1.2). However, the European *Großraumwirtschaft* had not yet kept this promise. Hence, the economic interpretive frame defined the problem, the lack of European cooperation, and stipulated the solution, advancing European output and trade, while the war effort rendered this purpose discursively incontestable. Being bound to this end, the limits of what could be said about Europe were narrowed down to the discursive negotiation of the 'right' and 'sensible' means. This discursive practice produced a two-pronged carrot-and-stick rhetoric. On the one hand, it allowed for calls for a more considerate policy, thereby turning the wishes and expectations of the population in the occupied territories into a meaningful category. The demand to treat the subjugated people decently was now far more than the peculiar idea of a few scaremongers. Its promise of war-economic short-term benefits made it the 'right' and 'sensible' move. On the other hand, the discursively hegemonic war effort could also classify this course as "foolish and unrealistic". Partly still inspired by the *völkisch* interpretive frame, it also gave meaning to arguments in favour of an even more uncompromising course, thereby radicalising German policy all over Europe.

3.3.3 Hubris and Hindsight – Keeping the Dream Alive

Dear Richard,

I acknowledge the receipt of your letter from 20 November. I regret that you have written it. If the problem of this ridiculous re-drawing of borders proves one day to be the most important issue, I will send for you. In the meantime, there are – you may not believe it – more pressing matters.⁵⁰¹ (Heinrich Himmler, November 1944)

This reply of Himmler's – his entire written reply – to Richard Wendler's thoughts on Europe-to-be⁵⁰² speaks volumes: He cut his brother-in-law, a *SS-Gruppenführer*, short because by the end of 1944 even to him the particulars of Europe's *Völker* and their borderlines seemed of "laughable" importance. Given that the Allies were pushing back the *Wehrmacht* everywhere, there were more pressing problems. However, just like Wendler, many German officials continued planning the reorganisation of Europe. In addition to *völkisch* and economic notions, new understandings of Europe emerged in the German discourse on Europe as the discursively hegemonic war effort broadened the spectrum of justifiable long-term concepts. In short, as impending defeat brought National Socialist Germany back down to earth, many still dreamt of a new German-led Europe.

Just as before, the thoughts patterns and arguments, provided by the *völkisch* interpretive frame, shaped the New Order discourse. The "*Volkstums*-strategic importance in a reorganised Europe"⁵⁰³ and the "racial and *völkisch* composition"⁵⁰⁴ of a country still informed appraisals on its belonging to Europe. In the eyes of Seyß-Inquart, Europe was entirely defined by its *Völker*. In the East, it ended where the steppe began and a "*Volkstum* of Aryan nature" could not thrive. Internally, *völkisch* qualities determined

the natural hierarchy, in which every nation occupies the place in the community which was due to it because of its economic performance, its biological vitality, its martial strength, and its cultural capability. All these are qualities that are rooted in the racial strength of a *Volk*, in its richness of healthy substance, and on whose sum true power rests. The *Reich* is leading

⁵⁰¹ Letter by Himmler to Wendler, 24 November 1944, BArch, NS 19, 1509, p. 4.

⁵⁰² See letter by Wendler to Himmler, 20 November 1944, BArch, NS 19, 1509, pp. 1-4.

⁵⁰³ Muchow on the integration of Belgium into the Greater Germanic *Reich*, 1943, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Belgien, Luxemburg und den Niederlanden*, pp. 197-198.

⁵⁰⁴ Mentzel on Estonia's role in the new Europe, 16 July 1943, BArch, R 6, 67, pp. 22-25.

the way for the European community; its importance exerts the decisive influence on the European order. There is no need for an explanation or justification anymore.⁵⁰⁵

A certain Gallmeier also held that “the German *Volk* was called to lead Europe”. In Latvia, this mission consisted in making the valuable population see and “hammer it into their souls, what we actually want in the *Reich*.”⁵⁰⁶ However, the hammer, especially the sledgehammer, which Germany’s policy in the East relied on heavily, was counterproductive in the eyes of Frauenfeld. He argued that in history, “a *Volk* on the anvil has often been hammered hard as steel, instead of being smashed.”⁵⁰⁷ If the future of the German *Volk* called for it, one could naturally let hundreds of thousands die, but one should be mute about it and pursue long-term aims in a tactical manner and with some suppleness.⁵⁰⁸ Even though his expanded settlement schemes⁵⁰⁹ fell victim to this new course of shelving policies that potentially aroused resistance (see chapter 4.3.1), Himmler still clung to his idea of a *völkisch* New Order:

The program is unalterable. It is unalterable that we will push back the *Volkstum*-border by 500km; that we will settle here. It is unalterable that we will found a Germanic *Reich*. It is unalterable that 30 millions will join the other 90 million Germanics so that we will enlarge our *Blutsbasis* [blood basis] to 120 million Germanics. It is unalterable that we will be the ordering power in the Balkans and the rest of Europe; that we will politically, economically, and militarily align and order this entire *Volk*. It is unalterable that we will fill this settlement area; that we will establish a blooming garden of Germanic blood in the East.⁵¹⁰

Thus, the *völkisch* interpretive frame kept shaping the long-term perspective within the German discourse on Europe until the end of the war. Its core element, the alleged racial superiority of Germanic blood, still justified the war, informed German New Order planning, and assigned the leading role in Europe to the German *Volk*.

Under the discursive hegemony of the short-term oriented war effort, however, the value of Germanic blood simultaneously became the starting-point for a different line of reasoning. Anatol von der Milwe-Schroeden, deputy head of the Department of Cultural Policy at the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories, warned that the

⁵⁰⁵ Seyß-Inquart on the European Order, 1943, printed in Neulen, *Europa und das 3. Reich*, pp. 116-120.

⁵⁰⁶ Gallmeier on the tasks of German *Volkstum* policy in Latvia, 29 December 1943, BArch, R 90, 133, pp. 1-10.

⁵⁰⁷ Frauenfeld’s memorandum on the problems of administrating the occupied Eastern territories, 10 February 1944, BArch, NS 19, 1478, pp. 2-38.

⁵⁰⁸ See *ibid.*

⁵⁰⁹ See letter by Himmler to Meyer, 12 January 1943, printed in Madajczyk, *Generalplan Ost*, pp. 256-257.

⁵¹⁰ Speech by Himmler to the *Reichs-* and *Gauleiter*, 3 August 1944, printed in *ibid.*, p. 284.

war and antagonistic policy were weakening the German *Volk*. If one managed to win “over the Slavic *Völker* for the intended New Order” by granting them formal equality, however, it would be nothing to install a “Nordic leading class above all member states”.⁵¹¹ Wiedemann also promoted the creation of autonomous states in the East because she feared that “our *Volk*, which had been bled dry,” would end up “winning depopulated areas in the East as settlement areas for our non-existent blood”.⁵¹² Alexander Dolezalek, a SS-*Hauptsturmführer* with a leading role in the SS Race and Settlement Main Office, came up with the idea of a European *Eidgenossenschaft*. Appealingly named after the Swiss Confederation, it revolved even closer around the value of Germanic blood.⁵¹³ At the core of this “German-shaped and Germanic-oriented” notion stood “Germania, the Germanic *Reich* of the German nation”.⁵¹⁴ The *Waffen*-SS was to be its spearhead, as it not only united the “Germanic-Nordic blood of the other European *Völker*” but also embodied the three integrative European forces: National Socialism as the antithesis to Bolshevism, the yearning for peace, and *Germanentum* (Germanicness). Accordingly, it linked the *Völker* and transcended nationalism because it added a European and Germanic belonging to a *völkisch* one.⁵¹⁵ Thus, the *völkisch* interpretive frame did not necessarily culminate in settlement fantasies and ruthless concepts of starvation and mass murder. It also allowed for a more moderate line of reasoning that made do with transferring the alleged racial hierarchy into a political one by installing a Germanic leading class presiding over formally equal *Völker*. However, these alternative long-term notions did not gain ground before the allegedly superior Germanic blood was being shed on a huge scale all over Europe.

The second constant in the German New Order discourse were the thought patterns and arguments taken from the economic interpretive repertoire. The basic principles of a European economic cooperation – as established in the discourse – had long been in place by 1943. They still boiled down to a powerful, German-led, coherently

⁵¹¹ Memorandum of Milwe-Schroeden, May 1943, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik Sowjetunion*, pp. 422-425.

⁵¹² Letter by Wiedemann to Koherr, 5 October 1943, printed in Neulen, *Europa und das 3. Reich*, pp. 137-141.

⁵¹³ See Dolezalek on the German war aim, the European idea of peace, 1944/45, printed in *ibid.*, pp. 165-168.

⁵¹⁴ Dolezalek on political warfare, 14 January 1945, BArch, NS 31, 432, pp. 1-27.

⁵¹⁵ *Ibid.*

planned, and autarkic European economy with a common market.⁵¹⁶ Its creation was not only the order of the day in an “epoch of great empires and continental agglomerations”.⁵¹⁷ Under the discursive pressure of the war effort, it had gained additional meaning as short-term necessity. According to the *Wirtschaftspolitische Auslandsdienst*, this was the alternative that Germany offered to the “bleak prospect” of returning to the pre-war modus of international trade.⁵¹⁸ Thus, the well-established motives that had shaped the economic long-term dimension of the New Order discourse persisted: Europe was to become an independent, powerful, and German-led economic entity with intensified but state-orchestrated internal trade.

The distribution of roles within the New Order, which the *völkisch* and the economic interpretive frame had specified (see chapter 3.1.2 and 3.2.2), was equally stable because they were defined by the alleged superiority of the German *Volk* and of its needs and wishes. For the Ministry of Economics, for example, an industrialisation of the “agrarian countries of the Southeast” was still out of the question, even if it might “seem to meet the current needs during the war and to be economically profitable”⁵¹⁹. According to the *Wirtschaftsorganisation Ost* – the organisation led by the *Wirtschaftsstab Ost* – southern Russia, as “Europe’s granary”,⁵²⁰ was to cater for Europe, while Germany would skim off the profits the low price level promised.⁵²¹ Apparently, this concept still carried enough discursive weight to let Riecke justify his agrarian reforms with the post-war prospect of a “colonial usage of the land”.⁵²² In April 1944, when the issue had already become a hypothetical one, Körner still clung to this thought pattern, when he explained what Germany expected from Ukraine after its reoccupation:

⁵¹⁶ See e.g. note by Ribbentrop on a European federation, 21 March 1943, printed in Lipgens, *Documents on the History of European Integration*, pp. 106-109; Draft of a memorandum, 9 September 1943, printed in Opitz, *Europastrategien*, pp. 957-966. This memorandum bears a resemblance to Renthe-Fink’s draft. Renthe-Fink’s draft for a memorandum on the establishment of a European confederation, autumn 1943, printed in Lipgens, *Documents on the History of European Integration*, pp. 150-161.

⁵¹⁷ Guiding principles of the Europe Committee in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 9 September 1943, printed in Hass and Schumann, *Anatomie der Aggression*, pp. 216-218.

⁵¹⁸ *Wirtschaftspolitische Auslandsdienst* on the revival of world trade after the war, 2 January 1945, BArch MA, RW 19, 1605, pp. 7-10.

⁵¹⁹ Letter by Walter to Heinrichsbauer, 13 May 1943, BArch, 5628, pp. 448427-448428.

⁵²⁰ Explanatory notes on the structure and the tasks of the *Wirtschaftsorganisation Ost*, 8 February 1943, BArch MA, RW 19, 758, pp. 76-79.

⁵²¹ See the elaboration of the *Wirtschaftsstab Ost* on the basic principles of price policy, May 1943, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik Sowjetunion*, p. 419-420.

⁵²² Letter by Riecke to Klopfer, state secretary in the *Reich* chancellery, 19 July 1943, BArch, NS 19, 3863, pp. 6-10.

The Ukraine is the most fertile agrarian area of Europe. It has the task to provide the new Europe with foodstuffs and raw materials from its fertile soil. All political, administrative, and economic measures have to serve solely this purpose.⁵²³

Thus, within the German discourse on the Europe, the economic interpretive frame had solidified a long-term notion of European economic cooperation to a point that it could even survive major military setbacks. It lasted until the end of the war. Since it was still borne by the same thoughts and arguments, it perpetuated the same functioning principles. The European economies were to engage in an intra-European division of labour in which the dominating *völkisch* and economic knowledge and belief systems assigned the roles.

However, the discursive dominance of the war effort and its short-term orientation towards remedying the shortcomings of the *Großraumwirtschaft* (see chapter 3.3.2) also made it possible for alternative notions to (re-)emerge. In 1943, Ferdinand Friedensburg, a liberal and former member of the German Democratic Party (DDP), who had spoken up for a democratic European customs union as early as 1926, publicly envisaged a “European Economic Community” based on “comradely cooperation”.⁵²⁴ The Ministry of Foreign affairs discussed the idea of holding “European economic conferences” which would prepare and implement Europe-wide standards – an idea that came close to Köster’s intention to rely on the “voluntary willingness” and the “well-meaning forces” in Europe.⁵²⁵ Even though these considerations aimed at solving German short-term problems, some of them had long-term implications. Köster’s memorandum on European planning, for example, expressed the hope that the presidium of the planning committee would evolve into an “intergovernmental organ, in which official representatives of the single countries have a seat.”⁵²⁶ Kehrl nurtured similar hopes for his *Europakränzchen*. Its European planning was intended to outlive the war and continue in peacetime.⁵²⁷ Moreover, the *Planungsstab Europa* discussed what it considered “the precondition for a European post-war programme

⁵²³ Körner’s memorandum on the new German Ukraine policy, 20 April 1944, BArch, R 6, 426, pp. 39-67.

⁵²⁴ From Friedensburg’s book ‘Rohstoffe und Energiequellen im neuen Europa’, 1943, printed in Opitz, *Europastrategien*, pp. 971-989. See also Friedensburg, ‘Europäische Zollunion’; chapter 2.1.2.

⁵²⁵ Köster’s memorandum on European economic planning, 13 September 1943, BArch, R 3, 1941, pp. 181-187. See also Suggestions of Fröhwein, 7 June 1943, printed in Hass and Schumann, *Anatomie der Aggression*, pp. 185-191; draft for a memorandum of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 9 September 1943, printed in Opitz, *Europastrategien*, pp. 957-966.

⁵²⁶ Remarks on European economic planning, undated, BArch, R 3, 1941, pp. 194-196.

⁵²⁷ See Kehrl’s manuscript for the *Europakränzchen*, 16 December 1943, BArch, R 3, 1940, pp. 173-177.

under German leadership”: a “German concept of a continental European idea”⁵²⁸ that was supposed to allay the “inferiority complexes of economically weaker partners”.⁵²⁹ In a detailed memorandum, Richard Riedl, who had also advocated a democratic United States of Europe in the interwar period,⁵³⁰ also presented a different reading of the European *Großraum*:

The ‘new Europe’ cannot be the transfer of outdated colonial methods to our soil. Its creation cannot result in a single state or a single *Volk* reaching new heights of wealth and power. The concept of a European community of states has to come true. Not subjugation and exploitation must be its aim, but the common good and the organic affiliation of the European family of *Völker* [...].⁵³¹

Shortly after Riedl’s death, Erich Welter – a German economics professor, economic journalist, and member of the *Planungsstab Europa*⁵³² – raised the issue of publishing this memorandum as the “legacy of a great European”. Despite Funk’s approval, the *Planungsstab* decided against a publication. Not because demands like freedom and autonomy as well as the explicit rejection of exploitation and enslavement revealed the liberal and democratic imprint of the document, but because its focus on the Southeast would not make clear enough that the “new European *Großraum*” would entail the “entire European continent”. After thorough revision, however, this “well-considered German plan for a European *Großwirtschaftsraum*” could form the basis of the discussion after a German victory.⁵³³ In a letter to Köster, Hugo Stinnes, a German industrialist and member of the *Planungsstab Europa*, also advocated a different form of economic community. European cooperation would not work out unless “other *Völker* enjoy life in the European space under more or less felt German tutelage”.⁵³⁴ He therefore advised a subtle economic policy that would result in their voluntary reorientation towards Germany. Once Europe was economically interlinked and grown together, the other participants would “gladly conform with Germany politically and not perceive it as rape anymore.”⁵³⁵ Thus, by turning the voluntary co-

⁵²⁸ Minutes of the meeting of the *Planungsstab Europa*, 30 May 1944, BArch, R 3, 1941, p. 29.

⁵²⁹ Minutes of the meeting of the *Planungsstab Europa*, 27 June 1944, BArch, R 3, 1941, pp. 12-17.

⁵³⁰ See Riedl, ‘Die Vereinigten Staaten von Europa’.

⁵³¹ Riedl’s memorandum ‘Ways to Europe. Thoughts on an Economic Federation of European States’, 1944, BArch, R 8119 F, 339, pp. 19-67.

⁵³² In 1933 and 1934 he had been editor in chief of the liberal *Vossische Zeitung* and between 1921 and 1943 he worked for the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. See Klee, *Personenlexikon zum Dritten Reich*, p. 667.

⁵³³ Minutes of the *Planungsstab Europa*’s meeting, 29 August 1944, BArch, R 3, 1941, pp. 1-9.

⁵³⁴ Letter by Stinnes to Köster, 20 June 1944, BArch, R 3, 1941, pp. 26-28.

⁵³⁵ *Ibid.*

operativeness of the subjugated countries into a crucial category of the New Order discourse, the war effort opened up a considerable discursive leeway. As the idea of attracting support ruled out force as a 'sensible' and 'pertinent' means to foster Europe economic cooperation, the war effort made it possible to fall back on a different kind of reasoning. In this way, ideas like the 'comradely cooperation' of "free nations"⁵³⁶ – categories which the powerful combination of the *völkisch* and economic interpretive frame had previously discursively discarded (see chapter 2.1.2 and 2.3) – found their way back into the German discourse on Europe.

While the New Order had been discursively constructed primarily along *völkisch* and economic lines for years, it did gain a new dimension in 1943. Europe was now frequently referred to as a cultural community. For the diplomat Hans Frohwein, for example, a National Socialist new Europe had to be deeply rooted in Europe's history, particularly in its culture. On this basis, an organic order which was structured along *völkisch* lines, the merits of a *Volk* in the war, and the *Führer* principle, could be erected.⁵³⁷ According to a detailed memorandum on Europe-to-be, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs intended to preserve European cultural diversity because it was the source of the power of the continent. If cultural differences were levelled, Europe would forfeit the advantages that arose out of the varying strength and talents of its *Völker*.⁵³⁸ Otto Bräutigam, by contrast, emphasised the bonding effects of European culture. In his considerations on the future of the Baltic States, their cultural belonging to Europe was mentioned in the same breath as their racial qualities.⁵³⁹ In the eyes of Riedl, preserving these bonds was the purpose of the new Europe:

In this war, we have raised the flag of Europe and set our sights on turning the thousands-of-years old cultural community which girdles the *Völker* of our part of the world into a community of states and an economic community. On its basis and under its protection, our cultural community will find itself safeguarded in its existence and its future against external dangers.⁵⁴⁰

⁵³⁶ Riedl's memorandum 'Ways to Europe. Thoughts on an Economic Federation of European States', 1944, BArch, R 8119 F, 339, pp. 19-67.

⁵³⁷ See suggestions of Frohwein, 7 June 1943, printed in Hass and Schumann, *Anatomie der Aggression*, pp. 185-191.

⁵³⁸ See draft of a memorandum, 9 September 1943, printed in Opitz, *Europastrategien*, pp. 957-966.

⁵³⁹ See note by Bräutigam, 4 October 1943, BArch, R 6, 67, pp. 54-56.

⁵⁴⁰ Riedl's memorandum 'Ways to Europe'. Thoughts on an Economic Federation of European States', 1944, BArch, R 8119 F, 339, pp. 19-67.

For the SS *Hauptamt*, Europe's inner unity also rested on its culture. It named several prominent examples stretching from Goethe to Michelangelo to Shakespeare, and emphasised that "these significant men are the common property of all Europe." However, in the understanding of the SS *Hauptamt*, Europe was the home of all "Nordic-Germanic people". Currently, the Germanics, the traditional "wall against foreign rule in Europe", fought off "Jewish capitalism".⁵⁴¹ Dolezalek voiced similar thoughts in his definition of Europe. In his eyes, Europe was a racial family of *Völker*, a cultural community, and an economic community of destiny.⁵⁴² Thus, after 1943, cultural aspects started to gain ground in the German New Order discourse. However, they did not substantiate new lines of reasoning and thus did not produce different notions of the future of Europe. As culture was – in the traditional *völkisch* reading – often understood as the visible expression of racial qualities (see chapter 2.3), Europe as a cultural community almost exclusively served as a second-order argument to underscore the dominating *völkisch* and economic interpretive repertoire.

Deliberations on the future political system of Europe were the second novelty in the German New Order discourse after 1943. While Hitler's only concern seems to have been to replace the "set-up of states as it existed before the war" with a new "form of organisation" that would be strong enough to stop the prospective *Oststürme* (Eastern storms),⁵⁴³ others, like Seyß-Inquart, already saw the New Order looming. He was convinced that "the form of the new Europe [...], the legal expression of the relationship between the *Reich* and Europe is already clearly visible today"⁵⁴⁴. For Hans Peter Ipsen, a law professor who worked for the Ministry of Justice, the existing administrative structures were "essentially already the foundation for the implementation and fulfilment of the future European *Großraum*-order",⁵⁴⁵ which the *Reich* was striving for.

Others developed specific notions of a new European political order. In the Ministry of Foreign affairs, Ribbentrop wanted to proclaim a European federation in which all member states would enjoy sovereignty and mutually guarantee each other's free-

⁵⁴¹ The SS-*Hauptamt* on 'National Socialism saving the Nordic-Germanic genetic material of Europe', 7 September 1944, BArch, NS 31, 418, pp. 2-19.

⁵⁴² See Dolezalek on political warfare, 14 January 1945, BArch, NS 31, 432, pp. 1-27.

⁵⁴³ Note by Bormann on a meeting between Mussert and Hitler, 9 January 1943, BArch, NS 6, 161, pp. 3-14.

⁵⁴⁴ Seyß-Inquart on the European Order, 1943, printed in Neulen, *Europa und das 3. Reich*, pp. 116-120.

⁵⁴⁵ Ipsen on the external administration of the *Reich*, 3 April 1943, printed in *ibid*, pp. 111-115.

dom and political independence.⁵⁴⁶ The Europe Committee, which he had established, also acted on the assumption that the result of the current European war of unification would be a federation of sovereign states led by Germany. Its “loyal, Europe-affirming members of the European community” would ensure peace, security, and prosperity.⁵⁴⁷ However, elaborating a more concrete “political structure of Europe-to-be was out of the question” because the complicated *völkisch* structure of Europe did not allow for generalisations, and the promise of independence and autonomy ran contrary to the necessities of war.⁵⁴⁸ Nevertheless, Frohwein’s version of Germany being the epicentre of a community of sovereign and autonomous European states stipulated a European court to settle conflicts peacefully. Getting rid of Jews and bringing the borders in line with the *völkisch* structure of Europe, however, was essential to its pacification.⁵⁴⁹

A certain Mentzel⁵⁵⁰ in the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories and Renthe-Fink also suggested a community of sovereign European states, in which the *Reich* would be the *primus inter pares*, but they excluded the Eastern territories. While Mentzel wanted Germany to take them under its wing by taking over crucial parts of their policies and duties, Renthe-Fink accepted a “certain autonomy, or at least the illusion of sovereignty”, in the West, but found even puppet governments in the General Government and the occupied Eastern territories unacceptable.⁵⁵¹ Others in the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories envisaged a similar future for Estonia and Latvia. Bräutigam was willing to give them a degree of autonomy they would perceive as freedom to honour their “Germanic imprint”.⁵⁵² Rosenberg even drafted a declaration for Estonia, in which the German *Reich*, in its striving for a “*völkisch* fu-

⁵⁴⁶ See note by Ribbentrop on a European federation, 21 March 1943, printed in Lipgens, *Documents on the History of European Integration*, pp. 106-109.

⁵⁴⁷ Guiding principles of the Europe Committee in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 9 September 1943, printed in Hass and Schumann, *Anatomie der Aggression*, pp. 216-218.

⁵⁴⁸ Ribbentrop’s guidelines for the work of the Europe Committee, 5 April 1943, printed in Opitz, *Europastrategien*, pp. 954-956.

⁵⁴⁹ See suggestions of Hans Frohwein, 7 June 1943, printed in Hass and Schumann, *Anatomie der Aggression*, pp. 185-191.

⁵⁵⁰ It seems very likely that Walter Mentzel, former deputy mayor of Kiel and later parliamentary party leader of the CDU in the *Landtag* of Schleswig-Holstein, authored this memorandum in his role as employee of the economic administration in the *Generalkommissariat* Estonia. See *Der Spiegel*, no. 15, 1969, [<http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-45861231.html>], (accessed 27 May 2016).

⁵⁵¹ Note by Renthe-Fink, 9 September 1943, printed in Hass and Schumann, *Anatomie der Aggression*, pp. 198-203; See also See Mentzel on the role of Estonia in the new Europe, 16 July 1943, BArch, R 6, 67, pp. 22-25.

⁵⁵² Note by Bräutigam, 4 October 1943, BArch, R 6, 67, pp. 54-56.

ture and social justice”, promised to “respect *Volkstum*, language, and culture”.⁵⁵³ In Walter Labs’ notion of a hierarchically ordered and German-led New Order, the Eastern territories had earned their right to be part of it by defying the attempt to press them down to the status of a colonial people.⁵⁵⁴ Hans Heinrich Lammers, the influential head of the *Reich* chancellery, however, felt the need to weigh in. He pointed out that the right to decide on the elaboration of the “basic principles of a reorganisation of Europe” resided with Hitler. Until then, Lammers wanted to see every man-hour dedicated to total war, not New Order planning.⁵⁵⁵ Nevertheless, this collection of statements makes clear that the political dimension of the discourse on the future of Europe was still bound by the *völkisch* interpretive frame and its rejection of freedom, equality, and democracy. For the allegedly inferior population of the occupied Eastern territories nothing but a kind of pseudo-autonomy was conceivable and for the rest of the European states the *status quo* of a German dominance prefigured the future.

The longer the total war dragged on, the more contributions to the German discourse on Europe started with a big “*wenn*” – a word which in German combines the meanings of ‘when’ and ‘if’. Frauenfeld, for example, demanded that many aspects of German occupation policy had to change fundamentally, “*wenn* the further course of the war and the victorious end of the war put these spaces into our care again.”⁵⁵⁶ On behalf of Göring, Körner dealt with the question “What does the *Reich* want after a reoccupation of the Ukraine?”⁵⁵⁷ He called for a coherent policy which was also in accordance with the status of Ukraine as “a member of the European community of *Völker*”.⁵⁵⁸ Despite picking up Rosenberg’s previously isolated appraisal of Ukraine as European (see chapter 3.2.3), his thoughts apparently found Backe’s approval. After having spoken to Hitler, he authorised Körner to start planning and preparing

⁵⁵³ Rosenberg’s declaration to the Estonian people, 2 December 1943, BArch, R 55, 1435, pp. 126-127.

⁵⁵⁴ See suggestions of Labs, 26 June 1944, printed in Hass and Schumann, *Anatomie der Aggression*, pp. 222-229.

⁵⁵⁵ See Lammers’ objection to elaborate the basic principles of a reorganisation of Europe, 10 August 1944 printed in Neulen, *Europa und das 3. Reich*, pp. 163-164.

⁵⁵⁶ Frauenfeld’s memorandum on the problems of the occupied Eastern territories’ administration, 10 February 1944, BArch, NS 19, 1478, pp. 2-38.

⁵⁵⁷ Körner’s memorandum on the new German Ukraine policy, 20 April 1944, BArch, R6, 426, pp. 39-67. See also Göring’s order concerning the rebuilding of Ukraine, 5 April 1944, BArch, R6, 426, p. 37.

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid.

for a reoccupation of Ukraine.⁵⁵⁹ For Otto Stapf, General and the head of the *Wirtschaftsstab Ost*, the “exploitation of the land for the fighting troops and the war economy” still took precedence, but this time basic supplies, effective propaganda, and an attractive political vision should win reliable support from the population.⁵⁶⁰ If this vision implied turning “the Ukraine into an equal part of the European *Großraum*”, another document of the *Wirtschaftsstab Ost* concluded that, “a corresponding land policy” and a kind of autonomy – somewhere between the Protectorate and the General Government – had to be the consequence.⁵⁶¹ After having lost Lithuania, an unsigned note from the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories demanded a “clear political line”. *Wenn* (when/if) the country had been re-conquered, “[w]e do not want to simply exploit Lithuania during the war, but integrate it into the European economy of tomorrow.”⁵⁶² SS-*Obergruppenführer* Curt von Gottberg, who had ruled *Weißruthenien* as Commissioner General from October 1943 until it was lost, was convinced that the re-establishment of German authorities could achieve much better results if they steered a more considerate course.⁵⁶³ SS-*Untersturmführer* Joachim Nehring, who took care of Ukrainian nationalists who fled from the Red Army, also favoured a different approach to ultimately secure the leadership in the Ukrainian space, which “will be won back by the sword one day.” And then,

in the interest of our European conception, the *Reich* has to grant the Ukrainians the right to their own state. The Ukrainians will, out of their natural opposition to Russia and due to their inability to lead and administer themselves, look for support from the *Reich* anyway. Not how we lead Ukraine, but that we do is the only thing that counts.⁵⁶⁴

Thus, once the German rule over the object of the New Order discourse had been lost, National Socialist officials claimed that they had learned their lesson. The next time the East came under German rule, occupation authorities would steer a coherent course of treating the local population more decently, of granting them at least a modicum of self-administration, and of making them a part of the New Europe. How-

⁵⁵⁹ See note on Backe’s order to start preparations for the reoccupation of Ukraine, 12 June 1944, RGVA, 700, 1, 76.

⁵⁶⁰ Stapf on the experiences of the *Wirtschaftsinspektion* Ukraine, 15 June 1944, RGVA, 700, 1, 76.

⁵⁶¹ Suggestion on the organisation of the Ukrainian agricultural self-administration, 19 June 1944, BArch MA, RW 31, 258, unnumbered.

⁵⁶² Thoughts on a German leadership in the Lithuanian space, 28 August 1944, BArch, R 6, 68, pp. 56-63.

⁵⁶³ See Gottberg’s final report on experiences in and the evacuation of *Weißruthenien*, 31 August 1944, BArch, NS 19, 2715, pp. 1-18.

⁵⁶⁴ Nehring’s experiences of and thoughts on the ‘Ukrainian question’, fall 1944, BArch, R 6, 597, pp. 1-8.

ever, this redefinition of the means – in accordance with the thoughts and arguments initially established by the appeals and warnings (see chapter 3.2.3) – did not change the goal of getting the most out of the East. Hence, these displays of ‘repentance’ attest to the continued rootedness of German discourse in the *völkisch* and economic knowledge and belief systems.

Himmler’s notion of the New Order had not changed. In July 1944, when he concerned himself with the question of “how we want to rule and pacify Russia *wenn* we have conquered large areas of the Russian land once again”,⁵⁶⁵ property, autonomy, and freedom only existed at the Eastern border, where Cossacks constituted the last line between the German *Ostwall* (Eastern wall) and Bolshevism. The rest of the East had to be pacified and disarmed by means of religion: “We have to support every form of religion and cult that has a pacifying effect. For the Turkic *Völker*, the doctrine of Buddhism comes into question, for the others the doctrine of the Bible student movement.”⁵⁶⁶ In Himmler’s eyes, the merits of the latter were particularly valuable: They refused to fight, were anti-Semitic and against the Catholic Church. Furthermore, they did not smoke or drink, but were industrious.⁵⁶⁷ By the end of November 1944, however, Himmler had been jolted out of his dreams. Given the military situation, considerations on future frontiers, like the one he had sketched out in detail, seemed “laughable”.⁵⁶⁸

Overall, despite the deteriorating military situation and repeated official requests to end all post-war planning, the German New Order discourse kept its long-term perspective and continued after 1943. Its defining elements were still the *völkisch* and the economic interpretive frame. In conjunction with the now discursively hegemonic but short-term oriented war effort, these established knowledge and belief systems widened the limits of what could be said about Europe. The *völkisch* set of thoughts and arguments still determined the borderlines of Europe and its internal hierarchy. However, the concern for valuable German blood and the growing reluctance to aid the *Reich*, gave meaning to minimising the bloodshed through war and resistance and to pondering less intrusive ways to realise the German will. Economically, Europe was still imagined as a powerful, autarkic, German-led *Großwirtschaftsraum*

⁵⁶⁵ Letter by Himmler to Kaltenbrunner, 21 July 1944, BArch, NS 19, 3947, pp. 178-181.

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁷ See *ibid.*

⁵⁶⁸ Letter by Himmler to Wendler, 24 November 1944, BArch, NS 19, 1509, p. 4.

that engaged in a division of labour. However, the realisation of this notion was now increasingly linked to winning the voluntary cooperation of the other European nations instead of solely relying on German power. Ultimately, even previously marginalised notions of Europe that had their roots in democratic traditions of European thinking or *Mitteleuropa* ideas could legitimately make themselves heard, as they promised to bolster the war economy.⁵⁶⁹ Furthermore, the dominance of the war effort added new categories to the New Order discourse. Even though these political and cultural understandings of Europe-to-be were not variations of existing concepts, they did not go beyond the coordinate system that unfolded between *völkisch* and economic beliefs. They could be voiced because they promised to contribute to the war effort by allaying widespread fears of Germany's ill will and because they were still rooted in the *völkisch* and economic 'truth' that the position on top of the European hierarchy was indisputably Germany's. Allegedly, its racial value surpassed that of all other *Völker*, there was no match for its industrial capacities, its cultural achievements were unsurpassed, and its political system constituted the exemplary role model. Thus, by increasingly binding the German discourse on Europe to its short-term orientation (see chapters 3.3.1 and 3.3.2), the war effort at the same time widened the scope of what could be said about Europe. Now, German discourse allowed for broader spectrum of thoughts and arguments concerning the means, so that the scope of conceivable and expressible long-term conceptions widened. However, still being constrained by the *völkisch* and economic knowledge and beliefs systems, this development did not produce fundamental contestations of the end of a German ruled Europe. Therefore, until the very end of the war, all German dreams of a new Europe order emanated from the conviction of German supremacy and headed for its *völkisch*, economic, and political implementation. In fact, concepts of Europe-to-be that did not put the *Reich* first could not be voiced by German officials until something unthinkable – and of course unspeakable – happened: National Socialist Germany was defeated.

⁵⁶⁹ See e.g. Friedensburg, 'Europäische Zollunion'; From Friedensburg's book 'Rohstoffe und Energiequellen im neuen Europa', 1943, printed in Opitz, *Europastrategien*, pp. 971-989; Riedl, 'Die Vereinigten Staaten von Europa'; Riedl's memorandum 'Ways to Europe. Thoughts on an Economic Federation of European States', 1944, BArch, R 8119 F, 339, pp. 19-67.

4. Creating a New Order

In the middle of the war, Europe's political leadership has, out of the necessity of the situation and the expedience of things, step by step started to reorganise Europe in all areas of political, economic, and cultural life; in the same evolutionary organic way in which the inner reorganisation of the two leading powers, Germany and Italy, has been begun and carried out.¹
(Deutsches Institut für Außenpolitische Forschung, 1943)

While many contemporaries claimed that Germany had already started to create the New Order during the war, many historians see nothing but ideological delusion and the war effort at work in National Socialist European policy (see chapter 1.1). After having shown that the New Order was not a single notion but a constantly changing discursive negotiation process, in which the future of Europe was defined along well-established *völkisch* and economic knowledge and belief systems, a reassessment seems justified. By contrasting the discursive construction of Europe to the policies of German occupation authorities and of private companies, the factual relevance of the New Order will become clear. As explained in the chapter on methodology (see chapter 1.2), the power of the discourse becomes apparent in a twofold manner. The knowledge and 'truth' it produces gives meaning to statements, thoughts, and practices, while participating in this production warrants the 'voluntary subordination' to its binding rules.

This chapter demonstrates that the New Order discourse informed German European policy and the activities of private businesses during the Second World War. It started out as a predominantly economic vision which promised "Peace and Prosperity" (4.1) through a reorganisation of the economies and *Völker* of Europe, before the attack on the Soviet Union gave rise to more marked *völkisch* lines of reasoning. Together with the economic interpretive frame, this perspective boiled down to a notion of Europe as a "German Continent and its Colonies" (4.2). The longer the war dragged on, the more the fear of going under in this war of extermination gained ground and transformed the ways of speaking about Europe. Now, ways of mobilising the continent, as "A European Community Fighting Bolshevism" (4.3) were pondered. Instead of rallying Europe around the German cause, however, this New Order lost its integrative power and sank into insignificance.

¹ Deutsches Institut für Außenpolitische Forschung, 'Einleitung', in Deutsches Institut für Außenpolitische Forschung (ed.), *Europa - Handbuch der politischen, wirtschaftlichen und kulturellen Entwicklung des neuen Europa*, Leipzig, Heling, 1943, pp. 1-6, here p. 4.

4.1 A Promise of Peace and Prosperity (1939-1941)

In response to England's desire for power we offer: a contented, pacified Europe unified in close economic cooperation which can open its doors to world trade for the benefit of all *Völker* of the world!² (Friedrich Landfried, September 1940)

During the twenty-one months of waging war between the German attack on Poland and Operation Barbarossa, many German officials paid considerable attention to the future of Europe. In this New Order, they envisaged Germany to be in charge of securing peace and prosperity for the continent. By reorganising Europe along *völkisch* lines, Germany would finally bring peace to the war-torn continent. And by introducing its own successful mode of economic activity in a common European market, Germany would create a prosperous Europe that would be on a par with other *Großräume* (see chapter 3.1).

These concepts were more than just propagandistic weapons in Germany's struggle for European supremacy: German occupation policy and the activities of German companies clearly reflect in fact that the New Order discourse endowed their actions with meaning. The discursively constructed need to reorganise European "Industry, Currency, and Trade" (chapter 4.1.1) materialised in major political steps as well as in the individual measures of German occupation authorities. The "European Expansion" (chapter 4.1.2) of German companies, on the other hand, demonstrates that the discursively constructed new European order served as an important frame of reference.

² Speech by Landfried on occasion of opening the autumn fair in Cologne, 15 September 1940, BArch, R 2501, 7017, pp. 233-245.

4.1.1 Industry, Currency, and Trade – An Economic New Order

According to Friedrich Nietzsche, wars are the great instructors of fundamental philosophical doctrines, in whose name the struggle for the reorganisation of the world is conducted. It is precisely our enemies that arrogate to themselves the right to be sole representatives of such philosophies. However, we have already created a very real new world. And in this world the new economic order is already in place; the economic order of the new Europe.³ (Walther Funk, 1941)

These words concluded a speech that Walther Funk gave on Europe's new economic order in June 1941. A printed version of his speech was sent to National Socialist officials, relevant organisations, and individuals, including every *Gauleiter*, every *Reichstatthalter*, all *Preußische Oberpräsidenten*, the *Gauwirtschaftsberater*, the presidents of the chambers of industry and commerce, all professors of economics, all the editors of economic newspapers and journals, and the *Reichsbank*.⁴ Thus, shortly before National Socialist Germany attacked the Soviet Union, a multitude of German officials learned that today "the European New Order is already largely reality"⁵, a reality that was to be finalised after the war. Indeed, Funk had good reasons to believe in what he said: The foundations of a National Socialist New Order had already been laid at all levels of German policy.

One major step on the way to a National Socialist New Order was the introduction of a European central clearing system. As pointed out in chapter 2.1.2, the idea of converting bilateral clearing agreements into a multilateral payment system had prevailed in the considerations on how to establish a largely autarkic, *Reichsmark*-based *Großraumwirtschaft*, in which Germany would pull the strings. In contrast to a long-standing and well-established idea of a customs and currency union, it promised to perpetuate a hierarchy in Europe that the *völkisch* as well as the economic interpretive frame prescribed. By the end of 1941, this part of the New Order, the

central clearing according to the plans of the Minister of Economics, has become a reality. All countries within the German sphere of influence and the occupied territories [...] are inte-

³ W. Funk, *Wirtschaftsordnung im Neuen Europa. Rede gehalten vor der Südosteuropa Gesellschaft in Wien am 12. Juni 1941*, Vienna, Südost-Echo Verlagsgesellschaft, 1941, p. 30.

⁴ Mailing list, R 2501, 7018, pp. 212-234.

⁵ Funk, *Wirtschaftsordnung im Neuen Europa*, p. 10.

grated. Technically, the central clearing works satisfactorily. Of course, balancing the accounts is impossible as long as Germany keeps running up bills.⁶

Indeed, “the centrepiece of the National Socialist New Order”⁷ seemed to have lived up to expectations: Germany’s imports boomed and more transactions than before were processed on clearing accounts.⁸ At the same time, overseas trade practically ceased and intra-European trade between third countries declined sharply.⁹ However, due to the German war effort, Europe did not – as traditionally envisaged in the economic interpretive frame – become a huge sales market for German goods, but a community of Germany’s creditors. Instead of exporting them into agrarian countries, the *Reich* increasingly imported finished and semi-finished goods, thus piling up huge debts on the German clearing accounts until the end of the war.¹⁰ Despite this failure, the introduction of a European central clearing system manifests the relevance of the New Order discourse for actual policies. Even though the clearing system did advance the German war effort by facilitating necessary imports, its genesis and its characteristics reveal that it was not primarily tailored to the needs of war. Whilst the spiritual fathers of the central clearing system in the *Reichsbank* and the Ministry of Economics scarcely relied on war-economic thoughts and arguments, their prime concerns revolved around the European post-war order.¹¹ By restoring the standing of the *Reichsmark* and by granting Germany influence on European trade, these officials wanted to establish a monetary long-term alternative to the liberal gold standard and to enable the *Reich* to orchestrate the European economies

⁶ Report on the fields handled by department V of the *Vierjahresplanbehörde* since the beginning of the war, 9 December 1941, RGVA, 700, 1, 41.

⁷ Buggeln, ‘Währungspläne’, p. 76.

⁸ See J. Scherner, ‘Der deutsche Importboom während des Zweiten Weltkriegs. Neue Ergebnisse zur Struktur der Ausbeutung des besetzten Europas auf der Grundlage einer Neuschätzung der deutschen Handelsbilanz’, *Historische Zeitschrift*, no. 294, 2012, pp. 79-113, here pp. 97, 107.

⁹ See Klemann and Kudryashov, *Occupied Economies*, pp. 256-257.

¹⁰ See Scherner, *Ausbeutung*, p. 107. According to the *Reichsbank*, the German deficit on its clearing account added up to 20 billion *Reichsmark* by April 1945. See M. Oertel, ‘Die Kriegsfinanzierung’, in D. Eichholtz et al (eds.), *Geschichte der deutschen Kriegswirtschaft 1939-1945. Vol. III: 1943-1945*, Berlin, Akademie-Verlag, pp. 682-737, here p. 726.

¹¹ See e.g. the economic department of the *Reichsbank* on monetary transactions in the *Großraumwirtschaft*, 20 July 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 68; Guidelines on the upgrade of the German clearing system to a European central clearing, 30 July 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 10. Solely Göring kept insisting on wartime considerations: in a short correspondence on the *Großraumwirtschaft*, Funk exclusively focussed on post-war considerations while Göring emphasised the necessity to increase supplies for the German war economy. Letter by Funk to Göring concerning the European *Großraumwirtschaft*, 6 August 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 9; Letter by Göring to Funk concerning the continental- and *Großraumwirtschaft*, 17 August 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 9.

systematically.¹² Additionally, the founders of the central clearing system were well aware of the problems a constant one-sided German demand would cause.¹³ However, they rebutted these objections with arguments that depicted the war as a temporary and exceptional circumstance. The imminent victory would nullify this problem because peace treaty agreements would bring monetary gains and the restoration of Germany's profitable pre-war export pattern.¹⁴ Of course, it was necessary for every concept to ensure benefits for the war effort if it was to prevail. Nevertheless, the argumentative value of the necessities of war was not sufficient. Thus, the decision for and implementation of the central clearing system was informed by the discursively constructed notion of the future of Europe. It was rationalised as the 'sensible' foundation of the future German-led *Großraumwirtschaft* that also ensured the supply for the German war effort for the time being.

Apart from the primarily monetary side of European cooperation, National Socialist Germany also tackled specific trade political problems of Europe-to-be. The tasks Göring had delegated to Funk

in the context of preparing a German-led European *Großwirtschaftsraum* also comprised the adaptation of the tariff system to the necessity of intensifying the movement of goods and to the necessity of cooperation in the fields of industry, raw materials, and agriculture.¹⁵

Accordingly, in September 1940 an "inter-ministerial committee was set up to prepare the *Großwirtschaftsraum* tariff-wise"¹⁶. Delegates from the Ministry of Economics, the Ministry of Finances, and the Ministry of Nutrition and Agriculture discussed the possibilities of raising, lowering or abolishing tariffs where necessary.¹⁷ "In the

¹² See presentation by Puhl before the German institute for banking science and banking, 25 October 1940, BArch, R 2501, 7017, pp. 326-336; guidelines for a continental European economic block, 4 October 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 10.

¹³ See economic department of the *Reichsbank* on the cross-national monetary transactions after the war, July 1940, BArch, R 2501, 7017, pp. 202-208.

¹⁴ See e.g. material for elaboration on international currency balancing after the conclusion of peace, July 1940, BArch, R 2501, 6428, pp. 76-83; note on a meeting in the Ministry of Economics, 22 July 1940, printed in Hass and Schumann, *Anatomie der Aggression*, pp. 67-75; notes on questions of the economic reorganisation of Europe, 15 July 1940, BArch, R 2501, 7017, pp. 106-112; Funk's speech in front of the German and the international press on the economic reorganisation of Europe, 25 July 1940, BArch, R 2501, 7017, pp. 116-126.

¹⁵ Note by Imhoff on the first meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Tariffs Committee, 6 September 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 9.

¹⁶ Report on the fields handled by department V of the *Vierjahresplanbehörde* since the beginning of the war, 9 December 1941, RGVA, 700, 1, 41.

¹⁷ See note by Imhoff on the first meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Tariffs Committee, 6 September 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 9.

context of reorganising Europe”¹⁸, the committee sought to Europeanise the international agreement on the simplification of tariff formalities – developed by the League of Nations in the 1920s¹⁹ – and pondered initiating a European tariff conference after the war. A success in this respect would demonstrate the solidarity of Europe and could – “in the sense of the idea of a *Großraumwirtschaft* – become the prelude to further economic collective agreements for the purpose of reorganising Europe.”²⁰ Furthermore, the committee analysed the German tariff schedule to see if it “fits the requirements of a European continental economy.”²¹ Even though European tariffs were not harmonised during the war, this Inter-Ministerial Tariffs Committee clearly indicates that the New Order shaped German policy: Firstly, the creation of the committee shows already that the question of reorganising Europe economically was meaningful enough to institutionalise regular meetings of high-ranking officials. Secondly, imports from occupied territories were already exempt from tariffs.²² Thus, these meetings did not serve the war effort by maximising exploitation, but solely the purpose of actually preparing the discursively constructed New Order. Finally, every available document from the meetings of this committee attests to the paramount relevance of the New Order discourse. The arguments and thought patterns that were expressed there tied in with the dominating economic interpretive frame and the *Großraumwirtschaft* it discursively produced.

In addition to these top-level developments, the occupation policy of National Socialist Germany also reflected the New Order discourse. In the Netherlands, the policy of *Reichskommissar* Seyß-Inquart was geared towards a new Europe. In his first speech, he announced his political course:

This is what I wanted to tell the Dutch people on the occasion of taking over power in the Netherlands. We did not enjoy coming here at gunpoint. We want to be protectors and patrons in order to stay friends; but all this in the sense of the superior tasks which we have as

¹⁸ Note by Imhoff on a meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Tariffs Committee, 4 November 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 9.

¹⁹ Imhoff probably referred to an agreement on the standardisation of tariffs reached by the Economic Committee of the League of Nations in 1923. See G. Roon, ‘Völkerbund und Weltwirtschaft’, in C. Buchheim, M. Hutter, and H. James (eds.), *Zerissene Zwischenkriegszeit. Wirtschaftshistorische Beiträge*, Baden-Baden, Nomos, 1994, pp. 221-240, here p. 225.

²⁰ Note by Imhoff on a meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Tariffs Committee, 4 November 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 9.

²¹ Note by Imhoff on a meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Tariffs Committee, 10 May 1941, BArch, R 2, 10382, pp. 30-32.

²² See note by Imhoff on the first meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Tariffs Committee, 6 September 1940, RGVA, 1458, 29, 9.

Europeans. Because the point is the creation of a new Europe which follows basic principles as lodestars: national honour and common work.²³

In these basic principles, the two dominating interpretive frames of the National Socialist discursive construction of a New Order again come to the fore: Europe had to be restructured in its *völkisch* composition and its economic organisation. Since the Dutch were considered to have “good blood”,²⁴ Seyß-Inquart wanted them to participate in the reorganisation of Europe “as an equal and efficient partner”.²⁵ However, it was their behaviour that would ultimately determine the role of the Netherlands in a new Europe. Accordingly, German policy gave the Dutch a chance to recollect their Germanic blood: hoping that the Netherlands would find a way to form their political will in correspondence with the “indissoluble Greater-Germanic community of destiny”,²⁶ the occupation authorities contented themselves with supervising and directing the existing administration and demanded that Germans in the Netherlands behaved decently.²⁷ Instead of imposing one of the Dutch fascist movements as puppet government, the German authorities endorsed the *Nederlandse Unie*, a popular Dutch nationalist movement.²⁸ Furthermore, the Dutch were allowed to join the chapter *Westland* of the SS-Division *Wiking* which also took on Belgian and Scandinavian Germanic volunteers.²⁹ Even after a strike by workers, which followed the deportation of Jewish citizens, had shown the Dutch unwillingness to join forces with Germany, Seyß-Inquart still held on to the hope of winning over the Dutch for a National Socialist Europe.³⁰ He blamed the Jewish population – “elements alien to *Volk* and country” – for the insurgency and emphasised the historical bonds between the two

²³ Speech by Seyß-Inquart on occasion of the takeover of power, 29 May 1940, printed in Seyß-Inquart, *Gesammelte Reden*, pp. 7-12.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

²⁵ Speech by Seyß-Inquart at a convention of the *Auslandsorganisation* of the NSDAP, 26 July 1940, printed in *ibid.*, pp. 13-30.

²⁶ Speech by Seyß-Inquart, 27 October 1940, printed in *ibid.*, pp. 13-30.

²⁷ According to Romijn, National Socialist Germany did not completely align the Dutch administration, but started to transform it. See P. Romijn, ‘Die Nazifizierung der lokalen Verwaltung in den besetzten Niederlanden als Instrument bürokratischer Kontrolle’, in W. Benz, J. ten Cate and G. Otto (eds.), *Die Bürokratie der Okkupation. Strukturen der Herrschaft und Verwaltung im besetzten Europa*, Berlin, Metropol, 1998, pp. 93-119, here p. 117. See also B. de Wever, ‘Benelux-Staaten: Integration und Opposition’, in W. Benz, J. ten Cate and G. Otto (eds.), *Anpassung, Kollaboration, Widerstand. Kollektive Reaktionen auf die Okkupation*, Berlin, Metropol, 1996, pp. 69-115, here p. 80.

²⁸ See K. Kwiet, *Reichskommissariat Niederlande. Versuch und Scheitern nationalsozialistischer Neuordnung*, Stuttgart, Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1968, pp. 96-107.

²⁹ See Longerich, *Himmler*, p. 517.

³⁰ See G. Hirschfeld, *Fremdherrschaft und Kollaboration. Die Niederlande unter Deutscher Besatzung 1940-1945*, Stuttgart, Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1984, p. 28.

countries as well as the privileged position the Dutch enjoyed and concluded that the German historical mission would ultimately be accomplished:

Adolf Hitler, the leader of the Greater German *Reich*, the leader of all Germanic people in the new order of the *Abendland*, has given us this mission. We formed up; we may fall; he will triumph!³¹

The political attempt to win over the Germanic Dutch was accompanied by an economic policy that tried to align Dutch interests with Germany's. The extent of pillaging was considerably lower than in other countries and very soon after the occupation Seyß-Inquart opened up the opportunity to outsource production to the Netherlands. By September 1940, the Dutch economy had received orders worth 740 million guilders – about 11.5% of its social product – and started to boom.³² Seyß-Inquart's political calculation behind this policy was "to win over the Dutch for a German future".³³ Furthermore, from autumn 1940 onwards, Hans Fischböck, who was in charge of economic and financial matters in the occupied Netherlands, realised Funk's directive to reorganise the Dutch economy into the organisational forms practised in Germany.³⁴ Since he did so in cooperation with Dutch economic and political officials, he considered this measure to be a step towards the desired voluntary Nazification of the Netherlands.³⁵ The loosening of the border between the Netherlands and the *Reich* also has to be seen as a part of German New Order policy. Because the efforts to integrate the European economies had not yet yielded the expected results, Göring decreed – against the advice of Ribbentrop, Seyß-Inquart, and others – that the foreign currency border between the Netherlands and the *Reich* was to be loosened in order to further mutual economic interlocking.³⁶ By October 1941 Lammers, head of the Reich Chancellery, could state:

With the abolition of the customs border and the ensuing elimination of all foreign currency regulations, the German administration in the Netherlands has taken the necessary measures

³¹ Speech by Seyß-Inquart, 12 March 1941, printed in Seyß-Inquart, *Gesammelte Reden*, pp. 37-66.

³² See H. Klemann, 'Occupation and Industry. The Industrial Development in the Netherlands, 1940-1945', in J. Lund (ed.), *Working for the New Order*, Copenhagen, Copenhagen Business School Press, 2006, pp. 45-74, here pp. 52-55; Romijn, *Nazifizierung der lokalen Verwaltung*, p. 137.

³³ Klemann, 'Occupation and Industry', p. 52.

³⁴ In France and Luxembourg, German authorities also aligned the respective economic organisations with the German system. See M. Boldorf, 'Die gelenkte Kriegswirtschaft im besetzten Frankreich (1940-1944)', in C. Buchheim and M. Boldorf (eds.), *Europäische Volkswirtschaften unter deutscher Hegemonie 1938-1945*, Munich, Oldenbourg, pp. 109-130, here pp. 114-115.

³⁵ See Hirschfeld, *Fremdherrschaft und Kollaboration*, p. 147.

³⁶ See chapter 4.1.2; Aalders, 'Economic Penetration', p. 282-286; Breyhan's record of a meeting concerning the German-Dutch currency border, 24 October 1940, BArch, R 2, 344, pp. 109-113.

and fulfilled its task of integrating the Dutch territories into the economy of the *Reich*. The alignment of the measures of economic planning, in form and content, with the German order has been carried out to an extent that, economically, treating the Netherlands like a German territory would not encounter any obstacle.³⁷

Overall, the discursively constructed New Order served as a guiding principle of German policy in the Netherlands during the first year of occupation. Seyß-Inquart not only picked up the permissible ways of speaking about Europe, he also abided by its defining interpretive frames. The *völkisch* and the economic knowledge and belief systems had discursively established a New Order that featured an industrialised Germanic core area to which the Dutch belonged. As a frame of reference, this discursively constructed future not only gave meaning to anti-Semitic measures but also granted the racially valuable Dutch some leeway. Ultimately, the *völkisch* hope was that, the true nature of the 'Germanic brothers' would assert itself and lead to their voluntary accession to the new Europe. Additionally, this guiding principle gave meaning to measures that aimed at strengthening the Dutch economy and at aligning and interlocking it with the German one.

In other countries, whose inhabitants National Socialist officials considered racially valuable, Germany pursued a similar occupation policy. In Denmark, the hope that the country might voluntarily join the German cause even informed the collaboration with a democratically elected government.³⁸ Economically, its output of foodstuffs and favourable reactions to the New Order rhetoric launched negotiations about a currency and customs union which ultimately broke down.³⁹ Nevertheless, Danish foodstuffs mitigated German shortages, while the *Reich* arranged for the vital imports of Denmark.⁴⁰ In Belgium, the military administration pursued a spirit of friendship after an initial period of plundering.⁴¹ Furthermore, Belgians still had access to higher education, they could choose to work in Germany until March 1942, and join the SS,

³⁷ Circular by Lammers, 18 October 1941, BAArch, R 3101, 30.840, pp. 175-176.

³⁸ See E. Thomsen, *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Dänemark*, Düsseldorf, Bertelsmann, 1971, pp. 16-17.

³⁹ See *ibid.*, p. 21.

⁴⁰ See J. Lund, 'Business Elite Networks in Denmark: Adjusting to German Domination', in J. Lund (ed.), *Working for the New Order*, Copenhagen, Copenhagen Business School Press, 2006, pp. 115-128, here p. 120; J. Lund, 'Denmark and the "European New Order", 1940-1942', *Contemporary European History*, vol. 13, no. 3, 2004, pp. 305-321, here pp. 315-318; H. Winkel, 'Die wirtschaftlichen Beziehungen Deutschlands zu Dänemark in den Jahren der Besetzung 1940-1945', in F. Henning (ed.), *Probleme der national-sozialistischen Wirtschaftspolitik*, Berlin, Duncker & Humblot, 1976, pp. 119-174, here p. 136.

⁴¹ See W. Warmbrunn, *The German Occupation of Belgium, 1940-1944*, New York, Peter Lang, 1993, p. 126; Klemann, 'Occupation and Industry', pp. 51-52.

while Germany advanced economic interlocking and increased its influence on the modern industry in Belgium by restructuring the organisational system of the economy on the German model.⁴² In Norway, German occupation authorities also acted on the maxim of the New Order (see chapter 4.2.1). Overall, it seems that even a cursory glance at German occupation policy in the allegedly racially valuable countries reveals the significance of discursively constructed vision of a New Order. German occupation authorities took measures that were informed by, and were supposed to realise the vision of a European *Großraumwirtschaft* with its industrialised Germanic core area.

By contrast, German occupation policy in Poland reflected the alleged racial inferiority of the Poles from the start. The terror the *Wehrmacht* and the *Einsatzgruppen* unleashed from the outset of the September campaign were a foretaste of what was to follow.⁴³ Poland's agrarian economy and its non-Germanic population led to comparatively unscrupulous warfare and a ruthless occupation policy. In its striving for racially homogenous nations – a discursively established cornerstone of the New Order –, National Socialist Germany annexed Western regions of Poland as *Reichsgaue* – Danzig-West Prussia and Posen – and pursued a policy of Germanisation there.⁴⁴ In the eyes of Hitler, the rest of former Poland, the General Government, was the 'rubbish heap' on which Germany could dump the by-products of this "tough *Volkstumskampf*": "Jews and Polacks".⁴⁵ Ruled by Governor General Hans Frank, this pool of unwanted people should be subject to a policy of

ruthless exploitation, evacuation of all war-economically relevant stock, raw materials, machines, plants etc., utilisation of the entire labour force in the *Reich*, reducing the whole Polish economy to the minimum for the makeshift survival of the population, closing of all educational establishments [...] to prevent a Polish intelligentsia from growing again. Poland shall be treated like a colony; the Poles are to be the slaves of the Greater German world empire.⁴⁶

⁴² See Warmbrunn, *German Occupation of Belgium*, pp. 132, 182-185, 195, 225; D. Luyten, 'The Belgian Economic Elite between Economy and Politics', in J. Lund (ed.), *Working for the New Order*, Copenhagen, Copenhagen Business School Press, 2006, pp. 75-92, here p. 82.

⁴³ The campaign has justifiably been called "prelude to the war of extermination". J. Böhler, *Auftakt zum Vernichtungskrieg. Die Wehrmacht in Polen 1939*, Bonn, Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 2006.

⁴⁴ Memorandum by the NSDAP office of racial policy on the treatment of the population of the former Polish territories, 25 November 1939, BArch, NS 2, 56, pp. 243-256.

⁴⁵ Both quotes taken from notes on Hitler's instructions for Keitel, 17 October 1939, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Polen*, pp. 133-134.

⁴⁶ Frank on 3 October 1939, cited in G. Eisenblätter, *Grundlinien der Politik des Reiches gegenüber dem Generalgouvernement, 1939-1945*, PhD Thesis, Frankfurt a.M., 1969, pp. 112-113.

This colonial notion in German occupation policy was endowed with meaning by two purposes. On the one hand, German policy aimed at relieving some of the German war-economic shortages. On the other hand, it was tailored to the future of Europe:

by destroying Polish industry, its rebuilding after the war will be hampered or precluded, thus reforming Poland to its actual status as an agrarian country which depends on imports of German goods.⁴⁷

Accordingly, industry and stocks in the the General Government were plundered, schools and universities closed, intellectuals were shot or arrested, and workers were recruited – at first voluntarily, but from spring 1940 onwards by force.⁴⁸ However, by summer 1940, when the German victory in the West fuelled National Socialist ambitions for a new Europe, the projected status of the General Government partly changed. It was now considered a *Nebenland* (auxiliary country) of the *Reich* that had to serve Germany and would ultimately become German.⁴⁹ Accordingly, its Jewish population was to be deported in the long run. In this context, Hans Frank pinned his hopes on Africa, before the invasion of the Soviet Union promised to make a territory further in the East available.⁵⁰ In the short run, the *Haupttreuhandstelle Ost* pursued the policy of Germanisation by giving away seized property primarily according to *völkisch* considerations.⁵¹ And in the summer of 1942, German settlement schemes were set in motion.⁵² Economically, German occupation policy reflected the wish to turn the General Government into a pool of cheap labour and a supplier of foodstuffs from the outset. The occupation authorities tried to increase agricultural output by renewing agricultural machinery, supporting livestock farming, ensuring that high quality seeds were employed, and by carrying out meliorations.⁵³ The German need for cheap labour, however, found its expression in different measures: Despite Frank's efforts to integrate the General Government into the

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ See M. Broszat, *Nationalsozialistische Polenpolitik 1939-1945*, Stuttgart, Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1961, p. 183; W. Długoborski, 'Die deutsche Besatzungspolitik gegenüber Polen', in K. Bracher, M. Funke and H. Jacobsen (ed.), *Nationalsozialistische Diktatur 1933-1945. Eine Bilanz*, Düsseldorf, Droste, 1983, pp. 572-590, here p. 585.

⁴⁹ See B. Musiał, 'Recht und Wirtschaft im besetzten Polen (1939-1945)', in J. Bähr and R. Banken (eds.), *Das Europa des 'Dritten Reichs'. Recht, Wirtschaft, Besatzung*, Frankfurt a.M., Vittorio Klostermann, pp. 31-59, here p. 34; Rich, *Hitler's War Aims*, p. 88.

⁵⁰ See Longerich, *Politik der Vernichtung*, pp. 278, 427.

⁵¹ See Musiał, 'Recht und Wirtschaft', pp. 36, 38; R. Müller, 'Industrielle Interessenpolitik im Rahmen des "Generalplan Ost"', *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen*, Vol. 29, 1981, pp. 101-141, here p. 104.

⁵² See Eisenblätter, *Generalgouvernement*, p. 156.

⁵³ See C. Madajczyk, *Die Okkupationspolitik Nazideutschlands in Polen 1939-1945*, Berlin, Akademie-Verlag, 1987, p. 580.

German economic area, it had to stay an independent economic sphere, a kind of “dominion”,⁵⁴ because low living standards were an essential incentive for poor Polish workers to earn good money in the prosperous *Reich*.⁵⁵ Additionally, the reopening of some types of schools is telling: confined to elementary schools as well as technical and medical schools, the German liberalisation of education policy was clearly aimed at an intellectually inferior Polish population which would nevertheless be economically useful for Germany.⁵⁶ Overall, German occupation policy in the General Government aimed for a German *Herrenvolk* ruling over a racially inferior, uneducated, and ‘Jew-free’ population in an agrarian economy from which the *Reich* could draw foodstuffs and cheap labour.⁵⁷ This policy has therefore to be seen as an attempt to forcefully lower the region and its population to the level that the New Order discourse delineated. The envisaged division of labour between industrialised and racially valuable countries on the one side, and racially inferior agrarian states on the other gave meaning to this course. It seems that Frank would have preferred a different future for his *Frank-Reich*.⁵⁸ However, a system of checks and balances, within which meetings with Hitler proved to be the most effective, repeatedly restored the discursively assigned role as guiding principle.⁵⁹ The result was a policy – borne by Frank, the *Vierjahresplanbehörde*, and Himmler’s staff – that was in accordance with the New Order discourse and its defining *völkisch* and economic elements.

While the Dutch case could be compared to Germany’s occupation policy in other territories which National Socialists considered to be Germanic, German treatment of Poland is singular. Its fate differs not only because its population was considered inferior, but also because Germany had annexed its economically most relevant parts. In the eyes of Karl Hermann Frank, Secretary of State under Reich Protector von Neurath, the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia belonged to the German po-

⁵⁴ Frank’s entry in his duty diary, 27 June 1940, printed in W. Präg and W. Jacobmeyer (eds.), *Das Diensttagebuch des deutschen Generalgouverneurs in Polen 1939-1945*, Stuttgart, Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1975, pp. 244-246.

⁵⁵ See Frank’s entry in his duty diary, 31 October 1940, printed in *ibid.*, pp. 296-301.

⁵⁶ See Eisenblätter, *Generalgouvernement*, pp. 153-156.

⁵⁷ See Frank’s entry in his duty diary, 12 September 1940, printed in Präg and Jacobmeyer, *Diensttagebuch des Generalgouverneurs*, pp. 280-282.

⁵⁸ One example for this is Frank’s idea to turn the General Government into a role model of German imperial policy. By protecting and respecting other *Völker* and their peculiarities, Germany’s rule was supposed to appeal to other peoples. Frank’s entry in his duty diary, 8 March 1940, printed in Präg and Jacobmeyer, *Diensttagebuch des Generalgouverneurs*, pp. 149-152.

⁵⁹ See Frank’s entries in his duty diary, 19 January 1940 and 2 March 1940, printed in *ibid.*, pp. 90-98, 127-138.

litical and *völkisch Lebensraum* – just like Poland. Accordingly, he called for “the complete Germanisation of this area and its people”, but realised that the contribution of the Protectorate to the war effort forbade “any attack on the Czech *Volkstum*” for now.⁶⁰ Hence, National Socialist Germany prioritised the economic integration of the Protectorate. The *Reich* acquired – by means of the *Reichswerke* – the most important Czech companies, modelled the order of the economy on the German system, installed Germans in crucial positions, and abolished the customs borders.⁶¹ Politically however, it was essential to postpone the *Volkstumskampf* and to keep up the appearances of an autonomous Czech government in order to keep the industry working. Thus, in the case of the Protectorate, the economic dimension of the New Order discourse gave meaning to integrative measures but its *völkisch* dimension apparently did not outweigh the reasonableness of avoiding the detriments to the war effort that were to be expected in the course of the unavoidable *Volkstumskampf*. In this way, the needs of war spared the Czechs most of the Polish ordeal.

Overall, German European policy before the attack on the Soviet Union was strikingly consistent with the notion of Europe constructed within the New Order discourse. National Socialist Germany actually introduced the European central clearing system as a monetary system based on the *Reichsmark* and as an alternative to liberal trade system. And preparatory work for the European post-war order was institutionalised in the department VO – *Vorbereitung und Ordnung* (preparation and ordering)⁶² – and an Inter-Ministerial Tariffs Committee. Moreover, German occupation policies were in line with the discursively established vision of the future of Europe as well. The German efforts to degrade Poland to a source of cheap labour, for example, corresponded to its projected *völkisch* and economic status. German attempts to win over the local population in Germanic countries, in contrast, were in accordance

⁶⁰ Memorandum by K.H. Frank on the treatment of the ‘Czech problem’ and the future arrangement of the Bohemian Moravian space, 28 August 1940, printed in Král, *Vergangenheit warnt*, pp. 65-72.

⁶¹ By the end of 1940, the *Reichswerke* had brought 80 companies with a workforce of 150.000 under their control. See A. Teichova, ‘Instruments of Economic Control and Exploitation: the German Occupation of Bohemia and Moravia’, in R. Overy, G. Otto and J. ten Cate (eds.), “*Neuordnung*” Europas: *NS-Wirtschaftspolitik in den besetzten Gebieten*, Berlin, Metropol, 1997, pp. 83-108, here p. 99; J. Balcar and J. Kučera, *Von der Rüstammer des Reiches zum Maschinenwerk des Sozialismus. Wirtschaftslenkung in Böhmen und Mähren 1938 bis 1953*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012, p. 83-89; A. Teichova, ‘The Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (1939-1945): The Economic Dimension’, in M. Teich (ed.), *Bohemia in History*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 267-305, here p. 278.

⁶² See O. Ulshöfer, *Einflußnahme auf Wirtschaftsunternehmen in den besetzten nord-, west- und südosteuropäischen Ländern*, PhD Thesis, Tübingen, 1958, p. 40.

with the *völkisch* knowledge and belief system which predicted that racial kinship would ultimately assert itself in similar ways of thinking. Hence, German officials expected the Germanic countries to contribute to the New Order by undergoing their own *völkisch* revolution. These policies were accompanied by a proactive economic approach. All the occupied territories were incorporated into the clearing system, the organisational orders of the economy were remodelled to German standards,⁶³ production was outsourced, takeovers were supported, investments were made, and the output of the respective countries was aligned with the needs of the *Reich* while Germany tried to cater for their vital demands. Thus, within a few months, Germany had not only secured its influence on the European economies but also had become the most important trading partner of many European countries. Of course, all these measures did foster the war effort, but this policy also realised central aspects of the discursively constructed New Order. Since some of these policies were not dictated by the needs of war – takeovers and long-term investments for example⁶⁴ – it seems safe to conclude that during the first years of the war, the New Order was clearly more than propaganda. It informed and gave meaning to German policies in the occupied territories.

4.1.2 ‘Buy, when there is Blood on the Streets’ – European Expansion

Being at heart convinced of the justification of our struggle for German political, economic, and cultural freedom, we focus our entire abilities on the creation of the means for our *Volk*, our army and victory. And, with our trust in the *Führer*, we are looking forward to the future tasks which industry in Greater Germany will then support just as much as it now supports the necessities of war.⁶⁵ (Wilhelm Zangen, February 1941)

In his position as head of the *Reichsgruppe Industrie*, Wilhelm Zangen’s⁶⁶ word carried weight. However, his claim that the war was all that mattered to German industry at the moment seems to be a deviation from the truth. Many German companies were actually preparing for peace and the anticipated European post-war order.

⁶³ Even Vichy-France adopted the German system. See H. Joly, ‘The Economy of Occupied and Vichy France: Constraints and Opportunities’, in J. Lund (ed.), *Working for the New Order*, Copenhagen, Copenhagen Business School Press, 2006, pp. 93-104, here p. 100.

⁶⁴ See Overy, ‘New Order’, p. 23.

⁶⁵ Speech by Zangen on the war effort of the German industry, 7 February 1941, M, 20, 028.

⁶⁶ Wilhelm Zangen was not only head of the *Reichsgruppe Industrie* but also chairman of the *Mannesmann-Röhrenwerke AG* and managing director of the *Mannesmann* concern.

They therefore sought to benefit from the current German dominance by improving their market position.

When summing up the progress of interlocking the European economies, a meeting of representatives of German ministries, occupations authorities, and other institutions in September 1941 seemed to reflect a good degree of contentment. Even though their efforts to bring Shell, Philips, and Unilever under their control had failed, they had managed to integrate these companies into the German war effort. Moreover, the Dutch *Algemeene Kunstzijde Unie* had successfully been taken over and, by means of ‘Aryanisation’, the four largest department stores in the Netherlands had fallen into German hands – a fate that another 130 companies were to share. Additionally, German companies had acquired considerable shareholdings in Dutch heavy industry, its machine works, and its armament plants. All in all, private negotiations had led to the purchases of shares amounting to 65 million *Reichsmark* in the Netherlands. In Belgium, where Germany still strove for control over Arbed and where another 130 processes of ‘Aryanisation’ were pending, Germans had spent about 15 million *Reichsmark* on shares.⁶⁷ A mere 27 million went into French companies, but through French owners Germany managed to buy shares of companies in Southeastern Europe worth 100 million *Reichsmark*, including the majority of Mines de Bor in Yugoslavia. Overall, German acquisitions in Europe – endowed with meaning by the intent to realise the discursively constructed New Order – amounted to 270-280 million.⁶⁸

In its striving for more and longer lasting economic influence in the New Order, National Socialist Germany pursued several strategies of promoting economic interlocking (see chapter 3.1.3). However, since German eagerness to acquire shares in foreign companies often faced resistance, the process of ‘Aryanisation’ gained in importance.⁶⁹ The idea of dispossessing the Jewish in favour of the ‘Aryan’ population emerged from the *völkisch* movement during the 1920s.⁷⁰ The National Socialist re-

⁶⁷ See protocol of a meeting concerning the German acquisition of shares in Belgium, the Netherlands, and Greece and the attached report on Belgium and the Netherlands, 23 September 1941, printed in Eichholtz and Schumann, *Anatomie des Krieges*, pp. 354-358.

⁶⁸ See appendix three to the report on subject matters dealt with by the department V, June 1941, RGVA, 700, 1, 41.

⁶⁹ See Aalders, ‘Economic Penetration’, p. 289.

⁷⁰ See F. Bajohr, “‘Arisierung’ als gesellschaftlicher Prozeß – Verhalten, Strategien und Handlungsspielräume jüdischer Elgentümer und “arischer” Erwerber”, in Fritz Bauer Institut (ed.), *‘Arisierung’ im*

gime put it into practice. At first, many Jewish companies were slowly driven out of business by discrimination and boycotts.⁷¹ After the November pogrom 1938, National Socialist Germany officially passed a law that prohibited any entrepreneurial activity by Jews. From then on, the economic marginalisation of the Jewish population evolved into an essential part of German rule. After the rather uncoordinated process of 'Aryanisation' in Austria, Germany systematized its anti-Jewish measures in the following years.⁷² In every annexed or occupied territory, National Socialist officials dispossessed the Jewish population, shut down many of their businesses and distributed the rest to supposedly more valuable Germanic people.⁷³

This course of action was not only in accordance with the *völkisch* imagination of a 'Jew-free' Europe (see chapter 3.2.1) but also with the central demands of the discursively constructed economic New Order.⁷⁴ On the one hand, this becomes apparent in German prioritisation. In the allegedly Germanic territories anti-Semitic measures and the process of 'Aryanisation' were pushed on more forcefully and carried out more thoroughly than in other countries, like France for example.⁷⁵ On the other hand, German officials repeatedly emphasised the opportunities that the solution to the 'Jewish Question' in the occupied territories offered for the furthering of German economic dominance in Europe.⁷⁶ Since the penetration of the occupied economies was supposed to last far beyond the end of the war, German officials tried to keep up the appearance of legal transactions instead of simply seizing property.

The case of the *Erste Prager Malzfabrik Reiser & Söhne* is a telling example in this respect. From the many potential buyers, the *Bebca*, a subsidiary of the *Dresdner*

Nationalsozialismus. Volksgemeinschaft, Raub und Gedächtnis, Frankfurt a.M., Campus, 2000, pp. 15-30, here p. 15.

⁷¹ See M. Dean, 'Der Raub jüdischen Eigentums in Europa. Vergleichende Aspekte der nationalsozialistischen Methoden und der lokalen Reaktionen', in C. Goshler and P. Ther (eds.), *Raub und Restitution. 'Arisierung' und Rückerstattung des jüdischen Eigentums in Europa*, Frankfurt a.M., Fischer, 2003, pp. 26-40, here p. 27.

⁷² See Aly and Heim, *Vordenker der Vernichtung*, p. 276.

⁷³ In the Netherlands and Belgium the vast majority of former Jewish businesses were liquidated. See J. Dreyfus, 'Die Enteignung der Juden in Westeuropa', in C. Goshler and P. Ther (eds.), *Raub und Restitution. 'Arisierung' und Rückerstattung des jüdischen Eigentums in Europa*, Frankfurt a.M., Fischer, 2003, pp. 41-57, here p. 53.

⁷⁴ Additionally, the local population frequently participated and benefitted from these crimes as well. This complicity helped German anti-Semitic policies to obtain a much broader acceptance than the racial anti-Semitism ever could have created. See Dean, 'Raub jüdischen Eigentums', p. 35.

⁷⁵ See Dreyfus, 'Enteignung der Juden', p. 54.

⁷⁶ See e.g. Coelln on the handling of the 'Jewish Question' after the war, RGVA, 1458, 29, 8; Report on Denmark by the *Reichsgruppe Industrie*, printed in Menger et al., *Expansionsrichtung Nordeuropa*, p. 83; See Notes on a conference concerning the economic relations with the occupied countries, 6 and 11 September 1940, BArch, R 3101, 33.284, pp. 6-7.

Bank which carried out the processes of 'Aryanisation' in the Protectorate, chose the *Malzfabrik Niedersedlitz* because it promised to shift its banking operations to the *Dresdner Bank* in the future. However, the *Erste Prager Malzfabrik*, worth some 18 million koruna, turned down the initial offers of two, later three, million koruna and the *Reichsprotektor* did not comply with the request of the *Bebca* to initiate a forced 'Aryanisation'. Ultimately, the Jewish owners were forced to sell for about eight million koruna because the *Malzfabrik Niedersedlitz* had founded a new company, also called *Erste Prager Malzfabrik*, and prohibited the original company from using its name.⁷⁷ In this and other perfidious ways, German officials and companies managed to drive all Jews out of business in the Protectorate and by the end of 1942 possessions of more than six billion koruna had been transferred; mostly into German hands.⁷⁸ In other occupied territories, German officials pursued the same policies.⁷⁹ In this way, thousands of businesses changed hands or were closed down for the sake of local or German competitors.⁸⁰ The economic marginalisation of the Jewish population of Europe served two purposes: It was considered an important step towards a Europe free of Jewish influence and towards a German dominated European *Großraumwirtschaft* at the same time. Thus, the New Order, discursively construed by means of the two dominant *völkisch* and economic knowledge and belief systems, gave meaning to German anti-Jewish measures that extended beyond racial anti-Semitism.

Banks played a major role in the process of 'Aryanisation' and in increasing German economic influence.⁸¹ On the one hand, banks were eager to expand into the occupied territories themselves and they seized the opportunities that German domina-

⁷⁷ See D. Jančík, 'Die "Arisierungsaktivitäten" der Böhmisches Escompte Bank im Proektorat Böhmen und Mähren 1939-1945', in D. Ziegler (ed.), *Banken und 'Arisierungen' in Mitteleuropa während des Nationalsozialismus*, Stuttgart, Steiner, 2002, pp. 143-173, here pp. 151-154. For more detailed examples, see Wixforth, *Dresdner Bank*, pp. 322-348.

⁷⁸ See Teichova, 'Instruments of Economic Control', p. 108.

⁷⁹ However, 'Aryanisation' played a more important role in the West than in the East because in the East most Jewish property had already been confiscated during Soviet occupation. See M. Dean, 'Die Enteignung 'jüdischen Eigentums' im Reichskommissariat Ostland 1941-1944', in Fritz Bauer Institut (ed.), *'Arisierung' im Nationalsozialismus. Volksgemeinschaft, Raub und Gedächtnis*, Frankfurt a.M., Campus, 2000, pp. 201-218, here p. 203. And in the East ideological reasons outweighed economic motives in the process of dispossessing Jewish property. See D. Pohl, 'Der Raub an den Juden im besetzten Osteuropa 1939-1942', in C. Goschler and P. Ther (eds.), *Raub und Restitution. 'Arisierung' und Rückerstattung des jüdischen Eigentums in Europa*, Frankfurt a.M., Fischer, 2003, pp. 58-72, here p. 66.

⁸⁰ See e.g. Volkmann, *Luxemburg*, pp. 228-229; Aly and Heim, *Vordenker der Vernichtung*, p. 36; Dreyfus, 'Enteignung der Juden', p. 53.

⁸¹ See Aalders, 'Economic Penetration', pp. 287-289.

tion of Europe offered.⁸² The *Dresdner Bank* pursued this policy of expansion with the “future New Order in case of a final German victory in mind”.⁸³ As to the *Deutsche Bank*, statements by its management board member Hermann Josef Abs suggest that the European *Großraumwirtschaft* had become a category in his and the bank’s considerations as well:

Today, the European area of our political sphere of influence offers rich and rewarding opportunities to fully use our capacities. [...] In particular, the cooperation with our European neighbours that are possible exporters of capital will contribute to a quicker development of the forces of the European *Großraumwirtschaft* for the good of all.⁸⁴

On the other hand, German banks initiated and carried out the expansion of other German companies. Many German banks were allowed to purchase stocks – for their own accounts and on customers’ orders.⁸⁵ Sensing lucrative business, the banks became proactive and promoted the idea of a reorganised Europe to their customers. One telling example is a letter from the *Dresdner Bank* to the *Frottierweberei Lustnau*, a medium-sized company in the textile industry. The bank announced that “military and political developments have led to an acute interest in an economic penetration of the Western occupied territories.”⁸⁶ The letter continued by stressing that businesses willing to expand into Alsace, Lorraine, the Netherlands, Belgium, occupied France, Norway, or Denmark would probably receive political support. Additionally, the bank promised that “our headquarters in Berlin have made all provisions possible to initiate and carry out such transactions”⁸⁷, before expressing the hope that the *Frottierweberei Lustnau* might consult the bank in case of expansion. Thus, German banks did not only explicitly have the anticipated New Order in mind, when they expanded into occupied territories and tried to open up new markets, they also relayed their knowledge about how the discursively constructed New Order was supposed to be realised and about how far it was to reach.

⁸² While the assets of the *Deutsche Bank* doubled from 1940 to 1941, those of the *Dresdner Bank* tripled between 1938 and 1945. McElligott, ‘Reforging Mitteleuropa’, p. 149.

⁸³ Wixforth, *Dresdner Bank*, p. 667; see also J. Bähr, *Die Dresdner Bank in der Wirtschaft des Dritten Reichs*, Munich, Oldenbourg, 2006, p. 188.

⁸⁴ Speech by Abs on occasion of an event of the *Deutschen Instituts für Bankwissenschaft und Bankwesen*, 25 October 1940, printed in Opitz, *Europastrategien*, pp. 794-800.

⁸⁵ See letter by Schlotterer to German banks, 20 September 1940, R 8119 F / 7.465, pp. 70-76; letter by the Ministry Economics to numerous German banks concerning the acquisition of shares in the Netherlands, Belgium, and France, 2 October 1940, BArch, R 3101, 33.284, pp. 25-26.

⁸⁶ Letter by the *Dresdner Bank* to the *Frottierweberei Lustnau GmbH*, 2 October 1940, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Belgien, Luxemburg und den Niederlanden*, p. 119.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

In other cases, customers approached their banks of their own accord. In November 1940, for example, the *Centralverwaltung für Secundairbahnen Hermann Bachstein GmbH*, a transportation company, got in touch with the *Dresdner Bank*. Explicitly referring to “the wishes of the Ministry of Economics”,⁸⁸ the German company was wanting to take over a local railway in Belgium or the Netherlands, ideally the *Westlandsche Stroomtram Maatschappij*. After the *Dresdner Bank* forwarded a negative reply to its enquiries from its Amsterdam office, the *Handelstrust West*,⁸⁹ the *Bachstein GmbH* insisted that

[a]s the leading company in public transportation it is – in the interest of the guidelines issued by the *Reich* government – our task to seek influence in the newly-won territories. As mentioned [...], our interest is not confined to the Netherlands. All newly-won territories are of interest to us. However, the West, including Alsace-Lorraine, seems more favourable to us than the East [...].⁹⁰

After another negative reply, the *Bachstein GmbH* widened the scope of its expansionist ambitions again: Luxembourg would also be an option. And since there were no profitable local railways there, the *Bachstein GmbH* offered to take over bus routes. However, the *Dresdner Bank* had to inform the *Bachstein GmbH* that the local bus routes were run by either the *Reichsbahn* or the *Reichspost*. Even after suffering yet another setback, the *Bachstein GmbH* did not abandon its plans of expansion. Emphasising its tradition in the building and construction industry, it entrusted the *Dresdner Bank* with finding a construction company in which it could acquire an interest amounting to 200.000 *Reichsmark*. Only then did another negative reply apparently end the correspondence.⁹¹ Thus, the *Bachstein GmbH* was clearly aware of the political desire to increase German economic influence in the occupied territories and it was eager to help fulfilling this demand by expansion. Even though the anticipated Europe-to-be is not explicitly mentioned as a point of reference, it becomes clear that the company adopted the discursively established meaningfulness of the means to realise the New Order as its own.

⁸⁸ Letter by the *Centralverwaltung für Secundairbahnen Hermann Bachstein GmbH* to the *Dresdner Bank*, 7 November 1940, HAC, 500/29969-2001.BE, unnumbered.

⁸⁹ Letter by the *Dresdner Bank* to *Handelstrust West*, 9 November 1940; letter by the *Handelstrust West* to *Dresdner Bank*, 20 November 1940, HAC, 500/29969-2001.BE, unnumbered.

⁹⁰ Letter by the *Centralverwaltung für Secundairbahnen Hermann Bachstein GmbH* to the *Dresdner Bank*, 14 December 1940, HAC, 500/29969-2001.BE, unnumbered.

⁹¹ For the entire correspondence between the *Centralverwaltung für Secundairbahnen Hermann Bachstein GmbH* and the *Dresdner Bank*, see HAC, 500/29969-2001.BE, unnumbered.

Other companies were more successful in their efforts to expand. According to Neil Gregor:

From summer and autumn 1940 on, the *Daimler-Benz* concern took over the control over many factories in the occupied territories, expanded its sales and repair network over entire Europe, and licensed the production of its aircraft engines in numerous plants in the East and West.⁹²

The discursively constructed New Order did play a part in this expansion. Even though the European post-war market was not explicitly the prime point of reference at board meetings in 1940, expansion was a constant topic. On the one hand, the *Daimler-Benz* AG projected big investments in Genshagen, a plant south of Berlin. On the other hand, the Ministry of Aviation called for an integration of French plants for aircraft engines. Seeming to supplement its existing sites, *Hispano-Suiza* and one of its plants in Tarbes aroused the interest of *Daimler-Benz*.⁹³ While Wilhelm Kissel, CEO of *Daimler-Benz*, countered the wish of the Ministry of Economics to create European cartels with the objection that “the circumstances in the European *Großwirtschaftsraum*” were currently too uneven for “a uniform European regulative body”⁹⁴, he kept steering an expansionist course: he officially registered the interest of the company in the steel works Hagendingen in Lorraine and instructed inspections of several plants in Alsace which produced parts for aircraft engines.⁹⁵ Ultimately, *Daimler-Benz* acquired a production facility in Colmar and initiated considerable investments there. For Neil Gregor, this and other measures in Alsace-Lorraine were tailored to the needs of the anticipated post-war market.⁹⁶ With respect to automobile manufacturing, *Daimler-Benz* not only studied models of *Peugeot* and *Renault*, but also took a close interest in *Bugatti*, *Unic*, *Latil*, and *Saurer*. In the cases of *Unic* and *Latil*, the directors decided to pursue the acquisition of shares to obtain a dominant position in the field of truck manufacturing.⁹⁷ Eager to tread the right path between the guidelines of the the *Vierjahresplan-behörde* and those of the Ministry

⁹² N. Gregor, *Stern und Hakenkreuz. Daimler-Benz im Dritten Reich*, Berlin, Ullstein, 1997, p. 125.

⁹³ See protocol of the directors' meeting, 13/14 October 1940, DBA, I / 14.

⁹⁴ Letter by Kissel to the *Wirtschaftsgruppe* Automobile Industry, 9 October 1940, DBA, 9.27.

⁹⁵ See protocol of the directors' meeting, 4 November 1940; DBA, I / 14.

⁹⁶ See Gregor, *Daimler-Benz*, p. 125. Pohl, Habeth, and Brüninghaus, by contrast, assert a certain reluctance of *Daimler-Benz* due to imponderabilities concerning the future of Alsace. See H. Pohl, B. Brüninghaus and S. Habeth, *Die Daimler-Benz AG in den Jahren 1933 bis 1945*, Stuttgart, Steiner, 1986, p. 83. The projected investments of nearly 15 million *Reichsmark*, however, clearly sustain Gregor's assessment. See investment claim, 29 March 1941, DBA, Haspel, 6.1.

⁹⁷ See protocol of the directors' meeting, 4 November 1940; DBA, I / 14.

of Economics, *Daimler-Benz* pointed out the German interests associated with its “closer bonding” with *Unic*.⁹⁸ After a few months’ efforts, all *Daimler-Benz* needed to finalise the acquisition of 40% of *Unic*, was the consent of the Ministry of Economics. Trying to get this, Kissel addressed himself to Schlotterer and put the efforts of *Daimler-Benz* in perspective:

As you know, we entertain commercial relations with the *Société Nouvelle des Automobiles Unic* because they are licensed to build our truck diesel engines. Thus, we have in due time notified the Plenipotentiary for Motor Transport, General von Schell, that – in the context of the reorganisation of French-German cooperation that is taking place at the moment – we would like to expand this cooperation and that we accordingly intend to acquire shares in the company from the former ownership of Baron Rothschild. [...] We think that by buying these shares we are particularly serving general German interests; for if we – as a major company in automobile and engine manufacturing – own a share of the *Société Nouvelle des Automobiles Unic*, we will, despite the seemingly confined influence, be able to stay up-to-date on all activities in France and, furthermore, we will be able to have a say.⁹⁹

With the help of these references to prominent categories of the New Order discourse – the supremacy of German interests, anti-Semitism, economic interlocking, expanding German influence, aligning the European economies – the plans of *Daimler-Benz* initially found the approval of the Ministry of Economics. However, the acquisition of these shares did not in the end take place, because the aspirations of *Daimler-Benz* had lost political support.¹⁰⁰ Even repeated affirmations that its intentions were not monetary ones were of no help.¹⁰¹ Thus, the discursively constructed New Order informed the policies of *Daimler-Benz*. It not gave meaning to expansion in general and long-term investments in Alsace-Lorraine in particular but was also reflected in the ‘voluntary subordination’ of the company to the ways of speaking that the defining elements of the discourse had produced. Officially, *Daimler-Benz* intended to acquire shares of *Unic* not because the investment would pay off in Europe-to-be but because it advanced German interests.

⁹⁸ Letter by Kissel to the Plenipotentiary for Motor Transport, 19 November 1940, DBA, 11.14.

⁹⁹ Letter by Kissel to the Ministry of Economics, 11 March 1941, DBA, 11.14.

¹⁰⁰ See letter by Kissel to the Plenipotentiary for Motor Transport, 21 July 1941, DBA, 11.14. This might have had to do with a new directive that the Ministry of Economics had elaborated. It stipulated that the founding of European cartels would only be supported if the respective cartel guaranteed a clear German dominance. Even though *Daimler-Benz* was not about to found a cartel, these preconditions for political support might also have applied to large acquisitions of shares. See Wand-schneider, ‘Pläne der deutschen Elektrokonzerne’, p. 226.

¹⁰¹ See letter by Kissel to the Ministry of Economics, 5 May 1941, DBA, 11.14; Letter by Kissel to the Plenipotentiary for Motor Transport, 16 May 1941, DBA, 11.14.

The cases depicted here are not isolated deviations.¹⁰² Documents of the *IG Farbenindustrie AG*, for example, also clearly reflect the New Order discourse. The IG rhetorically forged its projected plant near Auschwitz into a weapon for the Germany *Volkstumskampf*: Otto Ambros, a member of its management board, portrayed it as a “bulwark of Germandom” and as a “nucleus for the expansion of the *Volk* in the reconquered East”.¹⁰³ And in the efforts of the IG to close the Francolor contract, which was designed to grant the IG decisive influence over the French dyestuffs industry, the motive of a reorganisation of Europe kept recurring:¹⁰⁴

Note that, set in the framework of our programme of European reorganisation, these proposals are economically very advantageous for you. They are in your interest. They are in the interest of the IG. They are above all in the interest of Europe, since, essentially, it is a question of reorganising the continent of Europe.¹⁰⁵

Moreover, the IG *Farben* did not stop at words alone. Overall, they took over seven companies in Europe and erected another seven new plants to sustain the war machine and “to develop a continental-wide organization to serve its commercial interests”.¹⁰⁶ Thus, the discursively constructed New Order informed the activities of the *IG Farbenindustrie AG*. The company explicitly referred to a reorganised Europe as the foreseeable future, substantiated and prepared for it by expanding into the occupied territories, and adopted the established ways of speaking about Europe – taken particularly from the *völkisch* interpretive repertoire – as its own.

The rhetoric of German heavy industry, however, was in some ways strangely timid (see also chapter 3.1.3). When they tried to justify expansion and takeovers, they relied on a different set of thoughts and arguments than the New Order: Friedrich Flick, for example, argued that one of his companies, the *Harpener Gesellschaft*, “indeed had an ethical claim” to either *Arbed*, the centrepiece of the Luxembourgian

¹⁰² Mommsen also sees indications that *Volkswagen* prepared for a German-dominated Europe. See H. Mommsen, ‘Erfahrungen mit der Geschichte der Volkswagenwerk GmbH im Dritten Reich’, in L. Gall and M. Pohl (eds.), *Unternehmen im Nationalsozialismus*, Munich, Beck, 1998, pp. 45-54, here pp. 53-54.

¹⁰³ Cited in R. Stokes, ‘From the IG Farben Fusion to the Establishment of BASF AG’, in W. Abels-hauser et al., *German Industry and Global Enterprise. BASF: The History of a Company*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006, pp. 206-361, here p. 305.

¹⁰⁴ Other examples are: Letter by Schnitzler to Scheidtman, 1 August 1941, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Frankreich*, p. 173; Memorandum for Gustav Schlotterer, 30 August 1940, printed in *ibid.*, pp. 118-120.

¹⁰⁵ Cited in Milward, *New Order*, p. 103.

¹⁰⁶ R. Overy, *War and Economy in the Third Reich*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 334.

heavy industry, or the *Rombacher Hüttenwerke*.¹⁰⁷ And the *Hoesch AG* addressed the *Vierjahresplanbehörde* with its – “purely production-related”¹⁰⁸ – wish to take over *Arbed*. Considering the gains of other companies in the West, going away empty-handed would seriously impede *Hoesch*’s competitiveness. Hermann Röchling vented his anger over the distribution of the Lorraine plants by contrasting the profit seeking of Flick to his own loyalty and merits during the French occupation and the founding of the *Reichswerke*.¹⁰⁹ Zangen’s speech on the occasion of Mannesmann’s 50-year jubilee, by contrast, indicates that the New Order played a role in the post-war planning of German heavy industry. After recapping the history of the company, he hinted at its future:

Finally, a *Großraumwirtschaft* is looming in Europe. It is essential to be prepared for it. At this stage, one can see the task the future presages. At *Mannesmann*, we are convinced that the concern in its current structure will not only be able to assist, but will be able and destined to contribute significantly to the inner and outer development of Germany.¹¹⁰

However, the official restraint of German heavy industry in terms of expansion contrasted with its real activities. In the context of the defeat of Poland, the industry in Upper-Silesia aroused the interest of *Röchling* and *Krupp*.¹¹¹ In the case of Norway, undersecretary Waldemar Ludwig in the Ministry of Economics stated: “On the part of the industry, particularly heavy industry, plenty of special wishes are available to the Ministry of Economics which [...] would ultimately result in a sell-out of Norway.”¹¹² In the West, several German industrialists also tried to get hold of the cream of the crop, even before the Ministry of Economics officially encouraged the companies to register their interests in September 1940.¹¹³ Herman von Hanneken, undersecretary of state in the Ministry of Economics and plenipotentiary for the iron and

¹⁰⁷ Letter by Flick to Buskühl, 23 June 1940, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Belgien, Luxemburg und den Niederlanden*, pp. 102-103.

¹⁰⁸ Letter by Bruck, director of the *Hoesch AG*, to Körner, 2 August 1940, printed in Eichholtz and Schumann, *Anatomie des Krieges*, pp. 274-275.

¹⁰⁹ See letter by Röchling to Hanneken, 22 January 1941, BArch, R 3101, 32.262, pp. 1-5.

¹¹⁰ Zangen’s speech on the occasion of the 50 year jubilee of the Mannesmann pipe mills, 16 July 1940, M, 20, 028.

¹¹¹ See report by a representative of the Ministry of Economics on viewings of plants in Upper-Silesia with representatives of German businesses, 9 July 1940, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Polen*, pp. 175-177; Both were successful. See G. Seibold, *Röchling. Kontinuität im Wandel*, Stuttgart, Jan Thorbecke, 2001, pp. 257-260; K. Priemel, *Flick. Eine Konzerngeschichte vom Kaiserreich bis zur Bundesrepublik*, Göttingen, Wallstein, 2007, p. 437.

¹¹² Note by the department for economic policy of the *IG Farben*, 11 April 1940, printed in Hass and Schumann, *Anatomie der Aggression*, p. 41.

¹¹³ See circular of the *Wirtschaftsgruppe* of the Iron and Steel Producing Industry, 7 September 1940, printed in Eichholtz, *Kriegswirtschaft*, p. 328; Gillingham, ‘Montan-Union’, pp. 393-394.

steel industry in the *Vierjahresplanbehörde*, asserted that "[e]verybody is scrambling after Rombach, Hayingen, and Differdingen"¹¹⁴ – some of the most attractive plants in the West. Thus, despite expansionist ambitions, there is no sign of German heavy industry subordinating to the repertoire of thought patterns and arguments that dominated the New Order discourse. The *Reichswerke Hermann Göring* might be a plausible explanation for this. Embodying the primacy of the *völkisch*-political will over economic rationality, the very existence of *Reichswerke* made it impossible for private heavy industrial companies to resort to the predominant argumentative patterns: after the successful expansion of the *Reichswerke* into Austria and the Protectorate, they could neither claim to be indispensable for the realisation of the New Order nor credibly claim to prioritise national over self-interests after having initiated the founding of the *Reichswerke* by refusing to take up the uneconomical processing of low quality German iron ore for the sake of autarky in 1936. Nevertheless, German heavy industry was eager to expand into the occupied territories in order to be prepared for the coming *Großraumwirtschaft*. As a discursively constructed vision of the future, the New Order might not have shaped their rhetoric but it gave meaning to their current expansionist entrepreneurial activities.

This eagerness to take advantage of German dominance in Europe, to contribute to and to prepare for the creation of a common European market seems to have shaped the activities of most companies in many economic sectors. The *Allianz AG*, a leading insurance company, made efforts to expand into the occupied territories and to harmonise the European insurance industry “not only with regard to current business”, but also with respect to “the future in the greater European space.”¹¹⁵ When *Bosch* took over a seized machine factory in Alsace, it secured for itself the option-to-buy – a step which only makes sense, if its officials believed in a German victory.¹¹⁶ The engineering company *Werner und Pfleiderer* did not expand by taking over companies, but by outsourcing production into Belgium, France, the Nether-

¹¹⁴ Hanneken, head of the department II in the Ministry of Economics, 27 August 1940, cited in Overy, *War and Economy*, p. 327.

¹¹⁵ Hilgard, board member of the *Allianz AG*, cited in G. Feldman, *Die Allianz und die deutsche Versicherungswirtschaft, 1933-1945*, Munich, Beck, 2001, p. 450.

¹¹⁶ See J. Bähr and P. Erker, *Bosch: Geschichte eines Weltunternehmens*, Munich, Beck, 2013, pp. 208-209.

lands, Denmark, and the Protectorate.¹¹⁷ Otto Fahr, chairman of the executive board, expected this “well-practised economic cooperation” to prove helpful in the “prospective European economic order”.¹¹⁸ Thus, existing business-historical studies suggest that the discursively constructed New Order became a future scenario which German companies factored in when planning their own future.

Overall, the discursively constructed New Order found its way into business life. As the most likely post-war scenario, it became meaningful in the decision-making processes of private companies. And the concept itself, as well as its constitutive arguments and thought patterns reverberated in business correspondences and letters by officials, so that the *Großraumwirtschaft*, *völkisch* issues, German post-war interests, or at least political demands, served as motives and justifications for company policies. However, beyond this rhetorical compliance, German private businesses also started to realise the New Order on the ground. They seized the opportunity for European expansion that National Socialist military victories and policies had opened up. They bought or staffed companies, set up market agreements, and contributed to the alignment of the German sphere of influence. So even without answering the question of why exactly German companies did what they did, two valuable conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, the rhetoric of German companies clearly shows that they stabilised the New Order by accepting the basic rules of the discourse on Europe: Speaking about Europe meant speaking about German benefits. Secondly, for some – if not all – private companies the discursively constructed National Socialist Europe became a category of their thinking, a matter that had to be taken into account; thus: a reality.

¹¹⁷ See A. Gehrig, *Nationalsozialistische Rüstungspolitik und unternehmerischer Entscheidungsspielraum: Vergleichende Fallstudien zur Württembergischen Maschinenbauindustrie*, Munich, De Gruyter, 1996, pp. 121-129.

¹¹⁸ Fahr, cited in *ibid.*, p. 123.

4.2 A German Continent and its Colonies (1941-1943)

The other extreme involves the exclusively economic exploitation of the occupied territories while at the same time preventing any autonomous state building. For compelling political reasons, this will apply in the majority of the Eastern territories.¹¹⁹ (*Arbeitswissenschaftliches Institut* of the German Labour Front, December 1941)

After June 1941, Europe grew. To the extent that the *Wehrmacht* pushed eastwards, the geographical scope of German New Order planning expanded. This eastward enlargement had a far-reaching impact on the National Socialist New Order. On the one hand, the allegedly inferior population that had come under German rule gave additional significance to the *völkisch* interpretive frame within the discourse. The German expectation of fertile soils and of an abundance of natural resources, on the other hand, nurtured the economic notion of putting the industrial core of Europe on a broader and sounder basis. Accordingly, both the *völkisch* and the economic dimension of the discourse amalgamated into a stable vision of a subordinated, serving role for the East, the vision of a colony.

This chapter shows that after June 1941, the discursively constructed National Socialist New Order had lost little of its relevance. In fact, German occupation policy and the actions of German companies still reflected anticipations of a new Europe. While National Socialist officials kept working on the emerging *Großraumwirtschaft*, their efforts to integrate the occupied Eastern territories led the way to “A *Völkisch* New Order” (chapter 4.2.1). German companies, in contrast, focused on the Western economies because they were not allowed to spring into action in the East right away. However, as soon as the ever-growing war needs made it seem expedient to harness the expertise and initiative of private businesses, they lived up to political expectations in the East, in the hope that it might pay off in the long run (chapter 4.2.2).

¹¹⁹ Memorandum by the *Arbeitswissenschaftliches Institut* of the German Labour Front on the utilisation of the conquered territories by the German *Volk*, December 1941, BArch, R 6, 602, pp. 11-20.

4.2.1 Volk, Race, and *Lebensraum* – A Völkisch New Order

One day, history will note – soberly, as is its wont - that this war lasted three, four, five years. This is the way it spoke about the First World War and it will be the way it speaks about the Second World War. All the sorrows, the blood, the responsibility, all the misery and grief, that occurred over these months and years and which primarily also lay heavily on the shoulders of the *Führer*, will not be noted and mentioned. After all, history records what happened and what was achieved. After the war it will note that a Greater Germanic *Reich* has been founded, primarily encompassing the East.¹²⁰ (Heinrich Himmler, September 1942)

Even though Himmler's vision of a Greater Germanic Empire might not have been the focal point for all German officials, German occupation authorities did set the re-organisation of Europe in motion. Economically, the basic principles of the projected *Großraumwirtschaft* remained unaffected by the German attack on the Soviet Union. Since National Socialist officials saw the most remarkable feature of the Newly Occupied Eastern Territories in their abundance of raw materials and their fertile soils, they saw them as destined it to become Europe's suppliers of cheap foodstuffs and natural resources. Together with the conviction that Slavs were inferior, this amounted to a colonial perspective on the newly occupied territories. The policies of National Socialist Germany reflected this discursively established concept of Europe-to-be.

In December 1942, Josef Terboven predicted a bright future for Norway in the New Order: "Among the Germanic countries I know none whose economic prospects and developmental possibilities are as extraordinary as those of Norway in the case of a German victory."¹²¹ Its richness of raw materials, its significant shipping industry, the aptitude of its people for and inclination to seafaring, and above all its unrivalled cost-effective hydro-electric power not only destined the country for a close economic confederation with the highly industrialised Germany but also constituted the strengths that Norway could contribute to the "prospective Greater European market".¹²² Even though Terboven's words might have also been aimed at further mobilising the Norwegian economy, they were not empty phrases. The discursively constructed idea of a *Großraumwirtschaft* and the role of Norway in it did shape German

¹²⁰ Himmler's speech to SS- and police force leaders, 16 September 1942, printed in Opitz, *Europasstrategien*, pp. 921-930.

¹²¹ Terboven's speech to leading Norwegian businessmen, 8 December 1942, printed in Menger et al., *Expansionsrichtung Nordeuropa*, pp. 147-148.

¹²² Ibid.

occupation policy. Shortly after the invasion, Germany integrated Norway into the central clearing system, manipulated Norwegian prices, and – in order to foster mutual exchange and to increase German influence – set up a German chamber of commerce.¹²³

However, German policy did not leave it at these elementary steps of integrating Norway into the German-led *Großraumwirtschaft*. During the occupation, National Socialist officials took measures to turn Norway into the economy it was to be in a reorganised Europe. Being integrated “into a large-scale European fishery”, Norway “would play an outstanding role in the feeding of the whole of Europe”.¹²⁴ Accordingly, Germany invested in freezing plants and decreed a rise in fish prices. Nevertheless, these efforts amounted to nothing more than a larger part of the declining fish catch in Norway being shipped fresh to Germany. Norway did not become the main source of fish for Europe but merely for Germany. Unsafe fishing grounds and the shortage of oil diminished the overall yield. And this yield was shipped to Germany.¹²⁵

There was another, much larger project which similarly failed to live up to ambitious German planning: the so-called *Leichtmetallausbau* (expansion of light metal output). Shortly after the German invasion, Terboven pinned high hopes on Norwegian hydro-electric power. He intended to expand the power plants in a way that “these sources of energy fit purposefully into the context of the new European economy.”¹²⁶ Under the auspices of Heinrich Koppenberg, CEO of the *Junkers Flugzeug- und Motorenwerke AG*, these ambitions merged with the military wish to expand the *Luftwaffe* and the vision of Norway as Europe’s prime source of energy and energy-intensive goods into a detailed plan which Göring approved in October 1940.¹²⁷ By July 1941, the plan had undergone a few revisions and stipulated a tenfold increase of Norwegian alumina output, a rise of aluminium production from 40,000 to 243,000 tons per year, and an electricity output of 700,000 kilowatts to sustain this growth.

¹²³ See F. Hodne, *The Norwegian Economy 1920-1980*, London, Croom Helm, 1983, p. 117; R. Bohn, *Reichskommissariat Norwegen. “Nationalsozialistische Neuordnung und Kriegswirtschaft”*, Munich, Oldenbourg, 2000, pp. 247, 274.

¹²⁴ Cited in *ibid.*, p. 277.

¹²⁵ See A. Milward, *The Fascist Economy in Norway*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1972, pp. 241-258.

¹²⁶ Cited in Bohn, *Reichskommissariat Norwegen*, p. 390.

¹²⁷ See F. Petrick, *Der ‘Leichtmetallausbau Norwegen’ 1940-1945. Eine Studie zur deutschen Expansions- und Okkupationspolitik in Nordeuropa*, Frankfurt a.M., Peter Lang, 1992, pp. 86-89.

Overall, the bill totalled 1.2 billion *Reichsmark*.¹²⁸ Since alumina production in Norway would not suffice for an industry of this scale, further investments in France, Croatia, and Greece were to fill the gap.¹²⁹ During the further course of the war, these plans were progressively cut down to size, but never completely abandoned.¹³⁰ Judging the outcome against the background of Germany's grand plans, the verdicts of historians are unanimous: The programme was a failure.¹³¹ However, there is also broad agreement that the *Leichtmetallausbau* "was not really a plan for Norway [...] but a plan for Europe"¹³²; for the "*Großwirtschaftsraum*"¹³³. Thus, despite not living up to the enormous expectations, German economic policy in Norway clearly attests to the significance of the discursively constructed New Order. While the *völkisch* interpretive frame defined the alleged nature of Norwegians, the economic arguments and thought patterns translated this appraisal into a clear-cut role within the envisaged European division of labour. As a *Volk* of fishers and seafarers that lived in a natural environment predestined for hydro-energy generation, Norway would focus on its strengths and supply the *Großwirtschaftsraum* of the future with energy, fish, and maritime means of transport. National Socialist officials not only frequently and explicitly mentioned this aspect of the New Order but it also endowed their massive investments in these sectors with meaning.

The discursively constructed New Order does not only become apparent in the economic policies of German occupation authorities though. As a supposedly Germanic country, Norway was expected to adopt National Socialist values voluntarily.¹³⁴ In order to help make this happen, Terboven promoted the Norwegian fascist party, the Nasjonal Samling, as "the way for the Norwegian *Volk* to win back their freedom and autonomy".¹³⁵ To speed up this process, German authorities granted the Nasjonal

¹²⁸ See Milward, *Fascist Economy in Norway*, pp. 177-180; Petrick, *Leichtmetallausbau*, p. 123.

¹²⁹ See Bohn, *Reichskommissariat Norwegen*, p. 398.

¹³⁰ See Petrick, *Leichtmetallausbau*, p. 177.

¹³¹ See Milward, *Fascist Economy in Norway*, p. 206; Bohn, *Reichskommissariat Norwegen*, p. 417; Petrick, *Leichtmetallausbau*, p. 183.

¹³² Milward, *Fascist Economy in Norway*, p. 206.

¹³³ Bohn, *Reichskommissariat Norwegen*, p. 417.

¹³⁴ See Heydrich on the basic principles of the National Socialist reorganisation of Europe, 2 October 1941, printed in Madajczyk, *Generalplan Ost*, pp. 20-22; H. Umbreit, 'Auf dem Weg zur Kontinentalherrschaft', in Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt (ed.), *Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg. Vol. 5.1: Organisation und Mobilisierung des Deutschen Machtbereichs*, Stuttgart, Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1988, pp. 3-345, here p. 53.

¹³⁵ Terboven cited in R. Bohn, 'Die Instrumentarien der Deutschen Herrschaft im Reichskommissariat Norwegen', in R. Bohn (ed.), *Die deutsche Herrschaft in den "germanischen" Ländern 1940-1945*, Stuttgart, Steiner, 1997, pp. 71-109, here p. 75.

Samling every kind of support. Monetary contributions, strategic advice, and privileged access to the media were supposed to strengthen their position within Norwegian politics.¹³⁶ The cultural propaganda of Goebbels flanked these efforts, while Himmler's conviction of shared Germanic blood expressed itself in the SS regiment *Nordland*, whose members were supposed to become "champions of the Greater Germanic idea"¹³⁷ by learning German and receiving German citizenship after two years of service.¹³⁸ Not even political setbacks deterred Germany from this course. Instead, National Socialist officials were willing to risk the consequences "because otherwise achieving the political objective will be jeopardised."¹³⁹ This political objective was still the same:

I know that, when I am speaking of the necessity of a Germanic community and of an association of the Germanic *Völker*, wide sections of the Norwegians are convinced that it might be some of my racial and relational feelings talking in my formulations, but that they ultimately serve to cloak a plain German imperialism. However, one has to be a National Socialist to realise that the awareness of the unconditional common bond between the Germanic people is really a cornerstone of our entire worldview.¹⁴⁰

German occupation policy certainly raised doubts among Norwegians, but internally, National Socialist officials clung to the idea of winning them over for a Greater Germanic Empire. According to Terboven, Hitler's "irreversible will" in September 1943 was still – once the war was won – to create "a national and socialist Norway in freedom and autonomy which would only delegate those functions into the higher level of a European community that are essential for Europe's protection for all time".¹⁴¹ Thus, German occupation policy in Norway was also informed by the *völkisch* dimension of the New Order discourse. It provided the thoughts and arguments that made it seem sensible to promote and to wait for a *völkisch* revolution in Norway

¹³⁶ See Rich, *Hitler's War Aims*, p. 126.

¹³⁷ Ibid., p. 138.

¹³⁸ See Himmler's speech on the occasion of the foundation of the Norwegian SS, 21 May 1941, printed in Menger et al., *Expansionsrichtung Nordeuropa*, p. 102; M. Moll, 'Die deutsche Propaganda in den besetzten "germanischen" Staaten Norwegen, Dänemark und Niederlande 1940-1945. Institutionen - Themen – Forschungsprobleme', in R. Bohn (ed.), *Die deutsche Herrschaft in den "germanischen" Ländern 1940-1945*, Stuttgart, Steiner, 1997, pp. 209-246, here p. 237; Rich, *Hitler's War Aims*, p. 138.

¹³⁹ Letter by Schiedermeier to Stuckart, 15 June 1942, printed in F. Petrick (ed.), *Die Okkupationspolitik des deutschen Faschismus in Dänemark und Norwegen (1940-1945)*, Berlin, Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1992, pp. 139-140.

¹⁴⁰ Terboven's speech to leading Norwegian businessmen, 8 December 1942, printed in *ibid.*, pp. 157-158.

¹⁴¹ Terboven on Hitler's declaration on the position of Norway in Europe, September 1943, printed in Neulen, *Europa und das 3. Reich*, p. 136.

which would reveal the true Germanic nature of the Norwegians and make these 'blood brothers' a faithful part of the Germanic core of Europe.

In other parts of the projected Germanic core area of Europe, National Socialist authorities steered a similar course. The SS, and in the Dutch case even the *Wehrmacht*, took on volunteers from Denmark, Belgium, and the Netherlands.¹⁴² While Seyß-Inquart also increasingly groomed the Dutch National Socialists to spark a national revolution, Hitler's general discontent with the Danish attitude resulted in the dismissal of Renthe-Fink, but not of the general objective – the “inner conquest of the country”.¹⁴³ Apart from the war effort, the *Großraumwirtschaft* remained the second economic guiding principle on which German officials acted.¹⁴⁴ In Belgium, occupation authorities reorganised the economy according to German standards and kept pushing for further economic interlocking.¹⁴⁵ In Denmark, the Ministry of Economics objected to the erection of a steel mill because it ran contrary to the envisaged *Großraumwirtschaft*.¹⁴⁶ Generally, however, Renthe-Fink was confident that the *Reich* would get what it had to demand, “having the objective of integrating Denmark into the new Europe in mind”.¹⁴⁷ Thus, the discursively constructed New Order and its *völkisch* and economic specifications still guided German occupation policies in the allegedly Germanic countries.

The idea of a Germanic community also manifested itself more widely: Germanic nations were allowed to participate “in economically opening up the Eastern space”.¹⁴⁸ For Clodius the pending tasks in the East offered the opportunity to live up to the promise of European economic solidarity which Germany had preached since

¹⁴² Hirschfeld, *Fremdherrschaft und Kollaboration*, p. 185. Thomsen, *Besatzungspolitik in Dänemark*, pp. 94-101.

¹⁴³ Directive of Ribbentrop for the newly appointed Best, 27 October 1942, printed in Menger et al., *Expansionsrichtung Nordeuropa*, pp. 142-143. In Thomsen's eyes, the telegram crisis was merely the last straw that led to Renthe-Fink's dismissal. Thomsen, *Besatzungspolitik in Dänemark*, p. 111. For Seyß-Inquart's policy, see Hirschfeld, *Fremdherrschaft und Kollaboration*, pp. 177-178.

¹⁴⁴ Appendix four to the report on the fields handled by department V of the *Vierjahresplanbehörde* since the beginning of the war: Belgium, October 1941, RGVA, 700, 1, 41.

¹⁴⁵ See Letter by Kuhn to the Ministry of Economics, 17 July 1941, RGVA, 1458, 29, 8; report on the situation of the Belgian economy, January 1942, RGVA, 1458, 29, 24.

¹⁴⁶ Ultimately, the steel mill was built because the Danish imports of steel could be reduced in this way. See Lund, 'Denmark and the New Order', p. 311.

¹⁴⁷ Memorandum by Renthe-Fink on the German influence on the Danish administration, 28 August 1942, printed in Menger et al., *Expansionsrichtung Nordeuropa*, pp. 135-139.

¹⁴⁸ Report by the *Vierjahresplanbehörde* on the results of its work, spring 1942, BArch, R 26 I, 18, pp. 1-100. For an overview of the European countries' interest and activities in the East from a collaboration perspective, see D. Eichholtz et al., *Geschichte der deutschen Kriegswirtschaft 1939-1945. Vol. III: 1943-1945*, Berlin, Akademie-Verlag, 1996, pp. 307-344.

the beginning of the war. Danes, Norwegians, and Swedes could be deployed in their respective fields of expertise.¹⁴⁹ In a meeting on this matter, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Nutrition and Agriculture, the *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*, and the *Vierjahresplanbehörde* unanimously and “without any reservation affirmed the need to enlist foreign countries for the fulfilment of the economic tasks in the East.”¹⁵⁰ Expanding the demand of Clodius by including Belgium, Finland, Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy, and Switzerland, they wanted the focus to remain on foodstuffs and raw materials because “there is no room for a constructive policy [*Aufbaupolitik*] like in Western Europe.”¹⁵¹

Rosenberg, however, voiced racial concerns. In his eyes, employing non-Germanic people might make sense economically, but for biological reasons they should not be sent to prospective German settlement regions.¹⁵² Racially valuable Dutchmen, Flemings, Norwegians, Danes, or Swiss, in contrast, could even join the German administration in the East.¹⁵³ This stance was not only in line with Himmler’s endorsement of redirecting Scandinavian emigration into the Eastern territories¹⁵⁴ but was also a reverberation of Hitler’s point of view:

We must not let go any Germanic people from Europe to America anymore. We have to channel all the Norwegians, Swedes, Danes, and Dutchmen into the Eastern territories. They will become parts of the *Reich*. We are confronted with the big task of pursuing systematic racial policy.¹⁵⁵

This policy was actually set in motion. Danish companies took over firms in the East.¹⁵⁶ After having worked in the *Ostland*, fifty Dutch craftsmen transferred to

¹⁴⁹ Memorandum by Clodius, 23 November 1941, printed in Menger et al., *Expansionsrichtung Nordeuropa*, pp. 120-122.

¹⁵⁰ Note on the engagement of foreign countries in the opening-up of the East, 24 November 1941, BArch, R 3101, 31.142, pp. 7-9.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² See letter by Rosenberg to Göring, 21 January 1942, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik Sowjetunion*, p. 244-245.

¹⁵³ See correspondence concerning the engagement of Dutch as employees of the *Kreislandwirte* in the *Reichskommissariate*, BArch, R 6, 449, pp. 10-103.

¹⁵⁴ See Himmler’s remarks on a settlement plan for the Northern Soviet Union, 16 February 1942 printed in Madajczyk, *Generalplan Ost*, pp. 470-471.

¹⁵⁵ Hitler’s table talk, 10 November 1941, printed in Opitz, *Europastrategien*, pp. 857-858.

¹⁵⁶ See Lund, ‘Denmark and the New Order’, pp. 313-314. For an account of the German negotiations with the Danish government about the role of the Danes in the East, see Thomsen, *Besatzungspolitik in Dänemark*, pp. 88-93.

Kharkov in April 1942; another 750 were to follow.¹⁵⁷ In order to “activate and harness the Germanic Europe for the East” – particularly the “racially related Dutch Volk”¹⁵⁸ – the *Nederlandsche Ost-Compagnie* was founded to coordinate the Dutch engagements.¹⁵⁹ By tailoring its employment “to the peace-time goal of a European *Großraumwirtschaft*”, National Socialist officials sought to increase the attractiveness of the *Compagnie*.¹⁶⁰ This policy of promoting Germanic participation continued throughout the war.¹⁶¹ In May 1944, German officials were still concerned with the problems of these settlers; probably because they were still aware of the big picture and clung to it: These “pioneers of opening up the East”, which preferably had large families, settled there for good, thereby “dispersing the Eastern space with Germanic people.”¹⁶² Thus, despite being occupied themselves, the Dutch were allowed to join in on the Eastern policy of National Socialist Germany. It was the *völkisch* dimension of the New Order that granted them this privilege, while the economic dimension specified the tasks. In the envisaged New Order, the East was a colony of and *Lebensraum* for the Germanic core of Europe.

The *Reichskommissariat Ostland* was part of this *Lebensraum* – at least for Rosenberg. In his eyes, the region was “predominantly Germanic” because of a “constant inflow of German blood” and of “some Swedish elements”. Accordingly, it was already “mainly oriented towards Europe” and, as a part of the “Greater Germanic *Lebensraum*”, it was to be developed into a “mighty German borderland”.¹⁶³ On the one hand, this appraisal resulted in the demand to turn “this territory into a part of the Greater German *Reich*”¹⁶⁴ by settling 250,000 Germans there, as the *Generalplan Ost* stipulated. Shortly after the German invasion, the *Einsatzgruppe A*, which oper-

¹⁵⁷ See C. Dieckmann, *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Litauen 1941-1944*, Göttingen, Wallstein, 2011, p. 779; note on Dutch craftsmen for the occupied Eastern territories, 23 April 1942, BArch, R 58, 225, p. 21. Mai also mentions Dutch settlers in Ukraine. See Mai, *Rasse und Raum*, p. 315.

¹⁵⁸ Note on the foundation of a *Nederlandsche Ost-Compagnie*, 3 June 1942, BArch, R 58, 225, pp. 70-71.

¹⁵⁹ For an analysis of the *Osteinsatz* with an emphasis on the Dutch side, see Grunert, *Europa-gedanke*, pp. 151-160.

¹⁶⁰ Note on the closing meeting on the journey of the Dutch economic committee to the occupied Eastern territories, 24 June 1942, BArch, R 58, 225, pp. 89-100.

¹⁶¹ The *Nederlandsche Ost-Compagnie*, for example, was in charge of moorland and a fishery base in the *Reichskommissariat Ostland*. Furthermore, it founded a research institution on peat. See S. Myllyniemi, *Die Neuordnung der Baltischen Länder 1941-1944*, PhD Thesis, Helsinki, 1973, p. 175.

¹⁶² Correspondence concerning the employment of Dutch people as co-workers of the *Kreislandwirte* in the *Reichskommissariate*, 4 and 19 May 1944, BArch, R 6, 450, pp. 10-25.

¹⁶³ Rosenberg’s instructions for a *Reichskommissar* in *Ostland*, 8 May 1941, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik Sowjetunion*, pp. 131-132.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

ated in the Baltic States, had already prepared the ground for the projected Germanisation. In contrast to the other *Einsatzgruppen*, it killed not only male adult Jews but aimed at “eliminating the Jews as completely as possible”.¹⁶⁵ In the end, the 30,000 relocated German settlers fell far short of the set objective, but these settlements projects and the activities of the *Einsatzgruppe A* attest to the potency of the *völkisch* New Order to endow even inhumane policies with meaning, before the war effort prevailed in the German conflict of aims.¹⁶⁶ On the other hand, the appraisal of the *Ostland* as Germanic *Lebensraum* manifested itself in a less punitive occupation policy. The admission of autonomous institutions with advisory functions, the survival of local courts, the school system, the less intrusive raids for labour, all set the *Ostland* apart from other regions of the occupied Eastern territories.¹⁶⁷ In comparison, these small concessions seem like privileges and they indicate the different status of the *Ostland* in the discursively constructed New Order.

German economic policy also reflected the prospective status of the *Ostland*. Göring had exempted those parts of it which were “designated for Germanisation” from the economic exploitation “from a colonial point of view and with colonial means”.¹⁶⁸ Hence, National Socialist officials made sure that the price level in the *Ostland* was higher than in the rest of the occupied Eastern territories.¹⁶⁹ Additionally, the *Ostland* was spared the German policy of de-industrialisation. Instead, the authorities started to privatise the economy again. However, due to many exceptions, only a few people actually got their former property back.¹⁷⁰ For war-economic and *völkisch* reasons, larger industries, wholesalers, banks, insurance and shipping companies were ex-

¹⁶⁵ Franz Walter Stahlecker, 1942, cited in Burrin, *Hitler und die Juden*, p. 126.

¹⁶⁶ See Myllyniemi, *Neuordnung der Baltischen Länder*, p. 167, Dieckmann, ‘Siedlungspolitik Litauen’, p. 118.

¹⁶⁷ Elsewhere, German authorities stifled all attempts at self-government, they did not start to model the legal system on the German one, and they deported far more people to work in Germany. Only the people in the Caucasus enjoyed more rights and were treated more considerately. T. Mulligan, *The Politics of Illusion and Empire: The Attempts to Reform German Occupation Policy in the USSR, Autumn 1942 - Summer 1943*, Ann Arbor, University Microfilms International, 1985, pp. 35-36; D. Pohl, *Die Herrschaft der Wehrmacht. Deutsche Militärbesatzung und einheimische Bevölkerung in der Sowjetunion 1941-1944*, Munich, Oldenbourg, 2008, p. 178; Rich, *Hitler's War Aims*, pp. 365, 371; Dallin, *German Rule in Russia*, pp. 191, 226-252; K. Berkhoff, *Harvest of Despair. Life and Death in Ukraine under Nazi Rule*, Cambridge, Belknap, 2004, p. 196; Rosenberg's instructions for Bräutigam, 27 October 1942, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik Sowjetunion*, pp. 341-343.

¹⁶⁸ Göring on the basic principles of economic policy in the occupied Eastern territories, 18 November 1941, BArch, R 58, 225, unnumbered.

¹⁶⁹ See Dieckmann, *Besatzungspolitik in Litauen*, p. 548; Dallin, *German Rule in Russia*, p. 191.

¹⁷⁰ See Dieckmann, *Besatzungspolitik in Litauen*, p. 648.

empt, as were companies that had been owned by Jews, the state, or foreigners.¹⁷¹ In case someone applied for a company that did not fall into one of these categories, the decision of the German authorities depended on the “general attitude of the population”¹⁷² and the “political and economic merits”¹⁷³ of the applicant. Thus, apart from rewarding collaboration, German economic policy in the Ostland promoted *völkisch* aims by prioritising German interests and aimed at establishing the *völkisch* and economic hierarchy within Europe that the New Order discourse had produced.

However, a third thought pattern – besides the war effort and *völkisch* interests – kept recurring: the need to free the *Ostland* from the clutches of Bolshevism and to reintegrate it into Europe, where it belonged. Without even mentioning the war effort, the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories justified re-privatisations as an aspect of “winning over the [...] people for Germandom.”¹⁷⁴ As long as German officials claimed “to have come to restore and save European culture”, while failing to re-establish “the characteristic cornerstone of European life, private property”¹⁷⁵, “the moral credit of the *Reich* as the champion of *abendländisch* [occidental] culture and laws is drawn into doubt”.¹⁷⁶ Göring also wanted to see the “European economic system” restored because it “guarantees top performance”.¹⁷⁷ German policy of re-privatisations has therefore to be seen in an anti-communist and European context, as the *Zentral-Handelsgesellschaft Ost*, in charge of purchasing and transferring foodstuffs from the East,¹⁷⁸ did:

In the General Districts Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, private property has been restored in consistent continuation of the policy of liquidating the Bolshevik System and of reintroducing European legal relationships, which the Greater German *Reich* had started after liberating the occupied Eastern territories.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷¹ See Funken’s suggestions for privatisation in the Baltic States, 1942, BArch, R 6, 87, pp. 43-54; fourth work report by the *Zentral-Handelsgesellschaft Ost*, 1943, RGVA, 1458, 49, 37.

¹⁷² Dieckmann, *Besatzungspolitik in Litauen*, p. 648.

¹⁷³ Cited in Myllyniemi, *Neuordnung der Baltischen Länder*, p. 223.

¹⁷⁴ Note on re-privatisations, 7 October 1941, BArch, R 6, 87, pp. 18-20.

¹⁷⁵ Note on the final settlement of the property question in *Ostland*, 22 January 1942, BArch, R 6, 88, pp. 9-10.

¹⁷⁶ Letter to the Plenipotentiary for the *Vierjahresplan*, May 1942, BArch, R 6, 88, pp. 21-22.

¹⁷⁷ Göring’s basic principles for trusteeships in the Occupied Eastern Territories, 20 May 1942, BArch, R 58, 225, pp. 46-49.

¹⁷⁸ See explanatory note of the *Wirtschaftsstab Ost* on the purchase of food and feeding stuff in the occupied Eastern territories, March 1942, BArch MA, RW 19, 758, unnumbered;

¹⁷⁹ Fourth work report by the *Zentral-Handelsgesellschaft Ost*, 1943, RGVA, 1458, 49, 37.

On the part of the new owners, the nexus with the German striving for a new European order became even more apparent. In the paperwork they had to sign in the process of taking over property, they found a form that obliged them to cooperate on “the reorganisation of Europe under the leadership of the *Reich chancellor* and the German *Volk*”¹⁸⁰. Thus, the process of restoring private property in the *Ostland* was not only a measure of *Volkstumspolitik* and an attempt at mobilising the region for the war effort by politically living up to the expectations of the population. It was also endowed with meaning by the discursively constructed New Order. As a region with a clear Germanic imprint, the *Ostland* belonged to Europe. Therefore, it made sense to National Socialist officials to pursue a policy of Europeanization.

In the *Reichskommissariat* Ukraine, by contrast, National Socialist occupation policy followed different rationales: While Rosenberg considered it a part of the “European family of *Völker*”¹⁸¹ and fit for an autonomous state,¹⁸² *Reichskommissar* Erich Koch found it “nonsensical [...] to absorb the Ukraine into the European family of nations. The Ukraine has never belonged to Europe.”¹⁸³ Despite formally being his superior, Rosenberg failed to align Koch with his aims because the racial contempt of the *Reichskommissar* was in line with discursively constructed ‘truth’ about Ukraine.¹⁸⁴ Accordingly, German policy in Ukraine did not seek to Europeanize the country. Instead, Koch declared:

The aim of our work has to be that the Ukrainians work for Germany; not that we please the *Volk* here. Ukraine has to deliver what Germany lacks. This task has to be carried out at any sacrifice.¹⁸⁵

What Germany lacked most, in the eyes of Koch, was bread. “The missing quantities of grain have to be acquired from Ukraine. [...] In the face of this task, the nourishment of the civilian population is completely irrelevant.”¹⁸⁶ After all, he considered every German “racially and biologically a thousand times more valuable than the lo-

¹⁸⁰ Myllyniemi, *Neuordnung der Baltischen Länder*, p. 223.

¹⁸¹ Rosenberg on the treatment of Ukrainians, 22 November 1941, BArch, R 6, 69, pp. 126-128

¹⁸² See Rosenberg’s instructions for a *Reichskommissar* in Ukraine, 7 May 1941, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik Sowjetunion*, pp. 128-131.

¹⁸³ Koch cited in Dallin, *German Rule in Russia*, p. 165.

¹⁸⁴ In Dallin’s words “Rosenberg wrote memoranda from his desk in Berlin; Koch made policy on the spot.” Ibid., p. 133; see also I. Kamenetsky, *Hitler’s Occupation of Ukraine (1941-1944). A Study of Totalitarian Imperialism*, Milwaukee, Marquette University Press, 1956, p. 23.

¹⁸⁵ Notes on a meeting in Rivne, 28 August 1942, BArch, R 6, 70, pp. 15-18.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

cal population".¹⁸⁷ Accordingly, Koch put the preparatory planning in motion that envisaged a famine in the East and approved the "tough but unavoidable consequences" Göring had anticipated.¹⁸⁸ The local population ranked lowest in the official allocation formula for foodstuffs because – as Riecke put it – it was better Ukrainians starved than Germans.¹⁸⁹ While city dwellers officially received 300 grams of bread per person a day in September 1941, National Socialist officials expected the rural population to manage without any rations.¹⁹⁰ At the same time, the discursively constructed long-term vision, in which there was no need for any "noteworthy industry for commodities and finished products"¹⁹¹ in the occupied Eastern territories, translated into a policy of inaction at first. Stalin's scorched-earth policy had already stripped Ukraine of most of its industry, and German officials made no efforts to undo the harm done.¹⁹² In the industrially important region of Stalino, for example, occupation authorities watched the people starve to death instead of getting the former workforce of the factories back into their jobs to get production going again.¹⁹³ Given that National Socialist officials also closed all but the four-year primary schools and deported 1.5 million Ukrainians – two thirds of all Eastern workers – to Germany, it becomes clear that German policy in Ukraine did not aim at Europeanization but at colonisation.¹⁹⁴ Thus, the German notion of Ukrainians being inferior and of Ukraine being a resource-rich and fertile land – deeply rooted in the dominant *völkisch* and economic knowledge and belief systems – informed National Socialist occupation

¹⁸⁷ Speech by Koch cited in M. Weißbecker, "Wenn hier Deutsche wohnten..." Beharrung und Veränderung im Rußlandbild Hitlers und der NSDAP', in H. Volkmann (ed.), *Das Russlandbild im Dritten Reich*, Cologne, Böhlau, 1994, pp. 9-54, here pp. 44-45.

¹⁸⁸ See guidelines of the agricultural department of the *Wirtschaftsstab Ost* for economic policy in the territories of the Soviet Union, 23 May 1941, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik Sowjetunion*, pp. 135-143; Göring on the basic principles of economic policy in the occupied Eastern territories, 18 November 1941, BArch, R 58, 225, unnumbered.

¹⁸⁹ See decree of Göring concerning the distribution of agrarian products, 1 December 1942, BArch MA, RW 31, 203, unnumbered; letter by Riecke to the department of nutrition and agriculture in Ukraine, 22 April 1942, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik Sowjetunion*, pp. 272-273.

¹⁹⁰ See Berkhoff, *Harvest of Despair*, p. 166.

¹⁹¹ Göring on the basic principles of economic policy in the occupied Eastern territories, 18 November 1941, BArch, R 58, 225, unnumbered.

¹⁹² See J. Werpup, *Ziele und Praxis der deutschen Kriegswirtschaft in der Sowjetunion 1941-1944, dargestellt an einzelnen Industriezweigen*, PhD Thesis, Bremen, 1992, p. 74.

¹⁹³ See Pohl, *Herrschaft der Wehrmacht*, pp. 191-192.

¹⁹⁴ See Berkhoff, *Harvest of Despair*, pp. 48, 273; Rich, *Hitler's War Aims*, p. 382.

policies.¹⁹⁵ German officials deemed it necessary and sensible to ruthlessly squeeze the country into the economic role it was supposed to play in Europe-to-be.

Overall, German occupation policy between 1941 and 1943 reflected the discursively constructed New Order. German officials frequently resorted to this vision and its repertoire of thoughts and arguments, and the political measures they actually took can be read as steps towards realising the *völkisch* and economic dimension of the New Order.

National Socialist officials still pursued the idea of creating a *völkisch* homogeneous Europe around a Germanic core. They still hoped that the Norwegian, Danish, Dutch, and Flemish people bethought themselves of their Nordic blood and would ultimately join the German cause. Hence, they not only made efforts to lead the respective local fascist movement to success but also let their 'blood brothers' participate in the opening up of the Newly Occupied Eastern Territories. In the East, the *völkisch* dimension of the New Order discourse informed a different occupation policy: Some regions ranked below the Germanic states, but still enjoyed certain privileges over other territories due to their alleged racial value. However, where the people were considered racially inferior, National Socialist rule largely disregarded the population.

German economic policy in the occupied territories illustrates even more plainly the endowment of meaning by means of the New Order. The idea of a European division of labour, for example, channelled German investments into Norwegian hydro-electric energy and aluminium production. Being ideally autarkic, the discursively constructed European *Großraumwirtschaft* also justified a ruthless policy in Ukraine and led to a focus on raw materials and foodstuffs. Together with the simultaneous policy of deindustrialisation,¹⁹⁶ this political course served the purpose of establishing a trade pattern in which the East was to export its primary production and to import the industrial output of Central Europe. The *Ostland* was not exempt from this conception that had shaped the German discourse on Europe for decades and found its

¹⁹⁵ In his study on German occupation policy in Belorussia, Gerlach demonstrates this correlation between economic and ideological goals. See C. Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde. Die deutsche Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik in Weißrußland 1941 bis 1944*, Hamburg, Hamburger Edition, 1999, p. 1145.

¹⁹⁶ For a detailed account of Germany's policy of deindustrialisation in Belorussia, see *ibid.*, pp. 385-418; also P. Sanders, 'Population, Policy and Economic Exploitation. The German Occupation of Byelorussia (1941-44)', in J. Lund (ed.), *Working for the New Order*, Copenhagen, Copenhagen Business School Press, 2006, pp. 157-174, here pp. 169-171.

way into the New Order. However, its alleged *völkisch* value and its status as German *Lebensraum* led National Socialist officials to strive for economic reforms which were explicitly marked as the reintroduction of European standards.

Of course, many of the political measures that the German occupation authorities took were also meaningful from a war-economic angle. Extracting as much foodstuff as possible from the occupied Eastern territories facilitated feeding the *Wehrmacht*, just as the rising aluminium production in Norway was supposed to reinforce the *Luftwaffe*. National Socialist efforts to expand the Norwegian fishing industry were aimed at compensating for the loss of other animal protein, and the engagement of other Germanic states in the occupied Eastern territories can be blamed on a shortage of manpower. However, German policy seems to have followed a long-term rationale at the same time: creating the discursively established New Order. Even though National Socialist Germany tried to get hold of as much industrial output as possible elsewhere – for example by still pushing for economic integration in the West –, it refused to rebuild, or even dismantled industry in the East. This might have been a matter of priorities, but it also served the purpose of arriving at the economic structure envisaged in the future New Order. This is also true of German policy in Norway: The investments there were not only tailored to short-term considerations but were accompanied by thoughts and arguments that revolved around the New Order, they were borne by companies which had the post-war market in mind,¹⁹⁷ and they triggered a Europe-wide planning of the production chain. Concerning the participation of Dutch and Danes in the occupied Eastern territories, the meaningfulness of the discursively constructed New Order not only became apparent in the associated internal discussion but also determined which countries were allowed to send people to the East as well as where and how they were to be employed. Moreover, the German policy of re-privatisation in the *Reichskommissariat Ostland* was certainly supposed to alleviate the fears of the local population, but the internal documents attest to the intention of making the *Ostland* European. Thus, the reconciliation of short-term needs with long-term objectives and of the *völkisch* interpretive frame with economic lines of reasoning apparently was not only a feature of the New Order discourse (see chapter 3.2.2) but also of German efforts to realise it.

¹⁹⁷ Even for the Norwegian participants, the anticipated New Order played a role. See H. Froland, 'Nazi Planning and the Aluminum Industry', in F. Guirao, F. Lynch and S. Pérez (eds.), *Alan S. Milward and a Century of European Change*, New York, Routledge, pp. 168-188, here 2012, p. 187.

4.2.2 'The Trend is Your Friend' – Eastwards

For Germany's economic future, the Occupied Eastern Territories will have an importance that can hardly be overestimated. There, the German *Volk* will find the *Lebensraum* [living space], for the sake of which this war has to be fought. The transformation of the economy in these territories, and moreover its expansion, demand extraordinary efforts [...]. Germany's big branch banks collectively place themselves at your disposal, *Herr Reichsminister* [Funk], for the fulfilment of this great task.¹⁹⁸ (Joint letter of four major German banks to Walther Funk, January 1942)

Even though not all German companies expressed their willingness to embrace political wishes as commands as openly as the major German banks in this joint letter, most of them followed the German thrust eastwards. The attack on the Soviet Union may have taken some of them by surprise, but soon many of them started to focus on the opportunities the East offered. In accordance with the New Order discourse, businessmen – just like political institutions – pondered on how to integrate the Newly Occupied Eastern Territories into the new Europe. For them, this meant opening up a market and getting hold of the plants and factories whose former owner, the Soviet state, was about to vanish.

Shortly after the German attack on the Soviet Union, private companies already showed an interest in the economic values of the East and started to eye up facilities in the East.¹⁹⁹ This is hardly surprising, given that publicly owned plants and factories could now fall to the *Reich* and that German businessmen were well aware of what the East had to offer in their operating area. While some of them had embedded skilled personnel into the *Wehrmacht*, others relied on the overviews that the *Reichs-* and *Wirtschaftsgruppen* compiled and circulated from May 1941 onwards.²⁰⁰ One such analysis bore the title "*Großraumwirtschaft*",²⁰¹ while others concerned themselves with questions of privatisations and the rationalisation of the metal industries

¹⁹⁸ Letter by the *Bank der Deutschen Arbeit*, the *Commerzbank*, the *Deutsche Bank*, and the *Dresdner Bank* to Funk, 5 January 1942. Cited in Wixforth, *Dresdner Bank*, p. 622.

¹⁹⁹ See note for Flick, 26 June 1941, printed in K. Thieleke (ed.) 1965, *Fall 5. Anklageplädoyer, ausgewählte Dokumente, Urteil des Flick-Prozesses*, Berlin, VEB Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1965, p. 257; D. Eichholtz, *Geschichte der deutschen Kriegswirtschaft 1939-1945. Vol. II: 1941-1943*, Berlin, Akademie-Verlag, 1985, p. 393; Werpup, *Ziele und Praxis*, pp. 43-45.

²⁰⁰ See e.g. letter by Kotthaus, director of *Carl Zeiss*, concerning a meeting with General Loeb, head of the *Heereswaffenamt*, 30 June 1941, printed in Eichholtz and Schumann, *Anatomie des Krieges*, pp. 340-341; circular by the *Reichsgruppe Industrie*, 14 July 1941, CZA, 3737, unnumbered; Company report on the iron and steel producing plants in Russia, August 1941, M, 81, 55.

²⁰¹ Eichholtz, *Geschichte der deutschen Kriegswirtschaft. Vol. II*, 1985, p. 394.

for the “Greater European Economic Area”.²⁰² Thus, German companies and their self-administrative bodies were eager to seize the opportunities the newly won East offered. Within their considerations, the discursively constructed New Order was a crucial point of reference.

However, most German companies were well aware that their prospects of gaining a foothold in the East were limited for the time being. The foundation of several *Ostgesellschaften* indicated a different course than in the West. Reciprocal shareholdings and takeovers were not broadly promoted and it seemed doubtful whether the local industry had any future at all. Odilo Burkart, chief representative of the *Flick* concern, interpreted the *Ostgesellschaften* as an attempt to temporarily prevent competition for the best industrial plants in the East, but he expected a wave of privatisations after the war.²⁰³ The *Ostverbindungsstelle* of the *IG Farben* also characterised the *Ostgesellschaften* as temporary bodies, whose function of linking the Germany economy with the East was to be taken over by private companies after the war.²⁰⁴ Nevertheless, the *Ostverbindungsstelle* advised the board of directors to act with restraint, because

concerning the possibilities of participating in the build-up in the Eastern territories, once again the basic principle should be mentioned that the East is to be seen as a purely agricultural and raw materials territory. The guidelines for the measures to be taken in the future stipulate an indiscriminate evacuation of the industrial cities in the South, and an evacuation of all industrially usable machinery [...]. All efforts shall exclusively focus on agriculture and mineral oil.²⁰⁵

Nevertheless, several German companies already tried to get hold of interesting plants. AEG (General Electricity Company), for example, took over a plant for electric motors in Latvia, while the *Reichskommissar's* staff attempted to undo this seizure.²⁰⁶ Other companies, by contrast, confined themselves to placing personnel at

²⁰² Report by the *Fachgruppe* Metal Producing Industry, February 1942, printed in Eichholtz and Schumann, *Anatomie des Krieges*, pp. 383-385.

²⁰³ See note by Burkhart 13 August 1941, printed in *ibid.*, pp. 348-349.

²⁰⁴ See confidential report by the *Ostverbindungsstelle* on Russia, November 1941, BArch, R 6, 408, pp. 11-18. Parts of this document can be found in Müller, *Industrielle Interessenpolitik*, pp. 101-141. However, he dates this document to January 1942.

²⁰⁵ Confidential report by the *Ostverbindungsstelle* on Russia, November 1941, BArch, R 6, 408, pp. 11-18.

²⁰⁶ See note by Weiß on a meeting with Timm from the staff of the *Reichskommissar* in Riga, 17 October 1941, printed in Thieleke, *Fall 5*, pp. 261-263.

the disposal of the *Ostgesellschaften*.²⁰⁷ Thus, most German businesses were aware of what future the discursively constructed New Order stipulated for the East and complied with it. They had to be patient: As long as the Russian bear was not shot, the fur was not to be sold.

One company that showed an interest in the Eastern industry but refrained from taking actions that violated political guidelines, was the *Mannesmann AG*. The company had already expanded into Alsace-Lorraine, France, and the General Government before June 1941.²⁰⁸ Additionally, and explicitly with their future European market shares in mind, *Mannesmann* thought about purchasing *van Leer* – a company earmarked for ‘Aryanisation’²⁰⁹ – in the Netherlands and took an interest in *Titan Nadrag Calan*, the only profitable Romanian heavy industrial complex, not least because of “the tendency for a European economic interconnection”.²¹⁰ This expansionist course was partly driven by the wish to vertically integrate the production of the concern, partly by the intent to regain former sales markets, and partly by the ambition to open up new operating areas.²¹¹ And of course, it was a response to “the European conditions altered by the military and political situation”.²¹² In fact, German efforts to realise the New Order in the West offered promising investment opportunities: *Mannesmann* was to deliver the lion’s share of pipes for an oil pipeline which was under construction in Southeastern Europe, while the expansion of Norwegian hydropower plants and of its aluminium industry increased demand for steel pipes, the core product of the company. Consequently, *Mannesmann* sought to safeguard its own supply. This thought, for example, justified the purchase of stocks of a Slovakian company that produced asbestos – essential for asbestos cement tubes.²¹³

²⁰⁷ See Kühnen’s note on a meeting, 15 November 1941, HAC, 500/29969-2001.BE, unnumbered.

²⁰⁸ See report on the development of the affiliates in the third quarter of 1940, M, 11, 106; record on the meeting of the supervisory board, 13 November 1940, M, 11, 69.

²⁰⁹ Mannesmann took over several parts of the *Van Leer* concern to strengthen its position in the Dutch market and in the market for special barrels. See report of the board of directors, 23 August 1941, M 11, 107; Report on the development of the affiliates in the third quarter of 1940, M, 11, 106.

²¹⁰ Protocol of the supervisory board meeting, 9 April 1942, M, 11, 108.

²¹¹ The smelting works in which *Mannesmann* took an interest were supposed to substitute the purchase of semi-finished goods. Protocol of the supervisory board meeting, 13 November 1940, M, 11, 106; draft of the report by the managing board on the business year 1941, 7 May 1942, M, 12, 095. *Mannesmann* also purchased several companies in the West to improve its trade network. See report by the managing board on the business year 1942, 6 May 1942, M, 10, 022; record on the board meeting, 5 May 1941, M, 12, 017.

²¹² Protocol of the supervisory board meeting, 6 May 1941, M, 11, 107.

²¹³ See draft of a report by the managing board for the supervisory board, 18 October 1941, M, 11, 107.

Since being prepared for the post-war market of the New Order seems to have been a constant of the business strategy of *Mannesmann*, the German attack on the Soviet Union also left its mark. The company promptly established a Russian department, got an overview of all pipe mills on Russian soil, and placed staff at the disposal of the *Ostgesellschaften*, hoping that this might prove advantageous.²¹⁴ Even though Wilhelm Zangen, head of the *Reichgruppe Industrie*, chairman of the *Mannesmann-Röhrenwerke AG* and managing director of the *Mannesmann* concern, would have preferred a solution in which entire factories were assigned to German companies, *Mannesmann* played along and accepted that the East was barred for private initiative for the moment.²¹⁵ However, after assuring the supervisory board that “we attentively keep an eye on possible interests of our concern in the Newly Occupied Eastern Territories”²¹⁶, *Mannesmann* did indeed found a subsidiary in Riga – the very first non-state-related company registered there, as was noted.²¹⁷ Already in May 1942, another subsidiary was founded in Rivne because “it cannot be a mistake to have a base in an area that stretches across 700 km from North to South and 200 to 400 km from West to East”.²¹⁸ Subsidiaries in Kiev and Kharkiv soon followed.²¹⁹

Subsequent to the political turnaround of summer 1942, the considerations of the management of *Mannesmann* started to extend beyond expanding the trade network of the company eastwards. Now, the opportunity arose to take over factories in the East.²²⁰ One potential candidate for a takeover was a plant in Dnepropetrovsk in Ukraine.²²¹ However, *Mannesmann* settled for a smaller plant in Taganrog and wanted to rebuild it as fast as possible.²²² Even though the contracts under which *Mannesmann* had to operate the plant contained “clauses that would normally be unacceptable”, the board decided to sign them in November 1942. After all, the plant

²¹⁴ See record of the board meeting, 2 July 1941, M, 12, 017; company report on the iron and steel producing plants in Russia, August 1941, M, 81, 55; record of the board meeting, 11 September 1941, M, 12, 017; record of the board meeting, 5 November 1941, M, 12, 017.

²¹⁵ See record of the board meeting, 11 September 1941, M, 12, 017.

²¹⁶ Note for Mr. Wieneke concerning the meeting of the supervisory board, 13 February 1942, M, 11, 108.

²¹⁷ See protocol of the supervisory board meeting, 6 May 1942, M, 11, 108.

²¹⁸ Letter by Robert, 13 June 1942, M, 16, 685.

²¹⁹ Record of the board meeting, 15 June 1942, M, 12, 016.3.

²²⁰ See *ibid.*

²²¹ See record of the board meeting, 8 September 1942, M, 12, 016.3.

²²² See record of a talk between Zangen and Rösler, 17 October 1942, M, 12, 016.4; protocol of a board meeting with the head of the supervisory board, 29 October 1942, M, 12, 016.3.

was conveniently located by the Sea of Azov, contained a modern pipe mill, other companies – *Krupp* and the *Vereinigte Stahlwerke* for example – pursued similar interests in the East, and a refusal might be “unfavourably interpreted” and carried the risk that the company “would lose touch”.²²³ Thus, despite its concerns, *Mannesmann* participated in the “officially promoted enlisting of the Eastern territories for industrial war- and peacetime tasks”²²⁴.

Even though *Mannesmann* sought to “focus on its very own fields” instead of lapsing into “an unsystematic expansion”,²²⁵ the company grew considerably during the war: In 1938, an internal overview showed that *Mannesmann* maintained 53 companies in Europe, excluding the *Reich* territory.²²⁶ A similar compilation of July 1945, by contrast, reported 127 non-German European subsidiaries for the year 1944. At that time, *Mannesmann* commanded a network reaching from Paris in the West to Dnepropetrovsk in the East and from Narvik in the North to Sarajevo and Belgrade in the Southeast.²²⁷ Even though many of these additional subsidiaries were newly-founded trading companies, this expansion has to be seen as an adaptation to the anticipated Europe-to-be. As early as the summer of 1940, Zangen had spoken of a *Großraumwirtschaft* for which *Mannesmann* had to prepare (see chapter 4.1.2)²²⁸ and in the wake of the war economy usurping the New Order discourse, he depicted the armaments industry as “the forges of the *abendländisch* continent free of any foreign rule”. Moreover, he emphasised that

in his last speech, the *Führer* has said that the war we are waging is being fought for Europe. German industry has to draw the corresponding lesson from this. It has to expand in a geopolitical respect. It has to take a stand for Europe more than ever before and of its own accord.²²⁹

²²³ Protocol of a board meeting, 16 November 1942, M, 12, 016.3. See also See protocol of the supervisory board meeting, 25 November 1942, M, 11, 108.

²²⁴ With this phrase, which was discarded in the final version, the managing board intended to explain its engagement in the East to the supervisory board. Draft of the managing board’s report for the supervisory board on the third quarter of 1942, 25 November 1942, M, 11, 108.

²²⁵ Note on a managing board meeting, 6 January 1943, M, 12, 017.

²²⁶ See alphabetical list in addition to the overview map of the *Mannesmann* concern, 1938, M, 12, 995.2.

²²⁷ See alphabetical list in addition to the overview map of the *Mannesmann* concern, 13 July 1945, M, 12, 995.2.

²²⁸ See Zangen’s speech on occasion of the 50 year jubilee of the *Mannesmann* pipe mills, 16 July 1940, M, 20, 028.

²²⁹ Zangen’s speech ‘Industrie im Wandel der Zeit’, 12 December 1942, M, 20, 028.

Thus, in the case of *Mannesmann*, the discursively constructed New Order did shape business policy. Even though the concern pursued its own agenda, it did so within the boundaries set by the German sphere of influence. The intensity and the geographical thrust of its growth during the war were not only in accordance with, but also helped to realise, this New Order. Among the broad spectrum of motives that drove the expansion of the concern, the expected Europe-to-be constituted an important point of reference.

Within German heavy industry, *Mannesmann* was by no means an exception. *Flick*, for example, took on a trusteeship over the *Rombacher Hüttenwerke* in Lorraine which would have become a part of his concern once the peace treaties had been signed.²³⁰ And in the East, one of *Flick's* companies, the *Mitteldeutsche Stahlwerke* teamed up with the *Reichswerke* in the *Dnjepr Stahl GmbH*. This joint venture operated all industrial facilities along the Dnieper River.²³¹ Furthermore, *Flick* competed with *Krupp* for *Vairogs*, a factory for carriages in Riga, and prevailed in the end.²³² According to Priemel, this interest in *Vairogs* rested upon post-war considerations.²³³ *Friedrich Krupp AG* also seized opportunities that German dominance offered: in Silesia, *Krupp* administered the *Bismarckhütte*, it extracted molybdenum in Norway, chromium in Southeastern Europe, and, together with *IG Farben* and the *Metallgesellschaft*, it exploited Finnish nickel deposits.²³⁴ Additionally, *Krupp* took an interest in coalmines in the Netherlands, the manganese ore mines of Azagour near Marrakesh, and the Greek mining industry.²³⁵ In the occupied Eastern territories, *Krupp* controlled the *Azovstal* in Mariupol, a mechanical engineering company in Krama-

²³⁰ See Bähr et al., *Flick-Konzern*, pp. 439-453.

²³¹ See Priemel, *Flick*, p. 462.

²³² See note by Küttner for *Flick*, 26 June 1942, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik Sowjetunion*, p. 298; letter by the *Heereswaffenamt* at the Army High Command to the *Friedrich Krupp AG*, 9 July 1942, printed in *ibid.*, pp. 298-299.

²³³ See Priemel, *Flick*, p. 459.

²³⁴ See Bähr et al.; *Flick-Konzern*, p. 411; letter by the Ministry of Economics to the *Wehrmacht* office of military economics and armaments, 20 September 1941, printed in Menger et al., *Expansionsrichtung Nordeuropa*, p. 113; Thörner, *Deutsche Südosteuropapläne*, p. 491; McElligott, 'Reforging Mitteleuropa', p. 148; letter by the *sächsischen Nickelhütten* to the Ministry of Economics, 2 November 1940, BAArch, R 3101, 33.284, pp. 59-61.

²³⁵ See letter by the board of directors of the *Friedrich Krupp AG* to the mining department of the Ministry of Economics, 29 May 1940, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Belgien, Luxemburg und den Niederlanden*, pp. 96-97; letter by the *Friedrich Krupp AG* to the trade department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 3 April 1941, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Frankreich*, p. 159; protocol of the inter-ministerial meeting on capital participation in the Netherlands, Belgium, and Greece, 23 September 1941, printed in Eichholtz and Schumann, *Anatomie des Krieges*, pp. 354-358. For details on the activities in Greece, see M. Mazower, *Inside Hitler's Greece. The Experience of Occupation, 1941-44*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1993, p. 24.

torsk, and a tractor factory in Berdyansk.²³⁶ Even though the existing literature on the history of *Krupp* does not name the motives behind this expansion,²³⁷ its pattern resembles that of other German heavy industrial companies. It suggests that the New Order gave meaning to expansion as an improvement of the market position and to horizontal integration in anticipation of the expected autarkic European economy.

Expansion was not only the order of the day for heavy industry. The *Reemtsma* concern, the biggest German producer of cigarettes, also expanded during the war. Having been cut off from its vital tobacco imports, the company elected the Caucasus and the Crimea to fill this gap. In its “European tobacco plan”, these regions figured as the cornerstones to “secure the future supply of the German cigarette industry from any danger and allow for an increase in production.”²³⁸ However, due to the anti-smoking stance of the NSDAP, the current business model of *Reemtsma* seemed to be in jeopardy. Accordingly, the company simultaneously pursued a course of diversification in order to prepare for a National Socialist Europe. Between 1938 and 1942, *Reemtsma* became involved in the fishing and the timber industries, frozen foods, mineral oil, and ocean shipping in Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands, the Protectorate, Slovakia, and Southeastern Europe.²³⁹ Thus, the expansion of *Reemtsma* can be characterised as an anticipation of the discursively constructed New Order: the interest in the tobacco-growing regions in the East was the answer of the company to autarky and the diversification was not only a response to political tendencies but also focussed on branches that promised growth in the new Europe.²⁴⁰

Other non-heavy industrial companies also pursued an expansionist course in anticipation of Europe-to-be and were well aware of its defining arguments and thought patterns. In search of a weaving mill that it could take over, the medium sized German textile enterprise *Conze & Colsmann* contacted the *Dresdner Bank*. Being

²³⁶ See H. James, *Krupp. Deutsche Legende und globales Unternehmen*, Munich, Beck, 2011, p. 219.

²³⁷ See *ibid.* and W. Abelshauser, ‘Rüstungsschmiede der Nation? Der Kruppkonzern im Dritten Reich und in der Nachkriegszeit’, in L. Gall (ed.), *Krupp im 20. Jahrhundert*, Berlin, Siedler, 2002, pp. 267-472.

²³⁸ K. Roth and J.P. Abraham, *Reemtsma auf der Krim. Tabakproduktion und Zwangsarbeit unter der deutschen Besatzungsherrschaft 1941-1944*, Hamburg, Edition Nautilus, 2011, pp. 264, 283.

²³⁹ See *ibid.*, pp. 42-58.

²⁴⁰ The interest *Reemtsma* took in the Norwegian fishing industry and in Slovakia’s timber industry was based on the expertise of the *Vierjahresplanbehörde*. The investments in ocean shipping, however, were borne of the idea that a thriving German-dominated Europe and its colonies would cause a boom in maritime trade. See *ibid.*

aware of the political priorities in the *Warthegau*, the advice of the *Dresdner Bank* was to tailor any application to *Volkstumspolitik*.²⁴¹ The *Universum Film AG* (UFA), a motion picture production company, also referred to political wishes when it mustered ten million *Reichsmark* to take over French cinemas and theatres in the context of founding the *Continental Film*.²⁴² The *Bremer Baumwoll Aktiengesellschaft*, in contrast, willingly administered all cotton-related enterprises in Ukraine, Crimea, and the Rostov region because it wanted to avoid people being put in charge who might follow the political priorities of the party instead of economic ones.²⁴³ The trading company *Alfred C. Toepfer*, not only expanded into Krakow and Lviv but its CEO also joined an *Ostgesellschaft* for six months in order to ensure the company “a field of operation in the grain trade of Russia for the post-war era.”²⁴⁴ In Gerlach’s eyes, these efforts were not part of a “temporary evasion”, but of a “long-term reorientation”.²⁴⁵ Thus, the discursively constructed New Order as the most likely future scenario provided German companies with a reason to expand and with suitable arguments to justify this expansion.

Overall, German companies kept expanding after the attack on the Soviet Union. They did so in various forms, following different strategies, and for a broad spectrum of reasons, but the significance of the discursively constructed New Order becomes apparent in all of them. It geographically defined the planning horizon for German companies. For the time being, German political power facilitated expansion in Europe, but barred the rest of the world in general and the occupied Eastern territories for almost a year. The prospect of a largely autarkic European economy, however, necessitated adjustments for the future. Thus, *Krupp*, *Reemtsma*, and the *Bremer Baumwoll Aktiengesellschaft*, for example, sought to substitute previous imports by sources that lay within the German sphere of influence. Moreover, the New Order promoted these expansionist steps by the demand it created. *Mannesmann*

²⁴¹ See correspondence between *Conze & Colsmann* and the *Dresdner Bank* between October and December 1941, HAC, 500/29969-2001.BE, unnumbered.

²⁴² See note on a meeting of the economic committee of the *Universum Film AG*, 28 October 1941, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Frankreich*, pp. 181-182.

²⁴³ See K. Linne, ‘Bremer Baumwollhändler in den besetzten Gebieten 1941-1944’, *Bremisches Jahrbuch*, no. 81, 2002, pp. 126-155, here pp. 137-139.

²⁴⁴ Cited in A. Sywottek, ‘Das Handelshaus Alfred C. Toepfer (1920-1961)’, in G. Kreis et al. (eds.), *Alfred Toepfer. Stifter und Kaufmann. Bausteine einer Biographie - Kritische Bestandsaufnahme*, Hamburg, Christians, 2000, pp. 323-362, here p. 337.

²⁴⁵ C. Gerlach, ‘Die Ostexpansion des Handelsunternehmens Alfred C. Toepfer 1940-1945’, in G. Kreis et al. (eds.), *Alfred Toepfer. Stifter und Kaufmann. Bausteine einer Biographie - Kritische Bestandsaufnahme*, Hamburg, Christians, 2000, pp. 363-387, here p. 366.

and *Reemtsma*, for instance, responded to the demand that the reorganisation of Europe gave reason to expect. The power industry of Norway and its fishing grounds, for example, were bound to gain in importance. Of course, these steps already promised profits during the war, but the strategy of most companies tried to reconcile the current demand with their long-term considerations. Priemel ascertained this in the case of *Flick*, Gerlach did so in regard to *Alfred C. Toepfer*, the records of the managing board of *Mannesmann* point in that direction, and the general interest of German companies in ownership claims show that the order of the day was not only adjusting to the needs of war but also to the expected Europe-to-be. In addition to abiding by, taking advantage of, responding to, and preparing for the New Order, the rhetoric of German companies reflected their awareness of political concepts. They tailored their correspondence to political priorities, as advised by the *Dresdner Bank*, they toed the official political line, like *Mannesmann* chairman Wilhelm Zangen, or they offered National Socialist officials their services in the course of creating a new Europe, like the major German banks. Thus, even the few exemplary German companies whose actions and motives have been sketched out here, indicate that the discursively constructed New Order became an essential point of reference in the decision-making processes of German companies: As a framework it set boundaries, as a German sphere of influence it facilitated expansion, as a factual policy it created demand, as a future scenario it called for preparation, and as a political *dictum* it gave reason to rhetorical and *de facto* compliance.

4.3 A European Community Fighting the Bolshevist Threat (1943-1945)

Our programme is the salvation of Europe from the barbarians in the East and the West; they are about to eradicate the achievements of European culture, to brutally destroy the most sublime works of a spirit that has enlightened the world for centuries and given it the entire wealth of human progress.²⁴⁶ (Otto Dietrich, December 1944)

When Otto Dietrich, a SS-*Obergruppenführer* and state secretary in the Ministry of Propaganda, reiterated the omnipresent dichotomy between a German victory and Europe's doom in December 1944, his depiction of Europe as a cultural community fitted the mould. During the last years of the war, ramping up armaments output and freeing workers for the fronts had increasingly become the maxim of German policy, so that notions of Europe had gained ground which promised to win over the people in occupied Europe for the German cause (see chapter 3.3.1 and 3.3.2). However, the intention to turn Europe into a war-economic community did not only manifest itself in rhetoric of National Socialist Germany but it also resulted in a policy geared towards streamlining the European economies for war.

After 1943, the increasing prioritisation of the war effort did not silence the New Order discourse, nor did it reduce Europe to a solely propagandistic term. In fact, National Socialist officials took measures to turn Europe into a "Fighting New Order" (4.3.1). They offered larger incentives for cooperation and stepped in more harshly against resistance, they tried to mitigate obstacles and to avoid steps that could antagonise the subjugated people. For some time, German companies kept backing this policy because the idea of intensified European cooperation still attracted the support of private business. However, as soon as they realised that the war was lost, they started "Post-War Preparations" (4.3.2). The Europe they prepared for was not the discursively constructed National Socialist New Order any more, but the diffuse hope of a Western, market-based economy.

²⁴⁶ Speech by Dietrich at a congress of national associations of journalists, December 1944, printed in Neulen, *Europa und das 3. Reich*, pp. 171-172.

4.3.1 War, War, and War – A Fighting New Order

You will, just like me, deem it unlikely that emigrant committees will be able to significantly weaken the fighting morale of the troops, flushed as the Russians are with victory, or to initiate any internal subversive political activity.

Furthermore, a Russian soldier who has not yet joined the ranks of the Vlassov troops, would have to be bonkers to join them now.²⁴⁷ (Heinz-Georg Neumann, February 1945)

By February 1945, a certain Heinz-Georg Neumann apparently had abandoned all hope of winning over Russians to the German cause. To Fritz Arlt, who was responsible for foreign volunteers in the *Waffen-SS*, he admitted that neither Rosenberg's idea of establishing national committees, nor the so-called Russian Liberation Army under General Vlasov²⁴⁸ could change tack. It was too late. Before then, however, numerous German officials explored and partly exhausted all possibilities to win the war. Within the New Order discourse, this process of "Getting Priorities Straight" (chapter 3.3.1) had initiated a reconfiguration that established the war effort and the economic interpretive frame as the dominant elements (see chapter 3.3.2). This war-economic turn shifted the German focus away from long-term planning to short-term benefits, thus curbing those aspects of German policy that carried the risk of thwarting the war effort, while substantiating those that promised to be of avail.

Efforts to realise aspects of the discursively constructed New Order that were irreconcilable with the new paradigm – streamlining Europe for war – had a hard time: Even Himmler, one of the most powerful men of the 'Third Reich', had to yield to the loss of discursive significance of the *völkisch* interpretive frame and had to abstain from realising his version of Europe-to-be. At the end of 1942, he had initiated first steps to realise the vision of a *völkisch* New Order in the Eastern territories. In Ukraine, he ordered the deportation of almost 15,000 Ukrainians from the Zhytomyr region in order to settle *Volksdeutsche* there, and in the General Government, German forces evacuated 300 villages around Zamość, where 100,000 people had to make room for German settlers.²⁴⁹ Additionally, Himmler instructed Konrad Meyer²⁵⁰ to extend the *Generalsiedlungsplan*.²⁵¹

²⁴⁷ Letter by Neumann to Arlt, 28 February 1945, BArch, R 6, 597, pp. 17-20.

²⁴⁸ For an overview of the history of the Russian Liberation Army, see Müller, *An der Seite der Wehrmacht*, pp. 216-226.

²⁴⁹ See Aly and Heim, *Vordenker der Vernichtung*, p. 435; For a detailed account of National Socialist policy in Zhytomyr, see W. Lower, 'A New Ordering of Space and Race: Nazi Colonial Dreams in Zhytomyr, Ukraine, 1941-1944', *German Studies Review*, vol. 25, no. 2, 2002, pp. 227-254.

However, while Himmler and Meyer kept advancing their planning and started to realise it, the resettlement measures created controversy; particularly the one in Zamość. Given the shortage of means of production, Riecke argued that everything that undermined the will to work – “as might happen to a considerable extent through resettlement processes” – had to be avoided. Generally, one had to come to a decision “whether the settlement measures are absolutely essential at the moment”, or if it were not advisable to focus on the war effort.²⁵² With regard to Zhytomyr, Körner also acknowledged the “major importance the resettlement measures have in the long run”, but urged to “refrain from anything which might impair agricultural output particularly in the Eastern territories.”²⁵³ For Ernst Zörner, the Governor of the Lublin district, the resettlement measures around Zamość had yielded nothing but trouble. He reported that parts of the rural population had fled and in some cases joined the partisans so that agricultural output had declined drastically. Hence, he called for an immediate end of all resettlement measures because they were “irresponsible in the current state of total war”.²⁵⁴ Himmler, however, denied any negative effects.²⁵⁵ On the contrary, picking up the *völkisch* beliefs of racial superiority, he argued that the new “reliable German peasants” showed even higher crop yields. Just like Lammers, he blamed Frank for the shortcomings of General Government.²⁵⁶ Frank, in turn, acknowledged the long-term objectives, but called for a prioritisation of the short-term benefits. He declared that it was

one of the most honourable and most pressing tasks of the German leadership to turn the Eastern territories that the German sword and blood have conquered into a home for the *Volksdeutschen* which had retreated from the formerly *volksfremd* [alien] spaces. However, for me it seems necessary to weigh up whether this objective should be realised in the middle of the German *Volk*’s struggle for existence and despite its serious disadvantages in the field of economics and in other areas; or if it was not more appropriate to postpone the implementation of these measures to a time, in which the necessary fundamental preparations for the resettlement of *Volksdeutsche* are possible without interferences through war-related difficul-

²⁵⁰ On Konrad Meyer and the *Generalplan Ost*, see chapter 3.2.1 and Madajczyk, *Generalplan Ost*.

²⁵¹ See letter by Himmler to Meyer, 12 January 1943, printed in *ibid.*, pp. 256-257.

²⁵² Letter by Riecke to the *Vierjahresplanbehörde*, 13 January 1943, BArch, NS 19, 982, pp. 3-5.

²⁵³ Letter by Körner to Göring, 7 April 1943, BArch, NS 19, 982, pp. 6-7.

²⁵⁴ Zörner’s memorandum on the consequences of the ‘Aktion Zamość’, 24 February 1943, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Polen*, pp. 250-253.

²⁵⁵ See note on a talk of SS *Obergruppenführer* Greifelt, 12 May 1943, BArch, NS 19, 982, p. 10.

²⁵⁶ Lammers’s template for a presentation for Hitler, 12 April 1943, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Polen*, pp. 260-261.

ties and without the loss of significant economic contributions of the respective territory to the detriment of the German war economy.²⁵⁷

In a memorandum on the treatment of the Polish *Volkstum* which Frank prepared a month later, he even suggested concessions. Given the military situation, he emphasised that this was not a “matter of the heart or of feelings, but an act of hard-headed reason.”²⁵⁸ Ultimately, Himmler largely fell into line. In his official responses to the complaints of Frank, Riecke, and Körner, he stood by his settlement plans, but acknowledged the paramount importance of the war effort. Even though he warned Frank that one must not be “overanxious” and had to “risk short-term difficulties”,²⁵⁹ he also subscribed to “the view that during the war, resettlements may of course only take place in a way that in no way²⁶⁰ impairs the economic performance of the General Government, particularly its agricultural output.”²⁶¹ Accordingly, Zamość and Zhytomyr were the first and last large-scale resettlement measures that Himmler was able to realise in the German-occupied East. His planning continued until August 1944,²⁶² but for the time being, the reconfiguration of the discourse ended his policy of germanising the East. Thus, one of the most powerful men of the ‘Third Reich’ was not able to assert himself because his *völkisch* thoughts and arguments were not as ‘true’ and ‘sensible’ as the distinction between short-term needs and long-term objectives that dominated the New Order discourse and the statements of his medium-level opponents. Zörner, Körner, Frank, and Riecke prevailed because they did not doubt the *völkisch* arguments in general but followed the discursively constructed knowledge and belief system: in the end, a *völkisch* New Order would be realised, but for this purpose, everything, even steps towards this *völkisch* reorganisation, had to take a backseat to the war effort.

The growing discursive dominance of the necessities of war also becomes apparent in German occupation policies elsewhere. For an unknown head of a district in the Protectorate, the war effort justified harsher responses to the stiffening resistance:

²⁵⁷ Letter by Frank to Hitler, 25 May 1943, printed in Madajczyk, *Generalplan Ost*, pp. 512-516.

²⁵⁸ Frank’s memorandum on the treatment of the Polish *Volkstum*, 19 June 1943, BArch, R 52 II, 12a, pp.1-23.

²⁵⁹ Letter by Himmler to Frank, 3 July 1943, printed in Madajczyk, *Generalplan Ost*, pp. 275-277.

²⁶⁰ In the letter to Frank, the wording was different. Himmler only wanted to abstain from measures that “severely impaired” the economy of the General Government. See *ibid*.

²⁶¹ Letter by Himmler to Körner, July 1943, BArch, NS 19, 982, pp. 16-17.

²⁶² Backe dismissed Meyer in August 1944. Letter by Backe to Himmler, 8 August 1944, printed in Madajczyk, *Generalplan Ost*, pp. 284-285.

If hundreds of thousands and millions of our best German men give their lives for the existence of the *Reich* and thus the German *Volk* in its struggle against Bolshevism, it is only just and reasonable if all elements which want to fight a battle against the front and for Bolshevism at home, are mercilessly annihilated.²⁶³

This statement partly echoed Karl Hermann Frank's view. After he had become the *de facto* head of the Protectorate following the death of Heydrich, he pursued a policy that was supposed to lure the cooperative parts of the population into collaboration and to deter the rest from resistance.²⁶⁴ In this way, he wanted to "squeeze the utmost out of the rich human and economic resources of the area"²⁶⁵ in order to avoid delivering "Europe to Bolshevism, meaning to its annihilation and to its deletion from history".²⁶⁶ However, this purpose demanded sacrifices. In his case, it was postponing the Germanisation of the Protectorate in favour of the more pragmatic policy that "the war dictates":

Often we had to suppress resentments and we put political feelings and ideologies aside for the duration of the war. We have become sober, interest-driven political realists in order to achieve the maximum for the greater, for the *Reich*.²⁶⁷

Thus, the policies of Karl Hermann Frank virtually embodied the reconfiguration of the New Order discourse after 1943. Not only did he subscribe to the victory-or-doom dichotomy that justified stopping at nothing to increase the war-economic output of the Protectorate (see chapter 3.3.1). He also kept the *völkisch* long-term aims in mind (see chapter 3.3.3), but for the time being abstained from putting them into effect and did everything in his power – setting incentives and resorting to violence – to maximise the contribution of the Protectorate to the war economy (see chapter 3.2).

²⁶³ Letter by a head of district to Ahlsdorf, 16 March 1943, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Österreich und der Tschechoslowakei*, p. 213.

²⁶⁴ This was basically a continuation of Heydrich's carrot-and-stick policy. See V. Mastny, *The Czechs under Nazi Rule. The Failure of National Resistance*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1971, p. 224; G. Deschner, *Reinhard Heydrich. Statthalter der totalen Macht.*, Esslingen, Bechtle, 1977, p. 259; P. Crowhurst, *Hitler and Czechoslovakia in World War II. Domination and Retaliation*, London, Tauris, 2013, p. 138.

²⁶⁵ Cited in R. Küpper, 'Karl Hermann Frank als Deutscher Staatsminister für Böhmen und Mähren', in M. Glettler (ed.), *Geteilt, besetzt, beherrscht: Die Tschechoslowakei 1938-1945: Reichsgau Sudetenland, Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren, Slowakei*, Essen, klartext, 2004, pp. 31-52, here p. 37.

²⁶⁶ Speech by K.H. Frank at a rally in Prague, 26 February 1943, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Österreich und der Tschechoslowakei*, pp. 211-212.

²⁶⁷ Speech by K.H. Frank to representatives of the *Gauleitung Sudetenland*, 3 April 1944, printed in Král, *Vergangenheit warnt*, pp.163-172.

In Denmark, Best had to give precedence to the war effort in a completely different situation. In May 1943, he was still positive that

the Danes will find their way into the new European order, just like the Icelanders into Christendom: not forced by violence and not won over by propaganda, but out of the level-headed insight that this way is unavoidable and beneficial for the Danes in the long run.²⁶⁸

Even when the military setbacks in the East gave rise to strikes, sabotage, and uprisings, Best stuck to his course. He intended to meet the war-economic demands, without losing sight of the “Germanic future tasks”. By abstaining from harsh measures, he hoped to avoid any bitterness which might keep the Danes from joining the Germanic community.²⁶⁹ However, despite Best’s warning to the Danish government that any “impairment of German military interests” jeopardised the autonomy of the country, the strikes and acts of sabotage continued in August 1943.²⁷⁰ This gave General von Hanneken, since September 1942 supreme commander of the German forces in Denmark, the opportunity to declare the state of emergency he had been pressing for. One of the reasons he gave for this step was to ensure that “the situation here stays as calm as possible in order to maintain the will to export which is necessary to feed the *Reich*”.²⁷¹ The state of emergency lasted until October and saw the disarming of the Danish army, the dismissal of the Danish government, and German efforts to deport Danish Jews.²⁷² Even though Best tried to stick to his course subsequently, this episode turned out to be the prelude to a much harsher occupation policy. As many other occupied territories, the allegedly Germanic Danes now suffered from the terror that the newly installed higher SS- and police leader unleashed. Without relying on courts anymore, German officials responded to acts of resistance with ‘clearing murders’, counter-sabotage, and counter-terror.²⁷³ Thus, Best’s strategy of winning over the Danes had to give way to a policy that sought to end the impairments of Danish output by means of force. In accordance with the war-economic turn of the New Order discourse, German occupation policy now pri-

²⁶⁸ Best cited in Herbert, *Best*, p. 342.

²⁶⁹ See Thomsen, *Besatzungspolitik in Dänemark*, p. 160.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

²⁷¹ Letter by von Hanneken to lieutenant-general Warlimont, 7 September 1943, printed in Petrick, *Okkupationspolitik in Dänemark und Norwegen*, pp. 185-186.

²⁷² Luckily, the German anti-Jewish measures in Denmark were a failure. 95% managed to hide or to flee to Sweden. See H. Poulsen, ‘Die deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Dänemark’, in R. Bohn et al. (eds.), *Neutralität und totalitäre Aggression. Nordeuropa und die Großmächte im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, Stuttgart, Steiner, 1991, pp. 369-380, here p. 376.

²⁷³ See G. Meissner, *Dänemark unterm Hakenkreuz. Die Nord-Invasion und die Besetzung Dänemarks 1940-1945*, Berlin, Ullstein, 1990, pp. 347-361.

oritised war-economic gains over purposes deduced from the *völkisch* knowledge and belief system. This shift did not only make itself felt in territories where carrying out *völkisch* policies potentially fomented trouble but also in countries with an allegedly Germanic population. The need to win the war by streamlining the European economies now overrode the intent to win over the Danish 'blood brothers' for the New Order.

In the occupied Eastern territories, Erich Koch and Alfred Rosenberg embodied two conflicting stances within the National Socialist regime.²⁷⁴ While Ukraine had "never belonged to Europe"²⁷⁵ in the eyes of the *Reichskommissar*, Rosenberg considered the Ukrainians a part of the "European family of nations".²⁷⁶ Their differences became apparent in most policy measures. Koch thwarted the attempt of Rosenberg to live up to the expectations of the local population by reforming the Kolkhoz by means of the New Agrarian Order from February 1942.²⁷⁷ He had all but primary schools closed in Ukraine, despite Rosenberg's intention to keep educating skilled workers which Ukraine would need for its prospective role in Europe-to-be.²⁷⁸ While Rosenberg rejected flogging as "unworthy of a German"²⁷⁹ and reminded all German officials to choose their words and deeds carefully as they represented the *Reich* in the East, Koch continued to speak of the 'German Master Race' and Slavic *Untermenschen*.²⁸⁰ He even declared that if he ever found a Ukrainian who was worthy of sitting at the same table with him, he would have to shoot him.²⁸¹ As the policies of the other local occupation authorities lay inbetween these two extremes, German occupation policy in the East remained incoherent.²⁸² In the light of this uncoordi-

²⁷⁴ These two currents have been pointed out by research. See e.g. Mazower, *Nazi Rule*, 2008, p. 245; Elvert, 'Germanen und Imperialisten', pp. 161-184.

²⁷⁵ Erich Koch cited in Dallin, *German Rule in Russia*, p. 165.

²⁷⁶ Rosenberg on the treatment of Ukrainians, 22 November 1941, BArch, R 6, 69, pp. 126-128.

²⁷⁷ See Rich, *Hitler's War Aims*, p. 380; For a concise summary of the New Agrarian Order see Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde*, pp. 342-356.

²⁷⁸ See Berkhoff, *Harvest of Despair*, p. 48; report by Rosenberg to Hitler, 11 August 1942, BArch, R 6, 85, pp. 8-15.

²⁷⁹ E.g. Rosenberg's decree on the treatment of people, 9 April 1942, BArch, R 6, 139, pp. 6-7; Rosenberg on calling the occupied Eastern territories colonies, 17 March 1942, BArch, R 3101, 31.142, pp. 80-81.

²⁸⁰ See e.g. *ibid.* and Rosenberg's notes on the psychological treatment of the population in the occupied Eastern territories, 23 March 1942, BArch, R 3101, 31.142, pp. 15-21; letter by Rosenberg to Koch, 14 December 1942, BArch, R 6, 70, pp. 89-95; Weißbecker, 'Rußlandbild', pp. 44-45.

²⁸¹ Koch cited in Frauenfeld's memorandum on the problems of the occupied Eastern territories' administration, 10 February 1944, BArch, NS 19, 1478, pp. 2-38.

²⁸² To name but a few examples: in the *Reichskommissariat Ostland*, Lohse allowed some institutions of higher education, and Estonians were allowed to celebrate their independence day. In Belorussia, Kube carried out the Agrarian reform and relied on local advice. In the Crimea, Frauenfeld did not

nated German policy in the area over which Rosenberg was supposed to preside, it becomes clear why historians have arrived at withering assessments. Mazower calls the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories “something of a joke”,²⁸³ and Mulligan characterises its policy as “*Cha-ostpolitik*”.²⁸⁴ However, the continuous cacophony and incoherence signify more than political incompetence amidst a polycratic power structure. They are the result of a collision between the two main versions of the place of the East in Europe-to-be. Embodied by Rosenberg and Koch, these different concepts turned every political matter into a proxy war.

While Rosenberg had not been able to assert himself in this struggle, the war-economic turn of the New Order discourse and its focus on short-term considerations increasingly removed the ground from under Koch’s *völkisch* thought patterns and arguments and played into the hands of Rosenberg, whose calls for a more considerate course promised higher outputs without having to put a “soldier behind every peasant”.²⁸⁵ Backed by a growing number of institutions and with the interpretive repertoire of the war effort on his side, Rosenberg revived the concepts he had promoted before June 1941 and partly realised them:²⁸⁶ a free Ukraine and semi-autonomous Baltic States as a *cordon sanitaire* against Russia. While National Committees in Ukraine and the area of the army group were to “be a sign for the named territories that they would somehow be developed into separate administrative areas”,²⁸⁷ the territories of the *Reichskommissariat Ostland* were to become semi-autonomous Protectorates or *Gaue* – a measure that was supposed to demon-

prohibit Germans from mingling with the locals. See Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde*, pp. 356-365; Mulligan, *Illusion and Empire*, pp. 175-182; M. Luther, ‘Die Krim unter Deutscher Besatzung’, *Forschungen zur Osteuropäischen Geschichte*, vol. 3, 1956, pp. 28-98, here pp. 43-47; Rich, *Hitler’s War Aims*, p. 380.

²⁸³ Mazower, *Nazi Rule*, p. 151.

²⁸⁴ This is a pun combining the German words ‘Chaos’ and ‘Ostpolitik’ [Eastern policy]. Mulligan, *Illusion and Empire*, pp. 73-74.

²⁸⁵ Rosenberg cited in A. Kay, *Exploitation, Resettlement, Mass Murder: Political and Economic Planning for German Occupation Policy in the Soviet Union, 1940-1941*, Oxford, Berghahn, 2006, p. 205.

²⁸⁶ After promoting different ideas before the attack on the Soviet Union, Rosenberg had fallen into the official line. See e.g. Rosenberg’s instructions for a *Reichskommissar Ukraine*, 7 May 1941, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik Sowjetunion*, pp. 128-131; Rosenberg’s instructions for the *Reichskommissar* in Ukraine, 18 November 1941, BArch, R 6, 69, pp. 103-116; Elvert, *Mitteleuropa*, p. 359. However, at a meeting in the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories in December 1942, several army commanders, the *Wirtschaftsstab Ost*, and the *Chefgruppe Landwirtschaft* had spoken out for political and economic concessions and had demanded a prospect for the local population, which they could support. See Rosenberg’s report to the *Führer* on a meeting with the commanders of the army’s rear areas, 21 December 1942, BArch, NS 19, 3758, pp. 3-5; See also chapter 3.2.3, 3.3.1, and 3.3.2.

²⁸⁷ Zimmermann’s supplement to the protocol of a meeting of commanders of the army territories on 18 December 1942, 4 January 1943, BArch, NS 19, 1704, pp. 61-62.

strate their belonging to the *Reich*.²⁸⁸ According to Körner, the bottom line was “to abandon the previously pursued course and to win over the population of the occupied Eastern territories for the active fight against Bolshevism.”²⁸⁹ For this purpose, Rosenberg intended to exhaust all possibilities.²⁹⁰ In May 1943, he officially initiated the reprivatisation of farmland. In November, the Cossacks were granted autonomy and private property.²⁹¹ In December, he drafted a declaration for the independence of Estonia.²⁹² In April 1944, he instructed propaganda to focus on the antagonism between Ukraine and Russia and to promise Ukraine safety and security in “a united and free Europe”.²⁹³ In July 1944, he decreed that all Estonians and Latvians who fought for Germany were to be rewarded with a farm.²⁹⁴ And in February 1945, Rosenberg finally could order the establishment of the first National Committee in Ukraine. Similar committees were to be created in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.²⁹⁵

Of course, most of Rosenberg’s efforts were too little and too late. However, they are remarkable in several respects. Even though Hitler had clearly sided with Koch and his *völkisch* thoughts and arguments when he had weighed into the dispute between the Minister and the *Reichskommissar* in July 1943, Rosenberg pursued his version of Europe-to-be and partially implemented it, sometimes even against Koch’s will.²⁹⁶ This would not have been possible without the support of other institutions and party bigwigs. Their rethinking, however, often was not the result of a fundamental change of mind but the effect of the discursively established distinction between war-economic short-term pragmatism and actual long-term New Order planning (see

²⁸⁸ See *ibid.*

²⁸⁹ Letter by Körner to Bergmann, 20 February 1943, BArch, R 6, 139, pp. 28-31.

²⁹⁰ However, he did not support the idea of mustering a Russian Liberation Army under Vlasov. In this respect, his fear of a Pan-Russian or Pan-Slavic movement outweighed the prospect of additional forces. See Rosenberg on two years of German Ukraine policy, 14 May 1943, BArch, R 6, 70, pp. 119-125.

²⁹¹ See Dallin, *German Rule in Russia*, pp. 301, 361.

²⁹² See Rosenberg’s declaration to the Estonian people, 2 December 1943, BArch, R 55, 1435, pp. 126-127.

²⁹³ Guidelines on the treatment of the Ukrainian question in press and propaganda, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik Sowjetunion*, pp. 556-558.

²⁹⁴ See Rosenberg’s decree on the settlement of Estonian and Latvian fighters, 8 July 1944, BArch, R 6, 450, p. 93.

²⁹⁵ See Circular by the *Informationsdienst Ost*, 21 March 1945, BArch, R 6, 597, pp. 21-29.

²⁹⁶ See protocol by Bormann on Hitler’s comment on the quarrel between Rosenberg and Koch, 10 June 1943, BArch, R 58, 1005, pp. 9-16. Koch was reluctant to realise Rosenberg’s initiative to privatise farmland. Ultimately, he agreed because Himmler, Bormann, and Lammers supported the measure. Mulligan, *Illusion and Empire*, p. 223.

chapter 3.3.1).²⁹⁷ In this way, the growing discursive significance of the war effort made it possible to voice different notions of Europe-to-be. While Rosenberg might have believed in his, condoning it was a means to an end to others. Without the military setbacks and their discursive repercussions, this notion of Europe – and similar more considerate plans for a New Order (see chapter 4.3.3) – could not have been revived, and in case of a German victory, it most likely would not have prevailed. As a last resort, however, a New Order that promised to benefit the war effort attracted support.

The prioritisation of the need to streamline Europe for total war in the New Order discourse did not only make it seem reasonable to postpone potentially antagonising long-term measures but also gave significance to an intensification of European economic cooperation. Among the many institutions that were created to serve this purpose,²⁹⁸ the *Planungs-Stab Europa* in Speer's Ministry for Armaments and War Production carried most weight. Its head, Arnold Köster, identified several deficiencies that were causing Europe's meagre contribution to the German war effort: the lack of systematic Europe-wide planning, the reluctance to support "Germany in its fight for European freedom",²⁹⁹ and Germany's policy of importing unproductive workers instead of outsourcing work.³⁰⁰ Accordingly, he encouraged the promotion of the "spirit of a European economy",³⁰¹ whereby the prospect of a "continental-European economic area", in which "all European nations cooperate closely",³⁰² would play an important role. Apart from this attempt to alleviate fears by specifying

²⁹⁷ See e.g. Baranowski, *Nazi Empire*, p. 287; M. Oldenburg, *Ideologie und militärisches Kalkül. Die Besatzungspolitik der Wehrmacht in der Sowjetunion 1942*, Cologne, Böhlau, 2004, pp. 308-327; H. Wilhelm, 'Hitlers "Europäische Neuordnung" und deren "lebende Objekte" auf dem Territorium der Sowjetunion 1941 bis 1944. Ein Versuch einer Bestandsaufnahme nach über fünfzig Jahren', in R. Bohn (ed.), *Die deutsche Herrschaft in den "germanischen" Ländern 1940-1945*, Stuttgart, Steiner, 1997, pp. 277-299, here p. 285.

²⁹⁸ The *Europa-Kränzchen* led by Kehrl (see chapter 3.3.2) and the *Arbeitskreis für Außenwirtschaftsfragen* within the Ministry of Economics are the most prominent examples. Herbst's interpretation of the latter as an attempt to keep private business on board is convincing, considering the growing divergence between the demands of the regime and the aims of private business (see chapter 4.3.2). See L. Herbst, 'Die wirtschaftlichen Nachkriegspläne der SS, des Reichswirtschaftsministeriums und der Reichsgruppe Industrie im Angesicht der Niederlage (1943-1945)', in M. Dumoulin (ed.), *Plans de temps de guerre pour L'Europe d'après-guerre 1940-1947*, Brüssel, Bruylant, 1995, pp. 15-24; Herbst, *Ordnung der Wirtschaft*, pp. 352-360; Müller, *Hans Kehrl*, p. 505.

²⁹⁹ Köster's memorandum on European economic planning, 13 September 1943, BArch, R 3, 1941, pp. 181-187.

³⁰⁰ See Köster's proposal for the mobilisation of the European economic capacities, 19 September 1943, BArch, R 3, 1941, pp. 188-193.

³⁰¹ Köster's ideas for European economic planning, 19 October 1943, BArch, R 3, 1940, pp. 178-180.

³⁰² Protocol of a meeting of the *Planungsstab Europa*, 27 June 1944, BArch, R 3, 1941, pp. 12-17.

a promising European future, German officials took concrete measures to Europeanize the war economy. As before, these harmonisation measures modelled the organisation of occupied economies on the restructured German framework and aimed at increasing and centralising German influence. The system of the *Ausschüsse* (committees) and *Ringe* (rings) undertook the coordination of outsourcing and new armament and procurement offices assumed the responsibilities of several institutions.³⁰³ Additionally, Germany exported its domestic rationalisation measures.³⁰⁴ While companies that were not war-relevant were shut down, production which was crucial enjoyed a privileged position.³⁰⁵ In addition to exempting them from Sauckel's labour raids, Speer made sure that they were given priority in the allocation of raw materials.³⁰⁶ In this way, he wanted to integrate the European economies in a European system of overall planning to achieve the highest possible output.³⁰⁷ After all, every additional worker who worked for or in Germany freed up a German for the Eastern front. This was what he expected from France and other occupied countries to contribute to "the fight for a better Europe."³⁰⁸ However, his measures yielded mixed results – in Belgium some of the measures never materialised, whereas outsourcing to the French and the Italian economies increased.³⁰⁹ Nevertheless, these steps illustrate the way that the economic interpretive frame still endowed policy measures with meaning. In the German discourse on Europe, European economic cooperation had always been a promise of power. This thought pattern had constantly shaped the New Order discourse (see chapter 3.1.2) and after the war-

³⁰³ See letter by Speer concerning the war-economic utilisation of France, 1 June 1943, RGVA, 1458, 29, 24; Umbreit, 'Deutsche Herrschaft', p. 188.

³⁰⁴ In the Protectorate, all "instruments and mechanisms" that characterised Germany's economy were established in 1942/43. See Balcar and Kučera, *Rüstammer des Reiches*, p. 108.

³⁰⁵ See Klemann and Kudryashov, *Occupied Economies*, pp. 90-91; Klemann, 'Occupation and Industry', p. 67.

³⁰⁶ These exemptions were made in France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Italy. See G. Janssen, *Das Ministerium Speer*, Frankfurt a.M., Ullstein, 1968, pp. 126-127; P. Klemm, *German Economic Policies in Belgium From 1940 to 1944*, PhD Thesis, Ann Arbor, 1973, p. 255.

³⁰⁷ See protocol of talks in Budapest on the integration of the Hungarian economy into the European overall planning, 2 June 1944, BArch, R 3, 1987, 71.

³⁰⁸ Speer cited in a letter by Schnurre to Ribbentrop, 22 September 1943, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Okkupationspolitik in Frankreich*, pp. 283-284.

³⁰⁹ See Klemm, *Economic Policies in Belgium*, p. 270. However, due to this reorganisation, in 1943 Belgium supplied Germany with locomotives for the first time. See *ibid.*, p. 387; Dickert, *Auftragsverlagerungen*, p. 165; M. Rieder, 'Deutsche Besetzung, Wirtschaftssteuerung und Kollaboration in Italien 1943-1945', in J. Bähr and R. Banken (eds.), *Das Europa des 'Dritten Reichs'. Recht, Wirtschaft, Besatzung*, Frankfurt a.M., Vittorio Klostermann, 2005, pp. 237-258, here p. 251. Winkel calls the time between summer 1942 and summer 1943, the heyday of French-German collaboration. H. Winkel, 'Die "Ausbeutung" des besetzten Frankreich', in F. Forstmeier and H. Volkmann (eds.), *Kriegswirtschaft und Rüstung, 1939-1945*, Düsseldorf, Droste, 1977, pp. 333-374, here p. 367.

economic turn, it suggested harnessing the economic potential of the German sphere of influence even more to avoid the expected doom of Europe. In this way, the National Socialist ideal of a German-led autarkic European *Großraumwirtschaft* engaged in an internal division of labour not only continued to constitute a discursively constructed war aim but also gave meaning to the continued harmonisation of Europe and the intensification of European cooperation as a means to this end.

Overall, Germany's attempts to turn the war-economic tide in its favour transformed the New Order discourse and German European policy. *Völkisch* long-term visions stayed valid and justified pragmatic adjustments, but they increasingly lost their impact on everyday policies in favour of the promise of immediate war-economic benefits. No matter if pragmatic or heart-felt considerations caused this rethinking, the discursively constructed threat of a German defeat and Europe's downfall (see chapter 3.3.1) gave rise to alternative concepts of Europe and meaning to corresponding policies. In the East, this tendency turned the hopes and wishes of the local population into a significant discursive category and materialised in a less punitive policy which abstained from resettlements and cut back the most antagonising excesses of the German *Herrenmenschen* standpoint. In the West, by contrast, the precedence of the war effort eclipsed the *völkisch* intent to win over the allegedly Germanic population. The military setbacks National Socialist Germany started to suffer spurred and stiffened resistance, while German attempts to mobilise the European economies for war became more desperate. Thus, two opposing developments – the rising dependence of Germany on smoothly working European economies and the growing confidence of its opponents in the impending end of German rule – increasingly clashed. Together with the discursive dominance of the war effort which justified all means due to the inscribed victory-or-doom dichotomy, the German efforts to streamline the German-led *Großraumwirtschaft* – now often labelled European war economy – resulted in a more radical occupation policy. Accordingly, the differences between German occupation regimes started to vanish. Towards the end of the war, National Socialist Germany's policy of terror and violence was as European in scope as the economic community it held together.

4.3.2 'Never Catch a Falling Knife' – Post-War Preparations

Director Werthmann (of *Wintershall AG*) had openly told her (a certain Frau Halfmann) that National Socialism was ruined, that the *Führer* could no longer have an overview of the situation, that business leaders considered the war lost and that the current state would doubtless collapse. Business leaders were thus already making efforts to establish links to their counterparts abroad, for it was clear that in future only representatives of the economy would be able to ensure that Germany could still play a part among the peoples of the world.³¹⁰ (Alfred Backhaus, August 1944)

The increasing post-war orientation of German companies alarmed SS-man Backhaus and in his eyes bordered upon high treason.³¹¹ Even though Speer had teamed up with Himmler to nip the emerging defeatism and resignation in the bud,³¹² German companies started to lose faith in a German victory from 1943 onwards and acted accordingly. This turning away from National Socialism did not necessarily manifest itself in decreasing war-economic output, but in a growing reluctance to sacrifice long-term interests for the short-term necessities of the war effort. Thus, German companies did not follow the war-economic turn of the New Order discourse and its reorientation towards short-term needs. They kept their long-term perspective. However, instead of preparing for the discursively constructed European *Großraumwirtschaft*, they now prepared for the post-war order that they expected after the downfall of National Socialism.

Germany's leading company in the sector of precision engineering and optics, *Carl Zeiss*, had taken a lively interest in German New Order planning from the outset. Due to its superior products and its production capacities, the company expected to be able to supply and to dominate the future European market as long as no tariffs or subsidies distorted competition.³¹³ Being primarily interested in preventing serious competition from arising in Europe-to-be, *Zeiss* largely abstained from taking over plants abroad and ruled out intensifying European cooperation to avoid disseminat-

³¹⁰ The remarks in parantheses are part of the cited document. Letter by SS-*Sturmbannführer* Backhaus to SS-*Standartenführer* Brandt, 26 August 1944, printed in Eichholtz and Schumann, *Anatomie des Krieges*, pp. 459-460.

³¹¹ See *ibid.*

³¹² See Tooze, *Ökonomie der Zerstörung*, pp. 681-700.

³¹³ The New Order concepts of the *Wirtschaftsgruppe Feinmechanik und Optik*, which have been sketched out in chapter 3.1.3, most likely reflect the interests of *Zeiss* because the two heads of the *Wirtschaftsgruppe*, Albrecht and Henrichs, were also leading officials of *Zeiss*'. Additionally, *Zeiss* economically dominated the German precision engineering and optical industry. R. Walter, *Zeiss 1905-1945*, Cologne, Böhlau, 2000, pp. 232-235.

ing its expert knowledge.³¹⁴ This intention also shaped the policy of the company towards its only takeover, the *Polskie Zakłady Optyczne* (PZO) in Warsaw. Zeiss had sought to acquire this plant since 1929.³¹⁵ However, it did not succeed until the possibility of a lease arose in the wake of the German attack on Poland.³¹⁶ Even though the PZO was “without doubt the most efficient precision engineering and optical plant in Poland”,³¹⁷ Zeiss officials chose its production with regard to the current uncertainty: By letting the PZO carry out only unsophisticated production processes, Zeiss wanted to make sure that the PZO would not keep “too much German know-how in case of eventual political changes”.³¹⁸

Despite attempts to increase the output of the plant – its machine park was augmented in May 1941, and in February 1942 Heinz Küppenbender, a member of the executive office of Zeiss, had suggested higher food rations and more German staff³¹⁹ – the *Rüstungsinspektion*,³²⁰ a local occupation authority, accused Zeiss of not backing the PZO fully in 1943. Defending his company policy, Küppenbender claimed that Zeiss tried to achieve German production standards in Warsaw.³²¹ In fact, however, the German staff were not supposed to teach the local workers, but to lead and to supervise them.³²² And a few weeks later, when the head of the PZO approached Küppenbender with the idea of rewarding a leading Polish worker with a tour through a German Zeiss plant, his concerns about giving away too many insights led him to hesitate. Ultimately, the Polish worker was shown around, but only in selected parts of the production facilities.³²³ Even though the leading personnel of Zeiss claimed to always have “thought and acted National Socialist”,³²⁴ their loyalty apparently ended where the interests of the company were at stake. By the end of

³¹⁴ See e.g. letter by Henrichs to Albrecht concerning outsourcing to France, 23 December 1940, CZA, W23, p. 462; note by Henrichs, 16 September 1942, CZA, 7832, unnumbered.

³¹⁵ See Eichholtz, *Carl Zeiss*, 1962, p. 544.

³¹⁶ See note concerning the PZO, 20 October 1939, CZA, 22721, unnumbered.

³¹⁷ Report by Winkler, a Zeiss engineer, on the PZO 18 October 1939, CZA, 22721, unnumbered.

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ See list of necessary machines at the PZO, 31 May 1941, CZA, 22721, unnumbered; Report by Küppenbender on a journey to Warsaw, 19 February 1942, CZA, 22721, unnumbered.

³²⁰ For the role of the *Rüstungsinspektionen* in German occupation policy, see H. Umbreit, ‘Sonderformen des bürokratischen Apparats in den besetzten Gebieten: Die Rüstungsinspektionen’, in W. Benz, J. ten Cate and G. Otto (eds.), *Die Bürokratie der Okkupation. Strukturen der Herrschaft und Verwaltung im besetzten Europa*, Berlin, Metropol, 1998, pp. 139-152.

³²¹ See note by Küppenbender on a meeting with lieutenant-general Schindler in Krakow, 26 May 1943, CZA, 22721, unnumbered.

³²² See report by Küppenbender on a journey to Warsaw, 19 February 1942, CZA, 22721, unnumbered.

³²³ See note by Küppenbender on a visit of the PZO, 4 June 1943, CZA, 22721, unnumbered.

³²⁴ Letter by Albrecht to Henrichs, 4 July 1942, CZA, 22725, pp. 25-29.

1944, National Socialism and its war effort seem to have lost all relevance to them. Paul Henrichs, since August 1941 representative of the *Carl Zeiss* Foundation, which owned the company, started to prepare for the post-war period. He instructed *Zeiss* subsidiaries in Sweden and Switzerland to fill up their stocks³²⁵ and got in touch with the manager of the German-American Trade Association in December 1944:

It is refreshing that you are addressing the post-war period in your letter and that you are emphasising the importance of not falling behind then. So you are convinced that after the end of the war relations to the USA will be resumed. I will openly admit that my considerations on the future are also guided by the thought that particularly the Americans, with their predominantly economic attitude, will come to realise that an economically languishing Europe would be of enormous detriment, and that conversely a healthy Europe is unthinkable without a healthy Germany.³²⁶

Thus, in the case of *Zeiss*, the interests of the company increasingly clashed with the political intention to increase the war effort. At the beginning of the war, *Zeiss* had welcomed the opportunities and prospects that the National Socialist regime offered and, trying to help shape the future of Europe, had adopted the dominant thought patterns and arguments of the New Order discourse. During the period of total war, however, the company did not subscribe to the discursively constructed dichotomy of victory or doom but pinned its hopes to the 'predominantly economic attitude' of the United States. Giving away expert knowledge might have advanced German military potential, but at the expense of the future competitiveness of the company. Hence, instead of sacrificing its own long-term interests for a National Socialist future, *Zeiss* looked after its own.

The *Mannesmann* concern also had seized some of the opportunities the war offered and expanded into many European countries (see chapter 4.2.2). Late in 1942, the company still kept its eyes open for further promising opportunities.³²⁷ In the occupied Eastern territories, plants in Taganrog and Dnepropetrovsk caught the interest of leading officials. They founded a separate company to run the smelting works in Taganrog on behalf of the *Berg- und Hüttenwerksgesellschaft Ost* at the beginning of 1943 and took over the plant *Krsni Wessowtschik* in Dnepropetrovsk a few weeks

³²⁵ See Eichholtz, *Carl Zeiss*, p. 581.

³²⁶ Letter by Henrichs to Müncks, 2 December 1944, printed in Eichholtz and Schumann, *Anatomie des Krieges*, pp. 466-467.

³²⁷ Wilhelm Zangen for example advocated the takeover of a French steel mill in St. Etienne in August 1943. Note on a board meeting, 17 August 1943, M, 12, 017.

later.³²⁸ However, the engagement of *Mannesmann* in the “build-up in the occupied Eastern territories”³²⁹ – as the executive board labelled it in accordance with the official slogan – demonstrated goodwill, but did not come to fruition.³³⁰ By August, it was clear that the takeover of Taganrog “would remain in name only”.³³¹ All one could do was to deport its machinery, materials, and work force to Dnepropetrovsk.³³² In September 1943, however, *Mannesmann*’s subsidiary in Kiev reported that “the development of the situation in the East” was anything but good and it advised the halting of all deliveries.³³³ By the end of the year, the most eastern branch of the company was its trading company in Kraków, to where the other subsidiaries had retreated.³³⁴ While the official publications called these steps temporary evacuations, internal memos spoke of abandonment.³³⁵

Even though the deteriorating military situation made itself felt considerably in the rest of the European market as well, the activities of *Mannesmann* abroad continued.³³⁶ At the beginning of 1944, *Mannesmann* not only founded a subsidiary in Paris, the *SA de Constructions en Toles d’Acier*, but its executive board also projected investments at the *Prager Eisenindustrie Gesellschaft* (PEG) in the Protectorate.³³⁷ Although this step was in accordance with the tendency to increase industrial capacities where they were safe from Allied bombings, the necessities of war were not the only reason the board gave. According to its members, the modernisation of the facilities of PEG was necessary to secure supplies for the *Mannesmann* plant in Chomutov, and inevitable if the PEG was ever to yield profits in the future.³³⁸ In August 1944, months after the Allies had landed in France, the international activities of *Mannesmann* still did not cease. The machine factory *Seiffert & Co* – a part of the *Mannesmann* concern – gave patents, licences, and expert support to the *Société de Constructions des Tuyauteries* in Clichy in exchange for the right to acquire 35% of

³²⁸ See report by the executive board on the first quarter of 1943, 28 April 1943, M, 11, 70; report by the executive board on the second quarter of 1943, 25 August 1943, M, 11, 70.

³²⁹ Ibid.

³³⁰ This was one of the reasons that was explicitly given for the engagement. Protocol of a board meeting, 16 November 1942, M, 12, 016.3.

³³¹ Letter by Segeth to the department of participations, 8 August 1943, M, 16, 685.

³³² See Ibid.

³³³ Letter by the *Mannesmannröhren- und Eisenhandel Ukraine GmbH*, 9 September 1943, M, 16, 685.

³³⁴ See report by the executive board on the year 1943, 1944, M, 11, 70.

³³⁵ See report by the executive board on the fourth quarter of 1943, 23 February 1944, M, 11, 70.

³³⁶ See report by the executive board for the advisory board, 28 August 1944, M, 11, 109.

³³⁷ See report by the executive board for the advisory board, 23 February 1944, M, 11, 110.

³³⁸ See report by the executive board on the year 1943, 1944, M, 11, 70.

its shares.³³⁹ Unfortunately, the internal documents remain silent on the rationale behind this move. However, given the point in time, it seems unlikely that this course of action was a response to the political demand of sacrificing competitive advantages for the sake of the war effort (see chapter 3.3.2). Against the background of the realistic appraisal of the situation in the East and the long-term considerations that drove the company policy towards the PEG, it seems plausible to assume that this was an attempt at bringing parts of valuable know-how into safety. Thus, *Mannesmann* – just like many other German heavy industrial companies – willingly engaged in the German Eastern expansion until the Red Army started to push back the *Wehrmacht*. Financially, the risks were modest, but, in the case of a German victory and the finalisation of the discursively constructed New Order, the reward would in the long run have been a highly profitable market.³⁴⁰ While the activities of *Mannesmann* were still accompanied by a rhetoric that reflected the established discursive standards in the summer of 1943, the company apparently abandoned the National Socialist New Order together with its subsidiaries in the occupied Eastern territories. Nevertheless, *Mannesmann* seems to have kept its long-term orientation until the end of the war. Its point of reference, however, was not a German-led *Großraumwirtschaft* anymore, but the hope that the US-American part of occupied Europe would offer a brighter future for private businesses.³⁴¹

The *Daimler-Benz AG* also kept a very close eye on the current developments and their potential ramifications for the future. From November 1943 onwards, Wilhelm Haspel, successor of Wilhelm Kissel as CEO, received frequent reports from a certain Felix Lauscher. The job he seems to have had in Berlin was to keep his ears open with regard to the military situation and in respect of “what will come afterwards”.³⁴² Without mentioning the unspeakable – a possible German defeat –, he reported his insights into German post-war planning as well as what he had learned about Allied concepts.³⁴³ In case of a German victory, he presumed that “the autarky of the European space (with or without Russia)” would shape post-war policy, while

³³⁹ See report by the executive board for the advisory board, 28 August 1944, M, 11, 109.

³⁴⁰ See A. Donges, *Die Vereinigte Stahlwerke AG im Nationalsozialismus. Konzernpolitik zwischen Marktwirtschaft und Staatswirtschaft*, PhD Thesis, Mannheim, 2013, p. 401.

³⁴¹ According to Roth, many companies followed this orientation towards the West. See Roth, ‘Nachkriegsplanungen’, p. 219.

³⁴² Letter by Lauscher to Haspel, 17 November 1943, DBA, 12.1, unnumbered. Lauscher cultivated contacts with the Ministry of Economics, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the leadership of the army, and the *Wirtschaftsgruppe Fahrzeugbau*. See Gregor, *Daimler-Benz*, pp. 154-155.

³⁴³ See letter by Lauscher to Haspel, 22 January 1944, DBA, 12.1, unnumbered.

the Western Allies would conquer Europe as a sales market for their industrial over-capacity.³⁴⁴ Irrespective of the victor, however, he predicted a general turn towards more state control.³⁴⁵ Given the shape of the numerous German cities levelled by Allied bombs, the building sector would boom, while private demand would not recover immediately.³⁴⁶ In the *Daimler-Benz* headquarters this market prospect was translated into a strategy that prioritised lorry production sites over other lines of business and liquid assets over inflation-proof investments. After all, the demand for cars and aircraft would be negligible after the war, while lorries would be in high demand. And the cash would be needed to overhaul the respective facilities and machinery. Thus, *Daimler-Benz* also kept its long-term perspective and did not join in on the discursive turn towards short-term necessities. While this focus on future markets had led Daimler-Benz to participate in Germany's European expansion during the first years of the war, it kept the company from unreservedly following the regime into total war. Instead, Daimler-Benz started preparing for 'what will come afterwards', peacetime after German defeat.³⁴⁷

By being perceived as less and less likely future scenario, the discursively constructed New Order lost its integrative power. The resulting divergence between the demands of the National Socialist regime and the behaviour of private companies was not confined to *Daimler-Benz*, *Mannesmann*, and *Zeiss*. In fact, these cases exemplify a widespread development. Despite several Hitler decrees that forbade all post-war planning in January 1942, in January 1943, and in July 1944,³⁴⁸ German companies kept meeting war-economic demands, but with more than a half an eye aimed at the expected post-war period. In June 1944, leading officials of *IG Farben* pondered on a split-up of the company because they expected an Allied victory to be the end for large German concerns.³⁴⁹ The *Hohner GmbH*, a medium-sized manufacturer of musical instruments, had adjusted to the wartime market by taking up armaments production and by advertising its famous harmonicas as an essential part of soldierly life. In March 1944, however, the company started to hoard supplies and informed one of its branches that there was "no need to pursue the plan of producing

³⁴⁴ Letter by Lauscher to Haspel, 10 July 1944, DBA, 12.1, unnumbered.

³⁴⁵ See letters by Lauscher to Haspel, 22 July 1944 and 17 November 1943, DBA, 12.1, unnumbered.

³⁴⁶ See letter by Lauscher to Haspel, 17 November 1943, DBA, 12.1, unnumbered.

³⁴⁷ For a more detailed analysis, see Gregor, *Daimler-Benz*, pp. 151-161.

³⁴⁸ See Boelcke, 'Europäische Wirtschaftspolitik', p. 229; Herbst, *Ordnung der Wirtschaft*, pp. 179, 389.

³⁴⁹ See Stokes, *IG Farben*, pp. 332-333.

armaments anymore”.³⁵⁰ Instead, the branch was supposed to take care of its workforce, its liquid assets, and those parts of its stocks that promised to sell well in peacetime.³⁵¹ The *Dr. August Oetker KG* pursued a different strategy. From 1943 onwards, Germany’s leading producer of baking ingredients and processed foodstuffs struggled to get enough raw materials for its core product, baking soda. In reaction, the company tried to bring about a political solution. In a memorandum for the Ministry of Economics, *Dr. Oetker* joined the calls for rationalisation and applied it to its own branch. Since its own plants were among the most efficient, this demand would have put many competitors out of business, thus enabling *Dr. Oetker* to survive the war and to get off on the right foot after its end.³⁵² However, the plans of the company did not come to fruition, so that it monetized its stocks, hid most of the yields, and invested the rest in alcoholic spirits.³⁵³ In Hamburg, the shipyard *Blohm & Voss* started to prepare for an Allied invasion in November 1944. All documents that were essential for the resumption of production were shipped into supposed safety in Magdeburg. Furthermore, post-war considerations led company officials to thwart official orders that demanded that nothing but scorched earth be left for the Allies.³⁵⁴ Thus, for most German companies the New Order had lost its relevance as a future scenario and therefore as meaningful category in negotiation and decision-making processes. They took a third path between the two discursively constructed options of victory or doom.³⁵⁵ Instead of making sacrifices for a lost war, they planned for a defeat which would not be their end. Accordingly, they prepared for peacetime by trying to minimise risks, bringing valuable materials and documents into safety, and safeguarding expert staff and knowledge.³⁵⁶

³⁵⁰ Cited in H. Berghoff, *Zwischen Kleinstadt und Weltmarkt. Hohner und die Harmonika 1857-1961*, Paderborn, Schöningh, 1997, p. 486.

³⁵¹ See *ibid.*

³⁵² See J. Finger, S. Keller and A. Wirsching, *Dr. Oetker und der Nationalsozialismus. Geschichte eines Familienunternehmens, 1933-1945*, Munich, Beck, 2013, pp. 290-291.

³⁵³ See *ibid.*, p. 375.

³⁵⁴ See A. Meyhoff, *Blohm und Voss im “Dritten Reich”. Eine Hamburger Großwerft zwischen Geschäft und Politik*, Hamburg, Hans Christians Verlag, 2001, pp. 499-509.

³⁵⁵ However, some businessmen seem to have believed the official version. See F. Trommler, “Deutschlands Sieg oder Untergang”. Perspektiven aus dem Dritten Reich auf die Nachkriegsentwicklung, in T. Koebner, G. Sautermeister and S. Schneider (eds.), *Deutschland nach Hitler. Zukunftspläne im Exil und aus der Besatzungszeit*, Opladen, Westdeutscher Verlag, 1987, pp. 214-228, here p. 217.

³⁵⁶ See e.g. K. Henke, *Die Dresdner Bank 1933-1945. Ökonomische Rationalität, Regimenähe, Mittäterschaft*, Munich, Oldenbourg, 2006, p. 216; Feldman, *Die Allianz*, p. 500; Bähr and Erker, *Bosch*, pp. 211-212; Gehrig, *Rüstungspolitik und Entscheidungsspielraum*, pp. 125-129; Dickert, *Auftragsverlagerungen*, pp. 182, 188; Herbst, *Ordnung der Wirtschaft*, pp. 402-409.

In light of the broadly shifting priorities among German companies, it is not surprising that the *Reichsgruppe Industrie*, Germany's industrial association, also concerned itself with the end of the war. For this purpose, it had founded the *Institut für Industrieforschung* which coordinated scientific work on the most problematic issues of the expected transition.³⁵⁷ According to Ludwig Erhard, the head of this research facility who later became Minister of Economics and Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, by November 1944 this planning had been going on "for quite some time" and was supposed to prepare the *Reichsgruppe* "for the upcoming tasks at least mentally".³⁵⁸ Apart from financial and monetary questions, the studies addressed trade relations, tariffs, cartels, and international cooperation.³⁵⁹ Additionally, the *Reichsgruppe Industrie* enquired about what kind of problems the industry expected "during the conversion to peacetime".³⁶⁰ In its answer, the *Wirtschaftsgruppe* of the Iron Producing Industry expressed guarded optimism, but emphasised that the precondition for a smooth transition was a return to a free-enterprise economy.³⁶¹ Thus, by the end of 1944, the National Socialist prosecution of defeatists still made it impossible to call a spade a spade. Even though large parts of German industry had not only already turned their back on the promises of a National Socialist New Order but also on the National Socialist notion of an economic system, the impending German defeat remained unexpressible.

Overall, most German companies still complied with the wishes of the regime. They kept the war machine going, they took charge of facilities in the Eastern territories, they outsourced production, and they exported goods, thereby facilitating imports by reducing German clearing debts. However, this compliance was less and less the result of their support for National Socialist war aims but increasingly of the lack of alternatives. While the discursively constructed New Order had shaped the thoughts, arguments, and activities of German companies for years, it was no longer either on everyone's lips or a meaningful point of reference. The necessities of total war for a lost cause demanded sacrifices they were not willing to make. Accordingly, private

³⁵⁷ According to Roth, it had been founded early in 1943. Erhard's memorandum, on which the exposé was based, dates from March 1944. Roth, 'Vorbereitungen auf das Kriegsende', pp. 545, 556.

³⁵⁸ Letter by Stahl to Ohlendorf with an attachment by Erhard, 14 November 1944, printed in Hass and Schumann, *Anatomie der Aggression*, pp. 290-296.

³⁵⁹ See *ibid.*

³⁶⁰ Letter by the *Reichsgruppe Industrie* to the *Wirtschaftsgruppe Eisen schaffende Industrie*, 31 October 1944, printed in *ibid.*, p. 265.

³⁶¹ Letter by the *Wirtschaftsgruppe Eisen schaffende Industrie* to the *Reichsgruppe Industrie*, 10 November 1944, printed in *ibid.*, pp. 266-279.

businesses worked to rule and occasionally succumbed to pressure exerted by the state, but their actual focus was still the future. Hence, they gathered information on the future market and avoided jeopardising their competitive advantages by keeping on essential staff, a jealous watch over their know-how, and supplies hoarded. The National Socialist New Order had lost its integrative effect.

5. 'Anti-Europe' Revisited

Having analysed the discursive construction of the National Socialist New Order and having traced its correlation with the words and deeds of occupation authorities and private companies, it is time to recapitulate the main findings and to evaluate them against the background of existing research. A preliminary reflection on our methodical approach shows that analysing the New Order as a German discourse on the future of Europe has indeed mitigated the problems identified and yielded new insights (5.1). It has led to an understanding of the New Order as a process of social construction of reality which was decisively shaped by *völkisch* and economic knowledge and belief systems (5.2). The result, the discursively constructed New Order, did not only give meaning to the actions of National Socialist occupation authorities in Europe (5.3). The prospect of a German-dominated European market also became an important point of reference in the decision-making processes of private companies: taking advantage of the German dominance in Europe and preparing for the discursively constructed future of the continent seemed sensible until it became clear that the future of Europe would not be a National Socialist one (5.4). The concluding remarks, finally, argue that the National Socialist New Order fits in with previous and later German notions of Europe (5.5).

5.1 A Discourse – The Nature of the New Order

This study has been shaped by its discourse-analytical approach: By gathering all source material that attests to German interest in Europe-to-be or a European post-war order, the scope of the study grew larger. And by taking these primary sources at face value, the epistemological task changed. Instead of gauging the intentions of the respective originator, the 'conditions of emergence of statements' (see chapter 1.2) or documents and the patterns that these statements revealed became the foundation of conclusions and insights. This focus on recurring arguments, images, motives, and phrases that condensed into notions of Europe proved worthwhile.

The analysis made clear that two interpretive frames and their underlying knowledge and beliefs dominated the New Order discourse from 1939 until the defeat of National Socialist Germany in 1945: soon after 1933, National Socialist terror and control narrowed down the possible ways of speaking about Europe to a *völkisch* line of reason-

ing, which had its starting-point in the *Völker* of Europe and their racial value, and an economic repertoire of interpretations (see chapter 2.3).¹ Since both were reconcilable during the Second World War as long as a German victory seemed likely,² the New Order discourse produced and solidified the vision of a racially graded German dominated European *Großwirtschaftsraum*, which, after June 1941, was augmented by a colonial *Lebensraum* in the East. The isolated appeals and warnings, which resorted to the same interpretive repertoire of *völkisch* and economic arguments, did not fundamentally change the ways the future of Europe was spoken about until another rationale weighed in. The objective of winning the war, discursively established as the *sine qua non* for Europe to have any future at all, provided a set of incontestable arguments and thoughts. This new centre of gravity transformed the New Order discourse. Its economic dimension was increasingly bound to the vision of a war-economically streamlined *Großraumwirtschaft*, the European war economy, while the *völkisch* interpretive repertoire only kept fitting in by distinguishing between ideal long-term objectives and necessary short-term deviations from this course. Additionally, alternative ways of speaking about and imagining the future of Europe mushroomed in the wake of the interpretive repertoire of the war effort gaining weight. Still being rooted in the same knowledge and beliefs system, they continued to be committed to German economic and *völkisch* superiority in Europe, but advocated less brutal means to this end. Thus, a discourse analysis of the New Order does not only accurately account for the interplay of the two core elements of the discourse, *völkisch* and economic knowledge and belief systems. It also confirms and specifies the close connection of the war to the internal shifts of the discourse. Furthermore, it suggests that the war-economic turn in the New Order discourse was not the result of a single event or decision,³ but a slow process of reinterpreting 'right' and 'wrong'

¹ Volkmann has already pointed out these two dimensions of the New Order. Volkmann, *Luxemburg*, p. 98.

² This might be the reason why some scholars have mistaken the terms 'Germanic', 'European', 'National Socialist', and 'German' as synonyms in the National Socialist vocabulary. Looock, 'Großgermanische Politik', p. 39; Hoensch, 'Europapläne', p. 316. Hitler, however, once corrected a *Wochenschau* report, which had spoken of securing Germany's basic food resources, instead of Europe's. Hitler's table talk, 23 March 1942, printed in Picker *Tischgespräche*, p. 202.

³ Madajczyk, for example, states that it remains "unclear who inspired the tactical change of occupation policy in the East". C. Madajczyk, 'Zur Besatzungspolitik der Achsenmächte - ein persönliches Forschungsresümee', in J. ten Cate and G. Otto (eds.), *Das organisierte Chaos. 'Ämterdarwinismus' und 'Gesinnungsethik': Determinanten nationalsozialistischer Besatzungsherrschaft*, Berlin, Metropol, 1999, pp. 303-338, here p. 330.

European policies, which started at the end of 1941 and picked up speed, the more the war effort gained discursive weight.⁴

Together with the intrinsic logic of the discourse, the participants changed. The predominantly economic reasoning before the German attack on the Soviet Union was borne by different protagonists than the *völkisch* thoughts and arguments about the Eastern territories. With the war-economic turn, yet another group of speakers dominated the New Order discourse. From a discourse-analytical perspective, this is the result of the changing rules of the discourse and of its inherent power relations. As long as the discursive construction of the New Order had not produced a single 'right' and 'good' notion of Europe-to-be, being able to inscribe thought patterns and arguments meant shaping the future. Additionally, the economic and *völkisch* interpretive frames spanned a coordinate system that permitted a wide range of 'true' and 'sensible' lines of reasoning.⁵ The growing discursive weight of the war effort, however, narrowed this spectrum down and devaluated the discourse itself. Since all thoughts and arguments, which were still bound to the economic and *völkisch* knowledge and belief systems,⁶ were now additionally dependent on a war-economic rationale and its short-term focus, this shift took the ground from under certain arguments and partly turned the New Order into a tool "to forge one more weapon in their [the National Socialist] struggle to win the war"⁷. Consequently, this development led to withdrawals, called for adjustments, or created the opportunity to voice certain ideas in the first place. This explains the declining participation of private companies, as their intrinsic logic and their future-oriented perspective increasingly clashed with the new

⁴ Unfortunately, this makes it hard to pin down an exact time. Most authors take the defeat in Stalingrad and a subsequent circular of Goebbels as the starting-point of this rethinking (e.g. Schilmar, *Europadiskurs*, p. 117). A discourse-analytical reading, however, suggests that Goebbels' rethinking was the result of this process.

⁵ In the documents analysed, there is no evidence of an intention to keep the New Order indistinct for the sake of benefitting from its integrative effects. So instead of assuming a purposeful vagueness (Elvert, *Mitteleuropa*, p. 301; Kletzin, *Rasse und Raum*, p. 4), it seems more plausible that the many meanings of the New Order were the result of the broad interest it attracted as an open projection surface for the wishes and objectives of its participants. In *Das Amt und die Vergangenheit*, a telling example can be found: Bargen, who was the envoy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Northern France and Belgium, tried to win Belgium over for the New Order. Interrogated after the war, however, he could not specify what the New Order stood for. See E. Conze et al., *Das Amt und die Vergangenheit. Deutsche Diplomaten im Dritten Reich und in der Bundesrepublik*, Munich, Pantheon, 2012, pp. 241-242.

⁶ Weißbecker also found that any striving for a change had to be wrapped in an ideologically acceptable way. Weißbecker, 'Rußlandbild', p. 47.

⁷ Herzstein, *Nazi Blueprint for Europe*, p. 3. However, in contrast to Herzstein's appraisal, it seems that the New Order discussion increasingly spawned these kinds of concepts, instead of having been tailored to this purpose from the outset.

course of total war,⁸ and accounts for the (re-)emergence of previously silent voices and ideas (see chapter 3.3.3).⁹ Together with the growing influence of Speer's war-economic institutions, this development might be read as a shift of power within the National Socialist regime, but given the receding impact of Himmler's long-term plans for Germanisation and settlements (see chapter 4.3.1),¹⁰ as well as Hitler's futile attempts to ban all post-war planning,¹¹ it seems that the discursive construction of Europe-to-be defied political power. Instead, influence on the New Order discourse was a question of compliance. Europe-to-be gained its initial integrative effects through its openness,¹² while the totalisation of the war effort changed the access modalities to the discourse as it narrowed down the range of legitimate contributions to thoughts and arguments that claimed to serve the short-term needs of the war. Therefore, an approach taking into account all relevant source material, irrespective of the assumed political power of its originator, leads to a broader and thus more accurate understanding of the New Order. However, the potential remoteness of these statements from the corridors of power lends additional weight to the question of the factual relevance of the discourse.

The discourse-analytical approach has proved suitable for tracing the significance of the New Order for German occupation and business policies. Theoretically, the New Order discourse was supposed to shape social reality by giving meaning to actions and by resulting in what has been called 'voluntary subordination'. In practice, the former became apparent in form of consistencies between factual policies and the reconstructed German notions of Europe, whereas the latter manifested itself in rhe-

⁸ This reading confirms the observations of Marxist historians but offers a different explanation. German companies indeed turned away from the New Order. However, they did not do so because the National Socialist regime had failed as the vehicle to their imperialist aims, but because the total war abandoned all economic rationality. For the Marxist reading, see e.g. W. Schumann, 'Nachkriegsplanungen der Reichsgruppe Industrie im Herbst 1944', *Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, vol. 13, no. 3, 1972, pp. 259-296, here p. 260; Drechsler, Dress and Hass, 'Europapläne', p. 919.

⁹ In this reading, the increasing presence of alternative *völkisch* drafts during the last years of the war is not ascribed solely to the growing dissatisfaction with German policy, but to the intrinsic logic of the discourse. Critics of the current course needed the war effort argument to legitimise their thoughts and arguments as 'true' and 'sensible'. Rosenberg's inconstancy (see chapter 4.3.1) or Dolezalek's drafts (Neulen, *Europa und das 3. Reich*, pp. 61-66) are prime examples for this. For the two different *völkisch* camps, see Looock, 'Großgermanische Politik'; Elvert, '*Germanen und Imperialisten*', pp. 182-183; Mazower, *Nazi Rule*, p. 245.

¹⁰ However, scarcely anybody contested the ultimate *völkisch* objective of a Germanic Reich. In fact, many alternative drafts assured their long-term commitment to this aim.

¹¹ See Boelcke, 'Europäische Wirtschaftspolitik', p. 229; Herbst, *Ordnung der Wirtschaft*, pp. 179, 389.

¹² According to Kershaw, the same holds true for National Socialist racial concepts. See I. Kershaw, 'Adolf Hitler und die Realisierung der nationalsozialistischen Rasseutopie', in W. Hardtwig (ed.), *Utopie und politische Herrschaft im Europa der Zwischenkriegszeit*, Munich, Oldenbourg, 2003, pp. 133-144, here p. 133.

torical overlaps between the discourse and the thought patterns and arguments voiced by German officials or companies. In this respect, it does not matter whether they actually adopted the discursively constructed New Order as their own, or instrumentalised it for their own ends. Ultimately, such behaviour stabilised the discourse and, more importantly, helped produce its content. The hermeneutic perspective adopted in chapter four showed that on the micro level thoughts, arguments, and actions indeed reflected the New Order. Thus, the analysis of the New Order as a discourse and the understanding of its effects as power relations, provide a plausible link between words and deeds. Even though it does not exhaustively explain the activities of companies and occupation authorities, it adds a new angle which is telling.¹³ Unfortunately, the more the war effort dominated the discourse the more blurred these links become (see chapter 4.3).¹⁴

However, the discourse-analytical approach falls short in another respect. Even though German officials were often explicit in their inhumane planning, concerning the starvation of millions of Russians for example, this study has not paid enough attention to one of the central aspects of the National Socialist New Europe, the mass murder of its Jewish population.¹⁵ In this respect, taking primary sources at face value backfires. Even though the anti-Semitic stance of National Socialism resonates in many statements and activities – reaching from the well-established and omnipresent connection of Jewry with plutocracy and Bolshevism to the murderous policy of Germanisation –, German officials fell increasingly silent on the matter. “For years they had no inhibition against yelling in public from every rooftop about the extermination of the Jews, but when it actually happened, they refrained from putting it into words”.¹⁶ This analysis and its focus on statements reflected the importance of the *Volksgemeinschaft* and the inherent idea of a Germany without Jews. It showed that together with the National Socialist sphere of influence, the scope of this notion grew and that, in the context of a *völkisch* renewal of Europe, the Jewish population was

¹³ Numerous historians have called for an integration of cultural studies approaches into economic history. See e.g. H. Berghoff and J. Vogel, ‘Wirtschaftsgeschichte als Kulturgeschichte. Ansätze zur Bergung transdisziplinärer Synergiepotentiale’, in H. Berghoff and J. Vogel (eds.), *Wirtschaftsgeschichte als Kulturgeschichte*, Frankfurt a.M., Campus, 2004, pp. 9-41, here p. 13; J. Kocka, *Historische Sozialwissenschaft*, Oldenburg, Bibliotheks- und Informationssystem der Universität Oldenburg, 2007, p. 183. However, economic-historical studies hardly live up to this demand.

¹⁴ For that reason, Overy emphasises those New Order measures which “were not dictated by the war”. Overy, ‘New Order’, p. 23.

¹⁵ For an analysis of the nexus between New Order planning and the anti-Jewish measures of National Socialist Germany, see Aly and Heim, *Vordenker der Vernichtung*.

¹⁶ Confino, *A World Without Jews*, p. 197.

declared incompatible, so that imagining a 'Jew-free' Europe led to concrete planning for a territorial solution to the 'Jewish Question'. However, the more this idea of expelling the European Jewish population shifted into their systematic physical extermination, the more the primary sources remain silent. This might be due to "a certain sense of transgression",¹⁷ but within the New Order discourse this silence also indicates that it was already far beyond dispute that the new Europe, just like the new Germany, had to be rid of Jews.¹⁸ Nevertheless, this void is not a downside of discourse-analytical approaches in general.¹⁹ On the contrary, a discourse analysis based on different primary sources might even demonstrate how anti-Semitic convictions gained ground in Germany, how they merged with anti-capitalist and anti-communist resentments, how deeply ingrained these ideas were in German thinking, and how their premises became taken for granted to a degree that they provided the basis for a radical reinterpretation of fundamental values. In his Posen speeches, Himmler could speak of the German massmurder as an unsung "glorious chapter of our history"²⁰ that was morally right and justified by the duty to the German *Volk*.²¹

Overall, the discourse-analytical approach lived up to the expectations formulated at the beginning. It has allowed for a precise reconstruction of National Socialist notions of Europe by exhibiting and explaining the patterns within the New Order discourse. Despite its minor shortcomings, this new perspective on the New Order has proved worthwhile because it provides new insights into the National Socialist notions of Europe and their implementation.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ The National Socialist euthanasia program (*Aktion T4*), by contrast, was contested. Even though the protests did not entirely end the killing of handicapped people, the arguments apparently carried weight and decreased the scale of the murders. See e.g. Thamer, *Verführung und Gewalt*, pp. 697-700.

¹⁹ For a generally sceptical stance towards poststructuralist approaches in history, see Evans, *Defence of History*; Wehler, *Herausforderung der Kulturgeschichte*. For an argument in favour of analysing the discursive construction of reality, see P. Schöttler, 'Wer hat Angst vor dem "linguistic turn"?', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, vol. 23, 1997, pp. 134-151.

²⁰ Speech by Himmler, 4 October 1943, printed in Michalka, *Deutsche Geschichte*, pp. 277-278.

²¹ See Burleigh, *Nationalsozialismus*, p. 767.

5.2 A *Völkisch* and Economic Dream – The Cornerstones of the New Order

The German New Order discourse during the Second World War was a struggle for interpretational sovereignty over German war aims and the future of Europe. It mainly fed on two interpretive frames: long-standing, well-established *völkisch* ideas and economic knowledge and beliefs. Apart from the General Government and the Protectorate, Europe seemed racially largely unproblematic until its Eastern boundaries dissolved with the German invasion of the Soviet Union. Accordingly, economic thought patterns and arguments dominated the discourse on Europe-to-be during the period from May 1940 to June 1941. The result, the vision of a powerful, autarkic, and German-led European *Großwirtschaftsraum*, remained valid until the end of the war and incorporated the Newly Occupied Eastern Territories as colonial *Ergänzungsraum* (supplemental area). Being highly compatible with the *völkisch* interpretive frame, which deemed Slavs inferior and which claimed large tracts of their land as *Lebensraum* for Europe's Germanic core area, this reading of the East in Europe-to-be became a stable and deeply ingrained aspect of the New Order discourse. Despite appeals and warnings, this vision gained a hegemonic position in the discourse until the necessities of war increasingly drove back thoughts and arguments that threatened to thwart immediate economic benefits by promoting potentially antagonising long-term concepts. Accordingly, the European *Großraumwirtschaft* gained in importance as an armoury, while the still valid, but discursively receding *völkisch* vision gave way to alternative notions of Europe that invoked solidarity with the German cause. Thus, the ambiguity of the National Socialist New Order was inversely proportional to German power: What started out as a powerless country's conglomeration of European dreams in 1933 evolved into a clear-cut notion of German-dominated continent, before the growing pressure of the war effort shattered this temporarily stable vision and ultimately all National Socialist hopes for a New Order.

The vision of Europe as a *Großwirtschaftsraum*, which dominated the New Order discourse before the attack on the Soviet Union, was more to National Socialists than a “thin propagandistic cloak”²² glossing over their claim to power. Europe was neither “primarily a propaganda term”²³, nor a “merely political-propagandistic”²⁴ instrument

²² Kluke, ‘Europaideologie’, p. 274.

²³ Loth, ‘Rettungsanker Europa’, p. 201.

²⁴ Salewski, ‘Europa’, p. 102; Salewski, ‘Ideas’, p. 48.

to allay suspicions in the rest of Europe.²⁵ Indeed, National Socialist Germany did exploit the appeal of a new Europe propagandistically without ever turning this rhetoric into action.²⁶ Thus, the divergence between the public fuss and actual policies – instead of making concrete political offers, Germany subjugated and ruled large parts of the continent by force –, suggests a lack of interest in Europe.²⁷ Yet, within German institutions, officials pondered over Europe and its prospective *Großraumwirtschaft*. Often without even mentioning its propagandistic value, their thoughts and arguments – informed by the dominant *völkisch* and economic interpretive frames – produced concepts for a globally competitive German-led *Großraum*. These notions of a united European non-capitalist economy orchestrated by the *Reich* and engaged in a natural division of labour promised a broadly autarkic Europe that would be a match for all the other large entities in the world. Thus, the considerations of German officials²⁸ were not driven by the intent to cash in propagandistically on the widespread yearning for a unification of Europe but by long-standing and well-established lines of reasoning that declared a powerful German-led Europe the order of the day (see chapter 2.3). Being aware of the reluctance of the other European states to accept a German hegemony, they did not search for a widely acceptable New Order but for silent and discreet ways to deepen and perpetuate the current predominance.

The German attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941 indeed marks a turning-point in the National Socialist New Order discourse. However, its prime significance lies neither in the new – apparently appealing²⁹ – anti-communist connotation of the New Order, nor in the fact that National Socialist Germany now “began to consider the idea of European unity with any seriousness”.³⁰ It was the enlarged geographical

²⁵ See also Krüger, ‘Europapolitik’, p. 124; Kletzin, *Rasse und Raum*, pp. 210-216.

²⁶ Moll, ‘Deutsche Propaganda’, p. 239; Looock, ‘Großgermanische Politik’, p. 37.

²⁷ See e.g. Raphael, ‘Radikales Ordnungsdenken’, p. 263, B. Piotrowski, ‘Konzeptionen und Vorstellungen von Europäischer Integration im Totalitarismus des Dritten Reiches’, in P. Delvaux and J. Papiór (ed.), *Eurovisionen. Vorstellungen von Europa in Literatur und Philosophie*, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 1996, pp. 151-160, here p. 160.

²⁸ The officials and businessmen of other countries also took German New Order planning seriously. See e.g. M. Fioravanzo, ‘Die Europakonzeptionen von Faschismus und Nationalsozialismus (1939-1943)’, *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, vol. 58, no. 4, 2010, pp. 509-541; Balcar and Kučera, *Rüstammer des Reiches*, p. 308.

²⁹ The phrase of ‘Europe’s crusade against Bolshevism’ seems to have mobilised thousands of volunteers. See R. Gerwarth and S. Malinowski, ‘Europeanization through Violence? War Experiences and the Making of Modern Europe’, in M. Conway and K. Patel (eds.), *Europeanization in the Twentieth Century. Historical Approaches*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, pp. 189-209, here p. 201; Neulen, *Eurofaschismus*, p. 105.

³⁰ Salewski, ‘Ideas’, p. 48; see also M. Salewski, ‘Wie und warum Deutschland nach 1945 europäisch wurde’, in J. Elvert and J. Nielsen-Sikora (ed.), *Leitbild Europa? Europabilder und ihre Wirkungen in der Neuzeit*, Stuttgart, Steiner, 2009, pp. 143-155, here p. 143.

scope of Europe-to-be and the hugely expanded area of application for the *völkisch* interpretive frame which most affected the voiced thoughts and arguments on Europe. While German propaganda tried to take advantage of the fear of communism,³¹ internally National Socialist officials focused on the economic and *völkisch* integration of the Newly Occupied Eastern Territories into the New Order. From a *völkisch* perspective, they deemed the local population inferior, while the fertile soils and raw material reserves seemed a welcome economic supplement to the industrial core of the *Großwirtschaftsraum*. Thus, the two dominant interpretive frames within the New Order discourse boiled down to a consistent concept: In order to maximise European supply, local consumers had to disappear.³² Economically, this translated into downgrading the economy to the level of primary production by dismantling industry, while the *völkisch* visions stipulated the death of millions and the settlement of a Germanic upper class which was to become the nucleus for Germanisation.

Isolated voices argued that ruling a country in complete disregard of the population was economically counterproductive, militarily dangerous, and often unjustified in a *völkisch* sense. However, their arguments did not carry enough discursive weight to alter the discourse profoundly. In the eyes of most scholars, this changed with the defeat of the Sixth Army at Stalingrad.³³ In its aftermath, Goebbels gave his infamous *Sportpalast* speech, which called for a Europeanization of the war effort, and he issued a circular that demanded a rethinking of German occupation policy.³⁴ However, this alleged turning-point in fact seems to have been part of a longer lasting and gradual process. The arguments and thoughts behind the appeals and warnings carried the more discursive weight, the more precious one of their central promises, war-

³¹ See e.g. G. Koenen, *Der Russland-Komplex. Die Deutschen und der Osten 1900-1945*, Munich, Beck, 2005, p. 424; Child, *New Order*, p. 50.

³² Długoborski/Madajczyk argue that National Socialist Germany never distinguished between long-term and short-term objectives. See W. Długoborski and C. Madajczyk, 'Ausbeutungssysteme in den besetzten Gebieten Polens und der UdSSR', in F. Forstmeier and H. Volkmann (eds.), *Kriegswirtschaft und Rüstung, 1939-1945*, Düsseldorf, Droste, 1977, pp. 375-416, here p. 376. In the Eastern territories, however, both initially pointed into the same direction (Chapter 3.2.2). Lund has found that the same holds true in the Danish case. See Lund, 'Denmark and the New Order', p. 321.

³³ See e.g. Schilmar, *Europadiskurs*, p. 117; Elvert, *Mitteleuropa*, p. 379; Neulen, 'Deutschland', p. 38; Salewski, 'Ideas', p. 52; Child, 'New Order', p. 53.

³⁴ See O. Oexle, 'Leitbegriffe - Deutungsmuster - Paradigmenkämpfe. Über Vorstellungen vom "Neuen Europa" in Deutschland 1944', in H. Lehmann and O. Oexle (eds.), *Nationalsozialismus in den Kulturwissenschaften. Vol. 2: Leitbegriffe - Deutungsmuster - Paradigmenkämpfe. Erfahrungen und Transformationen im Exil*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004, pp. 13-40, here p. 18. Weißbecker, 'Rußlandbild', p. 46; Madajczyk, *Okkupationspolitik in Polen*, p. 110

economic benefits, became.³⁵ Accordingly, they gained ground in the New Order discourse thanks to and by means of, the deteriorating military situation. Thus, it is no wonder that the concepts they promoted sounded more “reasonable”³⁶ as they were tailored to the German need for military and economic support.³⁷ However, the growing importance of the war effort did not invalidate the previous notions of Europe, nor did it lead to a new common ground. Being incontestable, the war effort and its interpretive repertoire produced a broad spectrum of possible European solutions for the current problems. What most of them had in common – apart from promising to promote the war effort – was the adherence to the defining elements of the New Order discourse: Under the auspices of Germany, Europe had to be reorganised along *völkisch* and economic lines in order to have a future.³⁸

Against the background of the development of the New Order discourse, a large void becomes apparent. While many German officials pondered on the economic and *völkisch* future of Europe, their internal statements remained silent about its political organisation.³⁹ On the one hand, this explains why so many historians have seized on the plans of European Federations which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* drafted during the last years of the war.⁴⁰ Accounting for the absence of political concepts, on the other hand, is difficult. It might be that Hitler’s reluctance to settle matters already during the war caused the silence in this respect.⁴¹ However, his disinterest did not stop New Order planning in other policy

³⁵ Baranowski states that these voices, which were informed by pragmatic considerations not moral concerns, “grew louder as the progress of Barbarossa slowed”. Baranowski, *Nazi Empire*, p. 287.

³⁶ Krüger, ‘Europapolitik’, p. 129.

³⁷ Kahrs’ statement that all Germany planning from 1943 on assumed a German defeat seems highly doubtful. See H. Kahrs, ‘Von der “Großraumwirtschaft” zur “Neuen Ordnung”’, in G. Aly et al. (eds.), *Modelle für ein deutsches Europa. Ökonomie und Herrschaft im Großwirtschaftsraum*, Berlin, Rotbuch, 1992, pp. 9-28, here p. 24.

³⁸ Accordingly, Milward’s strict distinction between the New Order and “that quite different thing, ‘the European war economy’” seems problematic. Milward, *New Order*, p. 269. Even though the short-term orientation of the war effort sidelined *völkisch* long-term thoughts and arguments, the two dominant interpretive frames kept shaping the discourse on Europe. See chapter 3.3.2 and 3.3.3.

³⁹ This void has led Mazower to conclude that the “Nazi vision for Europe, [...] belonged to the sphere of economics, not politics”. Mazower, *Dark Continent*, pp. 150-151. However, there were many publications, which revolved around the political and legal framework of Europe-to-be. Kletzin, *Rasse und Raum*, pp. 110-167. The most important work in this respect was probably Carl Schmitt’s ‘Völkerrechtliche Grossraumordnung’ from 1939 (C. Schmitt, *Völkerrechtliche Grossraumordnung*, Berlin, Deutscher Rechtsverlag, 1941). For the influence of this theory on public debate, see M. Schmoeckel, *Die Großraumtheorie. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Völkerrechtswissenschaft im Dritten Reich, insbesondere der Kriegszeit*, Berlin, Duncker & Humblot, 1994, pp. 152-161.

⁴⁰ For Neulen one of these drafts is an “impressive document, which all powers belonging to or being inclined towards the Axis powers could have signed”. Neulen, ‘Deutschland’, p. 41. He generally gives much of his attention to the concepts of the SS. See Neulen, *ibid.*, pp. 61-68; Neulen, *Eurofaschismus*.

⁴¹ See e.g. Umbreit, ‘Besatzungsverwaltung’, p. 718; Hoensch, ‘Europapläne’, p. 324.

fields. Therefore, it seems more plausible to assume that the National Socialist understanding of politics⁴² together with the dominance of economic and *völkisch* thoughts and arguments limited what could be said. Internally, political suggestions could not go beyond authoritarian concepts without questioning the *Führer* principle. Externally, neither this form of rule nor the envisaged *völkisch* and economic hierarchy in Europe could expect to find favour. Thus, there was no ground on which considerations on the political foundation of the New Order could take place and there was no reason to reflect about it.⁴³ Accordingly, the political future which Germany could promise, increasingly boiled down to one official version. Every *Volk* would “take the place in the new Europe which it deserves”⁴⁴.

In the light of this incompatibility between German intentions and the hopes and wishes of the rest of Europe, several historians have concluded that there was nothing European about the New Order. In their eyes, these concepts were the most radical expression of nationalism, and thus actually a scheme for Germany.⁴⁵ However, even if one rejects – as these standpoints do – the idea that every notion of Europe is European because Europe itself is a social construct,⁴⁶ the New Order did in fact transcend the nation-state. Apart from the geographical scope of National Socialist planning and policy, neither its *völkisch* nor its economic dimension were linked to

⁴² In Thamer's eyes, the National Socialist tendency to erode state structures in favour of a personal form of rule was not just the result of a lack of plan. See H. Thamer, 'Monokratie-Polykratie', in J. ten Cate and G. Otto (eds.), *Das organisierte Chaos. 'Ämterdarwinismus' und 'Gesinnungsethik': Determinanten nationalsozialistischer Besatzungsherrschaft*, Berlin, Metropol, 1999, pp. 21-34, here p. 31.

⁴³ Because it was not possible to proclaim an acceptable European order, Neulen claims that “National Socialism had become a prisoner of its own ideology” (Neulen, 'Nachwort', p. 394). This formulation seems perfidious, considering that National Socialism had set out to realise its *völkisch* and economic ideology, not to establish a supranational political system. If anything, those who hoped for a realisation of their own aims through National Socialism had become captives in a prison of their own making.

⁴⁴ Ribbentrop's guidelines for work of the Europe Committee, 5 April 1943, printed in Opitz, *Europasstrategien*, pp. 954-956. Ribbentrop explicitly addressed one of the mentioned problems: “For the time being, it is out of the question to go into the details of the political structure of Europe-to-be.” One would have to promise the other European countries independence and autonomy, but “it is already certain that protecting Europe-to-be from external menaces will necessitate sacrifices and constraints of the autonomy of every single country.”

⁴⁵ See W. Lipgens, 'General Introduction', in W. Lipgens (ed.), *Documents on the History of European Integration. Vol. 1: Continental Plans for European Union 1939-1945*, Berlin, de Gruyter, 1985, pp. 1-33, here pp. 8-9; P. Bugge, 'The Nation Supreme. The Idea of Europe 1914-1945', in K. Wilson and J. van der Dussen (ed.), *The History of the Idea of Europe*, London, Routledge, 1993, p. 107.

⁴⁶ For Hayden White, “Europe has never existed anywhere except in discourse”. H. White, 'The Discourse of Europe and the Search for a European Identity', in B. Strath B. (ed.), *Europe and the Other and Europe as the Other*, Brussels, Peter Lang, 2000, pp. 67-86, here p. 67. According to Delanty, “Thinking, reading and writing about Europe are the intellectual modalities of power through which Europe is constituted as a strategic reality and subject of knowledge.” Delanty, *Inventing Europe*, p. 7. Strath defines Europe as a discourse “which is translated into a political and ideological project.” B. Strath, 'Introduction: Europe as a Discourse', in B. Strath (ed.), *Europe and the Other and Europe as the Other*, Brussels, Peter Lang, 2000, pp. 13-44, here p. 14.

questions of nationality:⁴⁷ The alleged racial value and the supposed economic proficiency decided on the place of a *Volks* in the hierarchically graded Europe-to-be. Furthermore, the New Order gave rise to transnational cooperation, integrated Europe economically, and did so without the intent to Germanise all of Europe.⁴⁸ Of course, Germany would have stood on top of this order, the reorganisation of Europe would have benefited Germany the most, and German attempts at harmonisation modelled Europe on the German system. However, all this was driven by notions of Europe. Convinced that spiritual and racial degeneration had caused the decline of Europe, Germany declared its own non-liberal, non-communist formula for success, the National Revolution and its results, the role model for a more powerful and pacified new Europe.⁴⁹ Together with the dominant economic and *völkisch* knowledge and belief system, this vision culminated in a policy of exploitation and violence.⁵⁰ However, this rule of terror was not purely the result of an uncurbed thirst for power but also of the National Socialist notions of Europe.⁵¹

One might object that reinterpreting the National Socialist reign of terror as the struggle for a new Europe simply subsumes the driving forces behind National Socialist expansion – its ideology – under a European label, thus boosting the significance of the New Order. This is partly true. National Socialist concepts for Europe-to-be do bear a close resemblance to the defining elements of National Socialist ideology. However, this is not the result of an *ex-post* perspective, but of contemporary devel-

⁴⁷ Wildt, 'Völkische Neuordnung', p. 5; M. Wildt, "Eine neue Ordnung der ethnographischen Verhältnisse". Hitlers Reichstagsrede vom 6. Oktober 1939', *Zeithistorische Forschungen*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2006, pp. 129-137. For the geographical scope of a National Socialist Europe-to-be, see J. Hoensch, 'Hitlers "Neue Ordnung Europas". Grenzveränderungen, Staatsneugründungen, nationale Diskriminierung, in N. Frei and H. Kling (eds.), *Der nationalsozialistische Krieg*, Frankfurt a.M., Campus, 1990, pp. 238-254. Rich, *Hitler's War Aims*, p. 412.

⁴⁸ The German efforts to create European cartels attests to that. See e.g. chapter 3.1.3; Wandschneider, 'Pläne der deutschen Elektrokonzerne'. The endorsed participation of allegedly Germanic countries in the East also falls into this category. See chapter 4.2.1. For examples of the National Socialist economic integration of Europe, see chapter 4.1.1; T. Sandkühler, 'Europa und der Nationalsozialismus. Ideologie, Währungspolitik und Gewalt', *Zeithistorische Forschungen*, vol. 9, no. 3, 2012, pp. 428-441. Southeastern Europe is one example of a region that occupied a solely economic role in National Socialist notions of Europe. See chapter 3.1.1; the elaborations of German planning in Aly and Heim, *Vordenker der Vernichtung*, pp. 331-350. However, anti-Jewish measures constituted an integral part of these plans. See *ibid.*, pp. 350-364.

⁴⁹ See chapters 2.1.4, 2.2, and 2.3. This also helps to explain why National Socialist officials clung to the hope of a voluntary nazification in the countries they considered Germanic.

⁵⁰ Schilmar also identifies a "discrete concept of Europe", which National Socialist Germany developed. However, for him, these plans "perverted the European idea". Schilmar, *Europadiskurs*, pp. 139-140; Gosewinkel, in contrast, argues that war and violence do not necessarily contradict Europeanization. See D. Gosewinkel, 'Antiliberales Europa - Eine andere Integrationsgeschichte', *Zeithistorische Forschungen*, vol. 9, no. 3, 2012, pp. 351-364, here p. 364.

⁵¹ This stands in contrast to Orlow's verdict, for whom "the power-centered aspects" are the "core of all New Order thinking". Orlow, *Nazis in the Balkans*, p. 106.

opments. The discourse on Europe became the arena in which ideational struggles took place; “the thing for which and by which there is struggle, discourse is the power which is to be seized.”⁵² As the prize to be awarded to the victor was the future of Europe, most German notions of Europe entered the ring hoping to gain interpretational sovereignty despite. However, National Socialist officials dominated this ring and, additionally, National Socialist beliefs laid down the basic rules. Consequently, their knowledges and beliefs won the upper hand and bound the New Order to their convictions. Thus, the New Order was not imposed on National Socialist beliefs as an umbrella term. National Socialist Germany had started a war in the name of its ideology and, during the war, this ideology produced concrete plans:⁵³ the New Order.

5.3 A World Set on Fire – The Forge of the New Order

German occupation policy during the war reflected the National Socialist New Order discourse and its predominant *völkisch* and economic interpretive frames. Before the attack on the Soviet Union, the economic vision of a *Großwirtschaftsraum* and the objective of a *völkisch* harmonised Europe endowed German policies with meaning. In territories that they considered German *Lebensraum*, German authorities fought what they called a *Volkstumskampf* by deporting non-German people and by resettling Germanic people. In the hope that their ‘Germanic brothers’ would voluntarily join the German cause, occupation authorities in the allegedly Germanic countries steered a more lenient course. Economically the *Reich* instigated the integration of all these territories into a European market. While the supreme *Reich* authorities brought the European central clearing system into being and promoted economic interlocking, the local occupation authorities aligned the economic organisations of the occupied countries with the German system. In this way, National Socialist Germany pulled the economic strings in Europe.

This general course was not affected by the attack on the Soviet Union. However, the *völkisch* knowledge and belief system came fully into its own with the conquest of large agrarian areas inhabited by allegedly inferior people. The discourse produced

⁵² Foucault, ‘Order of Discourse’, p. 53; see also chapter 1.2.

⁵³ Aly and Heim put forward a similar argument and highlight the role of medium-level experts in this process of translating National Socialist ideology into concrete plans. Aly and Heim, *Vordenker der Vernichtung*, p. 288. For Overy, the New Order was a function of National Socialist ideology and political struggles. See R. Overy, *Goering - The ‘Iron Man’*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984, p. 119.

notions of Europe in which these territories in the East were to supplement the rest of Europe in terms of labour, raw materials, and foodstuffs. From the outset, German officials pursued this vision. The scorched earth the Red Army had left behind was tilled again, but plants and factories were left to rot if they were not relevant for primary production. In order to maximise the desired exports, German officials caused or condoned the death of millions of people they considered superfluous.⁵⁴ Conversely, several thousand alleged Germanics from all over Europe, the prospective rulers over the uneducated and poor local workforce, were brought to the East. Thus, the National Socialist concept of a Europe graded along *völkisch* lines coalesced with the vision of an autarkic European *Großwirtschaftsraum* and translated into an inhumane policy of “exploitation, resettlement, mass murder”.⁵⁵

However, there were voices calling for a different policy and they grew louder the less likely a quick victory became.⁵⁶ German occupation policy in Europe reflected this war-economic turn of the New Order discourse – not in the form of a “generous gesture for the subjugated *Völker*”⁵⁷ but in a two-pronged carrot and stick policy. Since winning the war was the necessary precondition for realising any New Order, National Socialist Germany rewarded collaboration more generously and moved in on non-compliance more harshly. In the East, where the attempt to rule solely by force and oppression had not yielded the expected results, this led to a less ruthless course. National Socialist officials stopped the antagonising settlement measures, pushed on with agrarian reforms, and tried to win over the people they had considered irrelevant ‘*Untermenschen*’ before. In the West, the more lenient course of the *Reich* had failed to cash in on the supposed blood ties. Since none of the allegedly Germanic states had come to support the German war wholeheartedly, the National Socialist efforts to get more out of these territories resulted in an in-

⁵⁴ This finding supports the criticism Gerlach levels against approaches which understand ideology and economic interests as separate and opposing forces. See Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde*, p. 1145. Others make similar points. E.g. Hirschfeld, ‘Nazi Germany and Eastern Europe’, p. 76; Hallgarten and Radkau, *Deutsche Industrie*, p. 417. For Klemann and Kudryashov, economic considerations usually won the upper hand, even in the East. Klemann and Kudryashov, *Occupied Economies*, p. 434.

⁵⁵ This is the title of Kay’s study, which focuses on the planning for German occupation policy in the Soviet Union. Kay, *Exploitation, Resettlement, Mass Murder*.

⁵⁶ According to Baranowski, their concerns were informed by “pragmatic considerations rather than morality”. Baranowski, *Nazi Empire*, p. 287. Oldenburg confirms this with respect to the 11th and 17th army. Oldenburg, *Ideologie und militärisches Kalkül*, pp. 308-314. However, in some cases a different *völkisch* appraisal of the population led to this stance.

⁵⁷ Neulen constantly laments that National Socialist Germany did not create an acceptable, solidary, federalist Europe but “misused and exploited the idealism” of foreign volunteers. Neulen, ‘Deutschland’, pp. 28, 54.

creasingly radical occupation policy that neglected their supposed racial value. In this way, the growing discursive weight of the war effort started to level the National Socialist *völkisch* hierarchy for the sake of war-economic output.⁵⁸ The German intention to optimise Europe as a war-economic community entailed similar tendencies. By rebuilding industry in the East, by intensified outsourcing into occupied territories, and by sacrificing the competitive advantages of German companies, National Socialist officials followed the increasing short-term orientation of the New Order discourse and backed away from previously hegemonic long-term concepts. Thus, the discursively constructed New Order, as a long-term vision, lost its direct influence on factual German occupation policy to the extent that the war effort became the only yardstick of reasonableness. However, the future of Europe still mattered. As a central theme of German propaganda, it was supposed to rally Europe around the German cause. For some German officials, long-term New Order plans justified the short-term adjustments to the necessities of war. For others, the war effort opened up a discursive loophole through which their version of Europe-to-be could finally be voiced and realised.

Thus, the New Order discourse guided German occupation policy. Even though the paramount importance of the war effort increasingly curbed its power, the discursively constructed Europe-to-be was a powerful vision until then. Numerous political measures transformed the German sphere of influence towards the ideal defined along economic and *völkisch* lines. The expulsion of thousands of people, the resettlement of *Volksdeutsche*, the leeway enjoyed by the allegedly Germanic countries, and the welcome activities of foreign Germanic people in the East attest to the factual relevance of the *völkisch* dimension of the New Order.⁵⁹ Economically, National Socialist Germany started to build the European *Großraumwirtschaft*. The *Reich* orchestrated its production, rechanneled its trade, and imposed the *Reichsmark* as the key currency, while local occupation authorities remodelled the occupied economies and cut down or expanded economic sectors in accordance with the en-

⁵⁸ Other scholars have noted this development. See e.g. Looock, 'Großgermanische Politik', p. 50; Milward, *New Order*, p. 143. However, the structural differences in the legal frameworks of German occupation persisted. See J. Bähr and R. Banken, 'Ausbeutung durch Recht? Einleitende Bemerkungen zum Einsatz des Wirtschaftsrechts in der deutschen Besatzungspolitik 1939-1945', in J. Bähr and R. Banken (eds.), *Das Europa des 'Dritten Reichs'. Recht, Wirtschaft, Besatzung*, Frankfurt a.M., Vittorio Klostermann, 2005, pp. 1-30, p. 5.

⁵⁹ See Mai, *Rasse und Raum*, p. 357; Wildt, 'Völkische Neuordnung', p. 5.

visaged continental division of labour.⁶⁰ Hence the New Order was more than just “looming”⁶¹. It was a “major source of inspiration”⁶² for National Socialist officials, who did not only “mull over the long-term shape of the continent’s peace-time New Order”,⁶³ but also set up the “foundations and much of the scaffolding”⁶⁴ with “concrete efforts to integrate Europe economically”⁶⁵. Even though the war effort and the short time span⁶⁶ blur the picture of the factual impact of the New Order on German European policies, it was definitely not just propaganda. In fact, the predominantly European rhetoric that surrounded many of the major steps towards this economic reorganisation of Europe suggests that German policy was geared towards more than exploitation for the sake of the war.⁶⁷ The New Order was realised largely in

⁶⁰ See H. Volkmann, ‘NS-Außenhandel im “geschlossenen” Kriegswirtschaftsraum (1939-1941)’, in F. Forstmeier and H. Volkmann (ed.), *Kriegswirtschaft und Rüstung, 1939-1945*, Düsseldorf, Droste, 1977 pp. 92-133, here p. 107. Boldorf argues that the unilateral reorientation of the occupied economies’ exports to Germany is neither an act of Europeanization, nor does it have anything to do with a *Großraumwirtschaft*. Boldorf, ‘Europa unter nationalsozialistischer Hegemonie’, p. 11. Schröter also distinguishes between war-economic exploitation and long-term planning. See H. Schröter, ‘Thesen und Desiderata zur ökonomischen Besatzungsherrschaft. Skandinavien und die NS-Großraumwirtschaft’, in J. Lund (ed.), *Working for the New Order*, Copenhagen, Copenhagen Business School Press, 2006, pp. 29-44, here pp. 35-38. Bohn denies that the reorganisation of the Norwegian economy had anything to do with the New Order, even though the “protagonists constantly” referred to it. He argues that the reorganisation was merely an adjustment to the circumstances the war had created. See R. Bohn, ‘Deutsche Wirtschaftsinteressen und Wirtschaftslenkung im “Reichskommissariat Norwegen”’, in J. Bähr and R. Banken (eds.), *Das Europa des ‘Dritten Reichs’. Recht, Wirtschaft, Besatzung*, Frankfurt a.M., Vittorio Klostermann, 2005, pp. 105-122, here p. 110. However, these standpoints neglect the possibility that the war-economic organisation of Europe was partly consistent with the projected New Order. Overy also assumes that the basic principle of exploitation in accordance with German interests “would have been a permanent feature of the New Order”. Overy, *War and Economy*, p. 342.

⁶¹ Umbreit, ‘Deutsche Herrschaft’, p. 6; similarly: Hoensch, ‘Neue Ordnung Europas’, pp. 238-254.

⁶² Lund, ‘Denmark and the New Order’, p. 305. Schröter notices that the New Order became a relevant category in the considerations of occupation authorities. See H. Schröter, ‘Administrative Ansätze nationalsozialistischer Großraumwirtschaft - die Fälle Norwegen und Dänemark’, in J. ten Cate J. and G. Otto (ed.), *Das organisierte Chaos. Ämterdarwinismus und ‘Gesinnungsethik’: Determinanten nationalsozialistischer Besatzungsherrschaft*, Berlin, Metropol, 1999, pp. 143-172, here pp. 168-169. Dieckmann ascertains that German long-term planning legitimised the actions of occupation authorities in Lithuania. However, according to him, their actual policies were geared to the war and problems of occupation. Dieckmann, ‘Siedlungspolitik Litauen’, p. 118.

⁶³ Mazower, *Nazi Rule*, p. 262. In his previous book, Mazower states that the New Order hardly had an influence on policy. See Mazower, *Dark Continent*, p. 223.

⁶⁴ Overy, ‘New Order’, p. 25. According to Freymond, the economic reorganisation of Europe had been „partiellement mise en place.” Freymond, *Réorganisation Économique*, p. 207.

⁶⁵ Volkmann, ‘Europäische Dimension’, p. 41.

⁶⁶ According to Berghahn “there was ultimately too little time for the New Economic Order in occupied Europe to solidify”. See V. Berghahn, ‘German Big Business and the Quest for a European Economic Empire in the Twentieth Century’, in V. Berghahn (ed.), *Quest for Economic Empire. European Strategies of German Big Business in the Twentieth Century*, Providence, Berghahn, 1996, pp. 1-33, here p. 23. Hartmann points out that all National Socialist intentions stay vague because of the course of the war. See C. Hartmann, *Unternehmen Barbarossa. Der deutsche Krieg im Osten, 1941-1945*, Munich, Beck, 2011, p. 17; also Wildt, *Neue Ordnung der ethnographischen Verhältnisse*, p. 137.

⁶⁷ In ‘*Hitler’s Volksstaat*’, Aly denies that long-term planning played any role in German European policy. He argues that the National Socialist occupation policy solely served German short-term needs, particularly the need to bribe the German population into consent. If anything, this interest occasionally

accordance with – and sometimes even in contradiction to⁶⁸ – war-economic reason, until the pressing short-term necessities of war started to overshadow all German long-term planning.

5.4 A Common Market – The Profiteers of the New Order

Private companies⁶⁹ played an important role in the construction of the National Socialist New Order. In the initial stage, their voices were heard in the discursive construction of its economic shape and they were expected to breathe life into these plans for a new Europe. They lived up to this expectation. Under the patronage of German military dominance, many German companies⁷⁰ expanded into the occupied territories, took over competitors, bought seized Jewish businesses, acquired shares, outsourced production, or led companies provisionally. Thus, private businesses substantiated the German dominance in Europe. In the hope of also getting a chance in the conquered Soviet territories, German companies shifted their focus eastwards with the *Wehrmacht*. They gathered information on the local facilities and made their expertise available to the army by embedding experts in military units. However, they were in for a disappointment. For the time being, the National Socialist regime barred the Newly Occupied Eastern Territories for the activities of private businesses. That

clashed with some experts medium-term concepts of exploitation. Aly, *Volksstaat*, p. 349. Schröter takes a similar line when he argues that German occupation policy did not implement any long-term measures, which aimed at a European *Großwirtschaftsraum*. Schröter, 'Großraumwirtschaft', p. 170. This stands in stark contrast to the findings presented here. In 'Vordenker der Vernichtung', Aly and Heim also convincingly show that the *völkisch* and economic long-term planning of experts at the medium-level of the regime played a crucial role in initiating and carrying out the German policy of expulsion, resettlement, and mass murder. See Aly and Heim, *Vordenker der Vernichtung*, e.g. pp. 9, 55, 104, 111, 120, 159, 184, 198.

⁶⁸ There are numerous examples for this. To name but a few: The foreign currencies the *Reich* mustered to promote economic interlocking could have been used to purchase scarce goods abroad. Millions of Russian Prisoners of War could have eased the tight German labour market. Instead, German officials let them die. The former Russian industry was left to decay, instead of harnessing its war-economic potential. Himmler's resettlement schemes in Poland and Ukraine were set into motion despite its negative effects on the local population's will to cooperate. Of course, one could argue that National Socialist officials initiated many of these decisions in times of confidence in a German victory and revised them after the situation deteriorated. However, this argument underlines the view that there were times, in which National Socialist officials cared more about Europe-to-be than about the immediate needs of war.

⁶⁹ The following refers to those private companies that have been taken into account here and in the consulted business historical case studies.

⁷⁰ Of course, there were German companies which did not expand into occupied territories during the war. *Buderus* and *Hugo Boss* are examples for this. See H. Pohl, *Buderus 1932-1995, Vol. 3*, Wetzlar, Buderus, 2001, p. 83; R. Köster, *Hugo Boss, 1924-1945: Die Geschichte einer Kleiderfabrik zwischen Weimarer Republik und 'Drittem Reich'*, Munich, Beck, 2011.

led German companies to continue to consolidate their position in the rest of Europe and kept a close eye on the East.

When the military situation led German officials to change their mind and to call on the support private businesses in the summer of 1942, private companies were ready. They were willing to take over and rebuild factories in the East. By the time many of the respective contracts were ready to be signed, however, the tide had already turned and many German companies did not take a German victory for granted anymore.⁷¹ Nevertheless, they carried on because it demonstrated goodwill and the risk-reward ratio was favourable. Thus, private businesses kept backing the regime and its New Order as long as a German victory did not seem impossible. However, as the military situation kept deteriorating National Socialist officials tried to brace themselves against the impending defeat by streamlining the European economies for the immediate needs of total war, but the activities of German companies started to exhibit features of defiance. While private businesses kept cashing in on the demand the war effort created, they prepared for the time after a German defeat. They tried to safeguard their expert knowledge, hoarded supplies, and probed the prospective post-war market.

Until then the National Socialist New Order had played an important role in the activities of private companies. As mentioned above, their policies substantiated the discursively constructed New Order and their statements reveal a 'voluntary subordination' to the discursively hegemonic ways of speaking. The latter has led Hayes to conclude – with respect to the *IG Farben* – that German industry “learned to clothe its objectives in appeals to military necessity or the Party's goals”⁷². According to Feldman, they did so irrespective of whether they sympathized with the ideas or not.⁷³ Indeed, much of the analysed material suggests that German businessmen were well aware of what the National Socialist regime expected and tailored their official correspondence, memoranda, and speeches to it.⁷⁴ However, for German companies, the New Order was more than a means to their own ends. On the one

⁷¹ See J. Bähr, R. Banken and T. Flemming, *Die MAN - Eine deutsche Industriegeschichte*, Munich, Beck, 2008, p. 306.

⁷² Hayes, *Industry and Ideology*, p. 217.

⁷³ See Hansen, 'Business and German Hegemony', p. 183.

⁷⁴ According to Ernst von Weizäcker everybody had to adopt the current convention of speech if one wanted to achieve anything. Neulen, 'Deutschland', p. 44. This is certainly true, but since reiterating conventions stabilises and confirms them, this argument is not suited as the apology revisionists use it for. See e.g. the introductory remarks in ZFI, *Der Osten und die deutsche Wehrmacht*.

hand, being prepared for the anticipated European market became one of the goals they aimed for.⁷⁵ On the other hand, the New Order policy of the regime determined the circumstances of their activities. The German sphere of influence set the geographical boundaries, the dominance and the policies of the *Reich* facilitated expansion, and the economic reorganisation of Europe created or altered demand. Thus, it did not need executives who wholeheartedly supported National Socialism to align the activities of a company with the New Order.⁷⁶ Economic rationality sufficed as long as the discursively constructed National Socialist New Order seemed the most likely future scenario.

Accordingly, when the German victory failed to materialise quickly and first military setbacks started to raise general doubts German companies found themselves in limbo. They still complied but increasingly avoided taking risks. This becomes clear in the expansion of German companies into the occupied Eastern territories. The initial interest to expand by incorporating former Soviet companies made way for dutiful signs of goodwill shown by taking over low-risk trusteeships. However, while companies tried to minimise risks because of their uncertainty about the future, the regime shifted its focus to the here and now, calling for sacrifices for the sake of the war effort. This widening gap between the constant long-term considerations of German companies and the entirely short-term focused necessities of war resulted in frictions but also in efforts to re-establish a future prospect to which companies could subscribe.⁷⁷ However, the National Socialist New Order ceased to be a decisive point of reference. German companies prepared for a different future.

Overall, the National Socialist New Order depended on private businesses and private businesses supported the New Order discursively and on the ground as long as it seemed to shape their future circumstances. To the degree that this future scenario faded, they reorientated themselves. Neither the increasing pressure that state institutions exerted, nor the attempts to get the companies back on board succeeded in realigning private businesses. They refrained from investments that would be unprofitable in peacetime, they defied pressures to give away expert knowledge to potential

⁷⁵ See e.g. Gregor, *Daimler-Benz*, p. 160; Wixforth, *Dresdner Bank*, p. 889; Feldman, *Die Allianz*, p. 450; Hayes, *Industry and Ideology*, p. 60.

⁷⁶ With regard to the German automobile industry, Spoerer also argues that the ideological convictions of CEOs have “anecdotal value” at best. M. Spoerer, ‘Die Automobilindustrie im Dritten Reich: Wachstum um jeden Preis’, in L. Gall and M. Pohl (eds.), *Unternehmen im Nationalsozialismus*, Munich, Beck, 1998, pp. 61-68, here p. 68.

⁷⁷ See Herbst, *Ordnung der Wirtschaft*, pp. 299-300.

post-war competitors, and they tried to bring their important staff, machinery, and raw materials into safety instead of sacrificing them for total war. Thus, the interplay between private companies and the National Socialist New Order suggests that economic rationality prevailed in the activities of German businesses until the end.⁷⁸ It also shows – and this is the more disturbing finding – that it was not ideological conviction or political coercion but economic rationality which led German companies to voluntarily sustain the inhumane New Order policies of the National Socialist regime.⁷⁹ They participated in and capitalised on war and mass murder because it promised to pay off.⁸⁰

5.5 A German Europe – The Place of the New Order in German Thinking

The National Socialist New Order is often excluded from the History of European integration because of its supposedly anti-European nature. At the same time, the German war aims during the First World War are frequently portrayed as its spiritual origin. Hence, historiography constructs two major continuities in German thinking: On the one hand, a good one, in which the German role in the post-war integration process is traced back to a European spirit that timidly started to sprout during the interwar period;⁸¹ and, on the other hand, a dark side which made millions of German

⁷⁸ In the ongoing debate about the character of the National Socialist economy, this finding supports the view that “autonomous, economically rational, profit-oriented considerations determined businesses’ decisions on investment and production”. C. Buchheim and J. Scherner, ‘Anmerkungen zum Wirtschaftssystem des “Dritten Reichs”’, in W. Abelshauser, J. Hesse and W. Plumpe (eds.), *Wirtschaftsordnung, Staat und Unternehmen. Neue Forschungen zur Wirtschaftsgeschichte des Nationalsozialismus*, Essen, Klartext, 2003, pp. 81-97, here p. 96. For the two sides of this debate see P. Hayes, ‘Corporate Freedom of Action in Nazi Germany’, *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute Washington*, no. 45, 2009, pp. 29-42; C. Buchheim and J. Scherner, ‘Corporate Freedom of Action in Nazi Germany: A Response to Peter Hayes’, *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute Washington*, no. 45, 2009, pp. 43-50.

⁷⁹ Avraham Barkai has pointed this out. See Barkai, *Wirtschaftssystem des Nationalsozialismus*, p. 117. This reading confirms that private businesses and the National Socialist regime shared certain goals, but rejects the – sometimes implicit – connotation of high finance being the power behind the throne, which can be found in D. Eichholtz, ‘Die “Neuordnung” des europäischen “Grosswirtschaftsraumes”. Deutsche Pläne und Realität’, in J. Lund (ed.), *Working for the New Order*, Copenhagen, Copenhagen Business School Press, 2006, pp. 13-28; Roth, ‘Nachkriegsplanungen’.

⁸⁰ Spoerer argues that private companies will always participate in crimes, if they are in competition, act within a legal framework, and do not have to fear bad press. See Spoerer, ‘Automobilindustrie im Dritten Reich’, p. 68. This thought leads beyond the two central cornerstones of the debate on the entanglement of German companies in the crimes of the ‘Third Reich’: political responsibility and moral guilt. See V. Berghahn, *Industriegesellschaft und Kulturtransfer*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010, p. 21. In fact, it shows that the promise of profits will always trump ethically correct behaviour due to the intrinsic logic of companies.

⁸¹ See J. Dülffer, ‘Der Niedergang Europas im Zeichen der Gewalt: das 20. Jahrhundert’, in H. Duchhardt and A. Kunz (eds.), *Europäische Geschichte als historiographisches Problem*, Mainz, Philipp von Zabern, 1997, pp. 105-127, here p. 123.

soldiers trample on this delicate little plant on their way to establishing a German rule over Europe. By keeping these continuities separate, however, historians present the German role in the post-war process of European integration in a 'proper light' and block the view of commonalities that might link these traditions. Accordingly, this final section will briefly contextualise the National Socialist New Order within the German tradition of European thinking.

After the initial victories of the German troops in the First World War, German officials started to ponder on the future of Europe. For many, the *Reich* fought this war for the "ideas of 1914", which were to replace the "ideas of 1789" – liberalism, individualism, democracy, and human rights.⁸² Accordingly, German planning revolved around "weakening France in a way that it cannot rise again as a great power"⁸³ in the West, and aimed at freeing itself from the "pressure of the Russian colossus"⁸⁴ in the East. As a result, Germany would preside over a Europe pacified by a stable equilibrium.⁸⁵ Germany's newly gained power also revived the ideas of a reorganised European economy that had shaped the German discourse on Europe since the middle of the 19th century.⁸⁶ By additionally curbing British influence, leading officials intended letting German economic dominance in Europe come into its own, thereby establishing an informal political hegemony.⁸⁷ Thus, imperial Germany wanted to seize the opportunity the war offered and to enforce an economically unified *Mitteleuropa* despite the concerns of other states. The result was to be a powerful, prosperous, and stable German-led Europe which would be a match for the growing Anglo-Saxon and Russian economies.⁸⁸

The result of the First World War, however, was not a Europe reorganised by Germany, but a fragmented and crisis-ridden continent which felt increasingly mar-

⁸² See H. Winkler, *Der lange Weg nach Westen. Vol. 1: Deutsche Geschichte 1806-1933*, Bonn, Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 2002, p. 337.

⁸³ Note by Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg, 9 September 1914, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Weltherrschaft im Visier*, pp. 86-88.

⁸⁴ Bethmann Hollweg cited in F. Fischer, *Krieg der Illusionen: Die Deutsche Politik von 1911 bis 1914*, Düsseldorf, Droste, 1969, p. 753.

⁸⁵ Memorandum of Walther Rathenau, 7 September 1914, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Weltherrschaft im Visier*, pp. 83-86.

⁸⁶ See W. Mommsen, *Der Erste Weltkrieg: Anfang vom Ende des bürgerlichen Zeitalters*, Bonn, Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 2004, pp. 94-104; Mommsen, 'Mitteleuropaidee', 1995.

⁸⁷ See F. Fischer, *Griff nach der Weltmacht: Die Kriegszielpolitik des kaiserlichen Deutschland 1914/18*, Düsseldorf, Droste, 1967, p. 95.

⁸⁸ See e.g. Letter by Clemens Delbrück to Bethmann Hollweg, 13 September 1914, printed in Schumann and Nestler, *Weltherrschaft im Visier*, pp. 89-91; P. Theiner, "'Mitteleuropa'-Pläne im Wilhelminischen Deutschland", in H. Berding (ed.), *Wirtschaftliche und politische Integration in Europa im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Göttingen, 1997, pp. 128-148, here p. 130.

ginalised by the growing power of the United States and the Soviet Union. Against this background, many Germans considered a reorganisation of Europe more necessary than ever and continued to dream about a different, a peaceful, united and cooperating Europe.⁸⁹ In all but the socialist political camp, a European *Großraumwirtschaft* was supposed to be the economic foundation of this bright future.⁹⁰ Only in this way would Europe be able to hold its ground in a world shaped by large integrated areas and to restore its former power and glory.⁹¹ For conservative and right-wing circles, however, to achieve all this, Europe also needed a new unifying and genuinely European idea to replace the detested Western values.⁹² Their belief that Germany was destined to institute such an idea was fuelled by the 'National Revolution', by its label as 'Third Reich',⁹³ and by the *völkisch* spirit it promoted. Even though the concrete shape of German interwar notions of Europe produced many different concepts, they all shared one starting-point and promised the same results. No matter if it was the often unnamed socialist Europe-to-be, the United States of Europe, *Mitteleuropa*, the *Reich*, or a Pan-Germanic-League, Europe was the way out of misery and the promise of power, peace, and prosperity.

When National Socialist Germany set out to conquer the *Lebensraum* the German *Volk* supposedly needed, it did not have a clear-cut idea of Europe-to-be, but advo-

⁸⁹ According to Burgard, Europe was primarily discussed as a solution to various problems of the interwar period, not as an idealistic goal. See O. Burgard, *Das gemeinsame Europa - von der politischen Utopie zum außenpolitischen Programm*, Frankfurt a.M., Verlag neue Wissenschaft, 2000, p. 240. Very often, these problems related to national interests. See V. Conze, 'Leitbild Paneuropa? Zum Europagedanken und seiner Wirkung in der Zwischenkriegszeit am Beispiel der Konzepte Richard Coudenhove-Kalergis', in J. Elvert and J. Nielsen-Sikora (eds.), *Leitbild Europa? Europabilder und ihre Wirkungen in der Neuzeit*, Stuttgart, Steiner, 2009, pp. 119-125, here p. 124.

⁹⁰ However, even socialists spoke out for an intensification of trade and exchange between Europe's industrial core and the agrarian states in Southeastern and Eastern Europe. In all other political camps, the idea of a *Großwirtschaftsraum* gained ground. See A. Bay, *Der nationalsozialistische Gedanke der Großraumwirtschaft und seine ideologischen Grundlagen*, PhD Thesis, Erlangen-Nürnberg, 1962; U. Prehn, 'Die "Entgrenzung" des Deutschen Reiches. Europäische Raumordnungsentwürfe in der Zeitschrift Volk und Reich (1925-1944)', in C. Sachse (ed.), *'Mitteleuropa' und 'Südosteuropa' als Planungsraum*, Göttingen, Wallstein, 2010, pp. 169-197, here p. 175. Geopolitical considerations paved the way for this. See e.g. Hahnemann, *Texturen des Globalen*, p. 17; Schultz, 'Grossraumdenken', pp. 35-56, chapter 2.3.

⁹¹ Socialists, however, did care more about the working class than Europe's power and glory (chapter 2.1.1).

⁹² For the relevance of this thought in nationalist circles, see H. Mommsen, 'Das Trugbild der "Nationalen Revolution". Betrachtungen zur nationalistischen Gegenkultur in der Weimarer Republik', in W. Schmitz and C. Vollnhals (eds.), *Völkische Bewegung - Konservative Revolution - Nationalsozialismus. Aspekte einer politisierten Kultur*, Dresden, Thelem, 2005, pp. 21-30, here pp. 22-25; Mohler, *konservative Revolution*, p. 139.

⁹³ Due to its vagueness, the idea of the *Reich* became a very powerful antithesis to the Weimar republic and the National Socialist 'Third Reich' nurtured these diffuse hopes. See e.g. H. Winkler, *Der lange Weg nach Westen. Vol. 2: Deutsche Geschichte 1933-1990*, Bonn, Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2004, p. 6; Faber, *Abendland*, p. 25; Münkler, *Reich, Nation, Europa*, p. 58; Kettenacker, 'Mythos vom Reich', p. 267; Sontheimer, *Antidemokratisches Denken*.

cated *völkisch* and economic knowledge and belief systems. After the first major victories, these perspectives on Europe and their interpretive reservoirs produced constructs of ideas, thus launching the New Order discourse. Its *völkisch* dimension was understood as a way of pacifying the continent in a renunciation of the spiritual aberrations that both the East and the West had imposed or wanted to enforce on Europe. The idea of treading a third way also shaped the concepts for an economic reorganisation, which was envisaged as a more natural alternative to a liberal market, or a state economy. Hierarchically graded along *völkisch* lines and engaged in a division of labour that emphasised strengths, invalidated weaknesses, and reflected the supposed racial value of each *Volk*, this new Europe would thrive and not only defy 'Jewish capitalism' and 'Jewish bolshevism' but become the world's political and economic powerhouse again.

After the Second World War, the continent lay in ashes while the United States and Soviet Russia were more powerful than ever and divided the world between them.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, Germany still pinned its hopes on Europe. If they wanted to preserve themselves and their uniqueness, the European states had to make use of the potentials that economic and political integration promised. On its own, no country would stand a chance amidst the world powers.⁹⁵ Even though the idea of a third – genuinely European – way between the two dominating ideologies was still powerful, the West offered more compatible values and seemed much less threatening than communism in the East, whose dangerousness National Socialist propaganda had tried to hammer home to all Europeans since 1941.⁹⁶ Additionally, the expansion of

⁹⁴ See W. Loth, 'Der Zweite Weltkrieg und der Durchbruch der europäischen Einigungsbewegung', in H. Hecker and S. Spieler (ed.), *Die historische Einheit Europas. Ideen - Konzepte - Selbstverständnis*, Bonn, Kulturstiftung der deutsche Vertriebenen, 1994, pp. 85-99, here p. 91. Lipgens, in contrast, argues that European post-war integration was not the result of the East-West conflict but the expression of the ideas developed among resistance circles. However, it seems highly unlikely that Europe would have assumed the same form without the widely shared anti-communism and the iron curtain. See W. Lipgens, 'Preface', W. Lipgens (ed.), *Documents on the History of European Integration. Vol. 1: Continental Plans for European Union 1939-1945*, Berlin, de Gruyter, 1985, pp. IX-XI, here p. XI.

⁹⁵ See K. Adenauer, *Erinnerungen. Vol. 3: 1955-1959*, Stuttgart, Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1978, pp. 13-20, 266; Gosewinkel, 'Antiliberales Europa', 2012, p. 361.

⁹⁶ See G. Thiemeyer, *Europäische Integration*, Cologne, Böhlau, 2010, pp. 112-144; Bailey, 'European Discourse in Germany', pp. 453-478; U. Frevert, *Eurovisionen. Ansichten guter Europäer im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Frankfurt a.M., Fischer, 2003, p. 130; W. Burgdorf, "*Chimäre Europa*" – *Anti-europäische Diskurse in Deutschland 1648-1999*, Bochum, Winkler, 1999, pp. 198-199. A broadly shared anti-communism might be one respect, in which the Second World War set the agenda for the post-war integration debate. See B. Strath and T. Sandkühler, 'Europäische Integration. Grundlinien und Interpretationen', in T. Sandkühler (ed.), *Europäische Integration. Deutsche Hegemonialpolitik gegenüber Westeuropa 1920-1960*, Göttingen, Wallstein, 2002, pp. 19-40, here p. 29; P. Krüger, 'Europabewußtsein in Deutschland in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts', in H. Kaelble and K. Schwabe (eds.), *Europa im Blick der Historiker*, Munich, Oldenbourg, 1995, pp. 31-54, here p. 48.

Russia rendered *Mitteleuropa* illusory by factually and rhetorically barring the way into the economies Germany had eyed up for more than a century, and the havoc wrought in the name of the Third *Reich* not only prohibited calls for a fourth *Reich* but also discredited any claim to a German hegemony in Europe.⁹⁷ Thus, Western Germany reoriented itself westwards because there was no other choice, advocated a peaceful reinvigoration of Europe through integration, and meant to save “the Christian *Abendland* [occident]”⁹⁸ from sinking into insignificance.

Of course, condensed in this way, the commonalities between decades of German notions of Europe cover up some undeniable fundamental differences. National Socialism committed countless crimes and atrocities in the name of the New Order it wanted to enforce,⁹⁹ whereas the post-war integration process was borne by equality, mutual agreement and cooperation. Nevertheless, the focus on the commonalities reveals some remarkable common ground: For decades, the United States and Soviet Russia were large integrated entities whose military and economic power were perceived as a threat, while Europe was fragmented, quarrelling, poor, and powerless. In this context, a new European order seemed the only remedy for the loss of political weight, cultural influence, and economic relevance, as it promised peace, prosperity and power. Thus, Europe constantly faced the same, genuinely European, problems, and for many Germans, including the National Socialists, it remained the best answer. Only a pacified, cooperating, and economically thriving Europe, organised in a genuinely European manner, would safeguard the survival of whatever they held dear. From this perspective, Mazower’s verdict that National Socialism in general fits “into the mainstream not only of German but also of European history far more comfortably than most people like to admit”¹⁰⁰, also holds true for the National Socialist European policy. The New Order was the inhumane and violent attempt to realise a National Socialist solution to European problems.

⁹⁷ See Thörner, *Deutsche Südosteuropapläne*; Conze, *Ideen von Europa*, p. 394.

⁹⁸ Adenauer cited in W. Loth, ‘Politische Integration nach 1945. Motive und Antriebskräfte bei Konrad Adenauer und Charles De Gaulle’, in U. Lappenküper and G. Thiemeyer (eds.), *Europäische Einigung im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Paderborn, Schöningh, 2013, pp. 137-154, here p. 140.

⁹⁹ This is the fundamental difference, from which most authors deduce the anti-European and anti-*abendländisch* nature of the New Order. Elvert, *Mitteleuropa*, p. 393; Elvert, ‘*Germanen und Imperialisten*’ p. 184; Salewski, ‘Europa’, p. 106; Salewski, ‘Ideas’, p. 54. However, Elvert’s verdict that the National Socialist New Order “had nothing in common with the European concepts” of the 1920s is insupportable in its resoluteness. J. Elvert, ‘Europäische Leitbilder der Neuzeit’, in J. Elvert and J. Nielsen-Sikora (eds.), *Leitbild Europa? Europabilder und ihre Wirkungen in der Neuzeit*, Stuttgart, Steiner, 2009, pp. 81-88, here p. 87.

¹⁰⁰ Mazower, *Dark Continent*, p. xii.

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