

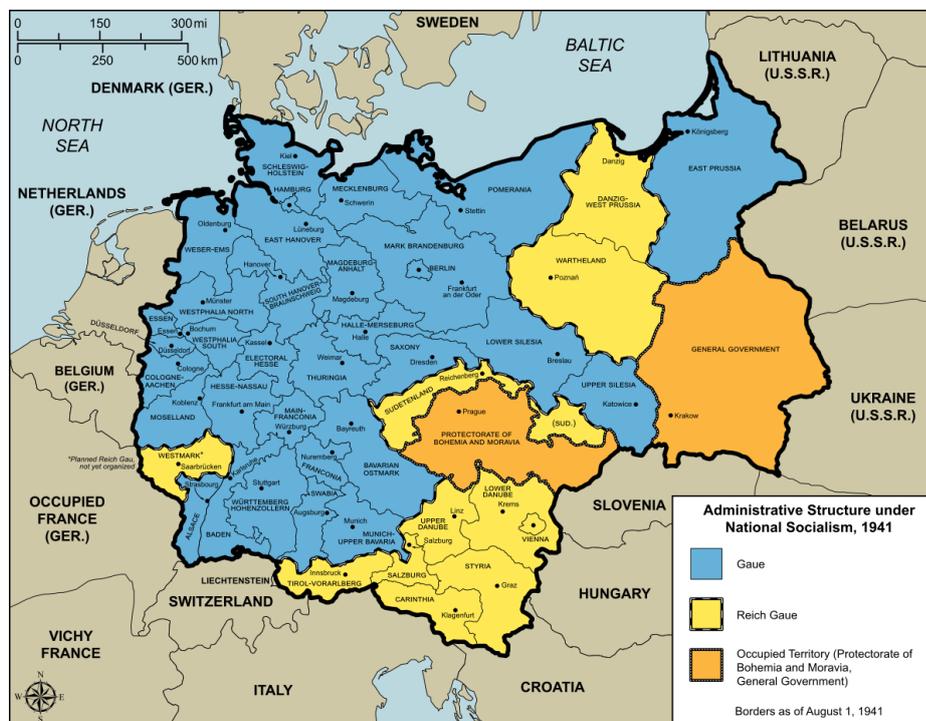
Administrative Structure under National Socialism (1941)

Abstract

The National Socialists began using the term *Gau* in 1926; at first, it was used to designate supra-regional administrative units of the NSDAP. (The term had been adopted from the gymnastics and sport associations of the 19th century.) After the Nazi takeover in 1933, *Gaue* eventually also became components of the German state administrative structure and as such replaced federal states. Germany was divided into 42 *Gaue*, with the NSDAP's Foreign Organization in Berlin counting as an additional one. Each *Gau* had a *Gau* leader [*Gauleiter*] who was appointed by Hitler himself and who, according to the "Führer principle," was directly responsible to him. Within their individual *Gaue*, however, *Gau* leaders had considerable freedom. The *Gaue* were further divided into districts, groups, cells, and blocks in order to ensure the optimal dissemination of propaganda and the strict control of residents, down to every last detail.

This map shows the *Gaue* and their respective capitals. The areas "annexed" to the Reich after 1938 were declared *Reich Gaue* and functioned as state administrative districts as well as party *Gaue*. They were governed by so-called Reich governors [*Reichsstatthalter*] who doubled as *Gau* leaders. The map also shows the *Reich Gaue* established on Austrian (Vienna, Lower Danube, Upper Danube, Styria, Kärnten, Salzburg, and Tirol-Vorarlberg), Czech (Sudetenland) and Polish soil (Danzig-West Prussia, Wartheland) up to 1941. Occupied areas that were not incorporated into the German Reich were designated as follows in Nazi terminology: the General Government (Poland) and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (Czechoslovakia).

Source



Source: Original cartography by Cherie Norton/Mapping Solutions. Revised cartography by Gabriel Moss, 2021.

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