

Ostpreußen—Brücke und Bollwerk  
East Prussia—Bridge and Bulwark

Picture book for education in the Hitler-Youth

- I. In the chapter "Orientation or Eastern Politics" in "Mein Kampf" (My Struggle), the Leader determined three great external political successes in German history:
1. The settlement of the Ostmark (Austria), essentially by the Bavarians.
  2. The acquisition and exploration of the area east of the Oder.
  3. The organization of the Brandenburg-Prussian state as a model and crystallization of the new Reich.

These great successes were achieved essentially in the east and the significance that this space has had for the entire German development can easily be recognized. The determination of the Leader should not only put the greatness of the past before us, but also illustrate the task of the future to be fulfilled in this area. In this framework East Prussia has its enormous historical task before us anew, in that it becomes a northeast pillar and bulwark against the destructive forces of the Asiatic steppes, as well as to build a bridge to those peoples.

Even at the time of our Germanic ancestors East Prussia was a land great Germanic culture, as numerous beautiful artifacts have proven. From here a strong influence on other areas further to the east. In the course of migrations the Germanic tribes from Eastern Europe moved to the west, yet some of them remained in their old places, and others moved into the newly freed areas. Their strength was not sufficient to create the requisite peace and to provide the necessary bases for economic construction. Only during the German colonization was there a new flowering of the area.

When the Polish duke Conrad von Masovien could no longer defend himself against the continual attacks of the Heathen Pruzzen, who had settled in central East Prussia, he called on the German Orders of Knights for help. Around 1230 Hermann von Salza sent Orders of Knights into the area under the leadership of Hermann Balt, through whom East Prussia was to experience economic construction.

The order of German Knights was a collection of men with the best of German blood. While sacrificing all personal comforts, they placed themselves into the service of their folk and of Christianity, even at the risk of their lives. They were a group of continuously prepared fighters whose accomplishments could only be calculated later, especially when we realize that the order had only about 300 members at its peak. It was a highly selected fighting group that achieved a unique level of cultural political achievement of the order's state. The fortresses, cities and dikes from that time are still proof of their great past today.

Toward the end of the fourteenth century the power of the knights' orders reached its zenith. Their area extended from the Oder to Lake Peipus, and was an extension of German power to the east, just as it existed for a short time during the First World War.

The main opponents of the order at that time were the Lithuanians. For about 150 years the order was in conflict with them. In the course of time the Poles joined with the Lithuanians, and slowly the influx of knights, peasants and handworkers from the Reich diminished, and at the same time certain signs of decay began to appear, and the order could no longer resist its opponents. In 1410, after brave resistance under the leadership of Ulrich von Jungingen, the order was subdued near Tannenberg by the combined armies of Lithuanians and Poles as a result of betrayal of a few dissatisfied troops who had joined together into the so-called "Eidechsenbund" (lizard confederation). That was the first Tannenberg battle.

The order had not recovered from this blow, when in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century it was drawn into a thirteen-year civil war that was ended by the Treaty of Thorn in 1466. This treaty placed the order under Polish sovereignty.

Albert I, of the Hohenzollern family and the last high commissioner of the order, fashioned the order-state into a worldly duchy in 1525. Two centuries later the basis for a new development was created with the coronation of the electoral prince of Brandenburg.

The Prussian kings saw as their first priority the attraction of necessary people into the land for its continued colonization. According to plan, they settled Germans from all the various tribes. Hessians, many from the Palatinate, Württembergers, Germans from Bohemia and Silesia came as settlers into the land. Huguenots, and especially Salzburgers, who were persecuted on the basis of the beliefs, were accepted here. From the barren soil they created the Germany's granary .

- II. However the liberal 19<sup>th</sup> century meant a serious setback for East Prussia, as well as for the entire German order. The one-sided demand for industrialization and the neglect of farming caused a strong migration from the rural east into the west that was engaged in industrial construction, where earning power was considerably higher. This migration of German people was a reason for Polish zealots to come upon the idea that the future Polish border should be extended to the Oder. Even the Lithuanians hoped that an opportunity would arise in order to move the Polish border further westward. These hopes and desires took on a threatening form for the German east, and especially East Prussia, after the collapse of the Central Powers in 1918. Nowhere was the dictate of peace caused such deep wounds as here. Posen and West Prussia were separated from the Reich, Danzig was made into a free

city against its will, Memel was removed from the Reich, the Soldauland (East Prussia) was given to Poland, Masuren was claimed by Poland, but after a unanimous declaration was able to remain in Germany. East Prussia was isolated; the Polish corridor separated it from the Reich by a distance of 100 kilometers. Thousands of roads were cut and few trains made travel possible with the Reich. East Prussian decayed and seemed to be threatened economically by foreign territory.

- III. The governments of the post-war period attempted to avoid the decline of the province through their "Osthilfe" (Help for the East), a form of sharing of money to avoid the decline of the province. They did not realize that what the east needed was not money, but foremost people to rebuild the land. It was the National Socialists who made this realization. It was no accident that the Leader chose March 4, 1933 in Königsberg to call upon the German people to work with him in the construction of the German Reich. To be sure, he wanted to direct the eyes of the entire German folk to the borderland in the northeast which was in need of all to aid in its rebuilding. It was achieved, not through financial support, as other governments had attempted, but rather through the creation of a healthy, balanced economy of the area. According to the district administrative head Koch, the reconstruction of East Prussia was to be attained through the "East Prussian Plan," whose aim was to win more people to come to the area and thereby to establish a firm bulwark for the northeast of the Reich. This settlement was to take place through the creation of rural jobs, but for the most part through the establishment of small industries for the processing of East Prussian raw materials (wood, flax, milk, vegetables, etc.). In this manner the farmer could then sell his products without the expense of high freight costs. Thousands of workers could find work and sustenance through the creation of these industries.

The East Prussian Plan is not only an economic program, but also the great building up of East Prussia in an economic and political sense. The most critical element for the completion of this plan is represented by the people who are prepared to do their best.

### OVERVIEW OF THE PICTURE BOOK

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- II. Pictures 13-25 East Prussia and Versailles
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### OVERVIEW OF THE PICTURES

- 1. Tannenberg  
Here in 1410 the order of German knights was defeated by enemy forces, because envy and disunity dominated in the ranks. Five hundred years

later (1914), Hindenburg, the great field marshal of the World War, was victorious in a powerful struggle against the advancing Russian armies and removed the blemish that had stuck to the name of Tannenberg. Today it is Hindenburg's grave and a national monument of the German people.

2. East Prussia...  
The breadth is a symbol of the Masuren landscape.
3. Borderland in the east...  
to the Memel .
4. Land of lakes and forests...
5. Land on the sea...  
Kurish spit.
6. East Prussia, an old Germanic land.  
Countless prehistoric findings prove that East Prussia, even at the beginning of our era was settled and influenced by Germanic tribes.
7. The German order of knights and the achievement of German peasants and citizens made East Prussia into an arable land and into a European outpost against Asia.
8. German knights of the order were the bearers of German colonization in the northeast of the Reich. Up to 1410, some fifty-five strongly fortified and surrounded cities, forty-eight fortresses of the order, one hundred knights' castles, some of which were highly fortified, and 1400 villages were founded.
9. The knightly fortress Marienwerder.  
Besides the Marienburg it is the proudest of the fortresses of the German order of knights. Today it is the second Reich leadership school of the Hitler-Youth.
10. Garden house in the Marienburger marsh.  
For the protection of the order's fortresses German peasants came from almost all German tribes. The timbered and garden houses remind us Lower Saxon and Frankish modes of building.
11. Town houses in Elbing.  
German burghers came with the peasants into the province. An example of their accomplishments is the city of Elbing, a city that played an important role in recent years. Today Elbing with its Schichau shipyard is one of the most important German shipyards.

12. The castle in Königsberg  
On January 14, 1701 the coronation of the electoral prince of Brandenburg to become the King of Prussia took place in Königsberg. That was the beginning of the history of Prussia-Germany.
13. East Prussia can feed the capital city of Berlin with its surplus of agricultural products.
14. The stud farm Trakehnen  
East Prussia is known for its horse breeding in the entire country. The stud farm Trakehnen belongs to the best.
15. Fishing boats on the Kurish Lagoon.  
All boats have a Kurish pennant on their masts.
16. Market day in Darkehmen  
The four-sided market place (the so-called ring) is a symbol of East German colonial cities. Pulsating life dominates on market days, on which farmers may come from 10 or even 20 km, in order to display their products and satisfy the needs of the inhabitants.
17. Amber, the East Prussian gold, and wood are the area's most important raw products.
18. Amber works in Palmnicken  
In former times amber was fished out of the sea. Today one finds it primarily in mines and in large companies. In prehistoric times amber, the local gold, as it is also known, is famous in Asia and served as a form of barter.
19. Wooden raft in the Königsberg harbor  
The share of East Prussia's wood industry in the all-German context is enormous. The cellulose factories in Königsberg and Tilsit produce 20% of the entire German cellulose needs.
20. That happened in Versailles!  
East Prussia: cut off from the Reich;  
Danzig: separated from the Reich;  
Memel: stolen.
21. Kurzebrack, East Prussia's gate to the Vistula  
The only "free" entrance for Germany to the Vistula is in reality only a border crossing, for admittance is provided during day times and with a legal identification card, that can be obtained only from the Polish side.
22. Danzig

The purely German city with its 400,000 inhabitants was declared a free city by Versailles. Poland received a number of special rights, for example, the administration of the Danzig railroad, inclusion of Danzig into the Polish tariff system, participation on the harbor administration, and much more. Even though the Danzig harbor was under Polish administration, the Poles vigorously built a new harbor in Edingen, which led to enormous harm to Danzig.

23. Lithuanian arbitrariness in the stolen Memel.

A destroyed German monument. As a result of Versailles the Memel area was separated from the Reich and put under the control of the Allies and the associated powers of France, England, Japan and Italy. During the French occupation of the Ruhr in 1923, Lithuanian guerillas took over the area. The French occupation, which was to promote order in the interest of the Germans, capitulated; the Geneva system accepted the Lithuanian surprise coup, and the area was ceded to Lithuania. The existing statute regarding the Memel area indicated that Lithuania was to guarantee its territorial integrity.

24. Those were the wishes of Poland and Lithuania.

The map shows which areas Polish and Lithuanian agitators had wanted to separate from the Reich. Unfortunately these wishes are still not a concern of the past; there are yet Polish chauvinists who wish that the Oder would be the future Polish border.

25. The vote provided the answer to the Polish demands.

The vote was extended especially to Masuren. Of course this area was designated as Polish. One assumed that the Masuren inhabitants represented a Polish minority. In reality they are a mixture of German, Pruzzian (a folk entity of the Lower Vistula of Baltic-Lithuanian origin, died out in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries) with some Slavic blood, and many current Polish-sounding names have been made Polish in later times. The Masuren have always considered themselves as members of the Prussian state and desired to be a part Germany.

26. West- and eastward orientation must not be the goal of our foreign policy, but our policy for the east must be the acquisition of the necessary ground for our German populace.

--The Leader in "My Struggle."

27. Erich Koch, the creator of the East Prussian plan.

The goal of the East Prussian plan is a greater increase of population in East Prussia, so that the land will be able to defend itself against the threatening forces from the east.

28. The Third Reich guarantees land to the peasantry.

Before the takeover by the National Socialists, the German farmer faced ruin and bankruptcy. His produce was subject to seizure, and forced auctions were commonplace. The line in the picture illustrates the number of forced auctions from 1932 to their end in 1934. The inheritance laws of the Reich no longer allowed seizure of land.

29. The Labor Service is conquering new territory.
30. New settlements appear.  
They were about 20 ha (hectares) in size and provided the necessary conditions for a new and strong peasantry.
31. The struggle for workers eliminates unemployment...  
The elimination of unemployment was approached with special energy. In 1934 East Prussia, as the first district of the Reich, had completely eliminated unemployment.
32. a long-established industry...  
should make possible a greater settlement through practical utilization of local raw materials.
33. with new factories things will be built  
The picture shows the implementation of a long-life milk plant in relation to the East Prussian plan.
34. The naval service will be built up—the autobahn appears.  
In order to create inexpensive means of transportation and in order to achieve markets in the rest of the Reich area, an extension of former traffic facilities is necessary.
35. East Prussia calls you!  
Density of population:  
Average in the Reich: 139 per square km.  
In East Prussia: 63 per square km.  
East Prussia need people in order to assert itself and for its defense.
36. Service of the Hitler Youth: dedication of the youth to the land in the east.  
The German East was not won with words, but with diligence and creativity of and for the German people, and even today it is only the deed that counts.