

**The Postwar Settlement in Motion:
A 1918 Memorandum in Favor of
Establishing a German Autonomous Region
in the Northern Black Sea Area ***
(Abstract)

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This article discusses a memorandum sent by the German Protestant pastor Immanuel Winkler to the political and military authorities of the German Reich in early March 1918. The memorandum demanded the establishment of an autonomous region for the German communities inhabiting the former Russian *guberniias* of Bessarabia, Kherson and Taurida. Hailing from Southern Bessarabia (Sarata), Winkler represents a fascinating case study regarding the emergence and increasing assertion of a growing intellectual and political elite within the traditionally and overwhelmingly rural ranks of the German community living in the northern Black Sea area. The impact of World War I was decisive in the process of generating a particular collective identity and in radicalizing the discourse of the German-language elites within the Russian Empire. The major elements highlighting this new dynamics were the following: 1) the growing discrimination against the German community residing in the Russian Empire during the period 1914-1916; 2) the dissolution of state authority in Russia during the years 1917 and 1918; 3) the collapse of the Eastern Front and the signing of separate peace treaties between the Central Powers, on the one hand, and Russia, Ukraine, and Romania, on the other hand; 4) the outbreak of the civil war in Russia. The memorandum authored by Pastor Winkler should thus be examined from the wider perspective of the constant preoccupation for and interest in the postwar organization of Eastern Europe exhibited by the political, military, and intellectual milieus of the German Reich in this period. It should also be analyzed from the point of view of the widespread theories concerning “Germany’s imperial and civilizational global mission and destiny”. These preoccupations also found some reflection in the drafting of ambitious plans aiming at German colonization in the East and at the creation of autonomous German-inhabited areas within certain regions of the European “Orient.”

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