

Military Landscapes

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editors

The Concept of “Defense Landscape” (*Wehrlandschaft*) in National Socialist Landscape Planning

GERT GRÖNING AND JOACHIM WOLSCHKE-BULMAHN

NATIONAL SOCIALISM HAD A PROFOUND IMPACT ON EVERY SPHERE of social and cultural life in Germany. This included garden and landscape architecture, often considered innocuous, nonpolitical, and free of ideology. However, landscape architecture was strongly influenced by the political interests of the National Socialists and, in particular, by their “Blood and Soil” (*Blut und Boden*) creed. This essay focuses on the activities of a team of landscape architects and members of other planning disciplines operating under the guidance of SS-*Reichsführer* Heinrich Himmler (1900–1945) in his capacity as Reich commissioner for the strengthening of “Germandom” in the incorporated Eastern areas (*Reichskommissar für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums in den eingegliederten Ostgebieten*).

The basic concern of Himmler’s planning authority was to reshape large parts of the “annexed” Polish territory into ideal German landscapes. According to National Socialist ideology, the seizure and occupation of this territory was a political necessity for the German people. Consequently, the National Socialist government planned new settlements in the territories, established to guard against the supposed “danger from the East.” The German farmers who were to be settled there, it was argued, needed an ideal German landscape in order to feel at home and as an impetus to defend their new territory. Thus, the development of German landscape planning as a discipline was closely related to this military and political operation. Numerous planners and landscape architects took part in these activities as Reich employees and under the supervision of Heinrich Himmler, a government official of the highest rank.

In a secret decree issued on October 7, 1939, Adolf Hitler (1889–1945) entrusted Himmler with the role of Reich commissioner for the strengthening of “Germandom.” Himmler’s task, according to the decree, entailed three main objectives:

- 1 Retracing for the final return into the Reich of those Reich- and Volk-Germans abroad who come into consideration.
- 2 The elimination of the harmful influence of such alien parts of the people that constitute a danger to the Reich and the German community of people (*Volksgemeinschaft*).
- 3 The design of new German settlement areas via relocation, especially by settling those Reich- and Volk-Germans who return from abroad.¹

Of the three tasks listed, Himmler was particularly interested in the third. The formation of new German settlement areas presented an unprecedented task, and Himmler noted its radical potential in a commentary document: “The resettlement ensues from the newest research results and its results will be revolutionary not only because it will transplant national contingents, but also because it will totally reshape the landscape.”²

According to the upper echelons of the National Socialist Party, the existing boards and agencies dealing with city and regional planning—such as the Reich Office for Spatial Order (*Reichsstelle für Raumordnung*), headed by *Reichsminister* Hanns Kerrl (1887–1941)—were unable to fulfill such reshaping tasks of “universal and historically unique character.”³ Therefore, Himmler, as Reich commissioner for the strengthening of “Germandom,” created his own planning authority under the supervision of SS-*Oberführer* (equivalent to general) Konrad Meyer (1901–1973) (Figure 10.1). Meyer was a member of the SS (*Schutzstaffel*) and of the National Socialist Party (NSDAP). Since 1934, he had headed the Institut für Ackerbau und Landbaupolitik (Institute of Agriculture and Land Politics); since 1941, the Institut für Agrarwesen und Agrarpolitik at the Universität Berlin. Meyer clearly understood the totalitarian character of planning and design of a new living space for the German people: “For us National Socialists, planning results in responsibility for people and state. More than the complete planning of space and economy, it aspires to the creation of a healthy structure of the society and a permanent shape of our living space as is befitting to Teutonic German men.”⁴ An authentic but not authorized autobiographical text by Meyer relates that Himmler took an active role in the wording of the planning board’s documents: “Here, if truth be told, Himmler not only signed the designs submitted to him but each time he ordered me to come to headquarters and went through the text [of the landscape planning guidelines] with me sentence by sentence. Then we often struggled together to find the right wording.”⁵

Heinrich Friedrich Wiepking-Jürgensmann (1891–1973) was another leading member of Himmler’s planning authority (Figure 10.2).⁶ From 1934 to 1945, he was chairman of the Institut für Landschafts- und Gartengestaltung (Institute for Landscape and Garden Design) at the Universität Berlin. He promoted ideas of a close relationship between Germans and their landscapes and of the absolute necessity to create what the planning authority considered adequate “home-landscapes” (*deutsche*



FIGURE 10.1
Konrad Meyer
at a meeting at
the Technische
Hochschule Hannover,
1960s. Photograph
courtesy of Hans-
Joachim Liesecke.



FIGURE 10.2
Heinrich Friedrich
Wiepking on an
excursion with his
students, ca. 1960s.
Photograph courtesy of
Hans-Joachim Liesecke.

FIGURE 10.3
Heinrich Himmler
(middle) visits the
exhibition *Planung
und Aufbau im
Osten* (Planning and
construction in the
East). To his right is
Konrad Meyer and
in the background at
right is Erhard Mäding.
Photograph courtesy of
Josef Umlauf.



Kulturlandschaft) for German settlers in the occupied territories. Himmler appointed Wiepking-Jürgensmann as a special representative for questions concerning landscape design. Wiepking-Jürgensmann was even more effusive than Meyer about the new assignments for landscape architects. In the fall of 1939, immediately after the invasion of Poland, Wiepking-Jürgensmann published an article (“The German East, a top-priority task for our students” [Der deutsche Osten, eine vordringliche Aufgabe für unsere Studierenden]) in the journal *Die Gartenkunst* in which he envisioned a renaissance for German landscape architects. He wrote, “today I believe that after the final securing of the Reich, a golden age for the German landscape and garden designer will begin, which will surpass everything that even the most enthusiastic among us can dream up.”⁷

According to Erhard Mäding (1909–1998) (Figure 10.3), the officer for landscape design on Himmler’s planning authority, landscape formation became the “most decisive cultural task at present: the activity of landscape formation goes over and beyond physical and organic living conditions. Germans will be the first occidental people to form their own spiritual environment in the landscape and, thereby, for the first time in the history of mankind will develop a lifestyle in which a people consciously determines the local conditions for its physical and mental life.”⁸

On June 22, 1941, the National Socialist armed forces launched Operation Barbarossa, invading the western Soviet Union.⁹ In 1942, Konrad Meyer developed the General Plan East,¹⁰ which pursued a long-standing imperialist ambition to expand through settlement strongholds (*Siedlungsstützpunkte*) in eastern Europe. In his preface to the book *Deutscher Osten. Land der Zukunft* (The German East: Land of the future) (Figure 10.4), the National Socialist propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels (1897–1945) estimated that the envisioned implementation of “the National Socialist program for the German East”

would take “years and tens of years.”¹¹ An extensive task, the settlement strongholds would be established every one hundred kilometers along roads that would lead from the German Reich to Leningrad (today Saint Petersburg) in Russia and to the Crimea.¹²

Wiepking-Jürgensmann’s vision was bound up with the idea that the National Socialist military would conquer vast areas east of Germany in Poland, Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine. After this conquest, the new territory would have to be transformed into a landscape suitable for “soldier-farmers” (*Wehrbauern*) from Germany. The timing of this transformation was of concern to the highest levels of the Nazi state. In his instruction (*Weisung*), number twenty-one of December 18, 1940, Adolf Hitler told the German armed forces (*Wehrmacht*), “The German armed forces need to be prepared, even before the end of the war against England, to defeat Soviet Russia in a quick campaign [Operation Barbarossa].”¹³

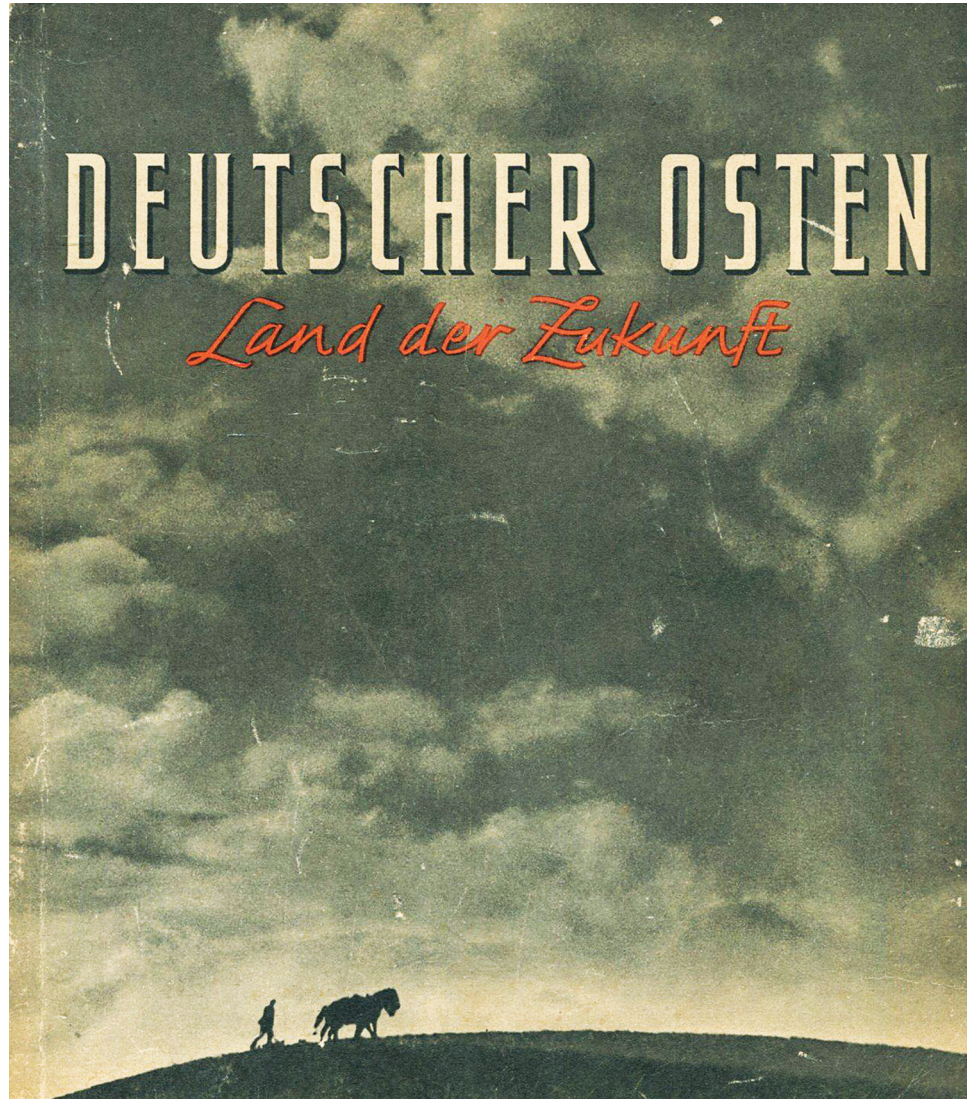
“Now,” Konrad Meyer said in a talk given at the Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften (Prussian Academy of Sciences) in Berlin on June 27, 1940, “the German architect, landscape designer, and master builder has been given an activity and experimentation field of endless diversity in the construction of villages, the design of landscapes, and the construction of new cities . . . a new science is in the making in landscape design and landscape politics.”¹⁴ The 1941 book *Zwischen Warthegau und UDSSR* (Between the Warthegau and the Soviet Union) included a chapter titled “Land im Osten ruft!” (Land in the East calling!). Under a photograph of Hitler prominently featured next to the book’s title, the caption read: “Der Führer beauftragte uns, Ordnung im Osten zu schaffen” (The leader has charged us with creating order in the East).¹⁵

In his 1942 annual publication of maxims and watchwords (*Parole*) for German youth, Heinrich Himmler fulfilled his roles both as Reich commissioner for the strengthening of “Germandom” and as honorary leader of the country service [Landdienst] of the Hitler Youth in writing about country service and youth deployment in the East. “The vast agrarian fields of the East, for which the German soldier fights with his blood, must be taken into possession and farmed by the German youth as soldier-farmers [*Wehrbauern*] into the most distant future.”¹⁶ This followed an earlier 1942 statement. In “The East as fulfillment,” Joseph Goebbels had written, “The East is our national fulfillment. Here the circulation of our folk blood needs to become stimulated and accelerated time and again.”¹⁷ Both statements were published in the 1942 book *Deutscher Osten. Land der Zukunft* mentioned above (Figure 10.4).

Wiepking-Jürgensmann, the only full professor of landscape architecture in National Socialist Germany, had long been a fervent advocate of the idea of defensive farmsteads (*Wehrbauerntum*) as “protection” against eastern Europe. His work on the subject and the “military” concerns of “garden and landscape design”¹⁸ predated National Socialist Germany’s assault on Poland in September 1939. As a university lecturer, he imparted his thoughts on the subject as early as 1935, and his interest is reflected in the titles of some of his students’ diploma assignments. For example, in November 1936, he noted to one of his students, the diploma candidate Hans Joachim Weise, that he should consider landscape planning for the Groß-Dammer manor estate north of Neu Bentschen as such: “As a special task the candidate is charged with also taking into account military-political

FIGURE 10.4

Cover of *Deutscher Osten. Land der Zukunft. Ein Ruf des Ostens an die Heimat!* (Munich: Heinrich Hoffmann Verlag, 1942).



and strategic reasoning in his work, in particular: deployment roads hidden from aerial reconnaissance, linked with troop assembly grounds that must also be shielded from aerial view. Furthermore, staggered defensive structures are foreseen. . . . The candidate will be precisely briefed by myself in situ and obliged to write and keep his work under conditions of the utmost secrecy.”¹⁹

A different candidate, named Wirth, was assigned a subject for his diploma thesis by Wiepking-Jürgensmann. “For a larger industrial town, a sports park for exercise and competitions in combination with a military sports ground [*Wehrsportanlage*] should be designed,” Wiepking-Jürgensmann noted to his student.²⁰ The military sports facilities were also to include “quarters for personnel with an indoor shooting range.” On March 25, 1939, a few months before the outbreak of war, another of Wiepking-Jürgensmann’s diploma students named Egon Barnard was assigned to design part

of the green space for the “reconstruction of the town of Wilhelmshaven-Nord.” For military reasons, Wiepking-Jürgensmann emphasized the need to keep the planning intentions for Wilhelmshaven-Nord absolutely secret: “In both projects, that is, the enlargement of the city park and the reconstruction of Wilhelmshaven-Nord, there are military construction projects to be taken into the most urgent consideration. These are to be kept secret and may not be depicted in the drawings. . . . Before the [design] work is commenced it must be confirmed to the institute director in writing that the candidate has been informed of his obligation of secrecy with regard to the military structures and purposes.”²¹

Another conceptual formulation, this for the diploma candidate Erich Ahlers, included drawing up a “work program for the settlement’s functioning” for the “new settlement of Gresse near Botzenburg.” Wiepking-Jürgensmann emphasized to his student that above all the design should include: “Guidance of the community on all questions of landscape maintenance, landscape design, cemetery management, playground, and defensive features.”²² A “plan for play and military training” grounds was also required.

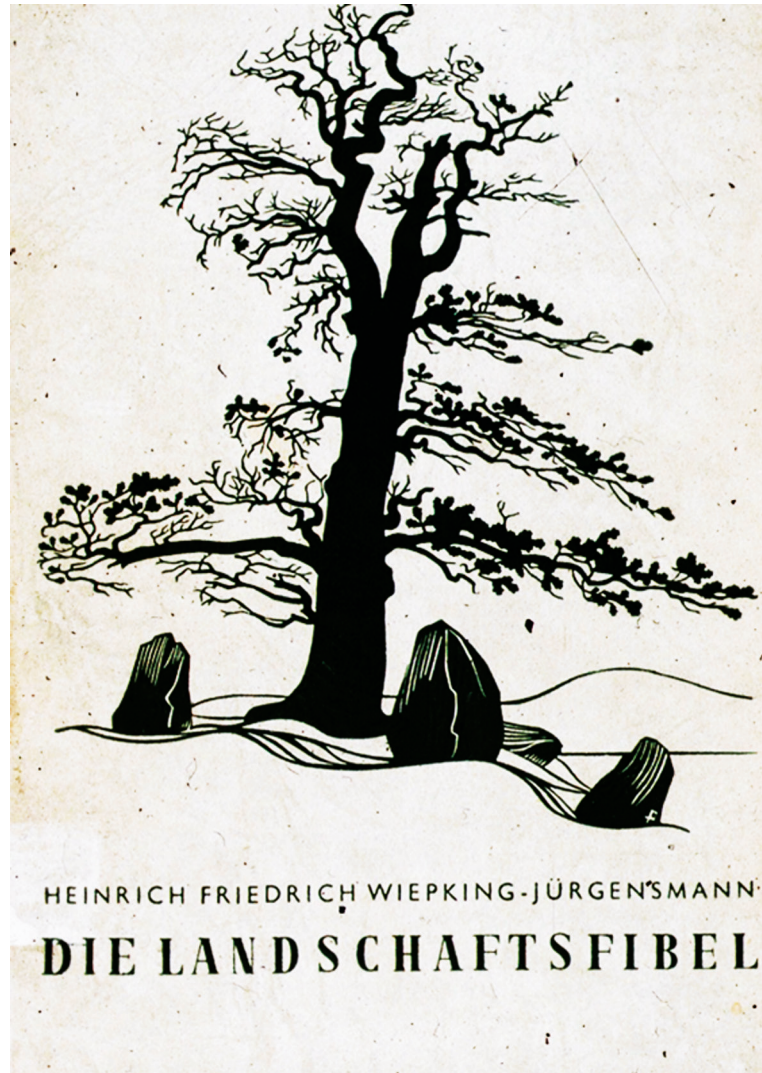
The diploma candidate Stoitscheff was assigned to “work on the large-scale landscape of the Selle [River] in Lothringen.” In August 1941, Wiepking-Jürgensmann enjoined him to “work in the closest collaboration with the SS land office in Metz and ascertain whether any defensive functions of the landscape are to be taken into account. Should this be the case, they are to be considered together with those of the cultural landscape and designated in the plan.”²³

After Germany invaded Poland in September 1939, Wiepking-Jürgensmann articulated his views with increasing force. He published a number of articles on the design of military defense landscapes, many appearing in the magazine *Neues Bauerntum* (New peasantry) as well as in his book *Die Landschaftsfibel* (Landscape primer), published in 1942 (Figure 10.5). During the war, Himmler used this magazine, among others, to promulgate a vision of appropriating eastern Europe by such means as settling soldier-farmers—and to reshape the landscape as well. It may be assumed that Himmler received Wiepking-Jürgensmann’s idea of “military defense landscape” (*Wehrlandschaft*) with interest.

As early as 1939, Himmler and the Reich youth leader Baldur von Schirach (1907–1974) agreed to establish a new peasantry (*neues Bauerntum*): “The land service [of the Hitler Youth] should above all attract young men who have the firm intention to become farmers on their own soil (soldier-farmers). This soldier-farmer notion will be especially cultivated in the Hitler Youth and SS land service.”²⁴

In a programmatic article, “Wehrbauern in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart” (Soldier-farmers past and present), the idea of “soldier-farming” was differentiated from agriculture in general. “[T]hrough his particular political duty and a specific attitude of the character and psyche,” the soldier-farmer differed from the ordinary farmer in terms of political expectations and increased responsibility. The origin of these characteristics was meant to be a constant state of vigilance derived from his precarious situation in enemy territory. This is where the actual roots of the soldier-peasantry lie:

FIGURE 10.5
Die Landschaftsfibel
(Berlin: Landbuch-
handlung, 1942).



it is not just a peasantry that has been trained in the use of weapons or that can take up arms in occasional situations, but farmers who live on constantly threatened soil. . . . The soldier-farmer must, then, be on guard in the broadest sense—he must also be a political combatant, also knowing and mastering conflict without military weapons.²⁵

What does this task amount to? To put it briefly: to appropriate foreign land or secure border lands by means of farming—to acquire territory, asserting one's right to it and using it. This is, then, a combat mission and a battle that will be fought by no means solely with military resources. . . .

A class of soldier-farmers, that is, a peasantry that exchanges
the plough for the gun

whenever necessary seems, however, . . . to emerge from the present military exigencies, to wit, from the special military organization of the population in border areas as practiced in Switzerland and French border protection.²⁶

Josef Umlauf (1906–1989), a young urban planner in Himmler’s Reich commission, considered the establishment of “politically active soldier-farmers” a requisite condition for the joining of town and countryside. This belief was captured in the title of his 1940 article “Die Zusammenfügung von Stadt und Land” (The merging of city and country), which appeared in the periodical *Neues Bauerntum*. In the article, he outlined a conflation of agrarian, economic, and political priorities under the heading “Design tasks in the new East”: “The aim of reorganizing the lands of the new Eastern territories is to achieve a strongly agricultural structure with farms of a size that will support a healthy rural standard of living according to German standards, with a certain proportion of larger farms as bases for politically active soldier-farmers and connected with the necessary farm laborer positions.”²⁷

For Wiepking-Jürgensmann, the notion of the soldier-farmer was closely connected with considerations in the design of a defensible landscape—his term of choice was *Wehrlandschaft*, literally “defense landscape.” In several articles in *Neues Bauerntum*, he promoted the concept. In the 1943 article “Der Landschaftsgedanke” (The thought of landscape), he wrote: “The shields and protectors of the entire land are strong hearts and sharp weapons. As once the homestead of a freeman farmer was called a *Wehr*, so today the entire land must, in spirit and in practice, become a *Wehrlandschaft*. . . . A vigilant, defended land is primarily one in which vigorous people live, people who are ready to defend their home soil with the sword.”²⁸ Furthermore, in the same article, Wiepking-Jürgensmann made the case that these conditions happened not by accident, but by determined, intentional design:

Close to nature, fruitful, watchful—with these simple terms the entire work of country people can be clearly determined and delineated. . . . It is not by chance that military demands on landscape design coincide with the agricultural, climatological, cultural, and sociological requirements. Uncultivated land is exposed to every enemy; land that is sensibly cultivated, designed, and used is a bulwark against any enemy or circumstance. The Third Reich of the Germans is assured for us when all the branches of our blood race can be provided with a homeland territory, felt as beautiful in the depths of the soul, that will be defended with hearts and weapons.²⁹

After the invasion of Poland, Wiepking-Jürgensmann expressed his thoughts on the “defense landscape” particularly forcibly in the article “Deutsche Landschaft als deutsche Ostaufgabe” (German landscape as Germany’s task in the East). He warned of the “danger of Easternization” of the Germans sent to colonize the conquered Eastern territories:

The further rapaciousness of the Easterner to the west and south can only be obstructed when the sources of Easternness are implacably and in eternity denied access to the west; no bridge, no landing stage from East to West may be left standing. Directly on the Eastern border of our new *Lebensraum* [space for living], trees must stand as the symbol of German life. . . . We must therefore give these young farmers the landscapes of the homeland from whence they come, without which they will, in just a few years, silt up, become Easternized.³⁰

Wiepking-Jürgensmann concluded the article with a section titled “The decisive factor is the shaping of a combative form for this landscape.” There, he sketched out his idea of the “defense landscape” as more than rhetorical or picturesque, containing design elements that served specific military purposes:

The need for a defense landscape is not a play on words. Wide open spaces without watercourses or trees, without structuring through woodland and settlements are also, in military terms, too exposed. The Cossacks of World War [I], for instance, could not deploy because too many paddock fences and hedges crisscrossed the land. In the recent Polish campaign, we became acquainted with two formidably effective types of weaponry: aircraft and motorized units. Their impact on the treeless steppe was devastating. It would not be divulging any military secrets to say that, in future, the effectiveness of these modern weapons would be negated to a large extent in intensively settled and cultivated landscapes. No enemy airman would be able to see anything that could be concealed. Trees can be grown that even the heaviest tank could not break through. Dammed ponds can be constructed which would force the enemy to traverse long distances. Our own camouflaged deployment roads and areas are to be laid out as part of the whole. In the same way that there have been mock battles since the earliest accounts of the history of war, we should include mock plantings in the ideal defense landscape. Protective screen planting over a wide area diverts the attention of aerial reconnaissance or an artillery observer, and is only one possibility for concealment. We must therefore [also] plant in places where there is “nothing to hide.” For the German, to elaborate such thoughts is not empty talk but a vital necessity arising from his situation in the European context. The German, by the way, has an old and valuable tradition of such defense landscapes—one need only remember the hedgerows and field walls of the distinctive agricultural landscape of our northwest and our highlands. Originally, all the Germanic tribes cultivated these landscape forms. A German people that once more vigorously shapes and defends its homeland will draw on these old forms.³¹

Wiepking-Jürgensmann emphatically articulated the necessity of a defense landscape in his 1942 article “Das Landschaftsgesetz des weiteren Ostens” (The landscape law of the wider East):

The woodland border to the steppe along a line from Tula to Kazan saved the peoples of northern Russia from the bloodlust of the nomadic peoples from the wide, borderless, treeless lands that extend to the Pacific Ocean. There are also, in the middle of our Old Reich, many such lifesaving woodland borders and forest areas that have not been cleared by invasive foes and, to the present day, are the refuges and residual territories of peoples and fragments of peoples who once ruled over significantly larger areas.³²

Forests were of particular strategic importance and played a role in Wiepking-Jürgensmann's military mythology:

The woodland in particular plays a decisive role in the history of warfare in Germany. . . . The woodland and the defensive landscape serve the purposes of attack and defense in equal measure.

Wherever Germanic peoples were devastatingly defeated it was on a treeless open battleground! The vast treeless spaces are the "eternal killing fields" of great masses of warriors.³³

Wiepking-Jürgensmann believed that dense, wooded landscapes could fulfill their ancient defensive purpose even in the modern, technologically enhanced dynamics of contemporary combat:

Compared to today's developments, the air force played a minor role in world wars. We had no idea of the possibilities that the air force could develop in just thirty years. . . . The less woodland, planted strips, and allées are present in the territory controlled by us, the less we can expect fortunate outcomes of war in future. A region so dramatically denuded of its vegetation as the Magdeburger Börde, or large treeless industrial areas, cannot be defended from the ground when a superior air power approaches.

One has to have seen the effect of our air force in Poland or Russia to know that woodlands and protective plantation strips have acquired even greater importance in military terms. And nobody is in a position to predict further developments of the war in the air. . . . It would be an inexcusable dereliction of duty if the landscapist, in all seriousness and fully cognizant of his responsibilities, were not to point this out and do all in his power to ensure that future landscape design be clearly seen as a defensive measure that must be executed.³⁴

In his 1942 "landscape primer," Wiepking-Jürgensmann covered the defense landscape extensively. In the chapter "Über die Schutzpflanzungen" (On protective plantings), he described the uses and planning of "hedges on soil walls" and "protective plantings" in the defense landscape.³⁵ Sketches illustrated landscaping measures that would assist military pursuits, augmenting the effective conduct of war, as well as how such defense landscapes should look. For example, a "scheme for a main road in the

FIGURE 10.6
 Illus. 250 ("Wallhecken in der Wehrlandschaft"
 [hedge on soil wall in the defense landscape])
 from *Die Landschaftsfibel*
 (Berlin: Deutsche
 Landbuchhandlung,
 1942), 301.

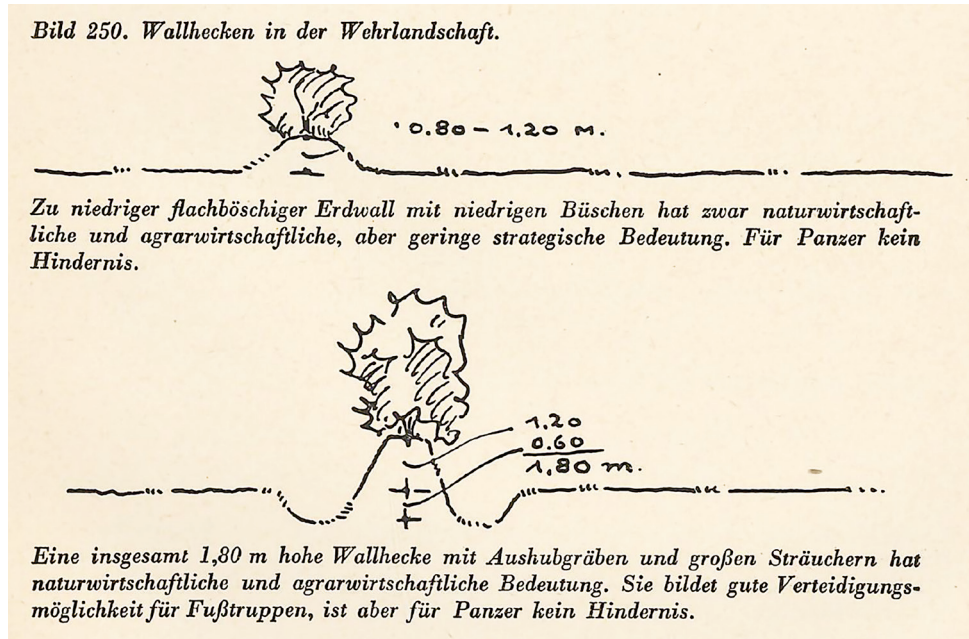
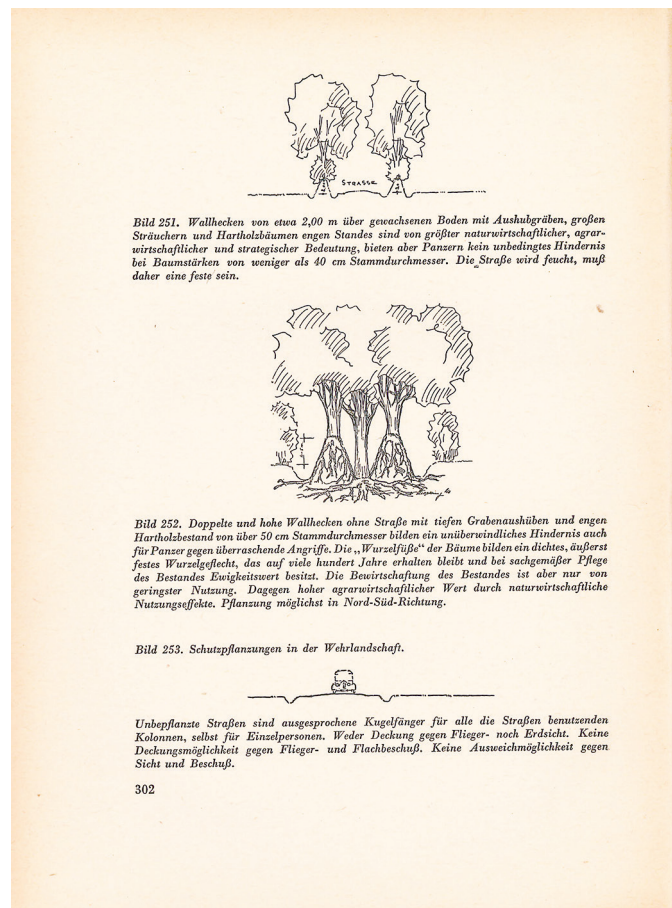


FIGURE 10.7
 Illus. 251-53 from
Die Landschaftsfibel
 (Berlin: Deutsche
 Landbuchhandlung,
 1942), 302.



defense landscape” and a “scheme for a defense landscape main road in open country” indicated a visual approach to planning, integrating military infrastructure into the landscape as a compositional exercise.³⁶

Wiepking-Jürgensmann commented on the sketches for a defense landscape as follows (Figures 10.6 and 10.7):

Illus. 250.

Hedges on soil walls in the defense landscape. Too low and shallow gradient soil wall with low bushes is of natural economic and agricultural value, but has little strategic significance. No obstacle for tanks.

A hedge on a soil wall with a total height of 1.8 meters made with excavation ditches and large shrubs is of natural economic and agricultural value. It offers good defensive possibilities for infantry, but is not an obstacle for tanks.³⁷

Illus. 251.

Hedges on soil walls rising about two meters above naturally grown soil with excavation ditches, large shrubs, and hardwood trees in close stands are of the greatest natural economic, agricultural, and strategic importance, but they are not unconditional obstacles to tanks when the tree trunk is less than forty centimeters in diameter. The road will get wet and therefore must have a solid surface.³⁸

For military purposes, the following sketches appeared particularly suitable to Wiepking-Jürgensmann (Figures 10.7–10.9):

Illus. 252.

High, double hedges on soil walls without road, with deep ditch excavations and narrow hardwood tree stand of more than fifty-centimeter trunk diameter, form an insurmountable obstacle to tanks against surprise attacks. The “root feet” [*Wurzelfüße*] of the trees will interlace in a dense, extremely strong plait of roots that will last many hundreds of years and, if the stand of trees is properly maintained, will be of eternal value. Management of the stand will be of lowest use. Comparatively there is a high agricultural value due to natural economic uses. To be planted where possible on a north–south alignment.³⁹

Illus. 253.

Protective planting in the defense landscape. Unplanted roads are nothing less than backstops for silhouetting convoys and even expose individuals. No cover against aviator view nor view from the ground. No cover opportunity against aviator fire and low fire. No chance to dodge sight and strafing.⁴⁰

Roads planted with alley trees of the usual kind do not provide full cover against aviator and ground-level view; only individuals can hide under the tree crowns and behind the trunks. . . . No significant natural economic value . . .⁴¹

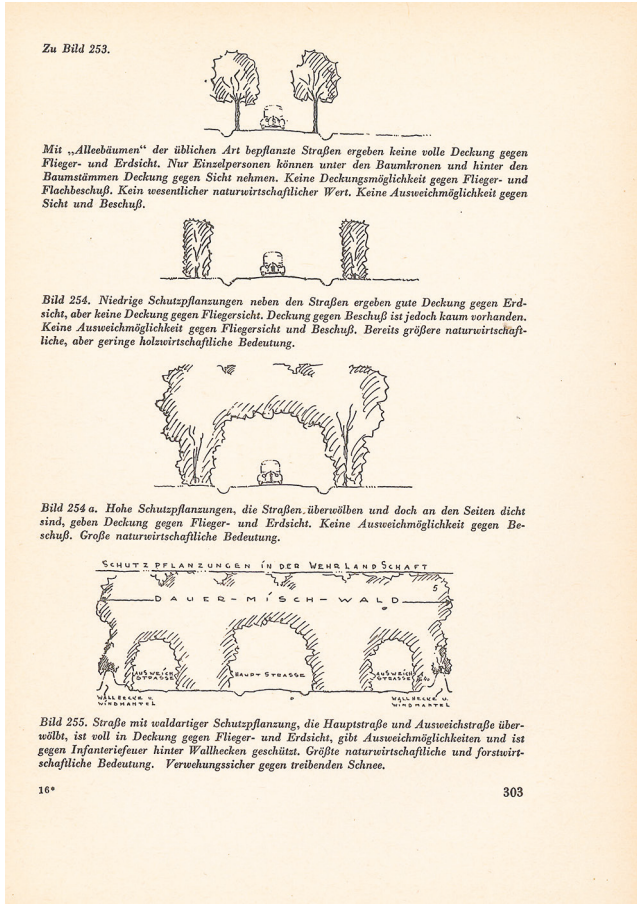


FIGURE 10.8 Illus. 253, 254, 254a, and 255 from *Die Landschaftsfibel* (Berlin: Deutsche Lanbuchhandlung, 1942), 303.

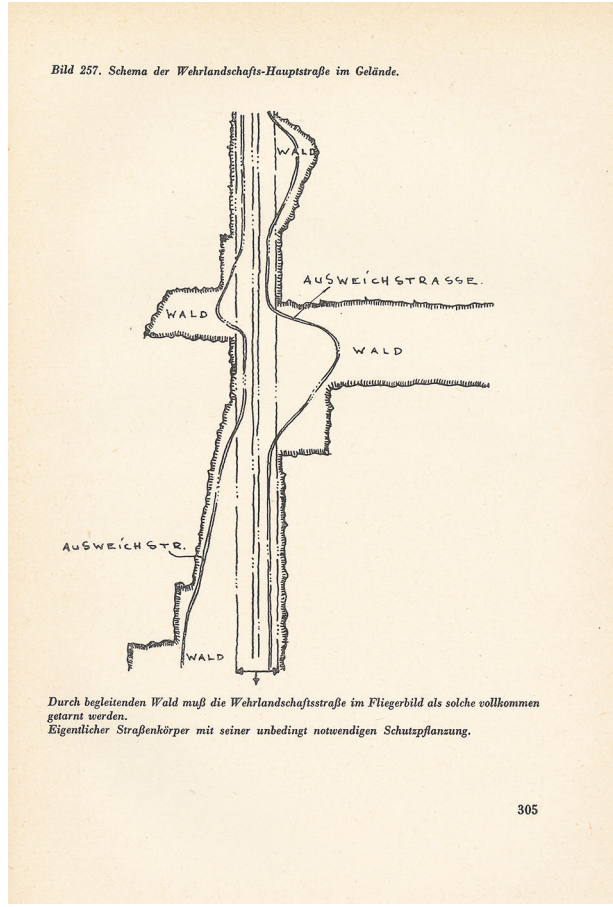


FIGURE 10.9 Illus. 257 from *Die Landschaftsfibel* (Berlin: Deutsche Lanbuchhandlung, 1942), 305.

Illus. 254.

Low protective plantings beside the roads offer good cover against ground-level sight but none against aviator view. Cover from strafing is barely available. No chance to dodge aviator view or fire from ground troops. Greater natural economic value but of meager silvicultural significance.⁴²

Illus. 254a.

High protective plantings vaulting the roads which also are tight on the sides. Offers cover from aviator and ground-level view. No chance to dodge strafing. High natural economic significance.⁴³

Illus. 255.

Road with forestlike protective plantings vaulting both the main and alternative roads. Provides full cover against aviator and ground-level views, offers

possibilities for evasion and is protected against infantry fire behind hedges on soil walls. Of greatest natural economic and silvicultural importance. Fully protected from snowdrift.⁴⁴

Wiepking-Jürgensmann also provided a sketch for the visibility of roads from the air with regard to their military importance and commented on a grid-like “scheme for the defense landscape’s main road”:

Illus. 256.

Scheme for defense landscape’s main road. Scheme must not become executed stubbornly, for example, with entirely parallel woodland edges, as this would be immediately recognizable as a strategic alignment from an aviator view.⁴⁵

For a “scheme for the defense landscape main road in open country terrain,” he noted:

Illus. 257.

Accompanying woodland must entirely camouflage the defense landscape road as such from aviator view.

Road body proper with its absolutely necessary protective planting.⁴⁶

Together with Erhard Mäding, a lawyer and SS officer, Wiepking-Jürgensmann developed a set of landscape guidelines (*Landschaftsrichtlinien*) from 1941 to 1943, which later should become formulated as a landscape law.⁴⁷ The guidelines included twenty-six points integrating landscape design with legal, social, and political categories: human and folk; natural preconditions; economic preconditions; military preconditions; the large-scale landscape; the farmers’ fields; the soil; the water; the terrain; the climate; the forest; the main protection planting; the east–west planting; other plantings in the landscape; main village, minor village, hamlet, and single farmstead; the rural city; the county seat; the big city; the urban fruit landscape; the industry and labor green space; the school green; the sports green; the recreation landscape; the cemetery; street and waterway; and landscaped celebration design.

On aspects of the defense landscape, the guidelines stated that the green space structure must enhance the “suitability of an area for defense and attack.”⁴⁸ The design and maintenance of woodland, forest belts, hedges, and the like should “satisfy the defensive conditions.”⁴⁹ In the “defensive regions,” Wiepking-Jürgensmann wrote, “tactical requirements determine the line of the woodland edges; in these cases they can be irregular and deeply indented. Healthy, mixed woodland is more suitable than monoculture of the same age because of the cover offered by its impenetrable shrub and succession layers.”⁵⁰

For the layout of defense roads (*Wehrstraßen*)—allées were excluded as unsuitable—Himmler’s planning team devised special design rules that, according to Mäding in 1943, were understandably “not suitable for publication.”⁵¹ These “defense landscape” issues appear, however, to have played no part in the deliberations of representatives

of other scientific disciplines that were involved in the “Eastern planning” of National Socialist Germany. One example is the article “Forstwirtschaft und Forstpolitik im neuen Osten” (Forest economy and forest policy in the new East) by the agricultural sociologist Herbert Morgen (1901–1996), which makes no mention of Wiepking-Jürgensmann’s work.⁵²

Wiepking-Jürgensmann himself assigned exceptional importance to the concept of the “defense landscape” in the assertion of National Socialist Germany’s military superiority over the Soviet Union. For example, in a letter dated January 18, 1942, Wiepking-Jürgensmann asked Himmler “whether the SS-*Reichsführer* could raise the matter of the defense landscape—which originated from our house—. . . with the *Führer*. . . Even if a Reich land office should be established, I could imagine that this sector, nevertheless, were to remain under the aegis of the *Reichsführer*, as it is deeply rooted in the SS’s military and ideological body of thought.”⁵³

Nevertheless, Wiepking-Jürgensmann’s notions of the military use of landscape design to create defense landscapes diverged widely from the realities of warfare. While he still extolled the merits of hedges on soil banks as landscape planning contributions to National Socialist military strategy, in the United States the first systematic experiments with large-scale defoliation of woodland had begun.⁵⁴ In this respect, it was probably only the end of World War II that precluded larger field trials of Wiepking-Jürgensmann’s heavily forested vision of warfare in Germany and its occupied territories.

The realities of World War II finally led Himmler to reject Wiepking-Jürgensmann’s notions of the defense landscape. In a memo signed on July 9, 1942, Himmler referred to increasingly frequent attacks by partisans and emphasized the necessity of removing woodland plantings along roads as they offered cover:

The partisan raids cost the lives of many German people on the roads and railways.

I shall now address fundamental countermeasures to the danger from partisans and gangs.

Along with active offensive and defensive action against partisans, a number of measures are needed. As one of the most important, to be carried out within the next four weeks, I regard the felling of trees and bushes to the right and left of roads and railway lines to a width of four hundred to five hundred meters, in order to prevent the emplacement of machine-gun nests and the covered approach of partisans to attack railways more importantly [*sic*] and with very few defensive forces.

If need be, I shall contact the railway and road experts with regard to danger from drifting snow in winter; I nevertheless take the view that one must discount minor albeit certainly justified reservations in favor of the elimination of greater dangers.

This clearance may not, in my opinion, happen in a regulated and unhurried manner but must be carried out using the available workforce from the villages within four weeks.

I propose that the *Ostminister* [East minister] together with the *SS-Reichsführer*, or the *SS-Reichsführer* with the consent of the *Ostminister*, issues a directive for the clearance of these protective strips and, as the surest incentive for the immediate and complete execution of the work, announces that the timber thus collected should belong to the inhabitants of the village who fell the trees.

In general, however, I request that it be once more considered that these urgently vital tasks for the security of our transport and traffic should not fail due to minor misgivings.

[signature] H. Himmler.

The *Reichsführer*

Führer Headquarters,

9 July 1942⁵⁵

For the duration of the war, members of Himmler's planning department claimed landscape planning superior to all other planning disciplines. The professional development within the discipline that Wiepking-Jürgensmann, Mäding, and Meyer envisioned claimed new disciplinary territory and coined a new term; given to immoderate exaggeration, Himmler's planners would elevate the landscape architect to the position of "space for living designer" (*Lebensraumgestalter*). Adolf Hitler's leader word (*Führerwort*) that all of Germany shall become a large garden served as a maxim for landscape maintenance and encouraged an increased professional prerogative. In 1941, Wiepking-Jürgensmann emphasized this in an article ("Spatial Order and Landscape Design: About Preserving the Creative Forces of the German People"), writing: "When in the early nineteenth century the goal had already been stated: 'all of Germany as one large garden,' and this goal became elaborated into a scientific system (Haushofer), this goal must be implemented today, and in total, after the leader proclaimed in his last speech . . ."⁵⁶

After the end of World War II, the defeat of Germany, and the liberation from National Socialism, there were no more opportunities for Wiepking-Jürgensmann, Mäding, Meyer, and other planners to implement their landscape planning and ideals of spatial order, which had been oriented to appeal to the National Socialist dictatorship and, consequently, stood only to benefit or be implemented by that regime. However, this did not prevent them from developing professional careers in the successive Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic, established a few months later in 1949.

After a three-year captivity and internment, Konrad Meyer was prosecuted in the Prozeß Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt der SS (SS Race and Main Settlement Office) judicial process. In 1948, Meyer was acquitted by the court in two out of three charges, namely crimes against humanity and war crimes. In the third charge, membership in a criminal organization, he was found guilty. The sentence was two years and ten months of detention, freed for time already served. From 1949 onward, Meyer directed a seed company in Voldagsen near Einbeck. In 1956, and with the help of Wiepking, he received the chair for land planning and spatial research at the faculty for horticulture and land culture at the Technische Hochschule Hannover, which he held until his retirement in 1968.⁵⁷

After 1945, Wiepking dropped the hyphenation -Jürgensmann and managed to establish, together with others, the Höhere Gartenbauschule Osnabrück (Higher School for Horticulture in Osnabrück) and Hochschule für Gartenbau und Landeskultur Hannover (College for Horticulture and Land Culture in Hannover). In spite of his clear National Socialist past, Wiepking was given a position as acting chair for land maintenance, landscape, and garden design at the Hochschule für Gartenbau und Landeskultur Hannover in 1948. He eventually became chair, a position he held from 1949 to 1959, when he retired. He also served as acting director of this college from 1950 to 1952, when it became incorporated into the Technische Hochschule Hannover.⁵⁸

Erhard Mäding served as an expert and on the Kommunale Gemeinschaftsstelle für Verwaltungsvereinfachung (communal community position for administration simplification). He also published numerous papers contributing to the concept of public duties, city development planning, and administrative geography.⁵⁹

As the examples of Wiepking-Jürgensmann, Mäding, and Meyer show, critical research that relates to the impact of National Socialism upon landscape architecture, landscape planning, and spatial planning in Germany after 1945 has yet to be conducted.

Acknowledgments

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Notes

- 1 Adolf Hitler, decree of October 7, 1939, Bundesarchiv Berlin, R 49/20.
- 2 Himmler über Siedlungsfragen, transcript, October 22, 1940, Bundesarchiv Berlin, R 49/20.
- 3 Konrad Meyer, "Der Osten als Aufgabe und Verpflichtung des Germanentums," *Neues Bauerntum* 34 (1942): 205.
- 4 Konrad Meyer, "Planung und Ostaufbau," *Raumforschung und Raumordnung* 5 (1941): 392–96.
- 5 Konrad Meyer, Über Höhen und Tiefen. Ein Lebensbericht, unpublished report.
- 6 After 1945, Wiepking-Jürgensmann dropped the hyphenation -Jürgensmann.
- 7 Heinrich Friedrich Wiepking-Jürgensmann, "Der Deutsche Osten. Eine vordringliche Aufgabe für unsere Studierenden," *Die Gartenkunst* 52 (1939): 193.
- 8 Erhard Mäding, "Die Gestaltung der Landschaft als Hoheitsrecht und Hoheitspflicht," *Neues Bauerntum* 35, no. 1 (1943): 22–24.
- 9 See Paul Carrell, *Unternehmen Barbarossa. Der Marsch nach Rußland* (Berlin: Verlag Ullstein, 1963).
- 10 See Czesław Madajczyk, *Die Okkupationspolitik Nazideutschlands in Polen 1939–1945* (Cologne: Pahl-Rugenstein Verlag, 1988). The title of the Polish original published by Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe in Warsaw in 1970 is *Polityka III Rzeszy w okupowanej Polsce*.
- 11 Joseph Goebbels, "Der Osten als Erfüllung," in *Deutscher Osten. Land der Zukunft. Ein Ruf des Ostens an die Heimat!*, ed. Heinrich Hoffmann (Munich: Heinrich Hoffmann Verlag, 1942), 4.
- 12 See Madajczyk, *Die Okkupationspolitik Nazideutschlands in Polen 1939–1945*, 89.
- 13 Carrell, *Unternehmen Barbarossa*, 17.
- 14 Konrad Meyer, *Bodenordnung als volkspolitische Aufgabe und Zielsetzung nationalsozialistischen Ordnungswillens. Festrede am Leibniztag der Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 27.6.1940*, Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vorträge und Schriften 2 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1940), 23.
- 15 Hellmut Körner, *Zwischen Warthegau und UdSSR* (Berlin: Reichsnährstand Verlags-Ges.m.b.H, 1941).
- 16 Heinrich Himmler, "Jahresparole 1942 der deutschen Jugend: Osteinsatz und Landdienst," in Hoffmann, *Deutscher Osten*, 56.
- 17 Joseph Goebbels, "Der Osten als Erfüllung," 4.
- 18 As the course of study was called in those days.
- 19 Heinrich Friedrich Wiepking-Jürgensmann, Diploma thesis task sheet for cand.rer.hort. (*candidatus rerum hortorum*) Hans Joachim Weise, November 16, 1936 (unpublished). Zbąszynek (Neu Bentschen) is a town in western Poland, in Lubusz Voivodeship, Świebodzin County. "Zbąszynek," *Wikipedia*, accessed April 18, 2018, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zbąszynek>.
- 20 Heinrich Friedrich Wiepking-Jürgensmann, Diploma thesis task sheet for cand.rer.hort. Wirth, n.d. (unpublished).
- 21 Heinrich Friedrich Wiepking-Jürgensmann, Diploma thesis task sheet for garden design candidate Egon Barnard, March 25, 1939 (unpublished).
- 22 Heinrich Friedrich Wiepking-Jürgensmann, Diploma thesis task sheet for the garden design candidate Erich Ahlers, n.d.
- 23 Heinrich Friedrich Wiepking-Jürgensmann, Diploma thesis task sheet for landscape and garden design candidate Lüben Stoitscheff, August 21, 1941 (unpublished).
- 24 Anonymous, "Neubauern aus HJ. und SS," *Neues Bauerntum* 31, no. 1 (1939): 19–20.
- 25 Anonymous, "Wehrbauern in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart," *Neues Bauerntum* 31, no. 2 (1939): 57.
- 26 Anonymous, "Wehrbauern in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart," 57.
- 27 J. [Josef] Umlauf, "Die Zusammenfügung von Stadt und Land," *Neues Bauerntum* 32, no. 6 (1940): 179–83, 181.
- 28 Heinrich Friedrich Wiepking-Jürgensmann, "Der Landschaftsgedanke," *Neues Bauerntum* 35, no. 1 (1943): 6.
- 29 Wiepking-Jürgensmann, "Der Landschaftsgedanke," 6, 7.
- 30 Heinrich Friedrich Wiepking-Jürgensmann, "Deutsche Landschaft als deutsche Ostaufgabe," *Neues Bauerntum* 32, nos. 4/5 (1940): 132–35, 132 ("Wir müssen deshalb den jungen Bauern die Heimatlandschaften, aus denen sie gekommen sind, mit auf den Weg geben, ohne welche sie sonst in wenigen Jahren versandet, verostet sein würden").
- 31 Wiepking-Jürgensmann, "Deutsche Landschaft als deutsche Ostaufgabe," 134–35.

- 32 Heinrich Friedrich Wiepking-Jürgensmann, "Das Landschaftsgesetz des weiteren Ostens. Steppe, Wald und Wiese als Lebensgrundlagen," *Neues Bauertum* 34, no. 1 (1942): 5–18.
- 33 Wiepking-Jürgensmann, "Das Landschaftsgesetz des weiteren Ostens," 8.
- 34 Wiepking-Jürgensmann, "Das Landschaftsgesetz des weiteren Ostens," 8.
- 35 Heinrich Friedrich Wiepking-Jürgensmann, *Die Landschaftsfibel* (Berlin: Deutsche Landbuchhandlung, 1942), 301–2.
- 36 Wiepking-Jürgensmann, *Die Landschaftsfibel*, 304–5.
- 37 Wiepking-Jürgensmann, *Die Landschaftsfibel*, 301.
- 38 Wiepking-Jürgensmann, *Die Landschaftsfibel*, 302.
- 39 Wiepking-Jürgensmann, *Die Landschaftsfibel*, 302.
- 40 Wiepking-Jürgensmann, *Die Landschaftsfibel*, 302.
- 41 Wiepking-Jürgensmann, *Die Landschaftsfibel*, 303.
- 42 Wiepking-Jürgensmann, *Die Landschaftsfibel*, 303.
- 43 Wiepking-Jürgensmann, *Die Landschaftsfibel*, 303.
- 44 Wiepking-Jürgensmann, *Die Landschaftsfibel*, 303.
- 45 Wiepking-Jürgensmann, *Die Landschaftsfibel*, 304.
- 46 Wiepking-Jürgensmann, *Die Landschaftsfibel*, 305.
- 47 See Gert Gröning, "Zu Genese und Bedeutung der Landschaftsrichtlinien (1941–1943)," in *Herrschaftsverhältnisse und Herrschaftslegitimation. Bau- und Gartenkultur als historische Quellengattung hinsichtlich Manifestation und Legitimation von Herrschaft*, ed. Joachim Ganzert and Inge Nielsen, Hephaistos, Sonderband 11 (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2015), 243–54.
- 48 Allgemeine Anordnung Nr. 20/VI, 1942, 51.
- 49 Allgemeine Anordnung Nr. 20/VI, 1942, 53.
- 50 Allgemeine Anordnung Nr. 20/VI, 1942, 55.
- 51 Erhard Mäding, Regeln für die Gestaltung der Landschaft. Einführung in die Allgemeine Anordnung Nr. 20/VI/42 des Reichsführers SS, Reichskommissars für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums, über die Gestaltung der Landschaft in den eingegliederten Ostgebieten, Berlin 1942, 31.
- 52 See Herbert Morgen, "Forstwirtschaft und Forstpolitik im neuen Osten," *Neues Bauertum* 33, no. 3 (1941): 103–7.
- 53 Wiepking-Jürgensmann to the SS-Reichsführer, 18 January 1942, Bundesarchiv Koblenz, BAK, R49/513.
- 54 See John Lewallen, *Ecology of Devastation: Indochina* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1971).
- 55 Memorandum by SS-Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler, 9 July 1942 (betr. Abholzung von Schutzpflanzungen wegen Partisanengefahr), Bundesarchiv Koblenz, NS 19 neu/1671.
- 56 Heinrich Friedrich Wiepking-Jürgensmann, "Raumordnung und Landschaftsgestaltung. Um die Erhaltung der schöpferischen Kräfte des deutschen Volkes," *Raumforschung und Raumordnung* 5 (1941): 1, 23 ("Wenn bereits im Anfang des 19. Jahrhunderts das Ziel formuliert wurde: 'Ganz Deutschland ein großer Garten,' und dieses Ziel sogar zu einem wissenschaftlichen System ausgebaut wurde (Haushofer), dann kann und muß dieses Ziel heute und gänzlich verwirklicht werden, nachdem der Führer in seiner letzten großen Rede vor der deutschen Arbeiterschaft den 'Garten des ganzen Deutschland' proklamierte").
- 57 See Gert Gröning and Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn, *Die Liebe zur Landschaft. Teil III: Der Drang nach Osten, Arbeiten zur sozialwissenschaftlich orientierten Freiraumplanung* 9 (Munich: Minerva Verlag, 1986); see also Präsident der Universität Hannover, ed., "Meyer, Konrad," in *Catalogus Professorum 1831–1981* (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1981), 2:198.
- 58 See Gert Gröning, "Wiepking-Jürgensmann, Heinrich-Friedrich, 1891–1973, German Landscape Architect," in *Chicago Botanic Garden Encyclopedia of Gardens*, vol. 3, ed. Candice A. Shoemaker (Chicago, Fitzroy Dearborn, 2001), 1429–31.
- 59 See Erhard Mäding, "Die Landespflege im öffentlichen Gemeinwesen," in *Festschrift für Heinrich Friedrich Wiepking*, ed. Konrad Buchwald et al. (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1963), 315–26.