

# Excerpts from Baedeker's Guidebooks (1936 and 1943)

## Abstract

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Verlag Karl Baedeker was a German publishing company founded by Karl Baedeker in 1827. Over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the publication of guidebooks became a popular source of revenue for the publishing company. When the Nazis came to power, the company was commissioned to produce several guidebooks for both German and foreign tourists. The two books excerpted here, one from 1936 and the other commissioned by Hans Frank, governor of the General Government in Poland, are both revealing of the times in which they were written.

The first book, *Germany: A Handbook for Railway Travels and Motorists*, written in English for foreign tourists, skews the history of Germany to 1936. The story of a struggling young democracy is replaced by a heroic tale of the Führer's rise to power and his "rejuvenation" of the German nation. The book reveals the desire by the Nazi regime to present itself, not only to Germany but also to foreign travelers, as a revolutionary force that saved the country from social, political, and economic crises caused by the Left after 1918.

The second book, *Das Generalgouvernement*, published in German in 1943, focuses on the region of occupied Poland that was at the heart of the "Final Solution." There are several references to the presence of Jews and their supposedly destructive impact in the General Government. Places like Auschwitz are presented as merely industrial towns with a small population. And, similar to the 1936 guidebook, there is an attempt here to rewrite the history of Poland by emphasizing its connections to Germany and the sizeable minority of German-speaking people who settled there over the years – perhaps further justifying the conquest of Eastern Europe.

## Source

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### I. Germany: A Handbook for Railway Travels and Motorists (1936)

#### THE REPUBLIC (1919-33).

The Treaty of Versailles was not a real peace in accordance with President Wilson's fourteen points, but a dictated peace, or rather a penal sentence which the vanquished were forced to accept. It was calculated to ensure a lasting repression of Germany by a continuance of the war with other weapons (reparations, sanctions, etc.), and its effects on the whole life of the nation were disastrous, although it did not succeed in destroying its unity. The attempt to fulfil the immense obligations caused a breakdown in the economic life of Germany. While the parliamentary system was preventing a purposeful policy on the part of the political leaders, and Communism was increasing by a dangerous degree, the forces of regeneration were gradually accumulating around Adolf Hitler.

1919 Feb. 6<sup>th</sup>: Convocation of the National Assembly at Weimar. Friedrich Ebert (d. 1925) elected President of the Republic.

June 28<sup>th</sup>: Ratification of the Treaty of Versailles.

Loss of territory 27,242 sq.M. (about the area of Bavaria), with 6,500,000 inhabitants, in Alsace-Lorraine, Eupen and Malmedy, N. Schleswig, Posen, West Prussia, East Prussia, and Upper Silesia; total loss of colonial possessions (1,122,229 sq.M., with 11,900,000 inhabitants); occupation of the Rhineland and the Saar; demilitarized zone, 31 M. deep, on the E. bank of the Rhine; abolition of compulsory military service; reduction of the army to 100,000 men (with restricted armaments) and of the navy to 6 battleships, 6 light cruisers and 24 destroyers and torpedo-boats; abolition of the air arm (these

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limitations being intended as a preliminary condition for a general reduction of national armaments); Germany to acknowledge its sole war guilt; vast sums of money, of indefinite amount, to be paid by way of reparations; all merchant vessels of over 1600 tons (i.e. about 90% of the merchant marine) to be handed over; surrender of all government and private property in foreign countries; etc.

Aug. 11<sup>th</sup>: The Weimar Constitution.

1920 Jan. 10<sup>th</sup>: The Treaty of Versailles comes into force.

Feb. 24<sup>th</sup>: *Adolf Hitler* (born at Braunau in Austria, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 1889) announces the programme of National-Socialism at Munich.

March 13<sup>th</sup>: Unsuccessful attempt to form a national government (the 'Kapp Putsch').

March 15<sup>th</sup>: Communist rising and formation of a 'Red Army' in the Ruhr.

July 11<sup>th</sup>: Plebiscite in the East and West Prussian districts of Allenstein and Marienwerder results in Germany's favour.

1921 March 20<sup>th</sup>: Plebiscite in Upper Silesia, 60% of the votes being given for Germany.

1923 Jan.: Lithuania occupies Memel (p. 127); the French invade the Ruhr.

Aug. 23<sup>rd</sup>: Gustav Stresemann (died 1929) chancellor and foreign minister.

Nov. 8/9<sup>th</sup>: Hitler attempts to take over the national reorganization of the Reich, starting with Bavaria; the movement is crushed at the Feldherrn-Halle at Munich (p. 469), and the party is proscribed (until Feb. 26<sup>th</sup>, 1925), its leaders being sentenced to a confinement in a fortress.

In November, after the complete collapse of the currency through inflation, the government succeeds in stabilizing it on a new basis.

1925 April 26<sup>th</sup>: *Field Marshal von Hindenburg* elected President of the Reich.

May 7<sup>th</sup>: Opening of the Deutsches Museum at Munich.

July-Aug.: Evacuation of the Ruhr.

Oct. 5-6<sup>th</sup>: Conference of Locarno. The British forces evacuate the Cologne zone.

1928 April: Atlantic flight of the 'Bremen' aeroplane.

1929 Aug. 15<sup>th</sup> to Sept. 4<sup>th</sup>: the 'Graf Zeppelin' airship flies round the earth.

1930 June 30<sup>th</sup>: End of the Rhineland occupation, after 10 ½ years.

1931 Germany is badly affected by the world economic crisis.

1932 April 10<sup>th</sup>: Hindenburg re-elected President. The number of members of the National-Socialist Party reaches one million.

July 31<sup>st</sup>: at the Reichstag elections the National-Socialists win 230 seats out of 608.

### **THE THIRD REICH (1933 to present day).**

National-Socialism, developed in bitter conflict with Marxism, has systematically carried through the national revolution and eliminated both fruitless Parliamentarianism and the mutual clashing of economic and local interests. Simultaneously, constructive work has begun on the abolition of unemployment, the reorganization of agriculture as the backbone of the nation, the reawakening of race-consciousness, and a corporate organization of classes.

1933 Jan. 30<sup>th</sup>: *Adolf Hitler* is appointed Chancellor of the Reich by President von Hindenburg.

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March 21<sup>st</sup>: Opening of the Reichstag in the Garrison Church at Potsdam ('Tag von Potsdam'). By the Enabling Act of March 24<sup>th</sup>, the whole political power is handed over to Hitler, authorizing the Cabinet to make laws by ordinance.

April 7<sup>th</sup>: Law for the appointment of state governors ('Reichs-Statthalter', p. lxii).

May 2<sup>nd</sup>: Trades unions replaced by the 'Deutsche Arbeits-Front' (German Labour Front; p. lxii).

Oct. 21<sup>st</sup>: Germany leaves the League of Nations after the failure of the disarmament conference.

Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>: Law for the safeguarding of the unity of State and Party, the National-Socialist Party, thus becoming the sole holder of political power.

1934 Jan. 30<sup>th</sup>: Reform of the Reich, abolishing the sovereign powers and representative institutions of the Federal States.

Aug. 2<sup>nd</sup>: Death of President von Hindenburg. Adolf Hitler, as 'Führer' (Leader) and 'Reichskanzler' (Chancellor), takes supreme command of State and Party.

1935 Jan. 13<sup>th</sup>: Saar plebiscite (p. 319).

March 16<sup>th</sup>: Obligatory military service reintroduced.

May 19<sup>th</sup>: Opening of the first 'Reichs-Autobahn' (special motor road), near Frankfurt am Main.

1935 Sept. 15<sup>th</sup>: The swastika flag (p. lxii) is made the sole national flag. New laws dealing with German citizenship.

1936 March 7<sup>th</sup>: German troops [sic] re-enter the Rhineland.

[...]

The **National-Socialist Party** ('Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter-Partei'; NSDAP), the sole political party of the Reich, has its headquarters at Munich (p. 472). The Leader of the party is Adolf Hitler, his deputy Rudolf Hess. The party is governed by the Political Organization, which is divided into regions ('Gäue'), districts ('Kreise'), and local groups ('Ortsgruppen'), and also into the SA (Sturm-Abteilung; brown-shirts), the SS (Schutz-Staffel; black tunics), the NSKK (Nationalsozialistisches Kraftfahrer-Korps, or motor corps), and the HJ (Hitler-Jugend or Hitler Youth, for boys and girls between the ages of 10 and 18 years). The following organizations were created and are controlled by the party: the *Deutsche Arbeits-Front* (DAF, p. lx) of all workers (employees and employers) under which comes the National-Socialist fellowship called 'Kraft durch Freude' (Strength through Gladness), which arranges social gatherings and holidays; the *NS-Frauenschaft* (for women), the *NS-Kriegsopferversorgung* (war victims' after-care), the *NS-Volkswohlfahrt* (NSV) which attends to public welfare and especially to the 'Winter-Hilfswerk' (WH, winter relief).

NATIONAL EMBLEMS. The swastika ('Hakenkreuz' or hooked cross), symbol of the National-Socialist Party, now has its place in every national emblem. The *National Flag* is red, showing a black swastika on a white disk. The army, navy, and air force flag ('Reichskriegsflagge') is likewise red with a cross of white and black stripes and a black swastika in the centre.– NATIONAL ANTHEMS. 'Deutschland, Deutschland über alles' (the 'Deutschlandlied'; comp. p. 82) and side by side with it (since 1933), the Horst Wessel song ('Die Fahne hoch, die Reihen dicht geschlossen'; comp. p. 19).

The *Deutscher Gruß* (German salute) or 'Hitler-Gruss', i.e. the raising of the right arm, accompanied by the words 'Heil Hitler', has since 1933 largely superseded the practice of hat-raising. The army, navy, and air force retain the military salute; but the *Deutscher Gruss* is compulsory for officials, and for everybody when the national anthems are played (comp. above).

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[...]

Source: Karl Baedeker, *Germany: A Handbook for Railway Travels and Motorists*. Leipzig: Boedeker, 1936, pp. lviii-lxii.

## **II. Das Generalgouvernement (1943)**

The suggestion for this new volume in our catalog was given by the Governor General, Reich Minister Dr. Hans Frank. The editor has welcomed with pleasure the task of creating a handbook that gives an idea of the extent of the ordering and rebuilding work that has already been accomplished or started under difficult wartime conditions in 3 ½ years since the German Reich took over the administration of the Vistula region. The country and its cities have gained a different face, the widely scattered beauties of nature and the countless, often buried testimonies of old German cultural and pioneering work, especially the creations of German architecture, have become more accessible. Our new handbook aims to offer help for finding them even in the areas still remote from traffic, for seeing the country and its people correctly and getting to know the historical contexts. We want to provide this service not only for the traveler, but for anyone engaging with the Vistula region.

[...]

The railroad to Krakow continues northeast (348km) via Auschwitz, an industrial town of 12,000 inhabitants, formerly the capital of the Piast duchies of Auschwitz and Zator (Hotel Zator, 20 beds), from where a branch line leads via Skawina (49km; p. 166) to Krakow (69km in 3 hrs). – 368km Krenau (formerly Chrzanow; elev. 266m), industrial town of 23,000; station hotel, 10 beds – 374km Trzebinia (p. 54). – Continue (413 km) to Kraków; see route 7a.

[...]

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century Kazimierz was a rich city with numerous inhabitants. – The decline of the Hanseatic League and two destructions of the city by the Swedes (1656 and 1657) caused a gradual decline and an exodus of German merchants, while due to a decree of King John III Sobieski, numerous Jews were able to settle since 1677. – Only the return of the Germans after the Polish campaign in 1939 brought about a change; the Jews were resettled, and since 1940 Kazimierz has been undergoing a planned redevelopment into a friendly German resort.

[...]

However, since the 18<sup>th</sup> century the decay increased, especially after a conflagration that almost completely burned down the city (1710) and especially due to the expansion of the Jews, who made Lublin their stronghold, held annual synods here until 1764 and also had a Talmud school with the largest Talmud library in Europe (in 1862 the city was 57% Jewish, now it is free of Jews). – In 1795 Lublin became part of Austria, from 1809-15 it belonged to the Duchy of Warsaw, then to Russia as stipulated by the Congress of Vienna. In World War I the city was occupied by the Austrians from July 30, 1915; in the Polish campaign it was taken by the German Wehrmacht on September 18, 1939, and returned to German administration. Now, as the capital of a district of the General Government, it again forms an eastern outpost of the Greater German Empire, true to its six-hundred-year German past. The well-maintained friendly streets and squares of the newer parts of the city already show the new German reconstruction work.

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Source of original German text: Karl Baedeker, *Das Generalgouvernement. Reisehandbuch*. Leipzig: Baedeker, 1943, S. V; 10; 112; 129.

Translation: Insa Kummer

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