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THE POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM OF
THE GENERAL GOVERNORATE
IN 1939–1945

The General Governorate or General Governorate for the Occupied Polish Region (German: Generalgouvernement für die besetzten polnischen Gebiete, Polish: Generalne Gubernatorstwo dla Okupowanych Ziemi Polskich, GG) was a peculiar Nazi formation established on the lands of occupied Poland at the end of October 1939. It was to be a kind of temporary colony, which the Third Reich authorities, particularly Reichsführer SS Heinrich Himmler, had from its creation treated as a reservoir of raw materials and a “racial dumping ground” to which the Nazi regime planned to resettle, among others, all the Jews living on the National Socialist-controlled lands. From 1942 onwards, the GG became the main area of extermination of European Jews, where the largest genocidal operation in the history of humanity was carried out (the “Reinhardt” Operation), during which, between 1942 and 1943, approximately 1.5 million Jews were exterminated in the German extermination camps at Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka, as well as at Majdanek (in addition to thousands murdered during the execution and pacification of ghettos that

accompanied the deportations).¹ Ultimately, however, this “racial laboratory” of the regime was destined for Germanisation once the local population under the *Generalplan Ost* had been deported beyond the Urals, with those who remained working as slaves of the “master race” for the German war machine.² The General Governorate was also an important point on the map of Nazi terror and ethnic cleansing, especially in the context of the extermination of the Polish socio-political elite, to mention as an example, the Extraordinary Pacification Action (*Außerordentliche Befriedungsaktion*) in 1940.³ The GG was also one of the projected sites for German settlements, a precursor of which was the unsuccessful “Zamość” Operation, carried out from November 1942 to August 1943.⁴

Not only did the leadership of the Third Reich play a strategic role in putting into practice the plans of the National Socialist “national struggle,” i.e. the Germanisation and demographic transformation of these lands, but, above all, the local civil administration headed by Governor General, Hans Frank, and the extensive SS and police apparatus, meticulously supervised by Himmler. Frank’s brutal and corrupt regime, which treated his subordinate territory as a “fringe state” of the Reich (*Nebenland*), made the tragic history of the GG stand out even against the background of the mass crimes and atrocities of German rule in occupied Europe.⁵ The purpose of this article is to present the political and administrative system of the General Governorate and, above all, the Nazi concept of the governance of the

¹ For more, see *Akcja „Reinhardt”. Zagłada Żydów w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie*, ed. D. Libionka (Warsaw, 2004); S. Lehnstaedt, *Czas zabijania. Bełżec, Sobibór, Treblinka i akcja „Reinhardt”*, transl. B. Nowacki (Warsaw, 2018).

² See H. Heiber, “*Der Generalplan Ost*,” *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 3 (1958), pp. 281–325; *Vom Generalplan Ost zum Generalsiedlungsplan*, ed. C. Madajczyk (München, 1994); *Der „Generalplan Ost”. Hauptlinien der nationalsozialistischen Planungs- und Vernichtungspolitik*, ed. by M. Rössler and S. Schleiermacher (Berlin, 1993); B. Wasser, *Himmlers Raumplanung im Osten. Der Generalplan Ost in Polen 1940–1944* (Basel, 1993).

³ For more, see *Außerordentliche Befriedungsaktion 1940. Akcja AB na ziemiach polskich. Materiały z sesji naukowej (6–7 listopada 1986 r.)*, introd. and ed. Z. Mańkowski (Warsaw, 1992); J. Pietrzykowski, *Akcja AB w Częstochowie. AB-Aktion* (Katowice, 1971).

⁴ See e.g. A. Jaczyńska, *Sonderlaboratorium SS. Zamojszczyzna – „pierwszy obszar osiedleńczy w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie” 1942–1943* (Lublin, 2012); *Zamojszczyzna – Sonderlaboratorium der SS. Zbiór dokumentów polskich i niemieckich z okresu okupacji hitlerowskiej*, ed. C. Madajczyk (Warsaw, 1979).

⁵ See M. Winstone, *Generalne Gubernatorstwo. Mroczne serce Europy Hitlera*, transl. T. Fiedorek (Poznań, 2015), pp. 29–30, 33–34, back side of the cover.

area, the characteristics of the various institutions of public authority, the scope of their competences and the relations between them.

The biography, style of government and political position of Hans Frank, first as the head of the civil administration (Chef der Zivilverwaltung, CdZ) and then in the position of Governor General, who took over full power in his “appanage principality” on 26 October 1939, i.e. after the period of Wehrmacht military administration, will be analysed. This will be followed by a presentation of the organisation and functioning of the GG government (Regierung des Generalgouvernements), which emerged in December 1940 from the Office of the Governor General (Amt des Generalgouvernements), as well as the boards of the individual districts headed by the governors. The structure of the local NSDAP will also be described, as well as the lower levels of the GG administration, which consisted of the offices of rural and urban district chiefs (Kreis- and Stadthauptmannleute), or rural and urban commissars (Land- und Stadtkommissare), mayors, aldermen and village heads. Finally, the problem of agencies of the German security apparatus, i.e. the SS and police structures subordinate to the higher SS and police commander in the GG (Höherer SS- und Polizeiführer, HSSPF), including auxiliary police formations, whose ranks were also supplied by the local population, will be examined. The text is based on Polish, Anglo-Saxon and German historiography produced after 1945, which deals with the occupation of the Republic of Poland by the Third Reich in the broadest sense, particularly with the German political and administrative institutions established in these lands during the Second World War.

The areas occupied by the Wehrmacht after Germany’s invasion of Poland in September 1939 were placed under military administration (Militärverwaltung) on 25 September that year, under a decree from Hitler. The territory of the future General Governorate was divided into the military districts of Lodz and Cracow, which fell under the responsibility of the 8th, 10th, and 14th Armies. Initially, Hitler appointed Hans Frank as the senior head of the administration (Oberverwaltungschef) for the entire territory of Poland occupied by the Wehrmacht; the intention was that Frank would uniformly direct the various civilian administrations and issue guidelines for dealing with the population in the occupied areas. At the same time, he performed a similar function at the Lodz Military District (under the command of Colonel-General Gerd von Rundstedt). In turn, Arthur

Seyss-Inquart, formerly Reich Governor in Austria, became the head of administration at the Cracow district (Col. Gen. Wilhelm List).⁶ Frank and Seyss-Inquart, whose task it was to form the foundations of the future administration, create the conditions for the development of economic life and establish order in their respective districts, were formally subordinate to the Army High Command in the East (Oberkommando Ost, Ober-Ost) headed by General Walther von Brauchitsch (from 3 October to 20 October 1939 – Lt. Gen. Gerd von Rundstedt and later Gen. Johannes Blaskowitz) and the individual military district commanders.⁷ Looting, requisitions, and deportations characterised the period of *Militärverwaltung* in the lands of the later GG. All industrial goods that could serve the war machine were exported *en masse* to the Reich. Although there were numerous executions, the violent and immediate removal of Jews was refrained from for the time being, as this would have caused serious disruption to economic life.⁸

Frank got down to setting up the CdZ organisational staff only at the end of September 1939, when he chose Poznan as his headquarters. On 3 October, he convened a meeting at which he outlined the radical task set for him by Hitler: “the use of the country by ruthless exploitation; the export of all resources important for the war economy, including natural resources, machinery, production equipment, etc.; the acquisition of manpower for use in the Reich; the suppression of the entire Polish economy to the minimum necessary to allow the population to stay alive [...]” Frank stressed that closing schools and universities would make it impossible “to recreate a stratum of Polish intelligentsia.” At the same time, he added, “Poland is to be treated like a colony” and “an agricultural country,” which must be made dependent on the import of industrial products from Germany,

⁶ See J. Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik in den Niederlanden (1940–1945)* (Köln–Wien, 2015), pp. 61–68.

⁷ See B. Musiał, *Deutsche Zivilverwaltung und Judenverfolgung im Generalgouvernement. Eine Fallstudie zum Distrikt Lublin 1939–1944* (Wiesbaden, 2011), p. 13; H. Umbreit, *Deutsche Militärverwaltungen 1938/39. Die militärische Besetzung der Tschechoslowakei und Polens* (Stuttgart, 1977), pp. 85 ff.; M. Broszat, *Nationalsozialistische Polenpolitik 1939–1945* (Stuttgart, 1961), p. 27.

⁸ M. Mitera, *Zwycyżajny faszyzm. Położenie prawne obywateli II Rzeczypospolitej w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie 1939–1944* (Warsaw, 2017), p. 39. See also J. Böhler, “Prześladowanie ludności żydowskiej w okupowanej Polsce podczas trwania zarządu wojskowego (od 1 września do 25 października 1939 r.),” in *Zagłada Żydów na polskich terenach wcielonych do Rzeszy*, ed. A. Namysł (Warsaw, 2008), p. 48 ff.

and “the Poles will become slaves of the Greater Germanic Reich.”⁹ Without going into the details of the official and semi-official enunciations of the regime’s leaders, allegedly announcing the creation of some residual buffer state (Reststaat), this is how the basic features of Germany’s plans for the Polish people and lands can initially be presented.¹⁰

It should be underlined that Frank lacked any competence to manage the territories he was entrusted with. His administrative experience was limited to the establishment of party institutions. He did not know much about the functioning of the economy or about financial matters. Moreover, he did not speak Polish, and his pre-war contact with Poland was limited to cooperating in a “working group on German-Polish legal relations”. The later political reservations, resentments and aversions to the Polish nation had not yet surfaced.¹¹ How was it then that this undistinguished Nazi politician, side-lined from public life in the Third Reich before 1939, was appointed the Governor General by Hitler? Who was Hans Frank, and how did his political career develop up until the outbreak of the war?

Hans Frank (born 23 May 1900 in Karlsruhe) grew up in a respectable middle-class family living in Munich. Like many young people of his generation, he joined the ranks of the German extreme right after the end of the First World War, joining first the Freikorps and then, in 1923, the assault troops of the NSDAP (SA). At the same time, he finished studies in law and political economy at the universities of Kiel and Munich. He was so fascinated by Hitler that in November 1923, he

⁹ D. Schenk, *Hans Frank. Biografia generalnego gubernatora*, transl. K. Jachimczak (Cracow, 2009), pp. 141–142.

¹⁰ According to Frank’s notes in his diary, which numbered as many as 38 volumes, even until the beginning of October 1939, Hitler assumed that the area of the future GG was to remain “a kind of a residual state [Reststaat], which would be returned to the Poles in the future.” However, the Führer soon withdrew from these plans and began to treat the General Governorate as a quasi-colony, a sort of a free “labour pool” and a resource base for the Reich. See Winstone, *Generalne Gubernatorstwo*, pp. 48–50 (review of this book: W. Wichert, *Dzieje Najnowsze* 3 [2017], p. 352); L. Dobroszycki, J.B. Garas et al., “Wstęp,” in *Okupacja i ruch oporu w „Dzienniku” Hansa Franka 1939–1945*, ed. by S. Płoski, and L. Dobroszycki et al., vol. 1: 1939–1942, transl. D. Dąbrowska and M. Tomala (Warsaw, 1972), p. 24; W. Wichert, “Niemiecki system okupacyjny na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945. Zarys problematyki,” in *Stan badań nad pomocą Żydom na ziemiach polskich pod okupacją niemiecką – przegląd piśmiennictwa*, ed. by T. Domański and A. Gontarek (Warsaw–Kielce, 2022), p. 37; C. Madajczyk, *Generalna Gubernia w planach hitlerowskich. Studia* (Warsaw, 1961); L. Herzog, “Czy Hitler chciał utworzyć buforowe państewko polskie?,” *Wojskowy Przegląd Historyczny* 4 (1962), pp. 295–316.

¹¹ Schenk, *Hans Frank*, p. 142.

participated in the Munich putsch, which proved unsuccessful for the National Socialists. In the second half of the 1920s, he became the party's chief legal adviser and lawyer. He represented its members, including Hitler himself, during numerous trials. In 1928, he formed the National Socialist Lawyers' Association, and in 1929 was appointed the head of the NSDAP's legal office. After the Nazis came to power in Germany on 30 January 1933, he was entrusted with the position of the Bavarian Minister of Justice and, shortly afterwards, Reich's Commissioner for the unification of justice in the Länder and the reform of the legal order, which amounted to the *de facto* abolition of the local court systems. In 1933, Frank founded the Academy of German Law,¹² which was to create a new interpretation of law based on the principle of chieftainship (Führerprinzip¹³), and at the same time, secure for him the prestigious position of the Hugo Grotius of Nazi Germany. However, as Hitler held both lawyers and the law itself in open dislike, not to say outright contempt, this quasi-academic think tank's influence on the nascent totalitarian regime was utterly irrelevant. A year later, Frank was appointed a minister without portfolio in the Reich's government, but in this position, he had little to do apart from the rare occasions that pandered to his vanity.¹⁴

Moreover, Hitler lost some of his confidence in Frank when, during the Night of the Long Knives (29–30 June 1934), the brutal liquidation of the SA leadership and the Führer's other political opponents, Frank expressed his opposition to the arbitrary actions and terror campaign unleashed by Himmler's SS. In any case, as Frank himself not unreasonably admitted, he had been "since 1934, a slowly but steadily declining political greatness." Hitler no longer needed the law for anything as soon as he took the dictatorial helm of the government in Germany. Frank's attempts to halt the loss of his influence were expressed after 1934 primarily in an almost religious cult of the leader, whom he praised to the skies in numerous written and oral tirades. However, this did not help him regain the favour of the dictator. Until the outbreak of the Second World War, Frank remained a somewhat

¹² See H. Hattenhauer, "Die Akademie für Deutsches Recht (1933–1944)," *Juristische Schulung* 26 (1986), pp. 680–684; H.R. Pichinot, *Die Akademie für Deutsches Recht. Aufbau und Entwicklung einer öffentlich-rechtlichen Körperschaft des Dritten Reichs* (Kiel, 1981).

¹³ See "Führergrundsatz," in H. Kammer, E. Bartsch, *Begriffe aus der Zeit der Gewaltherrschaft 1933–1945* (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1992), pp. 71–72.

¹⁴ Winstone, *Generalne Gubernatorstwo*, p. 63.

secondary figure in the political life of the Third Reich. In this situation, it must have come as quite a surprise to him when in mid-September 1939, following Germany's aggression against Poland, Hitler dismissed him from his service in one of the Potsdam military units to entrust him with the post of the head of civil administration at the Supreme Command of the Army in the East.¹⁵

One may presume that Hitler intended to test Frank's abilities in this way, with the intention to write him off in the event of a failure finally. Some believe that the Führer was putting him on a side-track by electing him to this office. After all, given Hitler's intentions for the province, the General Governorate was hardly an attractive assignment. Nevertheless, it seems more likely that the dictator was filling key positions with "old combatants" whom he considered to be unconditionally devoted and compliant, and this pattern of appointments was to be repeated frequently in the German East.¹⁶ He also applied this principle to the selection of gauleiters. This is not to underestimate Hitler's ability to appreciate Frank's intelligence and mental flexibility.¹⁷ He also knew that he could count on his complete subordination and loyalty.

On 6 October 1939, a meeting was held under the chairmanship of Wilhelm Stuckart, the Secretary of State at the Reich's Ministry of the Interior, attended by Frank and the gauleiters of Danzig, East Prussia, Silesia and Poznan, to divide up the German-occupied territory of Poland. The following zones were then designated: the part subject to Germanisation and incorporated into the Reich, and the zone of isolation and the exploitation of Poles and Jews (the General Governorate).¹⁸ Importantly, due to the energetic action of Arthur Greiser, the future governor of the *Reichsgau Wartheland*, and protests from the local Germans, the Lodz region did not remain within the borders of the General Governorate. The results of this meeting were reflected in Hitler's decree concerning the division and administration of the eastern territories of 8 October 1939. According to this decree, Pomerania, Greater Poland, Silesia, part of Mazovia and Kuyavia, as well as a fragment of the Lodz Voivodeship and a fragment of the Białystok Voivodeship (Suwałki County and

¹⁵ J.C. Fest, *Oblicze Trzeciej Rzeszy*, transl. E. Werfel (Warsaw, 1970), p. 354.

¹⁶ Winstone, *Generalne Gubernatorstwo*, p. 64.

¹⁷ Schenk, *Hans Frank*, p. 142.

¹⁸ See Mitera, *Zwyczajny faszyzm*, p. 22.

a part of Augustów County, excluding the city) became parts of the Reich. The fate of the remaining portion of the country occupied by the Wehrmacht was sealed four days later when, on 12 October, Hitler signed a decree concerning the administration of the occupied Polish lands, i.e. the creation of the General Governorate. This decree entered into force on the day of its promulgation, i.e. 26 October of that year.¹⁹

The established General Governorate was not a state but a kind of protectorate, since the Reich exercised supreme power. At the same time, it was not part of Germany, like the annexed territories. The GG was often referred to as an area of German interests. In later years, there were several attempts to abolish it and incorporate it into the Reich.²⁰ A prelude to this was the removal of the phrase “for the occupied Polish territory” from the titles binding in the General Governorate by Frank’s secret decree of 31 July 1940 (the relevant decision was made by Hitler himself through a decree of 8 July 1940). The GG then ceased to be the national headquarters of the Polish element and became a peripheral appendage country. Despite attempts to bring it closer to the Reich, a customs, currency, foreign exchange and police border existed between them until 1945.²¹ In one of his first decrees on administrative structure, Frank established the division of the GG into four districts: Cracow, Radom, Lublin, and Warsaw. As of November 1939, Cracow became the seat of the authorities of the General Governorate (earlier, from 26 October to 1 November, Frank had resided temporarily in Lodz, where the first GG offices were located).²²

¹⁹ See Schenk, *Hans Frank*, pp. 142–143; Dobroszycki, Garas *et al.*, “Wstęp,” pp. 30–31; Musiał, *Deutsche Zivilverwaltung*, pp. 20–21; “Erlaß Adolf Hitlers vom 12. Oktober 1939 über die Verwaltung der besetzten polnischen Gebiete,” in *Europa unterm Hakenkreuz. Die faschistische Okkupationspolitik in Polen (1939–1945). Dokumentenauswahl und Einleitung*, ed. W. Röhr (Berlin, 1989), p. 130.

²⁰ The GG, despite its links with the Reich, had a certain independence. The concept of the General Governorate was a peculiar novelty that could not be described using the existing legal categories. Hitler used the expression “Reich’s foreground,” while Frank referred to the GG not only as the “seat of the Polish nation,” but also as a “Polish reserve,” claiming, however, that it was not part of Germany, but remained under its authority. See Madajczyk, *Generalna Gubernia*, p. 45; D. Majer, „Narodowo obcy” w Trzeciej Rzeszy. *Przyczynek do narodowosocjalistycznego ustawodawstwa i praktyki prawniczej w administracji i wymiarze sprawiedliwości ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem ziem wcielonych do Rzeszy i Generalnego Gubernatorstwa*, transl. T. Skoczny (Warsaw, 1989), p. 69; Mitera, *Zwycząjny faszyzm*, p. 30.

²¹ See C. Madajczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy w okupowanej Polsce*, vol. 1 (Warsaw, 1970), p. 109; A. Chwalba, *Okupacyjny Kraków w latach 1939–1945* (Cracow, 2016), pp. 25–26.

²² See “Pierwsze rozporządzenie o odbudowie administracji okupowanych polskich obszarów. Z dnia 26 października 1939,” *Dziennik rozporządzeń Generalnego Gubernatora dla okupowanych pol-*

At the time of its creation, the GG covered an area of approximately 95,000 square kilometres, including the pre-war voivodeships of Kielce, Lublin, most of the Cracow Voivodeship (excluding the western districts), a fragment of the Warsaw Voivodeship (excluding northern Mazovia) and a fragment of the Lodz Voivodeship. Shortly after the German invasion of the USSR, on 1 August 1941, the south-eastern territories of the Second Polish Republic were incorporated into Frank's "appanage principality" as the fifth, and territorially largest, district of Galicia (a part of the pre-war Lwowskie voivodeship, and Stanislaviv (Polish: Stanisławów) and Ternopil (Polish: Tarnopol) Voivodeships in their entirety. The total area of the GG then grew to 142,000 square kilometres. Determining the exact population of the General Governorate poses some difficulties. According to official German data from 1940, the population of this occupation unit was then approximately 12 million, including 90 thousand Germans (*Volksdeutsche* – Polish citizens of German nationality until 1939), 750 thousand Ukrainians, 9 million 600 thousand Poles, 80 thousand Highlanders (sic!) and 1.5 million Jews. Taking into account the loss of population as a result of the extermination policy of the occupying forces and, last but not least, the war migration, which was not included in any statistics, it should be assumed that in 1943 the GG had a population of approximately 16.8 million, of which Poles accounted for ca. 70%, Ukrainians for 27%, Germans for 2%, and Jews for about 1% of the population.²³

Hitler's decree of 12 October concerning the administration of the occupied Polish territories placed almost unlimited power in the hands of Hans Frank. Seyss-Inquart became his deputy (he remained in office until May 1940, when he was replaced by Frank's protégé, Dr Josef Bühler). The Governor General reported directly to Hitler. All areas of administration were assigned to him, and he could "legislate by regulations". Frank was furthermore to create the GG budget, though this required the approval of the Reich Minister of Finance. According to the decree's provisions, the administration costs were ceded to the occupied

skich obszarów 1939, pp. 3–4; Chwalba, *Okupacyjny Kraków*, p. 43; D. Schenk, *Krakauer Burg. Wawel jako ośrodek władzy generalnego gubernatora Hansa Franka w latach 1939–1945*, transl P. Zarychta (Cracow, 2013), pp. 52–53.

²³ See Dobroszycki, Garas *et al.*, "Wstęp," p. 31; Schenk, *Hans Frank*, p. 143; K.M. Pospieszalski, *Hitlerowskie „prawo” okupacyjne w Polsce*, Part 2: *Generalna Gubernia. Wybór dokumentów i próba syntezy* (Poznan, 1958), pp. 20–22.

area. The provisions concerning the interference of the Minister of the Interior and the Plenipotentiary for the Four-Year Plan were also a specific limitation of Frank's authority since, according to Hitler's decree: "The Chairman of the Council of Ministers for the Defence of the Reich, the Plenipotentiary for the Four-Year Plan and the highest authorities of the Reich may issue orders that are necessary for the planning of German living and economic space, including for the areas subordinated to the Governor General." The Reich Minister of the Interior, in turn, constituted "the central authority for the occupied Polish areas." Such provisions must have inevitably led to conflicts between those involved, especially as Frank had no intention of sharing his authority with anyone. He was formally subordinate to Hitler and accountable to him.²⁴ Later, after various jurisdictional frictions started to appear, Frank repeatedly invoked the contents of the Decree of 12 October to secure his political position against the growing influence of other regime agencies. Nevertheless, as he correctly observed, the "anarchy of powers" (Anarchie der Vollmachten) characteristic of the Third Reich often prevented him from effectively governing the GG. Whether this "polycracy of ministries" was a central element of the *divide et impera* strategy or an expression of the quasi-Darwinist 'official chaos' resulting from the 'parasitic' breakdown of traditional administrative structures already initiated in the old Reich remains an open question.²⁵ In any case, Hitler never made a definitive decision on the future status and distribution of political forces in the GG, with the result that the area remained an arena for fierce competence disputes between the various instances of the dictatorship throughout the whole period of the occupation.²⁶

Nonetheless, towards the end of October 1939, Frank was immensely pleased that, after several years of annoying political marginalisation, Hitler had finally recognised his boundless loyalty by entrusting him with the post of the Governor

²⁴ See Mitera, *Zwyczynny faszyzm*, pp. 32–33; Schenk, *Hans Frank*, p. 143.

²⁵ For more, see K. Hildebrand, *Das Dritte Reich* (München, 1991), pp. 178 ff.; P. Reichel, *Der schöne Schein des Dritten Reiches. Faszination und Gewalt des Faschismus* (München–Wien, 1991), p. 10; M. Broszat, *Der Staat Hitlers. Grundlegung und Entwicklung seiner inneren Verfassung* (München, 1992), pp. 423 ff.; M. Ruck, *Führerabsolutismus und polykratisches Herrschaftsgefüge – Verfassungsstrukturen des NS-Staates in Deutschland 1933–1945. Neue Studien zur nationalsozialistischen Herrschaft*, ed. by K.D. Bracher, M. Funke, and H.A. Jacobsen (Bonn, 1992), pp. 36 ff.

²⁶ Ch. Kleßmann, "Frank: Parteijurist und Generalgouverneur in Polen," in *Die braune Elite: 22 biographische Skizzen*, ed. by R. Smelser and R. Zitellmann (Darmstadt, 1990), p. 45.

General. The office even seemed created to accommodate Frank's bombastic lust for honours. With the splendour of an oriental despot, he soon moved into Wawel Castle, where he furnished his residence amidst a costly ceremonial that suited his nature so well, and in "audacious romantic delusions saw himself as a fief, set by Hitler on the royal throne of Poland." He was a master of life and death, as incalculable in his magnanimous gestures as he was in his cruelty. The Italian journalist Curzio Malaparte assessed that Frank's nature was "incredibly complex, a bizarre mixture of intelligence and cruelty, finesse and vulgarity, brutal cynicism and refined sensitivity."²⁷ In his very first conversations with Hitler, he discussed individual actions that would at the same time determine the future political line towards the GG, such as the demolition of the Royal Castle in Warsaw, the deportation of art treasures and the liquidation of the Polish intelligentsia. Hidden behind this as a goal was a "process of re-Germanisation," which Frank sometimes described as "the absolute imbuing of this space with Germanness," cleansing it of "unnecessary foreign tribal elements." In this vein, he heralded that "the greatest hour of Germanness" was coming and that the General Governorate "had an enormous historical task to fulfil." In Berlin government circles, the GG soon began to be referred to as the "Frank-Reich," i.e. the "Frank state" in the East, and the Governor General himself became known as "King Stanisław," who does not rule but reigns.²⁸ While he presented himself as an Enlightenment-era ruler and a sophisticated intellectual who wanted to develop culture and civilisation in these lands at all costs, Frank was also extremely sensitive to prestige and passionate about luxury.²⁹ With his family, he occupied sumptuous palaces, including the residence of the Potocki family in Krzeszowice, and he willingly plundered the property of the occupation zone entrusted to him, appropriating numerous collections of works of art.³⁰

Hitler's terror, oppression, and exploitation policy in occupied Poland contained guidelines that Frank shared and zealously implemented. Hitler reportedly even

²⁷ Quoted in C. Malaparte, *Kaputt*, transl. B. Sieroszevska (Warsaw, 1962), pp. 149–150.

²⁸ See Fest, *Oblicze Trzeciej Rzeszy*, p. 355; Schenk, *Hans Frank*, p. 160; Ch. Kleßmann, "Der Generalgouverneur Hans Frank," *Vierteljahrshäfte für Zeitgeschichte* 3 (1971), p. 255; Malaparte, *Kaputt*, p. 69.

²⁹ P. Wiczorkiewicz, *Historia polityczna Polski 1935–1945* (Poznan, 2014), p. 228.

³⁰ See N. Frank, *Mój ojciec Hans Frank*, transl. E. Kacprzycka, J. Kwiatkowski (Warsaw, 1991), pp. 94 ff.

said to him at the time: “You, my dear Frank, go and carry out the devil’s work in Poland well.”³¹ Encouraged by the dictator, Frank initially drew the mistaken conclusion of his independence from the central ministries in Berlin. Moreover, according to the decree of 12 October 1939, anyone who did not fall in line with Frank had to appeal to Hitler, and this was not easy since only the triumvirate: Heinrich Himmler, Martin Bormann (head of the NSDAP Chancellery after Rudolf Hess fled to Britain in May 1941) and Dr Hans Heinrich Lammers (head of the Reich Chancellery), had regular direct access to him, while otherwise contentious issues rarely reached the last instance. In his calculations, however, Frank underestimated the influence of powerful rivals. Heinrich Himmler, who regarded the ‘theatricality’ and the ‘intellectual sophistication’ of the governor with contempt, demanded a prominent role not only in using the SS and police in the GG.³² On 7 October 1939, Himmler was given greater powers as the Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood. With the help of his local representative, the Higher SS and Police Commander, he claimed the right to shape racial policy in occupied Poland. Initially, Himmler intended to resettle all the Jews living in areas controlled by the Reich to the GG. However, this plan was never brought to fruition.

From 1941 onwards, especially in the wake of the German aggression against the Soviet Union, Frank and Himmler, who had been at odds with each other for years, unanimously decided that undesirable groups of the *Fremdvölkische* (foreign tribes or peoples) would no longer be sent to the GG, but that these lands would, in the future, be subjected to Germanisation.³³ To this end, the organisation of ghettos for Jews there was also accelerated, and their property was at the same time systematically plundered by the occupation regime, above all by the Main Trust Office East (Haupttreuhandstelle Ost, HTO). This institution was established on

³¹ Madajczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy*, p. 124.

³² See Wieczorkiewicz, *Historia polityczna Polski*, p. 229; Malaparte, *Kaputt*, p. 155.

³³ Frank, however, wanted to spread these plans over time to be able to reap the various political and material benefits of his rule for a longer period of time. In a conversation with Frank in March 1941, Hitler declared, “that he was determined to make this country a purely German state within 15–20 years,” to the extent that the Rhineland was then. To achieve this far-reaching programme, it was envisaged at the time that some 4–5 million Germans would settle in the GG, but this was not to happen until after the victorious end of the war. See Wieczorkiewicz, *Historia polityczna polski*, pp. 232–233; Madajczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy*, p. 125; Wichert, “Recenzja,” p. 352.

19 October 1939 by Hermann Göring, who was also the Plenipotentiary for the Four-Year Plan. The purpose of the Trust Office in Cracow (Treuhandstelle für das Generalgouvernement), which was the name of the HTO's branch in the General Governorate, was to coordinate the economic exploitation of the territories and, more specifically, to supervise the confiscation of Polish and Jewish property. The General Governorate was to "export all raw materials useful in the war economy, secondary raw materials, machinery, etc." Frank did not accept the total economic drain of the General Governorate, just as he did not accept the unrestricted deportation of Poles and Jews under his jurisdiction, which inevitably gave rise to numerous conflicts within the Nazi leadership. Nonetheless, Frank quickly came to terms with Göring (in a decree of 4 December 1939, Göring appointed Frank the general plenipotentiary for the Four-Year Plan in the GG), while other ministers, such as Albert Speer (from 1942 Minister of Armaments and War Production) and Fritz Sauckel (General Plenipotentiary for the Use of Manpower), always came across his resistance when they wanted to interfere in the affairs of his "mini-state".³⁴

In this context, it should be noted that there were permanently eleven plenipotentiaries of various Reich authorities and offices under the GG government.³⁵ There were Reich Government delegations and NSDAP outposts. These included: the Supreme Command of the Armed Forces, the Supreme Command of the Land Army in the GG, the Supreme Command of the Luftwaffe, a delegation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a representative of the Reich Minister for Armaments and War Production, a representative of the Plenipotentiary for the Regulation of the Construction Industry and the Reich Youth Leader, the German Red Cross, the Plenipotentiary for Securing Works of Art and Culture, and the Party Chancellery.³⁶ The role of the NSDAP in the GG cannot be compared with that in the areas incorporated into the Reich, where its structures were more developed and it had greater scope for action, especially in the sphere of the Germanisation policy. The Party's central department in the General Governorate was the Delegation of the Party Chancellery – the Arbeitsbereich Generalgouvernement der NSDAP, headed by Frank (as a member of the NSDAP's highest collective body, the Reichsleitung),

³⁴ See Mitera, *Zwycząjny faszyzm*, p. 33; Schenk, *Hans Frank*, pp. 144–146.

³⁵ Dobroszycki, Garas *et al.*, "Wstęp," p. 33.

³⁶ Mitera, *Zwycząjny faszyzm*, p. 46.

which was only established at the beginning of May 1940. The district governors, who led the party at this level of administration (Distriktstandortführer), sought to obtain powers in the NSDAP delegation equal to Frank or his deputy but were denied.³⁷ The county starosts, on the other hand, who were almost one hundred per cent recruited from the ranks of the NSDAP, also held the position of local party chairmen (Standortführer).³⁸ The Arbeitsbereich Generalgouvernement der NSDAP also supervised the activities of the Volksdeutsche Gemeinschaft (Ethnic Germans' Community), established on Hitler's birthday in 1940, which was transformed a year later into the Deutsche Gemeinschaft (German Community). The *Volksdeutsche*, of whom there were not many in the GG, were assembled into 34 local groups (*Ortsgruppe*) by the Department of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda in the government of the General Governorate,³⁹ which organised, among other things, festivals and mass party-state events in the area.⁴⁰ The German Community kept records not only of the *Volksdeutsche*,⁴¹ but also of Germans coming to the GG from the old Reich, who generally arrived as staff supplies for the clerical corps, local trade or service companies and were not members of the NSDAP.⁴²

The structure of the German administration in the General Governorate did not undergo any major changes in its basic form from the time of its establishment until the end of the occupation. This system was based on the principle of unity

³⁷ See Madajczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy*, p. 113; K. Leszczyński, J. Gumkowski, "Generalne Gubernatorstwo w oczach Niemca (sprawozdanie dra Blaschka, szefa biura przydziałnego protektora Rzeszy na Czechy i Morawy, z podróży służbowej do Generalnego Gubernatorstwa w dniach 21–26 sierpnia 1942 r.)," *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce* 15 (1965), pp. 126 ff.

³⁸ I. Haar, "Polityka ludnościowa w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie: polityka narodowościowa wobec Żydów i polityka osadnictwa a inicjatywy regionalne i centralne," *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość* 1 (2009), p. 164.

³⁹ For more, see L. Jockheck, *Propaganda im Generalgouvernement. Die NS-Besatzungspresse für Deutsche und Polen 1939–1945* (Osnabrück, 2006), pp. 69 ff.

⁴⁰ The most pompous and ceremonial fetes were the NSDAP day (24 February), Hitler's birthday (20 April), National Labour Day (1 May), the anniversary of the occupation of Cracow (6 September) and the anniversary of the establishment of the GG (12 October). Hitler's youth – the male youth organised in the Hitlerjugend and the female youth organised in the Bund Deutscher Mädel, both organisations having their headquarters in occupied Cracow – held an extraordinary place in the Nazi festivities. See Chwalba, *Okupacyjny Kraków*, pp. 78–81.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 82–83.

⁴² For more about the NSDAP apparatus in the General Governorate, see A. Nolzen, "Die Arbeitsbereiche der NSDAP im Generalgouvernement, in den Niederlanden und in der besetzten Sowjetunion," in *Die deutsche Herrschaft in den „germanischen“ Ländern 1940–1945*, ed. R. Bohn (Stuttgart, 1997), pp. 253–261.

of administration (Verwaltungseinheit) and chiefdom. In terms of its design, it could be said to have been more consistent than the organisation of administration in the old Reich and in the territories incorporated into it, where parallel forms of the old Prussian administration (provinces and regions) and the Reich districts (Reichsgauen) introduced by the Nazis existed. Frank, as Governor General, had full legislative and executive powers. The executive body was initially the Office of the Governor General and, from 1 December 1940, was known as the GG Government.⁴³ The head of this body, accountable to Frank for all his work, throughout the occupation remained Dr Josef Bühler (a former prosecutor, from 1933 a loyal charge of Frank in successive government institutions), using the title of Secretary of State from February 1940. From the end of May that year, following Seyss-Inquart's appointment as Reich Commissioner in occupied Holland, Frank also entrusted Bühler with the function of his deputy. He headed the occupation bureaucracy from his headquarters in the building of the Academy of Mining in Cracow, which had been closed by the Germans.⁴⁴ The government of General Governorate consisted of an extensive state secretariat, twelve departmental departments called *Abteilungen* and, from March 1941, main departments (*Hauptabteilungen*), as well as central level establishments, such as the president of the GG Emission Bank and the General Office of Fiscal Control. The heads of the main departments were given the titles of presidents (*Präsidenten*) by Frank's order of July 1940.⁴⁵

The organisation of the government was laid down in detail in the third decree on the "reconstruction of the administration" of the GG of 16 March 1941. The state secretariat consisted of the Governor General's office, the government office with its five subordinate departments, the legislative office, the price formation office, the land management office, the personnel office, the administrative office and the GG archives directorate.⁴⁶ The *Hauptabteilungen*, on the other hand, consisted of the departments of the interior, treasury, justice, economy, food and agriculture,

⁴³ See Dobroszycki, Garas *et al.*, "Wstęp," p. 32; Broszat, *Nationalsozialistische Polenpolitik*, p. 70; Madajczyk, *Generalna Gubernia*, p. 51.

⁴⁴ Winstone, *Generalne Gubernatorstwo*, p. 69.

⁴⁵ Dobroszycki, Garas *et al.*, "Wstęp," pp. 32–33.

⁴⁶ Mitera, *Zwyczajny faszyzm*, p. 45.

forests, labour, propaganda, science and education, construction, railways and the post office. More significant changes towards simplifying the administration took place in March 1943, when, among other things, the State Secretariat dissolved the Government Chancellery, transferring most of its departments to the relevant main government departments and incorporating the zoning office into the Department of the Interior.⁴⁷ The cabinet was to be a professional advisory body to the Governor General.⁴⁸

The middle and lower levels of administration were, in terms of structure, a diminished and simplified copy of the higher instance, respectively. Each of the five districts of the GG was headed by a governor (Gouverneur des Distrikts), who, until 25 September 1941, was called the district chief (Distriktschef). A district governor's office was headed by the head of the office (Amtschef), also the deputy governor. The internal organisation of this body corresponded to the bureaucratic structure of the GG government, meaning that the district governor was like a miniaturised version of Frank. The latter liked to surround himself with his henchmen, which was confirmed by the fact that two of his appointed governors had previously worked with him at the Academy of German Law. The director of this academy, Karl Lasch, whom Frank ironically referred to as a 'blond scoundrel', took over the Radom District, while Dr Ludwig Fischer was sent to Warsaw. Fischer was to prove to be the only German governor to remain in his post until the end of the occupation. The other governors were distinguished veterans of the NSDAP. Frank entrusted the Cracow District to Baron Otton von Wächter, a doctor of law and Austrian Nazi who had played a leading role in a failed putsch in his country in July 1934.⁴⁹ The first governor in Lublin was Friedrich Schmidt who, like Wächter, had been an SS man but was quickly replaced by Ernst Zörner, former mayor of Dresden and an old comrade of Hitler and propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels.⁵⁰ With the exception of Zörner, the district chiefs, and later the

⁴⁷ See Pospieszalski, *Hitlerowskie "prawo"*, pp. 51, 63–64.

⁴⁸ Dobroszycki, Garas *et al.*, "Wstęp," p. 34.

⁴⁹ See also M. Ogórek, *Lista Wächtera. General SS, który ograbił Kraków. Gdzie zniknęły polskie dzieła sztuki?* (Warsaw, 2017).

⁵⁰ See Winstone, *Generalne Gubernatorstwo*, p. 70; Dobroszycki, Garas *et al.*, "Wstęp," p. 34; Chwalba, *Okupacyjny Kraków*, pp. 22–23; Schenk, *Krakauer Burg*, p. 72; M. Roth, *Herrenmenschen. Die deutschen Kreishauptleute im besetzten Polen – Karrierewege, Herrschaftspraxis und*

governors and district chiefs at a lower level, also headed the local administration of the NSDAP. Under their authority, party affairs were handled by the internal affairs departments; in practice, this was done, albeit to a lesser extent, by other departments as well.⁵¹

Districts were, in turn, divided into rural and urban counties. Authority in the county was exercised by the village or town starost (Kreis- or Stadthauptmann). The structure of this office, which roughly coincided with that of the district governor, was somewhat simplified in comparison.⁵² Towns that were not county seats or urban counties were given a district office (Verwaltungsstelle) in the form of municipal commissariats headed by a commissioner (Stadtkommissar). In contrast, rural counties with larger areas received similar rural commissariats, which were managed by a rural commissar (Landkommissar). It should be noted here that the districts in the GG did not overlap territorially with the area of the districts existing before the war. The district chiefs (the starosts), like the district governors, were appointed by the Governor General, while the heads of offices and heads of departments were appointed by the Secretary of State. All these functions were held by Germans from the old Reich (most often from Dresden, Leipzig, Munich and Silesia), and at a county level also by the *Volksdeutsche*. The administration, which was supposed to fully implement Frank's policy and deal with all public activities, was unable, if only because of the lack of sufficient personnel, to function without the participation of the local Polish administration. As a result, Polish pre-war municipal boards and local administrative bodies in municipalities and settlements were left in place. Mayors and aldermen were appointed by district governors, and mayors of towns with more than 20,000 inhabitants by the Governor General. In practice, this meant in many cases that people who had already held these positions before the war remained in office. Of course, wherever possible, an attempt was made to place a *Volksdeutsche* or Ukrainian in the position of mayor or a village leader – the latter usually in all cases where the

Nachgeschichte (Göttingen, 2007), pp. 57–58; Musiał, *Deutsche Zivilverwaltung*, pp. 384, 388–389, 399–400.

⁵¹ Madajczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy*, p. 110.

⁵² For more, see S. Biernacki, J. Stoch, "Działania władz okupacyjnych (policji i administracji) w dystrykcie warszawskim przeciwko ruchowi oporu w latach 1939–1944," *Najnowsze Dzieje Polski. Materiały i studia z okresu II wojny światowej* 10 (1966), pp. 47–76.

Ukrainian population was predominant or in equal proportion to the Poles. The newly-appointed German starosts or commissars had an absolute right to supervise the local representatives of lower-level authorities and unlimited possibilities to interfere in their decisions. They could suspend any decision of the local mayor, for example, and issue their orders.⁵³ Certain positions at the county level, defined as office branches (*angeschlossene Dienststellen*), could be held by Poles, such as the office of a county doctor (*Kreisarzt*) or a county veterinarian (*Kreistierarzt*).⁵⁴

According to the intention of the GG occupation authorities, the entire administrative management and supervision were carried out by German outposts. In reality, however, the whole network of German administration, which in each district was administered by a maximum of 100-200 German officials, was too loose to allow close control of the Polish population. To mobilise economic production in the General Governorate and its labour force for the Reich, Polish municipality officials and village chiefs had to be used. Their loyal cooperation could not be counted on as long as the plan to subjugate the Polish element was in place. Hitler and Himmler's idea that it was possible to successfully both exploit the country and enslave its inhabitants very quickly proved to be a fatal miscalculation. However, because this basic concept, based on criminal ideological premises, was not abandoned, the GG authorities floundered constantly between attempts at an organisational and efficient use of Polish resources and manifestations of police-like arbitrariness and terror. This led to contradictory moves and intrigues on the part of Frank, the administration, the Wehrmacht and the police apparatus, often causing chaos. The governors of the individual districts often competed for influence with Frank himself, for whom the "unity of administration" was a hobbyhorse. By delegating powers downwards, the higher authorities were supposed

⁵³ M. Broszat, *200 lat niemieckiej polityki wobec Polski*, transl. by E. Kazimierczak and W. Leder (Warsaw, 1999), p. 341.

⁵⁴ Dobroszycki, *Garas et al.*, "Wstęp," pp. 34-35. However, for example, in the Cracow City Board, which from 1 April 1941 to 30 April 1943 was headed by Rudolf Pavlu as the city mayor, as a result of staffing difficulties, Poles were permanently employed in certain managerial positions as "acting officers." All of them, as well as the rank-and-file clerks, had to provide a police-verified clean criminal record and sign a so-called "service obligation," i.e. a kind of a declaration that they would conscientiously fulfil their duties. On the face of it, a signed pledge looked like a renunciation of one's own country; a failure to sign it entailed the risk of repressions. Almost everyone therefore signed it, and the Polish underground believing that signing under duress, in accordance with the Hague Convention of 1907, had no value, did not oppose this. See Chwalba, *Okupacyjny Kraków*, p. 30.

to be relieved of routine administration and to concentrate on 'governing'. In line with this concept, Frank planned to strengthen the county and town starosts and, at the same time, to bind them together in such a way as to weaken the intermediate instances. He wanted to effectively prevent district governors from seeking independence through this means. This plan ultimately failed to materialise due to a lack of staff and departmental selfishness. Moreover, contrary to these ideas, the government in Cracow became so bloated that the rules and regulations it produced flooded the lower instances, the end result being that the norm in the operation of local authorities turned out to be nothing more than improvisation.⁵⁵ Nonetheless, attempts were made to conceal this organisational disorder by exercising strict control over the activities of Polish administrative bodies in the field.⁵⁶

This supervision is perhaps best illustrated by the example of Warsaw, at the time a city of one million inhabitants and the largest city in the GG, which was subjected to the "high care" of the district governor himself, Ludwig Fischer, residing in the Brühl Palace. The day-to-day supervision of the city was exercised by the plenipotentiary of the district chief for the city of Warsaw, who was Ludwig Leist, throughout almost the entire occupation period. The same "privilege" was enjoyed by Cracow – a city with a relatively new tradition of German-Austrian presence, scheduled for rapid Germanisation, where a plenipotentiary also held office. In the eyes of the Germans, Cracow was also perceived as more predictable in terms of the behaviour of its inhabitants than the "fickle" and "perverse" Warsaw, which was engulfed by "chauvinistic" ideas that were supposed to create there an atmosphere of "cold hatred". Hitler himself stated in one of his conversations with Frank that "Warsaw must be demolished as soon as an opportunity comes up." Goebbels had a similar opinion of Warsaw, calling it "already Asia" and "a city of horror."⁵⁷ Nonetheless, due to the extensive administrative and economic issues of the great city, the occupant retained a Polish municipal administration there.

⁵⁵ See Schenk, *Hans Frank*, pp. 158–159; Musiał, *Deutsche Zivilverwaltung*, pp. 69 ff.; T. Sandkühler, „Endlösung” in Galizien: der Judenmord in Ostpolen und die Rettungsinitiativen von Berthold Beitz, 1941–1944 (Bonn, 1996), p. 35; Winstone, *Generalne Gubernatorstwo*, p. 77; Madajczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy*, p. 110.

⁵⁶ Broszat, *200 lat niemieckiej polityki*, pp. 341–342.

⁵⁷ See J. Goebbels, *Dzienniki*, vol. 2: 1939–1943, introd., ed., and transl. E.C. Król (Warsaw, 2016), p. 27 (14 October 1939); Chwalba, *Okupacyjny Kraków*, pp. 42–43.

Consequently, there were three instances in Warsaw: the district governor, the plenipotentiary of the district chief and the Polish city administration. German supervision was exercised according to the principle of unity of administration. Thus, Governor Fischer issued orders to Leist, or to Fischer's deputy, the head of the office, Dr Herbert Hummel – to Leist's deputy, Dr Hermann Fribolin, who in turn issued orders to the Polish commissariat mayor, who, until the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising, was Stefan Starzyński's pre-war deputy, Julian Kulski.⁵⁸ In addition, each department of the city administration had its supervisor in the form of the appropriate German functionary of the office of the plenipotentiary, and from 1 October 1941, simply in the form of the town starost (Stadthauptmann), i.e. Leist. In this way, Warsaw became *de nomine* a county town, stripped of all the attributes of a central city. This provides yet further proof of how much attention the occupants paid to Warsaw, and how much they sought to completely erase the role of this city from the history of the Polish nation and the state.⁵⁹

In a relatively short period, Frank completed the work of building the administration in the GG, so that in the summer of 1940 he could submit an appropriate report to Hitler. On 1 September 1943, 22,740 men and 7,184 women were employed, of which the railway and postal administration alone accounted for 15,880 men and 2,980 women. About two-fifths of the staff were given civil servant status. The government had 1,900 co-workers. However, according to entries in Frank's diary of 22 February 1943, the Warsaw District had only 200 German officials, Radom – 240, Cracow – 200, Lublin – 160 and Galicia – 230 functionaries of that nationality.⁶⁰ The dizzying pace of building the foundations of the new administration cannot, however, obscure the fact that its shape left room for numerous abuses and mistakes, which limited its effectiveness.⁶¹ Moreover, the lack of transparent power structures in occupied Poland incentivised some officials, especially starosts at the local level,

⁵⁸ See G. Piątek, *Sanator. Kariera Stefana Starzyńskiego* (Warsaw, 2016).

⁵⁹ Dobroszycki, *Garas et al.*, "Wstęp," pp. 35–36. See also B. Lachert, "Zamierzenia Niemców w stosunku do Warszawy w aspekcie opracowań urbanistycznych z 6 lutego 1940 r. 'Warschau die neue deutsche Stadt,'" in *Ekspertyzy i orzeczenia przed Najwyższym Trybunałem Narodowym*, ed. C. Pili-chowski, vol. 9 (Warsaw, 1980), pp. 306–308; N. Gutschow, B. Klain, *Zagłada i utopia. Urbanistyka Warszawy w latach 1939–1945*, transl. E. Dappa *et al.* (Warsaw–Frankfurt am Main, 1995).

⁶⁰ Dobroszycki, *Garas et al.*, "Wstęp," p. 37.

⁶¹ See Schenk, *Hans Frank*, p. 158; Musiał, *Deutsche Zivilverwaltung*, p. 87.

to take independent action.⁶² The more energetic and independent county starosts literally became “little Hitlers” on whose whims the life or death of the people under their rule depended. Most of these officials used their positions to push for radical measures, especially in areas such as policies towards the Jews or the collection of compulsory food quotas. In terms of radicalism, they often outdid even the SS itself.⁶³

Almost all county starosts were “active National Socialist fighters,” as Frank put it, i.e. they belonged to the NSDAP, and many of them (more than 54%) had already joined the party before 1933.⁶⁴ In the course of the recruitment, in addition to the knowledge of administration, it was, above all, the “pioneering spirit” and the desire to achieve a “historic mission” in the East that were important. The majority, such as Dr Heinz Gustav Albrecht – the starost of Końskie County – came from the middle class, the bourgeoisie, although there were also aristocrats among them, such as Hans Werner von Bülow, Mogens von Harbou und von der Hellen, and the head of the Lvov District, Joachim Freiherr von der Leyen. As a rule, these officers had studied law (more than half even held doctoral degrees).

Others, however, before 1939, had worked as lawyers, in the Gestapo, in various Nazi organisations or in the economy. The Kreishauptleute considered themselves the elite and representatives of the “master race”; they got rich and wallowed in luxury at the expense of the local population. Away from their homeland, in addition, surrounded by a hostile and, they claimed, primitive “ethnic mass,” they even behaved like rulers and often took criminal actions at their own initiative, without any order from above.⁶⁵

⁶² See P. Rogowski, E. Wójcicka, “Kielce i powiat kielecki pod rządami Eduarda Jedamczika i Huberta Rottera na przełomie 1939 i 1940 roku,” *Świętokrzyskie Studia Archiwalno-Historyczne* 8 (2019), pp. 143–162.

⁶³ Winstone, *Generalne Gubernatorstwo*, pp. 77–78.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

⁶⁵ The mentality of the “master race” prevailing among the occupiers was perhaps best summarised in December 1939 by the first head of the Lublin Municipal County, Fritz Cuhorst: “we decided to behave, we officials, exactly the opposite of what we do at home, that is, like the last scoundrels.” The racism with which the occupation regime was imbued, on the other hand, was best seen in relation to the Jews living in the General Governorate. Thus, Ernst Gramß, a member of the administration of the Warsaw District and later the head of the Sokołów County, wrote in one of his letters to his wife that the Warsaw Jewish quarter was a “disgrace” full of “thuggish faces” and the thought that “extermination would be a blessing for the mankind” came to mind all on its own. As a county starost, Gramß ordered the hanging of Jews on the pretext of practising illegal trade. In his county, he exercised a hard-handed rule to which many Poles also fell victim. In particular, this qualified agro-cultura engineer set himself

The recruitment of administrative cadres did not quite go as expected by the Governor General. It was particularly difficult to find officials willing to work in rural counties offering few amenities to compensate for the monotonous service, often performed in a hostile environment. As time went by, the GG actually became a place for the deportation not only of people who were “racially undesirable” in the Reich but also of German officials unwanted elsewhere, who were usually incompetent. In addition, the situation was further aggravated later by the relatively high turnover of staff, caused primarily by conscription into the Wehrmacht or simple disillusionment with the living conditions in the East. Complications were further added by the habit of the central GG administration in Cracow to keep the best officials, especially numerous lawyers, for themselves. The pervasive corruption among public and party functionaries, some of whom even had a criminal background, also created difficulties in management. As a result, in Berlin, the General Governorate came to be known by the vivid term “gangster’s Gau” or “Wild West,” synonymous with an area of unlimited opportunity, where a menagerie of corrupt, mediocre and degenerate brawlers, draft dodgers and upstarts flocked in large numbers. They mostly wanted to get rich and achieve a higher socio-professional status, hoping for an easier existence than in the old Reich (higher rations and wages, ample opportunities for extortion and abuse, etc.) and that their former misdeeds would be forgotten there.⁶⁶

up for the brutal exploitation of the Polish peasantry, forcing them to deliver unrealistic quotas of agricultural produce. When the mass deportation of Jews to extermination camps began in the spring of 1942, the SS and the police apparatus served the starosts eagerly. Walter Gentz, the starost of Jasło in the Cracow District, was particularly zealous in this field. Gentz, a Doctor of Law and a financial expert from Karlsruhe, was consumed by his morbid ambition and a lust for power. He wanted to be the first to “purge” his district of Jews. He even personally selected his victims and executed them with his own hands. Gentz and his companions were also in the habit of throwing lavish parties at which they sexually abused Polish, Jewish and even German women. Friedrich von Balluseck, a paedophile who served successively as the head of the Tomaszów and Jędrzejów counties was no stranger to sexual abuse, having – with impunity – molested Polish children. The aforementioned Heinz Gustav Albrecht, on the other hand, consistently refused to grant even reduced rations to Jews living in the Końskie County. This was because he believed that starvation was their “just punishment” for causing the World War and that they were already allegedly “responsible for the death by starvation of hundreds of thousands of German men, women and children” during the First World War. See Roth, *Herrenmenschen. Die deutschen*, p. 175 ff.; *idem*, I. Metzner, *Ciemieńczy Polaków nie potrzebowali rozkazów*, <https://www.dw.com/pl/ciemi%C4%99%C5%BCcy-polak%C3%B3w-nie-potrzebowali-rozkaz%C3%B3w/a-4608037> (accessed 8 October 2019); Winstone, *Generalne Gubernatorstwo*, pp. 78–79, 81.

⁶⁶ See Dobroszycki, Garas *et al.*, “Wstęp,” p. 36; Winstone, *Generalne Gubernatorstwo*, pp. 79–80; Wichert, “Recenzja,” pp. 353–354; Chwalba, *Okupacyjny Kraków*, p. 84.

The actions of the German administration functionaries, who inflicted their punishment on the Polish population, were actively supported by the SS and police formations in the GG. Without close cooperation between the various branches of the administration and the security apparatus, it would not have been possible to carry out “*łapanki*” or “seizures of hostages in the street,” and deportation to the Reich for forced labour, to collect quotas, to secure the harvest, to fight fiercely against clandestine trade, the black market and smugglers. Particularly operative in this respect were the gendarmerie in the villages and small towns, as well as the protection police (Schutzpolizei, Schupo) in the cities, i.e. formations that the starost had the right to deploy at his discretion. In addition to the pre-occupation organisational forms, there were new ones in the police structure introduced by Himmler, the most significant of which was the hierarchy of the SS and police commanders; this was headed by the Higher SS and Police Commander in the General Governorate.⁶⁷ Already on 4 October 1939, Himmler appointed the SS-Obergruppenführer Friedrich Wilhelm Krüger as the Higher SS and Police Commander East, who was to be the head of all SS and police forces in what would become the GG. He was a rather colourless figure compared to other National Socialists of equal seniority. He initially held senior positions in the SA, but after the Night of the Long Knives in 1934, he switched to the SS and continued his career there. Apart from his blind obedience to Himmler, which he also categorically demanded of his charges, and from reporting his employees, and his pedantry, there was nothing special about him. Krüger remained in the GG until 9 November 1943, after which he took command of the SS in Finland.⁶⁸

Formally, Krüger reported personally and directly to the Governor General; not initially part of the GG government, he was Frank's second adviser. In reality, however, Krüger, as Himmler's extended arm, recognised himself as the representative of the Reichsführer SS and took orders exclusively from him.⁶⁹ He commanded the

⁶⁷ Dobroszycki, Garas *et al.*, “Wstęp,” p. 37.

⁶⁸ See Madajczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy*, p. 112; R. Bettina Birn, *Die Höheren SS- und Polizeiführer. Himmlers Vertreter im Reich und in den besetzten Gebieten* (Düsseldorf, 1986), p. 340; Winstone, *Generalne Gubernatorstwo*, p. 73; E. Klee, *Das Personenlexikon zum Dritten Reich* (Frankfurt am Main, 2007), p. 343; L.V. Thompson, “Friedrich-Wilhelm Krüger – Höherer SS- und Polizeiführer Ost,” in *Die SS: Elite unter dem Totenkopf*, ed. by R. Smelser and E. Syring (Paderborn, 2000), pp. 320 ff.

⁶⁹ Schenk, *Hans Frank*, p. 177.

General SS (Allgemeine SS) units stationed on-site and coordinated the activities of both police divisions (security and order police), simultaneously the superior of the commander of the order police and the commander of the security police in the GG. With the establishment of the State Secretariat for Security in the Government of the General Governorate, Krüger became Frank's deputy for security matters. He was also able to perform the duties of the Governor General in his absence and the Secretary of State, Bühler, the first ex-officio deputy of Frank under Hitler's decree of 7 May 1942. In time, Krüger even created subordinate administrative bodies within his office as the Secretary of State for Security and took over several Interior Department agencies. From the outset, Himmler wanted to use Krüger as a tool in his showdown with Frank for influence in the GG. This undoubtedly was further enhanced by the Higher SS and Police Commander's own ambitions, which prompted him to embark on a persistent power struggle with the Governor General, ending in short-lived success.⁷⁰ To Bühler's face, the nonchalant and conceited Krüger even dared to call Frank a "clown" who was impossible to work with. Roughly up to September 1941, the two sides made appearances and tried to maintain good relations, but then a sharp conflict arose. Frank even spoke of "mortal personal hostility."⁷¹

Frank could see, almost daily, that Himmler and Krüger had set up a kind of parallel government in the GG, as he experienced numerous petty humiliations and repeated defiance of his orders regarding the security and population policy.⁷² While Frank invoked his exclusive right to issue directives with increasing desperation at government meetings, Krüger, covered by Himmler, pursued an unabashedly brutal SS policy towards Poland. The Governor General tried alternately to counteract this policy, taking the line of relative gentleness and reasonableness (for example, by calculated attempts to increase food rations for

⁷⁰ Dobroszycki, Garas *et al.*, "Wstęp," pp. 37–39.

⁷¹ Schenk, *Hans Frank*, pp. 177–178.

⁷² These included the subordination of the Sonderdienst, the German auxiliary police set up by Frank in May 1940 from members of the disbanded Selbstschutz (a paramilitary organisation of the Volksdeutsche in occupied Poland); a failure to inform Frank of major police actions, and the form of pacification and eviction from the Zamość region. See Schenk, *Hans Frank*, p. 178; Dobroszycki, Garas *et al.*, "Wstęp," p. 40; Ch. Jansen, A. Weckbecker, *Der „Volksdeutsche Selbstschutz“ in Polen 1939/40* (München, 1992), pp. 71 ff.; Madajczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy*, p. 111.

the Polish population), only then to compete with the SS line in cruelty and acts of terror, not least to gain a reputation in Hitler's eyes as a man capable of being effective in the East. Constantly tossing himself from left to right and aware of his own weakness, the Governor General resigned fourteen times until the end of his activity, each time in vain. However, outwardly, he continued to boast of the special confidence Hitler allegedly had in him.⁷³ As a result of constant conflicts of competence, the lack of clout and allegations of corruption, especially in the context of his family's enrichment, in the summer of 1942, Frank's position seemed to be seriously upset, which benefitted his SS adversary. As Himmler's plenipotentiary, acting as the Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood, Krüger was entrusted with the leadership of the planned large-scale resettlement operation in the Zamość region, which was carried out on his behalf by the fanatical SS and police commander in the Lublin District, SS-Gruppenführer Odilo Globocnik. The increasingly fierce rivalry reached its climax in the summer of 1942, when Frank gave four fiery speeches at German universities, in which he condemned the arbitrariness of the SS and cynically appealed for the 'observance of the law.'⁷⁴ Following these speeches, he was removed from all party posts on the personal orders of an enraged Hitler. Under these circumstances, his dismissal from the GG, which Himmler and Bormann, in particular, had been seeking, seemed only a matter of time. However, quite unexpectedly, Hitler decided to get rid not of Frank but of his opponent Krüger, especially after the failure of the "Zamość" operation in August 1943, which only intensified the resistance of Poles against the occupant's actions. Although Frank's relations with Krüger's successor, SS-Obergruppenführer Wilhelm Kopp,⁷⁵ who had previously been the Higher SS and Police Commander in the Reichsgau Wartheland, were admittedly bearable, behind the scenes, various disputes continued. These stemmed more from structural reasons and the lack of the regime's binding policy concerning the GG than from prestige or psychological motives.⁷⁶

⁷³ Fest, *Oblicze Trzeciej Rzeszy*, p. 360.

⁷⁴ Kleßmann, "Frank: Parteijurist und Generalgouverneur in Polen," pp. 47–48.

⁷⁵ See Bettina Birn, *Die Höheren*, p. 339; S. Datner, *Wilhelm Koppe – nieukarany zbrodniarz hitlerowski* (Warsaw–Poznan, 1963).

⁷⁶ See Fest, *Oblicze Trzeciej Rzeszy*, pp. 356–360; Schenk, *Hans Frank*, pp. 329–330.

Regarding the organisation of the police apparatus in the General Governorate, it should be emphasised that the SS and police commanders (SS- und Polizeiführer, SSPF) at the district level also played a major role in the implementation of the policy of mass terror. They were at the same time the superiors of the local commanders of the order police (Kommandeur der Ordnungspolizei, KdO) and the security police (Kommandeur der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD, KdS), even though these commanders were subordinate to the commanders of both these formations in the GG. In addition to their authority over all police formations in the field, the SSPF were also Himmler's local plenipotentiaries as the commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood and thus had authority over resettlement, deportation, extermination and repression.⁷⁷ The most notorious SS and police commander was Globocnik mentioned above, who displayed a "truly dogged loyalty" to Himmler. This archetypal Nazi torturer was united with his master by fanatical racism and a penchant for the use of violence, which 'Globus' (as Himmler called Globocnik), unleashed in the Lublin District between 1939 and 1943 with devastating and tragic consequences.⁷⁸ As an aide-de-camp to the Reichsführer SS, in addition to *Operation Zamość*, he also organised and supervised *Operation Reinhardt*, the extermination of the Jewish population in the GG. Rudolf Höss, the commander of the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp, said meaningful words about him after the war: "Jews, if they were not needed for his work, he wanted to liquidate on the spot."⁷⁹

In the General Governorate there were specific differences in the creation of the police apparatus compared to the Polish lands incorporated into the Reich. In the annexed territories, inspectors (Inspekteur) were appointed according to the model of the old Reich: an inspector of the protection police (Schutzpolizei, Schupo) and an inspector of the security police (Sicherheitspolizei, Sipo) and the Security Service (Sicherheitsdienst, SD), i.e. Himmler's intelligence agency. In the GG, on the other hand, these were the respective commanders (Befehlshaber), to whom the commanders corresponded at the district level. By empowering the

⁷⁷ Dobroszycki, Garas *et al.*, "Wstęp," p. 38.

⁷⁸ For more, see J. Sachslehner, *Zarządca do spraw śmierci. Odilo Globocnik, eksterminacja i obozy zagłady*, transl. M. Kilis (Warsaw, 2016); B. Rieger, *Odilo Globocnik. Twórca nazistowskich obozów śmierci*, transl. J.S. Zaus (Zakrzewo, 2009).

⁷⁹ Winstone, *Generalne Gubernatorstwo*, pp. 73–74; Wichert, "Recenzja," p. 353.

territorial commanders, both the SS and the police became largely independent as institutions.⁸⁰ The SS and police commanders controlled both the Sipo and the order police (*Ordnungspolizei*, Orpo), although both were subordinate to their headquarters in Berlin. The Sipo, whose outposts in the GG developed from the managerial and executive staff of the *Einsatzgruppen* death squads, included the Gestapo (Geheime Staatspolizei) and the criminal police (Kriminalpolizei, Kripo). The involvement of these institutions in German crimes is well-known, but it was the Orpo that played a much more important role in the General Governorate, mainly due to its numerical superiority.⁸¹ As late as November 1942, there were only 2,000 Sipo and SD officers in the entire GG, while Orpo members numbered

⁸⁰ Madajczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy*, p. 111. When writing about the SS and the police in the GG, it is also necessary to mention the judicial power given to these entities. By the term police judiciary we mean the police ad hoc courts (Polizeistandgerichte) and the SS and police courts, which were not subordinate to the Ministry of Justice of the General Governorate. The basis for the functioning of the former was Hans Frank's regulation of 31 October 1939. They took over the powers from the military ad hoc courts that had been abolished after the end of the military administration. The Polizeistandgerichte can hardly be regarded as courts in the usual sense of the word, as their activities were virtually no different from ordinary repressive police actions. They tried persons carrying out activities against the Reich, its citizens and the authorities of the General Governorate. The police ad hoc court, consisting of the chief of the security police and two assessors appointed by him from his charges, ruled on every case that came into the hands of the Gestapo. The most common penalty was death or exile to a concentration camp, which usually took place without a hearing and in the absence of the accused. Ad hoc courts were also set up by the police. Their competences were constantly expanded, including the scope of the death penalty, imposed in order to "combat attacks on the German work of reconstruction." Surprisingly, the SS and police courts had a slightly better reputation, sometimes providing the accused with basic procedural guarantees. Their activities, in addition to various misdemeanours of the SS and police officers, also included the "criminal acts" of the *Fremdvölkische*. In this situation, the civil "justice system," including the general (first and second instance) and special courts (*Sondergerichte*), was marginalised in the GG and did not play the same role as in the areas incorporated into the Reich. It is worth noting that a three-tier organisation of the Polish judiciary was maintained in the General Governorate, which dealt with cases that did not fall under the competence of the German judiciary. The structure of the Polish courts consisted of municipal courts, district courts and courts of appeal. They were under the direct supervision of the district chief. After the creation and incorporation of the Galicia District into the General Governorate in 1941, a non-German judiciary was established, in which the basic normative acts creating the organisation of the Polish judiciary in the original territory of the GG were to be applied accordingly. Most of the managerial functions there, however, were performed by Ukrainian judges. For more, see A. Wrzyszczyk, "Nadzór Hansa Franka nad sądownictwem w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie w latach 1939–1945," *Miscellanea Historico-Iuridica* 2 (2015), pp. 379 ff.; *idem*, "Sądownictwo SS i policji w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie (stan badań)," *Studia Iuridica Lublinensia* 19 (2013), pp. 361–370; E. Kurkowska, "Procedura karna na ziemiach polskich okupowanych przez Niemcy w czasie II wojny światowej," *Studia Iuridica Lublinensia* 17 (2012), pp. 158–165; Dobroszycki, Garas *et al.*, "Wstęp," p. 50; Mitera, *Zwyczajny faszyzm*, pp. 179–208.

⁸¹ For more, see W. Curilla, *Der Judenmord in Polen und die deutsche Ordnungspolizei 1939–1945* (Paderborn, 2011), pp. 333 ff.

as many as 12,000. Of the permanent, uniformed formations, the most prominent were the protection police in larger cities and the much more numerous gendarmerie (Gendarmerie), operating in municipalities, settlements, smaller towns and in the countryside. Most of the police forces, however, were militarised police battalions composed of professional policemen, volunteers and reservists called up to the Wehrmacht. These battalions were redeployed from place to place as required, and they accounted for about 80% of all the Orpo personnel in the GG.⁸² Various flying operational detachments (Jagdkommandos, Rollkommandos or Einsatzkommandos) were separated from them as needed, mainly to carry out pacification actions and mass executions (e.g. in Bochnia, Wawer and Palmiry).⁸³ The position of the SS and police in the GG weakened somewhat, at least in formal terms, after Frank concluded an agreement with Himmler in June 1943. Frank then gained the subordination of the local police authorities to the general occupation administration.⁸⁴

However, these police forces were still insufficient to ensure order or carry out repressive actions, and so they had to be supplemented by various auxiliary formations recruited from the local population. Thus, the *Volksdeutsche* living in Poland were reinforced by, among others, the *Selbstschutz* (and later the *Sonderdienst*), auxiliary police (*Hilfspolizei*), border police (*Grenzpolizei*), and special sapper units (*Technische Nothilfe*), responsible, among other things, for the complete destruction of Warsaw after the Warsaw Uprising, as well as the National Socialist Motor Corps (*Nationalsozialistisches Kraftfahrkorps*, NSKK) and the various “departmental” kinds of police (e.g. forest, water, post, railway, etc.). Other supporting police units in the GG included, in particular, some 11,000–12,000 officers of the Polish blue police,⁸⁵ 3,000 employees of the Polish Criminal Police and

⁸² Winstone, *Generalne Gubernatorstwo*, pp. 74–75.

⁸³ See Dobroszycki, Garas *et al.*, “Wstęp,” p. 45; M. Wardzyńska, *Był rok 1939. Operacja niemieckiej policji bezpieczeństwa w Polsce. Intelligenzaktion* (Warsaw, 2009), pp. 239–243.

⁸⁴ Madajczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy*, p. 111.

⁸⁵ For more, see A. Hempel, *Policja granatowa w okupacyjnym systemie administracyjnym Generalnego Gubernatorstwa (1939–1945)* (Warsaw, 1987); *idem*, *Pogrobowcy kłęski. Rzecz o policji „granatowej” w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie 1939–1945* (Warsaw, 1990); M. Getter, “Policja Polska w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie 1939–1945,” *Przegląd Policyjny* 1/2 (1999), pp. 74–91; *Policja granatowa w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie w latach 1939–1945*, ed. by T. Domański and E. Majcher-Ociesa (Kielce–Warsaw, 2019).

some 6,000 members of the Ukrainian Auxiliary Police (Ukrainische Hilfspolizei), reporting to the local order police commanders. The Ukrainian and Polish police participated in all kinds of actions carried out by the Orpo – from traditional forms of external service, through the pursuit of smugglers and the forcible collection of quotas to participation in mixed operational groups (Gemischte Einsatzkommandos) used to fight partisans. The blue police did not enjoy the trust of the occupying authorities. The attitude of Polish society towards the blue police was decidedly negative, and the underground killed many of its officers who collaborated with the Germans. A form of auxiliary police was also the Jewish Order Service (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst), which operated in the ghettos and ruthlessly carried out all orders and decrees of the occupier up to participating in the action of deporting their inhabitants to extermination centres.⁸⁶ The ghettos in the area were also guarded by paramilitary units of Lithuanian ‘Shaulis’, who actively collaborated with the Germans. According to German data, the numerical strength of all police formations in the GG on 1 December 1944 was 42,229, though this figure seems underestimated.⁸⁷

In conclusion, it should be stated that the area of the General Governorate was characterised by a high accumulation of competence conflicts between Frank and various agencies of the regime, in particular the SS and the police apparatus. These disputes, which were also characteristic of other Polish territories under German occupation, were also visible at the lower levels of administration if only in the form of the aspirations of the district governors, but also of the county and town starosts to gain greater independence and decision-making freedom. In this chaos of competing views and goals, all possibilities for any effective management, principles of common sense, and simple humanism were irretrievably bogged down. This was compounded by the lack of an established line of Nazi leadership in governing the GG. The thought of a residual state, which had originally

⁸⁶ For more, see E. Kurek, *Poza granicą solidarności. Stosunki polsko-żydowskie 1939–1945* (Kielce, 2006), pp. 130 ff.; *Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst in Enzyklopädie des Holocaust – die Verfolgung und Ermordung der europäischen Juden*, ed. by I. Gutman, E. Jäckel, P. Longenrich, and J.H. Schoeps, vol. 2 (München–Zürich, 1998), pp. 700–702.

⁸⁷ See Dobroszycki, Garas *et al.*, “Wstęp,” pp. 45–47; J. Sehn, “Organizacja policji niemieckiej w Rzeszy i Generalnej Guberni,” *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Niemieckich w Polsce* 3 (1947), p. 183.

been contemplated, was quickly abandoned, and the concept of some kind of a “protectorate status” fell through, as did the admittedly nebulous idea “of a multinational German empire,” a symptomatic example of a delusion born in Frank’s fired up the imagination. Throughout the occupation, Hitler evaded a definitive policy towards the GG, while Frank had to content himself with a vague formula of “a fringe state of the Reich.” The assumptions of a two-track strategy towards the General Governorate, consisting of the simultaneous ruthless subjugation of the Polish element, the extermination of the Jews and the economic exploitation of these areas (e.g. through the supply of agricultural products and labour force), soon proved to be contrary to the mechanics inherent in any orderly administrative activity and only intensified the resistance movement among Poles. The far-fetched policy of ‘humanisation’ and ‘Europeanisation’ proposed by Frank at the end of the war, and his attempt to rally the Polish population, found no understanding either with Hitler or with those concerned. On 18 August 1944, the Governor General informed Berlin of the “total shattering of the authority” of his administration, which only lasted another six months. “The great hour of Germanness in the East,” of which he once spoke so pompously, came to an end with the Red Army’s Vistula–Oder Operation in January 1945, and Frank himself later shared the fate of German war criminals, sentenced to death by hanging by the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ Fest, *Oblicze Trzeciej Rzeszy*, pp. 356–363. See also Schenk, *Hans Frank*, pp. 318 ff.

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SUMMARY

The General Governorate was a peculiar German political formation established on the territory of occupied Poland at the end of October 1939. It was to be a form of a temporary colony, which from its birth was treated as a reservoir of raw materials and a "racial dumping ground," to which the Nazi regime planned to resettle, among others, all the Jews from the lands it controlled. Governor General Hans Frank treated the territory as a kind of feudal duchy and a "fringe state" of the Reich. The occupation apparatus under his authority was disorganised, and there was a fierce rivalry between the various institutions of power, especially between the civil administration and the SS and police. A shortage

of professional staff and corruption among public and party officials further hampered management. As a result, the GG was nicknamed in the old Reich the “gangster’s Gau” or the Wild West, known as an area of unlimited opportunities, where a patchwork of inept adventurers and various parvenus came in large numbers to profit from the extermination and looting of Poles and Jews.

KEYWORDS

Third Reich • German occupation • General Governorate