

*The Holocaust*



# *The Holocaust*

A Reader

*Edited by*  
Simone Gigliotti  
*and*  
Berel Lang

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# *Chronology*

1933

30 January

Hitler becomes Chancellor

27 February

The Reichstag fire, attributed to Communists and used by Hitler as pretext for emergency suspension of freedoms of speech, press, assembly

5 March

Elections in Germany; National Socialists win 44 percent of vote, and with coalition, a majority

22 March

First Concentration Camp established at Dachau

23 March

The “Enabling Act” removing legislative power from the Reichstag to the Cabinet; in effect, the end of parliamentary rule

1–3 April

Organized boycott of Jewish businesses

7 April

“Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service,” ordering the discharge and exclusion of “non-Aryans” from the Civil Service

11 April

“Arierparagraph” [“Aryan-paragraph”]: Definition of Jew as any person with one Jewish grandparent

25 April

Law against Overcrowding of German Schools (quotas for non-Aryans set at 1.5 percent)

10 May

Coordinated book-burning in German cities and university towns

27 May

Heidegger’s Rectoral Address, “The Self-Assertion of the German University,” at Freiburg

- 8 September Jewish Organizations meeting in Geneva calls for world boycott of German goods
- 10 September Nazi Concordat with Vatican
- 1934**
- 26 January Non-aggression Pact with Poland
- 2 August Death of President Hindenburg. Hitler appoints himself Führer and Chancellor
- 1935**
- 14 November “Nuremberg Laws,” adopted, including “Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor.” Revised definition of Jew as anyone having three Jewish grandparents (“*Mischling*” [“mixed-one”] as having one or two). Jews are disenfranchised; no longer German citizens, but “subjects”
- 1936**
- 3 March Jewish doctors barred from government hospitals
- Summer Olympic Games held in Munich
- 1937**
- July Exhibition of “Degenerate Art” in Munich
- 4 November Jews prohibited from giving “German Salute”
- 1938**
- 13 March Germany annexes Austria (“*Anschluss*”)
- 5 July Evian Conference: Consideration and rejection by participating countries of “open door” policy for refugees. Dominican Republic and Mexico offer to take refugees
- 17 August German Jews required to take legal middle name of “Sara” or “Israel” if their own names are not on authorized list of Jewish names
- 29 September Munich Conference, ceding Sudetenland to Germany; British Prime Minister Chamberlain proclaims “peace in our time”

- 9 November "Kristallnacht": "Night of [Broken] Glass" – burning and destruction of synagogues and Jewish businesses; 91 Jews killed, 30,000 sent to concentration camps
- 5 December Himmler decree voids driving licenses for German Jews
- 1939**
- 17 May British "White Paper" restricting Jewish immigration to Palestine to 15,000 per year for five years
- 22 August Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact (USSR–Germany)
- 1 September Germany invades Poland
- 1 September "Euthanasia" Program ("T-4") initiated inside Germany
- 3 September Great Britain and France declare war on Germany
- 17 September Soviet army occupies eastern Poland
- 21 September Heydrich order for establishing ghettos in Poland
- 28 September Partition of Poland by Germany and Russia
- 28 December Goering directive: German Jews to be "concentrated" in specified dwellings
- 1940**
- 9 April German invasion of Norway and Denmark
- April Establishment of Lodz ghetto which eventually includes c. 200,000 people [destruction of ghetto, August, 1944]
- 10 May German invasion of Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, France
- October Establishment of Warsaw Ghetto which eventually includes c. 470,000 people [destruction of ghetto, May, 1943]
- 1941**
- April Lublin and Radom ghettos established
- 6 April German invasion of Yugoslavia and Greece

<i>May</i>	Role established for “Einsatzgruppen” in invasion of Russia
<i>20 May</i>	Order from Heydrich’s office prohibiting further Jewish emigration from France and Belgium, intended to increase emigration from Germany
<i>22 June</i>	German invasion of Russia, code-named “Operation Barbarossa”
<i>June–August</i>	“Euthanasia” program inside Germany formally halted
<i>June–November</i>	Order given by Hitler for carrying out the “Final Solution”
<i>31 July</i>	Goering instructs Heydrich to draw up plan for “Final Solution” of the Jews in Europe
<i>1 September</i>	German Jews over age 6 required to wear yellow star
<i>3 September</i>	First use of “Zyklon-B” gas, at Auschwitz
<i>18 September</i>	Transport Ministry prohibits German Jews’ use of public transportation during rush hours
<i>23 October</i>	Edict prohibiting emigration of German Jews
<i>December</i>	Establishment of Lwow Ghetto (third-largest)
<i>7 December</i>	Japan attacks Pearl Harbor; the USA at war with Japan
<i>11 December</i>	USA enters war against Germany and Italy
<i>8 December</i>	Gassing (carbon monoxide) of Jews begins at “death camp” of Chelmno [and then by March 1942, organization of the six camps: Belzec, Treblinka, Sobibor, Lublin, (Majdanek), as well as Auschwitz]
<b>1942</b>	
<i>20 January</i>	Wannsee Conference: Transmission of plan of “Final Solution” to Nazi officials
<i>May</i>	Biltmore Conference in New York City: Call for Jewish state and free immigration
<i>14 July</i>	First deportation of Dutch Jews
<i>21 July</i>	Protest rally at Madison Square Garden, New York



- 22 July  
August Deportations begin from Warsaw Ghetto  
Gerhart Riegner's report on the "Final Solution" to England and the USA
- 4 August First deportation of Belgian Jews
- 21 August Roosevelt warns of war crimes and "fearful retribution"
- 24 November Rabbi Wise publicly confirms "Final Solution" in Washington, DC
- 2 December "International Day of Mourning"
- 16 December Decree for deportation of German gypsies
- 17 December Eleven-government statement (including USA, Great Britain, USSR) denouncing the "planned extermination of the Jews [which is] being implemented" – issued in Washington and Moscow
- 1943**
- 17 March Bulgarian Parliament votes against deportation of Bulgarian Jews
- 29 March Decree for deportation of Dutch gypsies
- 19 April–1 May Bermuda Conference among Allies to discuss refugee rescue efforts; ends inconclusively
- 19 April–16 May Uprising and destruction of Warsaw Ghetto
- 25 July Mussolini deposed; Germany establishes puppet ["Salò"] government
- 29 August–2 September American Jewish Conference (NYC); support for Jewish state given priority over rescue of European Jews
- 2 October Rescue of Danish Jews to Sweden
- 14 October Revolt by inmates in Sobibor
- 1944**
- 22 January Roosevelt's Executive Order establishes War Refugee Board
- 19 March Germany takes control of Hungary
- 15 May Deportation of Hungarian Jews begins
- 6 June D-Day: Allied invasion of Normandy, France

- 20 July*                      Stauffenberg plot to assassinate Hitler ends in failure
- Summer*                      Discussion (and rejection) in London and Washington of proposals to bomb death camps/rail lines going to them
- 7 October*                    Revolt of *Sonderkommando* at Auschwitz
- 1945**
- January*                      Himmler's order to evacuate camps in Poland to the west, resulting in death marches
- 27 January*                  Liberation of Auschwitz by Soviet Red Army
- 30 April*                      Hitler commits suicide (?) in his bunker in Berlin (cf. his "Last Will and Testament")
- 8 May*                         Germany surrenders
- 22 November*                Nuremberg Trials (International Military Tribunal) of leading Nazis begins before judges from USA, Great Britain, France, and USSR

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## Glossary

*Aryanization*: Referred to the confiscation of Jewish property, investment and wealth in Nazi Germany. It also carried social and racial connotations when applied to the attempted assimilation of ethnic peoples in the “East,” such as Poles and ethnic Germans.

*Barbarossa*: Nazi code-name for the invasion of the USSR (June 22, 1941).

*Dreyfus Affair (1894)*: Late nineteenth-century political scandal in Paris that concerned allegations of treason against Captain Alfred Dreyfus. Dreyfus, a French military officer, was pardoned in 1899 and the case is widely seen as an example of French antisemitism.

*Einsatzgruppen*: Mobile SS and police units for activities in the Eastern territories, specifically the murder of Jews, communists and other enemies.

*Einsatzkommando*: Special Unit, and individual detachment of an *Einsatzgruppe*.

*Enlightenment*: A philosophical movement beginning in the early eighteenth century in Europe that advocated rationality in individual thought. It also emphasized secular ideas and rethinking the role of religion in public and private life.

*Ethnic cleansing*: Although it is commonly associated with genocide, this action is distinct from it, as it targets the territories of ethnic persons and acquires those territories through one or more actions of forced displacement of peoples, violence and terror, among others.

*Ethnic Germans*: People of German descent living outside or east of Germany, such as in Poland and the USSR. Groups of them were subjected to forced deportations under Hitler.

*Euthanasia*: In common usage, it refers to the humane means of ending the life of a terminally ill person; euphemism (together with “mercy death”) used in Nazi “T-4” campaign against ‘life unworthy of life’ – killing inside Germany of mentally and physically “incurable” between 1939 and 1941, with about 100,000 victims.

“*Final Solution*” (of the *Jewish Question*), or “*Endlösung*”: Nazi euphemism for the mass murder of European Jewry. It evolved in connotation and direction throughout the course of the regime.

*Gau*: Regional party district.

*Gauleiter*: Regional party leader, responsible directly to Hitler.

*Generalgouvernement*: Occupied area of interior of Poland which was not annexed to Germany and became the main region of Nazi territorial administration. Hans Frank was governor. The area held approximately 1.4 million Jews.

*Generalplan Ost*: Hitler’s plan for *Lebensraum* or living space in occupied Eastern Europe and the resettlement of Polish and Slavic populations from 1941.

*Gestapo*: Short form of “Geheime Staatspolizei” (“secret state police”), authorized to investigate all activities “hostile to the state” – and as also exempt from judicial control, with enormous internal power.

*Gouverneur*: Head of regional unit in the *Generalgouvernement*.

*Incorporated territories*: Territory incorporated into the administration of the Reich. Areas included Danzig, West Prussia, Poznan, and Eastern Upper Silesia.

*Intentionalist/Functionalist controversy*: Debate among historians beginning in the mid-1980s about the origins of the “Final Solution.” Issues concerned Nazi intentions regarding Jews, the role of Hitler, antisemitism and wartime occupation policies.

*Judenrat (Jewish Council)*: An administrative body established by the Nazis to implement policy in each of the ghettos. The councils comprised rabbis and influential officials responsible for the [implementation] of instructions, and as a link between German officials and Jews in the ghettos.

*Lebensraum*: “Living Space”; an important element of Nazi race and space ideology. *Lebensraum* was premised on a territorial expansion to the East, including Poland and the USSR.

*League of Nations*: International organization or association of states established after World War I to promote international cooperation and security. Its existence was mandated through the Covenant of the Treaty of Versailles.

*Madagascar Plan*: Nazi expulsion and deportation plan proposing to relocate Jews in the French colony of Madagascar. Discussed mainly in the summer of 1940, but essentially dropped by the end of the year when the decision to attack Russia (in 1941) was made.

*Nisko Plan*: Nazi expulsion and deportation plan that aimed to relocate the Jews to the Lublin district on the German–Soviet demarcation line.

*NSDAP*: *Die Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (National Socialist German Workers' Party) – for which 'Nazi' is short form.

*OKH*: *Oberkommando des Heeres* (Army High Command)

*OKW*: *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* (Armed Forces High Command)

*Reichsgau*: A territorial unit that combined the features of a Prussian province and a party district.

*Reichstag*: German parliament.

*RSHA*: *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* (Reich Security Head Office). Formed in 1939 under direction of Reinhard Heydrich. Departments included the Gestapo, Criminal Police and SD.

*SD*: *Sicherheitsdienst* (Security Service) Agency responsible for the collection of internal intelligence headed by Reinhard Heydrich (1904–42).

*SS*: *Schutzstaffel*. Police and security organization run by Heinrich Himmler.

*United Nations "Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide" (UNCG)*: Passed in the UN General Assembly in December 1948 as international designation of genocide as a crime.

*Versailles Treaty (1919)*: Signaled the official conclusion of the Paris Peace Conference; its terms required Germany and its allies to accept responsibility for World War I and pay reparations.

*Völkisch*: Racial, nationalist, emphasizing the "people," a community or nation of belonging.

*Wannsee*: Berlin suburb, site of the Wannsee Conference (January 20, 1942) at which instructions were transmitted to ministry and party officials concerning the "Final Solution."

*Waffen SS*: Phrase introduced in 1940 to describe militarized units of the SS.

*Wartheland/Warthegau*: Area of occupied Poland incorporated into the German Reich after invasion in 1939. The Łódz ghetto was located in this administrative area. Chelmno, the first of the six “death camps” established in Poland by the Nazis, was also located here.

*Wehrmacht*: German Armed Forces.

*Weimar Republic*: The liberal democracy established in Germany after World War I (1919–33).

*Yad Vashem*: Holocaust memorial, archive, and research center, founded in Jerusalem in 1953.

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## *Introduction*

SIMONE GIGLIOTTI AND BEREL LANG

Antisemitism has a long history in Europe. Had it been possible in, say, 1900 to take a measure of its corrosiveness and impact in each of the countries of Europe, Germany would not have been amongst the worst offenders, yet by 1933 the Nazis had begun to turn Germany into an extremely hostile country for its Jewish population. From 1933 to 1945, the Nazi regime in Germany, under Adolf Hitler's rule, implemented and directed a comprehensive policy of persecution of Jews. This policy began with their legal and social exclusion through administrative decrees, cultivated social intolerance, and continued into the policy of forced emigration in the late 1930s. The assault intensified with the collection and concentration of Polish Jewry into ghettos under the cover of war with that country, extended to countries where Nazi aggression in its racial war, particularly the USSR, delivered increasingly more Jews to their captivity, included Jews in countries of collaboration and occupation such as France, Greece and Hungary, and concluded with their deportation from these and other countries of Nazi influence to specially designed killing centers in occupied Poland. This resulted in the systematic physical annihilation of Jews as a group because of their ethnicity and religion. Historians and other scholars generally consider this annihilation to represent an unprecedented genocide, a state-sponsored mass murder that resulted in the death of approximately six million Jews, two-thirds of their pre-war numbers in Europe.

The active pursuit and implementation of this destruction was referred to in Nazi documentation as "The Final Solution of the Jewish Question"; post-war references have come to designate it as the "Holocaust," or "Shoah." The occurrence of this event in World War II has a part in the national histories and collective memories of every European country (including the "neutrals" who stayed out of the war itself) and of many non-European countries which became involved with the Holocaust directly, or indirectly, through the war and its consequences. The Holocaust also has a

continuing place – often a contentious one – in the memories of a variety of social institutions: among many religious denominations, in national and international legislative bodies, in welfare and humanitarian agencies, and first and foremost, of course, for the millions of individuals and their descendants directly caught up in the Holocaust as victims, perpetrators, or bystanders.

For contemporary college and university students with no direct connection to the event and who now approach it decades after the Holocaust itself ended, the amount of scholarly writing and discussion of the event can be overwhelming. When that is put together with other means of Holocaust imagery like film, television, photography, internet materials, and the various forms of literary fiction, furthermore, it becomes difficult to know where one should begin in order to construct a clear representation of the central features of the Holocaust and the issues that have emerged in the attempts to understand its origins and impact. The present collection aims to assist in reaching this goal. It draws primarily on historical sources but encourages interdisciplinary references both in the search for sources and in their analysis. The claim has often been made about the Holocaust that because of its historical and ethical enormity, it is “incomprehensible” – that there is no way of understanding why or how the events happened. That claim itself is debatable, and in any event, there are compelling historical and ethical reasons for attempting to understand what the Holocaust was; even a partial outline and summary, if balanced and accurate, can contribute to this, and we hope here to have achieved that much by placing the events and issues of the Holocaust in the contexts of analysis and discussion which have arisen since the end of the Holocaust itself. Thus, the rationale for the publication and structure of *The Holocaust: A Reader*.

In assuming only minimal familiarity with its subject matter, *The Reader* is intended for college and university level students, complementing the extensive range of primary and secondary source material published on the subject. In designing a collection of this scope, the editors have been necessarily selective rather than exhaustive. *The Reader* includes speeches, statements, affidavits, orders, testimonies and letters, and secondary source material from historians, philosophers and sociologists. We have not included material on non-Jewish victims, rescuers, bystanders, liberators, or on such important topics as the character of the Nazi state, the responses of the German population, Church responses, local and regional functionaries, accomplices and opposition, collaboration, camp structures, industry and forced labor, and Jewish and non-Jewish resistance movements. To address these topics would require several more books, and instructors can integrate these topics from the wealth of material otherwise available. Since there is no standard or dominant approach



to teaching this subject, *The Reader* has been conceptualized to give the Holocaust a “historical” character as it relates to the development of Nazi policy towards Jews. It examines the Jewish response to that evolving policy as it eventually led to what was for victims at the time, an unimaginable threat.

In its organization, *The Reader* follows a path of “policy development” from its “top down” application to Jews, mainly in Germany, occupied Poland and the USSR. It then addresses events and debates about how these decisions were carried out, responses to persecution and incarceration by ghetto writers and camp inmates, and the social and legal legacy of mass murder after World War II. The six Parts of *The Reader* thus address the unfolding of the Holocaust through contemporary debates about antisemitism, racism, ethnic cleansing and ghetto formation, the role of the *Einsatzgruppen* and *Wehrmacht* in the genocide, intentionalism and functionalism as explanatory accounts, and the later and still ongoing historicization of the Holocaust. Pedagogically, *The Reader* attempts to achieve clear fundamental outcomes through teaching the Holocaust: outlining its historical context, providing a framework to engage with the testimonies of victims and perpetrators, and enabling a critical discussion for the interpretation of the event as a whole. An introduction to the content of the six parts of the book and of the connections among them may provide a useful overview.

“Preconditions: Nazism and the Turn from Anti-Judaism to Antisemitism” (Part I) seeks to place traditions of exclusion in the context of European and German history as a way of introducing the distinctive and comparative aspects of antisemitism and the bio-political project of racial purification which came to be epitomized in the Nazi “Final Solution.” The phenomenon of antisemitism remains itself a hotly contested question in the historiography of the Holocaust – specifically asking why, since antisemitism existed in other European countries before World War II (and often more virulently), it reached an “eliminationist” extreme in Germany. The issue of antisemitism is further complicated as we consider the participation of perpetrators who came from all over Europe and who also targeted non-Jewish victims. To what extent was their involvement ordered, voluntary, willing or ideologically motivated? Antisemitism as a set of beliefs and often practices had a centuries-old history in Europe, but it is clear that in its Nazi conception and implementation, it reached new depths. What these were and how they were arrived at are crucial questions for any understanding of the Holocaust and of Nazi policy.

“A Racial Europe: Nazi Population and Resettlement Policy” (Part II) presents influential and emerging views on the pre-history of the implementation of the Holocaust. The pre-history is examined in its evolutionary and experimental phase as envisioned by the Nazis and implemented

by SS officials and bureaucrats in their plans for the “resettlement” of ethnic Germans, Poles and Jews during the years 1939 to 1941. While there remains disagreement about the intentions of that policy, the entries in Part II present the evolution of genocide – at this stage – as an outgrowth of frustrations of resettlement on the one hand, and the German euphoria of early war victories, on the other.

“War and the Turn to Genocide” (Part III) provides a link for analyzing the transition from localized mass murder in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union to the European-wide genocide of the Jews. Crucial in this process was the involvement of the SS *Einsatzgruppen*, four special task forces of killing squads that accompanied the Wehrmacht’s invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941. Their activities are highlighted here through a primary source document, namely the affidavit of Otto Ohlendorf, head of *Einsatzgruppe D*, which was used at the International Military Tribunals in Nuremberg in 1945 and at his own trial in 1947. That document needs to be viewed critically, for while it purports to be an objective presentation of his group’s actions in killing 90,000 Jews, attention should also be paid to issues of obedience, accountability and the implication of group responsibility through military-style execution of victims.

The controversial role of the German army in perpetrating war crimes against Jews and non-Jewish victims has stirred the German national conscience in recent memory as few other events in the war have. Although *The Reader* includes only one article on the topic, its treatment of the climate and conflicted moralities of soldiers in wartime can be considered in relation to other research on the treatment of Soviet prisoners of war, as well as the major German traveling photographic exhibition sponsored by the Hamburg Institute, “The German Army and Genocide.”

“Whose Final Solution? Revisiting Intentionalism and Functionalism” (Part IV) revisits the longstanding and divisive issue of historical evidence and the interpretation of intentions, which underlies much of the historiography of the “Final Solution” – from the stages of ghetto formation to concentration in camps, and then to the extermination in killing installations.

The extent to which the destruction of the Jews in Europe was the outcome of Hitler’s premeditated visions or the result of improvised decisions of his subordinates who responded according to wartime exigencies is a matter of ongoing importance to historians. Did Hitler always intend to kill the Jews, pursuing an aggressive war in Poland and the USSR to achieve this goal, and waiting for the right moment in which to take the decisive step from localized persecution and massacre to a systematic European-wide policy of murder? Or was the transition to mass murder of the Jews “unforeseen” – as much the result of unanticipated wartime failures, and increasingly fragmented and competitive Nazi administrators

in the occupied East who were unwilling to take “instruction” in relation to temporary solutions to overcrowding, forced migrations and labor shortages?

New research continues to question and unsettle long-held presumptions about key themes in this debate, such as the role of ideology as a necessary if not sustaining prejudice among the German and wider European populations, Hitler’s centrality in the decision-making path that led to an “order” for the “Final Solution,” and the function and responsibility of subordinate, seemingly non-ideological perpetrators in initiating decisions and following orders. The articles in Part IV represent some of the fundamental developments along that path to an “order,” and the interpretive latitude that evolved in the postwar debate about it.

The long exchange between protagonists of the two main lines of thought about this process – Martin Broszat (Functionalist) and Saul Friedländer (Intentionalist) – provided a basis for understanding the recent, mainly German, scholarly research. This new research portrays the decision-making process for the “Final Solution” as less instructional from Hitler – for example, that it was splintered, competitive, and initiated at local and regional levels. The selections here also include “Hitler’s Reichstag Speech,” seen by intentionalist historians as key to Hitler’s worldview, perception and timing of the Holocaust, and interpretations of the debate it generated in relation to a “conspiracy.” The bureaucratic dimensions of organizing the “Final Solution” are addressed in the Minutes of the Wannsee Conference, which provide a programmatic view of the plan for genocide.<sup>1</sup>

“Response and Testimony: At the Center of the Whirlwind” (Part V) focuses exclusively on chronicles and testimonies of Jewish victims in the ghettos of Warsaw, Łódz and Vilna, and the transit camp of Westerbork in the Netherlands. The readings highlight the testimonial dimensions and difficulties of representing the impact of incarceration and extreme deprivation. These selections transport the reader into an extraordinary reality that has shaped the common response of incredulity in postwar interpretations of this experience. The images conjured of ghetto life and its street scenes of despair are strikingly visual, and readers might consider how time is represented in these testimonies, as a marker of both threat and promise, and how chronology is used to give order to unspeakable experiences.

Originally written in a European language, and translated into English, the testimonies included here also invite questions about interpretation and linguistics: how does the “English” narrative of the Holocaust bear upon its interpretation as a multilingual narrative of disparate experiences? We can also speculate about how language is used to reconstruct horror and atrocity, and how the perception of what is seen or witnessed influences form and genre, especially in considering the dissonance

between Emmanuel Ringelblum's and Oskar Rosenfeld's visions of death and suffering. That language itself can become exhausted and emptied of meaning is exemplified by Herman Kruk in his entry of December 29, 1942: "The vocabulary has become impoverished. Concepts lose their clarity. Everything that was dreadful and terrible is pale and put to shame. Words stop affecting and influencing."

"Genocide and the Holocaust" (Part VI) concludes *The Reader*, and provides a useful departure point for considering the Holocaust in the context of genocide viewed as a more general historical and cultural phenomenon. It includes the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the landmark document inspired by Polish-Jewish émigré Raphael Lemkin that influenced standards of postwar judgment and legislation applied in war crimes trials after the Holocaust and in the movement toward international jurisdiction. The aim of the other articles included here is to expand on the theme of historicization and the Holocaust, moving from early discussions of the Holocaust's singularity, to its interpretation as the fullest exemplar of the genocide definition – and further to its role as a point both of comparison and misappropriation in scholarship on comparative genocide.

#### NOTE

- 1 See Mark Roseman, *The Wannsee Conference and the Final Solution: A Reconsideration* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2002) and Christian Gerlach, "The Wannsee Conference, the Fate of German Jews and Hitler's Decision in Principle to Exterminate all European Jews," *Journal of Modern History*, 70, December, 1998: 759–812.

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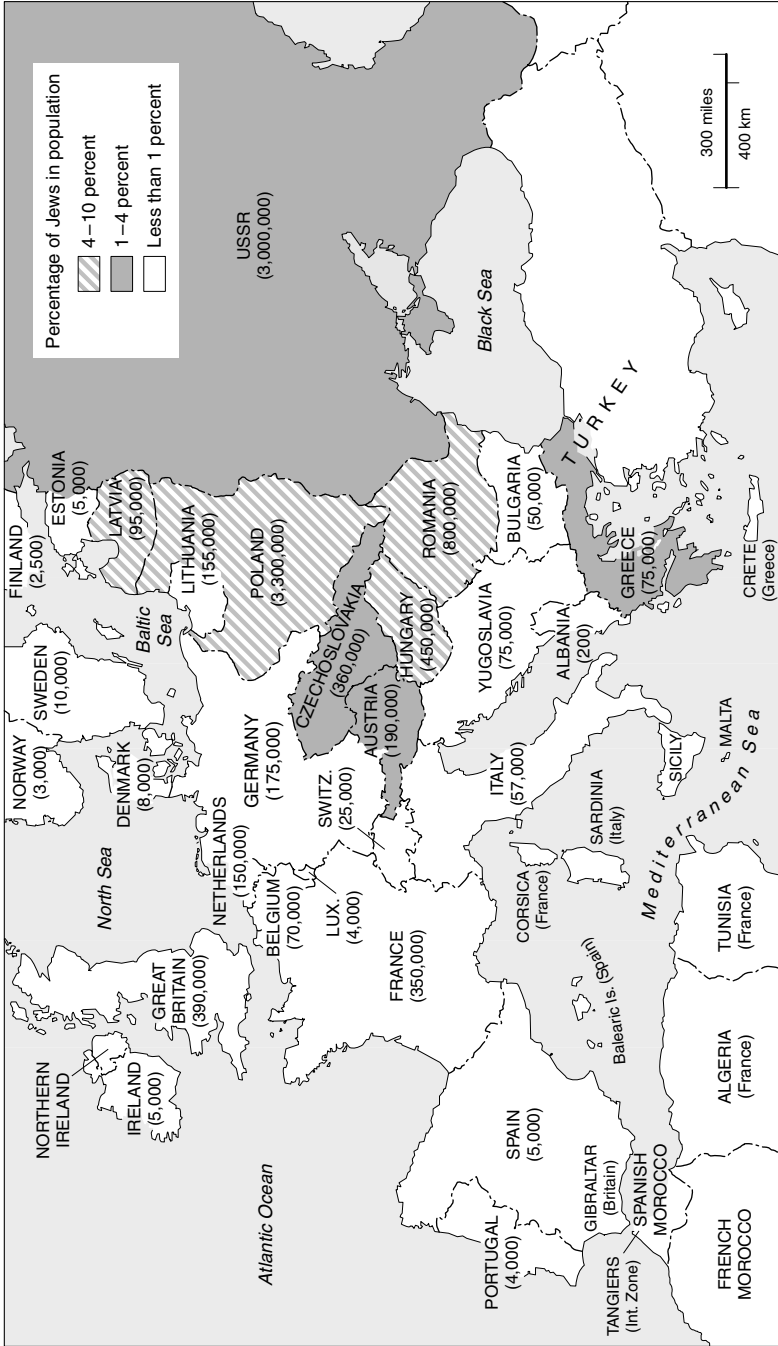
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PART I

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Preconditions: Nazism and  
the Turn from Anti-Judaism  
to Antisemitism



Map 1 Europe and its Jews, 1938



## *Preconditions: Nazism and the Turn from Anti-Judaism to Antisemitism*

When discussing antisemitism as a central cause of the Holocaust, or what the Nazis termed “The Final Solution of the Jewish Question,” it is important to distinguish between types of antisemitism. Also important are the comparative contexts of antisemitism’s historical development and reception, and its expression throughout the Nazi regime’s political and racial re-organization of German society through laws, decrees, terror and violence from 1933, for example, in and after the “Night of Broken Glass” or *Kristallnacht* of November 9–10, 1938.

Historians have traced the ideological, cultural, and religious expressions of antisemitism in Europe to early and medieval Christian religious doctrine, the Crusades, and the Inquisition, to list some prominent examples. The development of a racial inflection to antisemitism was a departing point of the modern period, beginning with the early Enlightenment thought of John Locke. His essays on toleration and government stressed the civic equality of peoples irrespective of religious and racial difference.

Recently, some scholars have begun to identify the period from 1850 to 1950 as a “racial century.”<sup>1</sup> It was during this period that constructions and intersections of race, hygiene, biology and ethnic difference formed the basis of many debates among intellectual elites. These debates contributed to the practices of governments and their conception of the emerging nation state as dependent on boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, belonging and citizenship.

Decades of scholarly inquiry have still not delivered any general consensus about the origins of Nazi antisemitism. Clearly, antisemitism gave Nazism and the Third Reich its defining discriminatory character, but it was arguably insufficient by itself as the motivating cause for the persecution and mass murder of European Jewry. The Jewish victims in the Holocaust numbered millions; the perpetrators most directly involved in the tens of thousands. The immense disparity between the way in which such

persecution could be implemented in a modern and enlightened state with such a relatively small number of immediate perpetrators should not obscure other acts of massacre and their causes committed elsewhere and involving direct perpetrators on a larger scale. A review of recent (and pre-modern) world history shows that massacres sometimes amounting to genocide have occurred under the guises of religious domination, “discovery” expeditions and colonization, imparting “civilization” as a foundation of settler societies, and the suppression of political and ethnic self-determination. The phenomenon of antisemitism thus also carries the weight of a broader accumulated history of political oppression and violence. That it was radicalized to support a national undertaking of mass extermination in the Third Reich and its countries of occupation and influence should not remove it from the broader framework of historical atrocity.

Antisemitism thus needs to be examined as both a historically specific and cross-cultural phenomenon. While many studies examine the particularities of centuries-long prejudice in thought and action, the articles included in Part I consider the links between traditional anti-Judaic discrimination, and its transformation into racial, blood-based models of exclusion. Primarily, they re-consider the typical modern explanations of biological racism as emanating mainly from a combination of Enlightenment philosophy and often skewed Darwinian-influenced anthropology; an early marker of this appeared in the Catholic “purity of blood” statutes in fifteenth-century Spain. These statutes were used to distinguish “Old” from “New Christians” (*conversos*, or Jewish converts) and thus weed out or eliminate so-called “Judaizing” influences. In his discussion of “Anti-Semites,” Bernard Lewis provides a useful introduction to the antisemitism that evolved from the Crusades, moving subsequently from religious persecution to biological racism. He emphasizes the importance of understanding the nuances and complexities of toleration in legislation and in practice, and considers the American and French Revolutions, and their effects, in the late eighteenth century as testing grounds for debates on race and citizenship.

In Germany, the Jews were subjected to sustained Nazi prejudice and vitriolic discrimination from the earliest moments of the party’s formation in 1920. Robert Wistrich explores in “From Weimar to Hitler” the traumatic aftermath of World War I in Germany and how it contributed to the appeal of nationalist movements in a society rife with political and economic confusion. An extreme statement of this appeared in the 1920 Program of the National Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP, or Nazi Party), which emphasized themes of citizenship and biological belonging, national security and internal threats to German prosperity. Wistrich charts the emergence of Hitler’s belief systems through interactions with Jews, and Austrian and German politics and culture. He effectively

outlines the development of Hitler's thought in speeches, appeals and election platforms throughout the 1920s and after – including the Nazi party's success in the 1930 election which prompted a temporary reorientation of their political agenda to focus on the economic and national restoration of Germany.

Hitler's statements, political writings and speeches themselves illuminate certain interpretive dilemmas historians face in analyzing the developing intensity of his thought and self-representation as tied to Germany's imminent decline and possible resurrection. Religious rhetoric as a pervasive feature of his writing should also be considered, as Michael Burleigh points out in *The Third Reich: A New History*, which sees Nazism as a political religion. The last two documents in Part I provide primary accounts of antisemitic thought: one by Hitler in his days of "instruction" in Vienna, and the other, a legalization of racial discrimination by the Nazi regime as the very basis of society.

In the selection from "Nation and Race" in Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, we see an attempt at sympathetic self-representation, the urban instruction of Hitler's "path to antisemitism" or his process of "becoming" an antisemite. There is much value in this document not only in terms of content but also in seeing how Hitler represents himself as an objective interpreter of Vienna as a melting pot of cultural and ethnic diversity. Of note here are Hitler's constructions of Jews: their physical appearance, their corrupt spirituality, and their pervasive cultural and economic presence in Viennese society. Metaphors of sickness and health that will come to dominate the imagery of Nazi propaganda in the 1930s resonate profoundly: Jews are "pestilence." Hitler constructs Jews as a public and urban menace, responsible for crime and prostitution, a threat compounded by their aggressive sexuality which further adds to the moral and spiritual defilement of society. A dominant theme in this document is a racial struggle over moral values, driven by the visible and invisible power attributed to "the Jew."

Antisemitism radicalized in Germany from rhetorical usage into blistering and explosive reality during the 1930s, and there are several ways to interpret its development. It can be seen in its singular aspects, as an unprecedented state-organized assault on Jewish religion and ethnicity, and after 1939, as a genocide of unprecedented conceptual scope, physical loss and cultural devastation. The "Law for the Protection of the German Blood and of the German Honor" of 15 September 1935 represented an important development in Nazi anti-Jewish policy before 1939. It gave legal form to the regime's thinking on the racial question as a blood-based model of exclusion, and sought to define and construct in law the boundaries of citizenship in national and racial terms. In sexual relations, marriage and employment, contact was prohibited between Jews

and non-Jews. Important themes are suggested by the emphasis on such words as “blood” and “honor,” the latter often an appeal to resist defilement by contact with Jews. Also significant is the document’s expression of state power and its invasion of the social and sexual relations between Jews and non-Jews. In sum, the document serves as a crystallization of Nazi thinking on race, providing the basis for exclusion of Jews from civil society and a legalization of their social and racial “separateness” from Germans.

Antisemitism was a specific assault against Jews but it also promoted the view that degeneration from within was potentially “everywhere” in German society. In this sense, antisemitism provided a background for other forms of pathology, whether these were criminal, social or medical. Emphasis on the alleged threat of racial degeneration was part of a general social and bio-political cleansing project against groups the Nazis saw as alien to the national community. Thus, this attempt at cleansing defined and cast out other “asocial” and racially “degenerate” groups also along the lines of deviant biology, behavior or belief. Such groups included gypsies, homosexuals, blacks, the physically and mentally handicapped, Jehovah’s witnesses and political opponents. Excluding the gypsies and the handicapped, none of these other groups were targeted for systematic physical annihilation, although all of them were subjected to exclusionary treatment in decrees, laws and at times physical acts of segregation and violence. There was some ambiguity and inconsistency in the application of policies to some of these groups, such as homosexuals, as the Nazis could not decide if it was the person or the behavioral practice that required corrective action.

Precisely because the categories of behavior and belief were fluid, homosexuals could modify their behavior to avoid persecution, and Jehovah’s witnesses could swear allegiance to Hitler, the fixed category of “biology” required extra attention in propaganda and legislation to attack the groups regarded as most dangerous. In relation to the Jews, the Nazis constructed this ethnic group as an all-encompassing threat that required removal from German society. Jews were defined according to their bloodlines, an inheritance that contaminated Germany’s present and racially pure future through the possibility of physical intimacy, sexual relations and reproductive potential. The behavior of Jews was also cast in deviant terms, whether by economic or allegedly conspiratorial practices, or treachery; they could not be trusted as loyal patriots or citizens, while the practices of Judaism were invoked to revive classic religious antisemitism about Christ killing and blood libel accusations. The Nazi construction of these “incompatibilities” or threats was played out in a script of epic proportions. It was supported by Josef Goebbels, head of the Ministry of Propaganda from April 1933, in an enormous production of manufactured stereotypes in newspapers, films, theater scripts, radio and school

syllabi that cast Jews as subhuman. The aim of this conglomerate of depictions was to cultivate a lack of compassion for Jews among members of society, to condition a generation of Germans to become indifferent to, and if not to support, the persecution and eventual disappearance of Jewish friends, neighbors and fellow citizens.

The 1930s then provide a “causal ground” from which to interpret subsequent phases in Nazi anti-Jewish policy and to explain how Hitler was able to implement his policy of persecution and, ultimately, extermination. As a causal factor, antisemitism is relevant as an explanation in every phase of the Nazi destruction process, even in instances where historians may apply more “functionalist” or bureaucratic interpretations. Raul Hilberg’s now-classic *The Destruction of the European Jews*, published in 1961, offered an early structuralist interpretation of Nazi exclusion methods against Jews and the involvement of German civil service, bureaucracy, Nazi party and other functionaries. Hilberg’s sequence of escalating persecution – through identification, expropriation, concentration and annihilation – provided a model of the way the destruction process was applied initially in Germany and then to Jews in other countries of occupation. His account also stresses the importance of ideological motivation. In the process of identification, expropriation, concentration and annihilation of victims, the Nazis developed an effective method of concealing that motivation under bureaucratic language and orders; this provided a cover for the persecution of the Jews as justified even among sophisticated officials: judges, doctors, university professors, and civil servants, to name a few. Tacitly or more explicitly, these contributed collectively to the segregation, expulsion, economic deprivation, and ultimately to the annihilation as dictated by Hitler over the course of his regime.

## NOTE

- 1 See particularly A. Dirk Moses, “Conceptual Blockages and Definitional Dilemmas in the ‘Racial Century’: Genocides of Indigenous Peoples and the Holocaust,” *Patterns of Prejudice*, 36, 4, 2002: 7–36. The editors have extracted this article in Part VI of *The Reader*.

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## *Anti-Semites*

BERNARD LEWIS

The term anti-Semitism was first used in 1879, and seems to have been invented by one Wilhelm Marr, a minor Jew-baiting journalist with no other claim to memory.<sup>1</sup> Significantly, it first appeared as a political program in Vienna, the capital of the sprawling and variegated Hapsburg monarchy, which was also the birthplace of Zionism and of many other nationalist movements, and the meeting place of traditional Eastern and secular Western Jews.

Though the name anti-Semitism was new, the special hatred of the Jews which it designated was very old, going back to the rise of Christianity. From the time when the Roman Emperor Constantine embraced the new faith and Christians obtained control of the apparatus of the state, there were few periods during which some Jews were not being persecuted in one or other part of the Christian world. Hostility to Jews was sometimes restrained, sometimes violent, sometimes epidemic, always endemic. But though hatred of the Jew was old, the term anti-Semitism did indeed denote a significant change – not the initiation but rather the culmination of a major shift in the way this hatred was felt, perceived, and expressed. In medieval times hostility to the Jew, whatever its underlying social or psychological motivations, was defined primarily in religious terms. From the fifteenth century onward this was no longer true, and Jew hatred was redefined, becoming at first partly, and then, at least in theory, wholly racial.

The earlier hostility was basically and indeed profoundly religious. It was concerned with the rejection by the Jew of the Christian redeemer and message, and was documented by the account in the Gospels of the Jewish role in the life and death of Christ. The Jew was denounced and at times persecuted as a Christ killer and as a denier of God's truths. While

Bernard Lewis, "Anti-Semites," from *Semites and Anti-Semites: An Inquiry into Conflict and Prejudice*, 2nd edn, New York: Norton, 1987, pp. 81–109.

this hatred might be stimulated and directed by the roles which Jews were compelled to play in medieval Christian society, their persecutors did not normally condemn them for being different in race and language. Conversion to Christianity, if sincere, was considered to confer full equality and acceptance. This seems to have been true in practice as well as in theory, in Eastern as well as in Western Europe. Indeed, it is said that in the medieval Duchy of Lithuania. Jews who adopted Christianity were accorded the status of noblemen, because of their kinship to the Mother of God.

This religious hostility acquired racial overtones when Jews were compelled, under penalty of death or exile, to adopt Christianity. A voluntary conversion may be accepted as sincere. A forced conversion inevitably arouses the suspicion, above all among the enforcers, that it may be insincere. This is particularly true where the converts are very numerous, where they tend to intermarry with the families of other converts, and where they continue to play the same role in society that brought them envy and hatred as Jews. There had been occasional forced conversions throughout the Middle Ages, but these were mostly minor and episodic. The only full-scale expulsion of Jews from a whole country was from England in 1290, but the numbers were few, and there seems to have been little or no aftereffect among the English.

A very different situation arose in Spain, where Jews were present in great numbers, and had been very prominent in the social, cultural, economic, and occasionally even the political life of the country. Their position had been profoundly affected, both for good and for evil, by the eight-centuries-long struggle between Islam and Christendom for the domination of the peninsula. While Muslims and Christians lived side by side, both were obliged, even in the intervals of warfare, to show some tolerance to one another, and Jews benefitted from this in both Christian and Muslim Spain. But as the final Christian victory grew nearer, there was less and less willingness to tolerate any presence that would flaw the unity of Catholic Spain. In 1492, with the defeat and conquest of the Emirate of Granada, the last Muslim state on Spanish soil, the reconquest and rechristianization of Spain was complete. In the same year an edict of expulsion was pronounced against Jews, followed some years later by a similar decree against Muslims. Followers of both religions were given the choice of exile, conversion, or death.

From this time onward no professing Jew or Muslim remained in Spain or – a few years later – in Portugal. Great numbers departed in exile, but many preferred to stay, and went through a form of baptism in order to qualify. Not surprisingly, they were regarded with some suspicion by their neighbors, and there can be no doubt that there were great numbers of crypto-Muslims and crypto-Jews masquerading as Catholics. The former were commonly known as *Morisco*, in allusion to their presumed



homeland in Africa. The latter, who had no homeland other than Spain, were called Marrano, a Spanish word meaning hog. A more polite designation for both groups was *nuevos Cristianos*, new Christians, in contrast to the *viejos Cristianos*, the old Christians, free from “any taint of Moorish or Jewish blood.”

Even before the expulsions, the absence or presence of such a taint had become an obsession, affecting the crown, the church, and much of Spanish society. The *converso* or convert was suspect to all three. The king needed loyalty against the ancient Moorish enemy. The Holy Office of the Inquisition was determined to extirpate heresy and unbelief – and where were these more likely to occur than among the *conversos* and their descendants? And the general population, delighted with the expulsion of unwelcome neighbors and competitors, were appalled to find that many of them were still around, lightly disguised as Christians. As far back as 1449, the first statute of purity of blood (*estatuto de limpieza de sangre*) was promulgated in Toledo. It declared *conversos* unworthy to hold positions of public or private trust in the city and dominions of Toledo. A series of other statutes to defend the purity of blood followed in the fifteenth century and after, by which Moriscos and Marranos were barred from various offices and orders and, incidentally, from the Inquisition itself, in which *conversos* had at an earlier stage been very active. In 1628 or shortly after, a Spanish inquisitor called Juan Escobar de Corro explained what was involved: “By *converso* we commonly understand any person descended from Jews or Saracens, be it in the most distant degree. . . . Similarly a New Christian is thus designated not because he has recently been converted to the Christian faith but rather because he is a descendant of those who first adopted the correct religion.”<sup>2</sup>

Several of the monastic orders adopted rules barring *conversos* and their descendants from membership. At first, the Papacy was opposed to such rules, insisting on the equality of all baptized Christians, but in 1495, a Spanish Pope, Alexander VI, formally ratified a statute passed by a Spanish order barring all *conversos* from membership. Thereafter, most such statutes were approved or at least tolerated by the popes. Thus, for example, in 1515 the archbishop of Seville, a former grand inquisitor, barred second generation descendants of “heretics” from holding any ecclesiastical office or benefice in the cathedral of that city. This statute was approved by the Pope, and subsequently extended to include the grandchildren and later the great-grandchildren of heretics. In 1530, the bishop of Cordova adopted a similar set of rules but went further, banning even the admission of New Christian choirboys. Describing the descendants of Jews and *conversos* as “a trouble-making tribe (*generación*), friends of novelties and dissensions, ambitious, presumptuous, restless, and such that wherever this tribe is found there is little peace,”<sup>3</sup> the decree bars the

admission of such persons as prejudicial to the interests of the Church. The statute prescribed a procedure to establish the purity of a candidate's blood. He must swear a solemn oath that he is not of Jewish or Moorish descent, and must give the names of his parents and grandparents with the places of their birth. An investigator was to be sent to these places, and only after he had established that there were no New Christians among the candidate's ancestors could he be admitted.

In its origins, the concern with "purity of blood" is religious, not racial. It begins with the suspicion that the *converso* is a false and insincere Christian, and that he imparts these qualities to his descendants. The notion of purity of blood was not new, but in the past, in medieval Christian Europe, it had had a social rather than a racial connotation, being concerned more with aristocratic than with ethnic superiority. But the special circumstances of fifteenth and sixteenth century Spain – the old confrontation with the Moors, the new encounter with blacks and Indians in Africa and the Americas, and the presence in Spain of New Christians in such great numbers and in such active roles, brought in time an unmistakably racial content to the hostility directed against these groups.

But even while the Spanish Inquisition was completing its allotted task, to seek out and destroy the hidden remnants of Spanish Judaism and Islam, further north a new spirit was moving, and a new and radical idea was put forward – that religion was a private affair and no concern of the state, and that followers of all religions were equally entitled to the rights of citizenship. As a result of the terrible religious and quasi-religious wars which devastated France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Britain in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a kind of war-weary tolerance, or perhaps rather lassitude, began to appear. The once universal religious fanaticism was by no means dead, but increasing numbers of people, both rulers and philosophers, began to seek for ways in which Catholics and Protestants of various denominations could live side by side in peace, instead of waging perpetual war.

One of the most influential was the English philosopher John Locke, whose *Letter Concerning Toleration* was published in both Latin and English in 1689. Many of the ideas expressed in it were already current among philosophers in Britain and on the Continent. In one respect, however, Locke went far beyond his predecessors, and that is in his conclusion that "neither Pagan nor Mahometan, nor Jew, ought to be excluded from the civil rights of the commonwealth because of his religion."<sup>4</sup> There were no "Mahometans" in Western Europe and few who dared avow themselves pagans. There were however Jews, who gradually became aware of the new mood and the opportunities which it offered them.

The first European country to give civil emancipation to its Jews was Holland. It was followed within a short time by England, which granted

extensive though by no means equal rights to Jews both at home and in the English colonies beyond the seas. The ideas of Locke and other English libertarians spread both to the American colonies and to France, where they contributed significantly to the ideologies of both the American and French revolutions. Though neither revolution immediately accorded full equality to Jewish citizens, both took the first significant steps which ultimately led in that direction. In Germany, too, the eighteenth-century enlightenment brought a change in attitudes, though it was not until Germany was conquered by Napoleon's armies that the new revolutionary doctrines gave some measure of civil rights to the German Jews. Imposed by French bayonets, these were a cause of fierce controversy in the years that followed the French departure.

Even in revolutionary France, the path of freedom did not run smooth.<sup>5</sup> The famous Declaration of the Rights of Man, passed by the French National Assembly at the end of August 1789, had significant gaps. For one thing, it did not apply to the black slave population of the French West Indies, whose fate became a subject of passionate debate. Their emancipation did not come until later. For Jews – present and visible in France – things went somewhat faster. In January 1790, after some argument, the status of “active citizens” was extended to the old established Sephardic community of Bordeaux. But the far more numerous Jews of Alsace-Lorraine, living among a rather more hostile population, were excluded and it was not until the end of September 1791 that the National Assembly passed a general law enfranchising all Jews.

Several of the interventions in the debate express in vivid terms the point of view of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment and its philosophers. Thus, for example, a Protestant spokesman, pleading for his own people, added a word for the Jews as well:

I ask of you gentlemen, for the French Protestants, for all the non-Catholics of the Kingdom, that which you ask for yourselves, liberty, equality of rights; I ask them for this people torn from Asia, always wandering, always proscribed, always persecuted for more than eighteen centuries, which would adopt our manners and customs, if by our laws that people were incorporated with us, and to which we have no right to reproach its morals, because they are the fruit of our own barbarism and of the humiliation to which we have unjustly condemned them.<sup>6</sup>

And Robespierre himself adjured the Chamber:

The vices of the Jews derive from the degradation in which you have plunged them; they will be good when they can find some advantage in being good.<sup>7</sup>

Such statements in defense of the Jews and their rights did not begin with the French Revolution. They were part of a tradition which dates back to the late seventeenth century and which continued into the twentieth – a tradition which has been called philo-Semitism, which defended the Jews against their detractors, attributed their faults to persecution, and pleaded for their admission to equal rights and full citizenship. This was a new phenomenon, without precedent in the history of Christendom. It had a powerful effect on the Jews who, in this new atmosphere and thanks to new laws, began to emerge, at first warily, then more confidently, from their seclusion – from the physical ghettos in which their rulers and neighbors had for so long confined them, from the ghettos of the mind in which they had enclosed themselves.

But this new situation brought new enemies, or at least new forms of enmity. One kind came from the very circles that had been most helpful to Jewish emancipation – from some of the deists and liberal philosophers of the Enlightenment. For many of these, the Church was the main enemy of humanity, and the Bible – the Jewish Bible – was the instrument of the Church. Voltaire's famous phrase, "Ecrasez l'infâme," expressed succinctly what the deists thought of the Church, and what they wished to do to it. But in eighteenth-century Europe, even in the Protestant democracies, to attack the Church, or to question the Bible, was still hazardous if not impossible. It was safer and easier to tackle the enemy from the rear – to criticize and ridicule the Old, not the New Testament; to attack not Christianity but Judaism, the source from which Christianity sprang and of which it still retained many features. If, for Christians, the crime of the Jews was that they had killed Christ, for the new anti-Christians it was rather that they had nurtured him. This line of thought continued into the nineteenth century, when a favorite accusation levied against the Catholic Church by its enemies in Germany was that it was "penetrated through and through with Semitism." This reached new heights in Hitler's time.

One of the most vehement critics of the Jews, in these terms, was the great Voltaire, whose hostility to both Judaism and the Jews – allegedly due to some personal difficulties with individual Jews – finds frequent expression in his writings. Indeed, the question has been asked whether Voltaire was anti-Jewish because he was anti-clerical, or anti-Christian because he was anti-Jewish. An acute observer, the Prince de Ligne, after spending eight days as Voltaire's guest at Ferney and hearing his views at length, remarked: "The only reason why M. de Voltaire gave vent to such outbursts against Jesus Christ is that He was born among a nation whom he detested."<sup>8</sup>

Voltaire himself remarked, in one of his notebooks, in his own English: "When I see Christians cursing Jews, methinks I see children beating their fathers. Jewish religion is the mother of Christianity, and grand mother of

the mahometism.”<sup>9</sup> There are other indications in Voltaire’s writings of a cast of thought which can fairly be described as racist, as when he remarks, quite wrongly, that in ancient Rome “the Jews were regarded in the same way as we regard Negroes, as an inferior species of men.”<sup>10</sup> In another place, ironically, in his *Traité de Métaphysique*, his philosophical narrator observes that white men “seem to me superior to Negroes, just as Negroes are superior to monkeys and monkeys to oysters.”<sup>11</sup>

Some clue to Voltaire’s antiblack racism may be found in a detail from his biography. The philosopher was engaged in a number of financial enterprises, some of them rather questionable. The most relevant was a large-scale investment in a slave trading enterprise out of the French port of Nantes, which according to contemporary witnesses made him “one of the twenty wealthiest (*les mieux rentés*) persons in the kingdom.”<sup>12</sup>

It was indeed against the blacks, and in defense of the enormously profitable slave trade, that the new form of racism first made its appearance. It was not until some time later that it was applied to the Jews. Both the American and French revolutions, despite their passionate love of liberty, had neglected to extend it to their black slaves, the one in the southern states, the other in the West Indies. This contradiction did not pass unnoticed, and before long the slave dealers and plantation owners found themselves on the defensive against the growing barrage of criticism, dating back to before the revolutions, in three of the major West European colonial powers – England, France, and Holland – and later also in the United States. For ordinary individuals, simple greed may suffice to justify their actions. For a society, however, formally at least committed to a religion or an ideology, some theoretical justification is required, for themselves as well as for others, to justify so fearsome an action as the enslavement of a whole race. When the Israelites, in accordance with the universal practice of the ancient world, enslaved the Canaanites whom they had conquered, they felt the need to legitimize this in terms of their own religious ethic, and found an answer in the story of the curse of Ham – Noah’s son, who committed an offense against his father and was punished by a curse of servitude falling upon him and his descendants. In the biblical story, it is only on one line of his descendants, Canaan, that the curse in fact fell. When the Muslim Arabs, advancing into tropical Africa from the Middle East and North Africa, initiated the great flow of black slaves into the outside world, they too felt the need to justify this action. The first answer was that the blacks were idolators and therefore liable to Holy War and enslavement; and when – with the spread of Islam among the blacks – this no longer sufficed, some of them adapted the story of the curse of Ham and, transferring it from the Canaanites to the Africans, amended the curse of servitude to a double curse of servitude and blackness.

Some of these ancient and medieval stories found their way, through Spain and Portugal and the Atlantic islands, to the slave plantations of the New World. But by the end of the eighteenth century – after the American and French Revolutions – the curse of Ham and similar arguments were no longer sufficient. A substitute, or rather a supplement, was found in the new science of anthropology, which had made impressive progress in this period. Scientists were now beginning to classify human beings according to their color, the size and shape of their bodies, the shape and measurements of their skulls. From the anthropologists, this new knowledge affected such major intellectual figures as Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803) and Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), both of whom gave great importance to ethnic and even racial factors in culture and history.

Herder and Kant, like the early anthropologists, were still men of the Enlightenment. Attached to their own races, they were nevertheless ready to respect some others, and did not develop a doctrine of racial superiority. But some of the writers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries introduced a new idea, which was to have far-reaching and devastating consequences. Men had always known that those who were unlike them in race or other collective features were different, foreign, and probably hostile. They were now taught that the other was not only different but inferior, and therefore genetically doomed to a subordinate role to which he must be kept. Specifically, according to this doctrine, the blacks were not only uncivilized – a condition which could be ascribed to environmental and historical factors. They were also, unlike the white savages who roamed the forests of northern Europe in antiquity, incapable of becoming civilized, and therefore – and this was the crux – best suited to a life of useful servitude. A similar argument, for similar reasons, may be found in some medieval Islamic philosophers, with the difference that by them it was applied to the fair-skinned northerners as well as to the black southerners, both of whom differed from the light brown ideal of the Middle East and had therefore, in this perception, been created by God to serve them.

The application of this new kind of racism to Jews seems to date from the early years of the nineteenth century, and was encouraged by the German struggle against Napoleonic rule and French revolutionary ideas. In a pamphlet published in 1803 and entitled “Against the Jews: A Word of Warning to All Christian Fellow Citizens . . .,” the writer argues: “That the Jews are a very special race cannot be denied by historians or anthropologists, the formerly held but generally valid assertion that God punished the Jews with a particularly bad smell, and with several hereditary diseases, illnesses and other loathsome defects, cannot be thoroughly proved, but, on the other hand cannot be disproved, even with due regard to all teleological considerations.”<sup>13</sup> In this sample, the characteristic

mixture of medieval bigotry and modern pseudoscience is unusually transparent. In the course of the nineteenth century, it became much more sophisticated.

The doctrine that races were unequal and could indeed be situated in a hierarchy from the highest to the lowest was not entirely new. It is already to be found in Aristotle and other ancient Greek writers, and reappears in the Islamic philosophers of the Middle Ages. For the ancient Greeks, the medieval Muslims, and the modern philosophers, it served the same purpose – to justify slavery. While even Herder and Kant at times betray their own principles, the former in his remarks against Negroes, the latter in his references to Jews, there were others who preferred the view expressed by the great German scientist and humanist Alexander von Humboldt: “In maintaining the unity of the human species, we reject, by a necessary consequence, the appalling distinction of superior and inferior races. . . . All are equally fit for freedom.” Quoting his brother, Wilhelm von Humboldt, he sought to “envisage mankind in its entirety, without distinction of religion, nation, or race, as a great family of brothers, as a single body, marching towards one and the same end, the free development of its moral powers.”<sup>14</sup>

Doctrines of racial inequality, though by no means absent, are a comparatively minor theme in anti-Jewish literature until well past the middle of the nineteenth century. Even the Count de Gobineau, whose *Essay on the Inequality of Races*, published in 1853–5, became a classic of modern racism, was not really concerned with Jews. Instead, the attack on the Jews concentrated on two new accusations, both of them consequences of the emancipation of the Jews in Western Europe and their entry into European society. One of them was that the Jew resisted assimilation; the other was that he practiced it too effectively.

The first was a modernized restatement of a charge familiar since antiquity, and paradigmatically formulated by the classic Jew hater, Haman, who said to King Ahasuerus: “There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from all peoples; neither keep they the king’s laws: therefore it is not for the king’s profit to suffer them.” (Esther 3:8). In a milder form, the same complaint is made by a number of Greek and Roman authors, who could not understand why the Jews persisted in worshipping and obeying their own peculiar God, at once exclusive and universal, and would not be content to let Him and His rites take their place in the mutually tolerant polytheism of the Hellenistic and Roman worlds.

The kings and prelates of medieval Christendom had a better understanding of the Jewish position, and insisted even more strongly than the Jews, if for somewhat different reasons, on their separateness. The Fourth

Lateran Council, convened by Pope Innocent III in 1215, decreed that Jews must wear a specific badge or mark on their outer garments, to distinguish them from Christians. This innovation, which was no doubt inspired by an earlier Islamic practice, spread very rapidly, and the “badge of infamy,” usually yellow, was enforced in many parts of Europe. The ghetto system began even earlier. Sporadic attempts were made by local authorities in Europe to segregate Jews in various places, and in 1179 the Third Lateran Council resolved that Christians “who will presume to live with them [Jews] be excommunicated.”<sup>15</sup> With the growth of hostility, what began as Jewish neighborhoods became a form of enforced segregation. The word ghetto seems to have been first used in Venice, where in 1516 Jews were restricted to an area of the city called the Ghetto, a local word meaning gun foundry. The practice – and the name – spread rapidly to other Italian cities and then to other parts of Europe, and came to denote the walled quarters, with barred gates, to which Jews were legally confined, and from which they were only allowed to emerge at limited times and by special permission.

The post-Christian and sometimes anti-Christian deists and liberals saw no reason to maintain such distinctions, which they regarded as part of the old order that they were committed to overthrow. For them, Jewish separateness was an evil, above all for the Jews themselves, who were its principal victims. Some even gave this a quasi-racial content, agreeing to the list of evil qualities ascribed to the Jews, and attributing them not only to the environmental effects of persecution and repression, but to the genetic effects of excessive inbreeding. The Emperor Napoleon is a good example of the mixed and sometimes confused perceptions and intentions of the revolutionaries and their successors towards the Jews. Napoleon never singled out his Jewish subjects for oppression, and seems to have meant well toward them. As early as 1798, at the time of his expedition to Egypt, he even issued a proclamation to the Jews, inviting them to enlist in his forces and help reconquer their promised land.<sup>16</sup>

Not surprisingly, nothing came of this, but the Jewish question continued to engage his occasional attention. As with others of his time, Napoleon’s pronouncements on the Jewish question seem to combine the remnants of medieval ecclesiastical bigotry with the beginnings of the new pseudoscience. The Jews, for Napoleon, were a race, and vitiated by bad blood: “Good is done slowly, and a mass of vitiated blood can only be improved with time.” Napoleon’s solution was extensive intermarriage: “When, in every three marriages, there will be one between Jew and Frenchman, the blood of the Jews will cease to have a particular character.”<sup>17</sup> It will be noted that for the emperor, the intermarriage which he desired was to be between Jews and Frenchmen, not between Jews and Christians, and the difference between them was blood not creed.



The Count Stanislas de Clermont-Tonnerre was expressing a common view when he urged the French National Assembly in December 1789 “to refuse everything to the Jews as a nation, to grant everything to Jews as individuals.” It was a common view among the philo-Semites that Jewish separateness was an anomaly and was the cause of all the many Jewish defects, the existence of which they readily admitted. The solution was to end that anomaly, for the Jews to emerge from their ghettos, become part of the general population in every way – in other words, to cease to be Jews in any meaningful sense. Lessing, perhaps the greatest of European philo-Semites, subtly ridicules this attitude. In one of his plays a vulgar and loud-mouthed anti-Semitic servant, suddenly discovering that his revered master is a Jew, tries to atone for his previous hostile remarks by observing, in defense of the Jews, that “there are Jews who are not at all Jewish.”<sup>18</sup> Some Jews responded to this kind of defense, and the implied invitation, with eager enthusiasm; others with outrage. Both kinds of responses can still be found among Jews to the present day.

While those Jews who insisted on remaining in the ghetto aroused one kind of indignation, their brothers who accepted the invitation to come out soon found themselves confronted by another, far more serious and dangerous kind of resentment. Before long Jews began to appear in increasing numbers in the high schools, in the universities, and finally – when they were admitted – in the professions. As in the Middle Ages, they encountered fewest obstacles in the worlds of trade and finance. But while in the Middle Ages they had – with few exceptions – been mere hucksters or usurers, in nineteenth-century Europe the most successful among them became bankers and brokers, financiers and entrepreneurs. Very few, of course, ever reached such heights, but there were enough to provide raw material for new stereotypes. Nineteenth- and to some extent twentieth-century fiction, in English, French, and German, offers some interesting Jewish characters, reflecting the reaction of Christian Europe, sometimes positive, more often negative, to this new element that was penetrating into its midst. Such, for example, is the portrayal of the Jew, by Trollope in England and Balzac in France, as the greedy upstart, the ambitious and acquisitive parvenu who corrupts and dominates through his skill in acquiring wealth and using it to serve his ends. The figure of the corrupting parvenu is by no means exclusively, or even predominantly, Jewish, but there were always some writers who shared the perception expressed by T. S. Eliot in two famous lines:

The rat is underneath the piles.  
The jew is underneath the lot.<sup>19</sup>

From the Middle Ages to the present time, the Jews have had defenders as well as accusers in Christendom.<sup>20</sup> If some Popes imposed the ghetto

and the yellow badge, others tried to alleviate the Jewish burden. Notable among them was Innocent IV, who denounced the blood libel as a lie and defended the Talmud against its traducers. The same causes were taken up by other Christian scholars, such as the sixteenth-century German canonist and Hebraist Johannes Reuchlin, and more recent scholars like Theodor Nöldeke and Franz Delitsch in Germany and Pavel Konstantinovich Kokovstov in Russia, who used their scholarly authority to refute charges of ritual murder. A noteworthy example was the "Declaration of the Notables," a condemnation of anti-Semitism published in Germany in 1880, and signed by such eminent scholars and scientists as Johann Gustav Droysen, Theodor Mommsen, Rudolf Virchow, and Ernst Werner von Siemens.<sup>21</sup> There is also a literary philo-Semitism. Lessing in Germany, Gorki and Andreyev in Russia, Emile Zola and Anatole France in France, wrote and spoke in defense of the Jews in general as well as of individual Jews under attack. In England, Byron, Browning and George Eliot, in their writings, showed deep sympathy for Jewish sorrows and aspirations, and even Shakespeare, while presenting his Jew, Shylock, in terms obviously affected by traditional anti-Semitic stereotypes, nevertheless gave him some noble lines expressing the Jew's complaint against his persecutors and his appeal to their common humanity.

By the mid-nineteenth century anti-Semitism was underpinned by a new theoretical and polemical literature, portraying the Jew as an evil and dangerous intruder in European society, whose penetration and depredations must be stopped if that society was to survive. By now, the difference and the danger are defined, usually though not exclusively, in racial rather than religious terms. As anthropology had provided the pretext for the earlier wave of antiblack racism, so now philology provided a theory and a vocabulary for anti-Jewish racism. The peoples of Europe were Aryans; the Jews were Semites. As such, they were alien, inferior, and noxious.

For the new anti-Semites, the issue was not religion. Indeed Wilhelm Marr, the inventor of the term anti-Semitism, rejected religious polemics as "stupid" and said that he himself would defend the Jews against religious persecution. For him, the problem lay not in religion, which could be changed and was in any case unimportant, but in the ultimate reality, which was race. In his booklet *The Victory of Judaism over Germanism*, he even pays a kind of tribute to the Jews, whose "racial qualities" had enabled them to resist all their persecutors and maintain their struggle for eighteen centuries against the Western world. They had finally won their victory and had conquered and subjugated this Western world.<sup>22</sup> While the philo-Semites in their discussion of the Jews often combine contempt with good will, the anti-Semites frequently display a mixture of respect, or even awe, with their malevolence.

An important element in the development of racial anti-Semitism was the growing number of Jewish converts to Christianity. The opening of the ghettos had created new ambitions among the Jews which the slow pace of emancipation could not satisfy. Some found a shortcut through the baptismal font. Benjamin Disraeli would never have become prime minister of England had his father not baptized him in childhood; Heinrich Heine would no doubt have written great poetry, but would hardly have attained his fame and influence without what he called “the entry certificate” of baptism. Once again, as in late medieval Spain, there was some suspicion about the genuineness of these conversions, which might be ascribed, not as in the past to constraint, but to ambition. In an era of religious persecution, the Jew had the option of changing sides. By the substitution of the immutable quality of race, the Jew would be deprived of this option, and even his descendants would be included in the curse.

In general, race was a major, often a dominant, theme in nineteenth-century European writing on national, social, cultural, and often even political questions. Most of these writings were not racist, in the sense that other races were regarded as inferior and to be treated accordingly, and much of it was concerned with identities and loyalties which would nowadays be termed ethnic rather than racial. But in the nineteenth century, and for many well into the twentieth, the two were not differentiated, and perceptions and discussions of these matters often reflect an unholy mixture of different things – the physical classification of the anthropologists, the linguistic classification of the philologists, the aesthetic preferences of romantics, and the realities of historical, cultural, and political identity, which might be tenuously if at all related.

Nineteenth-century Europe attached great importance to problems of nationality, which it often interpreted, especially in Central and Eastern Europe, in racial terms. The Italians, who had few Jews in their midst and no colonies abroad, developed no racist ideologies similar to those appearing further north, and were little affected by anti-Semitism until it was imposed on them in 1938 by the senior partner in the Axis. The fascist regime in Italy, the Italian Empire in Africa, and the Italo-German Axis all helped to foster its growth, and even after the Empire had crumbled, the Axis was broken, and fascism was overthrown, some of this new anti-Semitism remained, as was clear from certain Italian responses to events in the Middle East. In pre-fascist Italy, when Jews encountered anti-Jewish hostility, it was of the old-fashioned religious, not the modern racial kind.

They were the exception. In Eastern Europe, the Jews with their own separate language, culture, and way of life were self-evidently a race as the term was then used. In Central Europe, where problems of race and nationality were in the forefront of both philosophical and political concern,

the Jews were still seen as a distinct race, to be either assimilated or excluded, according to the two prevailing views on how to cope with the Jewish question. Only in England, France, and Holland, where Jewish communities were relatively small, and where political and national identity were equated, in contrast to the confusion of petty states and polyglot empires further east, Jews might hope for acceptance as citizens, as members of the nation. In France, this was taken to imply a renunciation of Jewishness in any but a narrowly defined religious sense. In Britain, where particularism rather than centralism was favored, and where a British nation of four races, English, Scottish, Welsh, and Irish, provided a pattern of pluralism, that sacrifice was not required. In the variegated immigrant societies of the Americas, the Jews could reasonably figure as one group among many, all contributing to the pattern of national life.

Despite the volume and vehemence of anti-Semitic literature in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Europe, with one exception, it did no more than delay the advance of Jewish emancipation, and left nothing worse than some remaining educational, professional and social barriers. The one exception was the empire of the czars, where the ideas of the theoreticians of anti-Semitism were given both wider circulation and more practical effect. In Germany, Austria, and France, despite their occasional intellectual and academic successes, the anti-Semites rarely achieved any significant political results – and this despite the support of such prominent figures as the musician Richard Wagner and the historian Heinrich Treitschke, who was responsible for the phrase, much used in Nazi times, “The Jews are our misfortune.” The first politician to win an election on an anti-Semitic platform was the Austrian Catholic populist Karl Lueger, leader of the “Austrian Christian Social Party.” Opposed by the grande bourgeoisie, the Austrian upper clergy and bureaucracy, and the Court, but with the strong support of the Pope and the Papal Envoy, he was able to win election as mayor of Vienna with an overwhelming majority. But once installed as mayor, he did little to harm Jews, but on the contrary even dined in the homes of Jewish bankers and attended a synagogue service in his mayoral robes. When reproached by some of his more consistent followers, he answered with a phrase which later became famous, “Wer ein Jud ist, das bestimme ich” – I decide who is a Jew.<sup>23</sup>

In France, the Dreyfus Affair seemed for a while to threaten the civic rights and even personal security of the Jews in France. That danger passed, however, and despite recurring anti-Semitic agitation, the threat of anti-Semitic action remained remote, until suddenly and devastatingly it was realized by the collaborationist government of Nazi-dominated France.

In the English-speaking countries, anti-Semitism never achieved the level of intellectual respectability which it at times enjoyed in France, Germany,

Austria, and Russia. The attempts by such figures as Goldwin Smith and E. A. Freeman to launch German-style racial anti-Semitism in the nineteenth century, like the later attempts by Hilaire Belloc and G. K. Chesterton to import the French clerical variety, had little or no success. This is the more remarkable in that English literature offers as rich a gallery of Jewish villains as any literature in Europe – a gallery that begins with the supposed murderers of Hugh of Lincoln in medieval legends and chronicles, and includes such varied figures as Barabas the Jew of Malta, Fagin, Svengali, the sophisticated stereotypes of Graham Greene and T. S. Eliot and the penny plain stereotypes of John Buchan and Agatha Christie.<sup>24</sup>

Prejudice against Jews has of course always existed in these countries, and on occasion amounted to a factor of some, though never major political importance. Racist ideas in general, and anti-Semitism in particular, are clearly discernible in the American immigration law of 1924 and the manner of its administration. Significantly, the Jews figure as “the Hebrew race.” Restrictive quotas and exclusions of various kinds continued to operate against Jews in America, not only at the point of entry into the country but at various subsequent stages. This was particularly noticeable in the 1920s and 1930s, when racist ideas were prevalent. As late as the 1950s there were still numbers of colleges, clubs, hotels, and board rooms in which Hitler or Stalin would have been eligible and Einstein or Freud would not. I vividly remember a conversation, some thirty years ago, with a student, when as a newcomer to this country I was seeking information about the (to me) mysterious phenomenon of the student fraternity. This student, who incidentally, was the son of the dean of the college, explained how the fraternities were organized and functioned, and remarked that they did not normally admit Jews or blacks because “we feel they would be happier among their own kind.” Since the end of World War II, virtually all these barriers have disappeared in the English-speaking countries.

Despite the former prevalence of such attitudes, in modern times the growth of anti-Semitism in the English-speaking world never reached a point when it could be publicly avowed in intellectual or political circles. Anglo-Saxon anti-Semitism, where it exists, is on the whole furtive, disguised, and hypocritical. Both in Britain and the United States, as well as in the other English-speaking countries, the political rights that Jews won in the nineteenth century have never since been seriously challenged, and the Jews of these countries never had to face anything like the barrage of hostile propaganda and political campaigns, the legal restrictions and physical violence encountered by Jews in most countries of the Continent. As a contemporary German Jewish observer noted in 1890: “The Englishman is economically too advanced for anyone to dare to try delude him that he might be dominated by a handful of Jews. He would also be too

proud to believe anything of the sort.”<sup>25</sup> The Yankee, as Mark Twain has attested, would be even less subject to these Middle and East European nightmares of domination by cleverer businessmen and more astute financiers.<sup>26</sup> It was this same English self-confidence which made it possible for Benjamin Disraeli, a Jewish convert to Christianity, to tell the British Parliament that the Jews were a superior race and aristocrats by nature. This was received with nothing worse than “cries of Oh! Oh! at intervals, and many other signs of general impatience.” Disraeli’s speech also brought some comments outside Parliament, but the most important – among them a parody published by Thackeray in *Punch* – expressed amusement rather than anger.<sup>27</sup>

Disraeli’s own writings are an interesting example of how the assimilated Jew or the ex-Jew could be affected by the notions of the time. Traditional Jews, nourished on traditional literature, might still see themselves as custodians of the Jewish faith and as members of a Jewish community defined by rabbinic law. Jews who stepped outside and became part of Europe were inevitably affected by current European ideas, even those specifically hostile to themselves. While English liberals like William Hazlitt and Lord Macaulay defended Jewish emancipation by arguing that Jewishness was nothing but an accident of birth, no more significant than red hair or blue eyes, Disraeli took the opposite position, proclaiming that “all is race: there is no other truth.” Disraeli’s obsession with race, and his dithyrambs on Jewish power and greatness, have no basis in Jewish religious or historical tradition. His view of the role of the Jews does not differ greatly from that of the anti-Semites, but is simply reversed – presented in positive instead of negative terms, with pride instead of hate. One characteristic which Disraeli, curiously, shared with the anti-Semites is the attribution of Jewish origins to many people who in fact had no Jewish connections whatever. The difference of course was that whereas the anti-Semites turn those whom they hate into Jews, Disraeli annexed those whom he most admired. Disraeli’s fantasies were eagerly picked up and used by anti-Semites, who have always shown an inclination to cite Jewish sources when they can find them, and invent them when they cannot.

The same kind of awestruck belief in Jewish power can be found in some gentile sympathizers with Zionism – even, for example, among some of the promoters of the Balfour Declaration, who saw in it a device to win “international Jewry” to the Allied cause. This belief still appears occasionally even at the present day, though it has lost most of its cogency in view of the manifest inability of “international Jewry” to do anything against either Hitler or his successors in enmity to Judaism. Awe for the mysterious power of Jewry has given place to respect for the political and military power of Israel – but this is not a racial consideration.

Disraeli was probably alone among Jews and ex-Jews in his enthusiastic acceptance and transformation of anti-Semitic fantasies about Jewish power. But other baptized Jews were convinced by what they read of Jewish inferiority and Jewish iniquity, and drew the appropriate conclusions. The prototype, perhaps the archetype, of the phenomenon of Jewish self-hate was a young Viennese Jew called Otto Weininger, who wrote a long and rambling book about the moral and intellectual inferiority of women and of Jews, the latter being far more serious, and who then, logically, committed suicide at the age of twenty-four. Another baptized Jew, Karl Marx, did not commit suicide, but in his anti-Jewish tirade "On the Jewish Question" seems to recommend this as a collective solution.

The basic themes of anti-Judaism were established at the very beginning of the Christian Era. The first, and by far the gravest, charge in the indictment was deicide. Jews had rejected Christ. They had not only rejected him, but they had killed him, and since Christ was God, they had killed God. Modern scholarship and modern morality have both shed some doubt on the ancient and cherished theory of Jewish guilt for the death of Christ. The Romans were after all the unchallenged rulers of Judaea, and crucifixion was a Roman, never a Jewish, form of capital punishment. True, the Gospel according to St Matthew is unequivocal in placing the blood of Christ on the head of the Jews, but some modern historical critics have pointed out that the author of this Gospel might have been influenced by a desire to placate and exonerate the Romans, who were and for long remained the rulers of the world they knew. Recently, some Christian moralists have questioned the morality of extending the guilt from those Jews who were present to other Jews living at the time, all the more so to their remote descendants.

But such considerations and such questioning were far from the minds of the early Christians and most of their successors. For almost two thousand years the story of the betrayal, trial, and death of Christ has been imprinted on Christian minds from childhood, through prayer and preaching, through pictures and statuary, through literature and music, through all the rich complexities of Christian civilization. It was not until 1962, after almost two millennia, that the Second Vatican Council, convened and deeply influenced by Pope John XXIII, considered a resolution exonerating the Jews from the charge of deicide. The resolution was strongly resisted, especially by the Near Eastern bishops, and was adopted in a modified form.<sup>28</sup> It may yet be some time before the sermon and the Sunday School syllabus all over the Christian world are appropriately amended and the habits of mind which they inculcate are transformed.

Though the crucifixion was seen as necessary for the fulfillment of God's plan for human redemption, those who were held responsible for it

had nevertheless, in Christian perspective, committed a monstrous crime, and they, their compatriots, their coreligionists, and all their descendants in perpetuity were sometimes perceived as subject to a divine curse from which only baptism could save them. No less a person than St John Chrysostom, in the fourth century, spoke of the synagogue as “the temple of demons . . . the cavern of devils . . . a gulf and abyss of perdition,” while St Augustine explained how those who had once been God’s chosen people had now become the sons of Satan.<sup>29</sup>

This curse was interpreted in many forms, the most important being the dispersion and oppression to which the Jews were subject. Those who distrusted and oppressed them were therefore doing God’s work. The legend of the wandering Jew, who must wander the earth, knowing neither death nor rest, until the time comes for him to witness the Second Coming, symbolizes this belief. Popular superstition added other details to the curse of the Jews, notably the evil smell – *foetor judaicus* – with which God is said to have afflicted them. This is perhaps an example of ordinary rather than extraordinary prejudice, since similar beliefs occur elsewhere, as for example among whites about blacks, and among yellow men about whites.

During the so-called Dark Ages, Jews in Europe enjoyed a relative tranquility. But the Crusades brought a new Christian militancy, and while this was directed primarily against the Muslims, the Crusaders found their first victims in their Jewish neighbors. This new hostility was aggravated by the relentless attack mounted by the Franciscan and Dominican orders against both Judaism and the Jews. From crusading times onward the Satanic element begins to dominate anti-Jewish polemic. Jews are now seen as children of the devil, whose assigned task was to combat Christianity and injure Christians. By the twelfth century they are accused of poisoning wells, ill-treating the consecrated Host (a somewhat pointless procedure for those who do not believe in it), and of murdering Christian children to use their blood for ritual purposes. The blood libel, as it is known, had originally been used by pagans against the early Christians. It was now used by Christians against Jews, with equal lack of justification, and with far more deadly effect. From time to time, these fantasies were denounced by popes and bishops, but they seem to have been widely accepted and disseminated by the lower clergy, who sometimes managed to convince their superiors. The notion of the Jews as possessing unlimited diabolic powers gained force with every private and public misfortune of Christendom. Before long, we find for the first time the story of a secret Jewish government, a sort of council of rabbis, which the Christians of course located in Muslim Spain, and which was directing a cosmic war against Christendom.

Against such dreadful enemies, only the most drastic measures could suffice. They had to be isolated, segregated, and if possible eliminated.



Excluded from agriculture, commerce, and handicrafts, the Jews were driven to the practice of usury, and a new stereotype was formed, of the Jew as the greedy, bloodsucking moneylender. Money was now added to sorcery as an instrument of the Jewish plot to rule the world.

With the growing intellectual sophistication of Christian Europe, such fantasies began to lose their hold, though they – and still more the attitudes resulting from them – have shown extraordinary persistence in some areas, and from time to time make a disconcerting reappearance. The myth of a Jewish conspiracy to dominate the world, directed by a secret Jewish government of which all Jews are agents, reappeared toward the end of the eighteenth century, and has survived. This new accusation was first formulated by French émigré opponents of the Revolution and of the Napoleonic regime that followed it. A French Jesuit called Barruel published a lengthy book proving that the Revolution was the work of a secret conspiracy of Freemasons. Subsequently – no doubt anticipating the later prominence of Jews in continental European Masonic lodges – he made the further discovery that the Freemasons were themselves mere instruments of a deeper and more dangerous conspiracy – the invisible government of the Jews. It was the Jews, according to Father Barruel, who had founded the Freemasons, the Illuminati, and all the other anti-Christian groups. Some Jews tried to pass as Christians in order the better to achieve their deceitful purposes. They had even penetrated the Catholic Church, so that in Italy alone more than 800 priests, including some bishops and cardinals, were really secret Jewish agents. Their real purpose was “to be masters of the world, to abolish all other sects in order to make their own prevail, to turn the Christian churches into synagogues, and to reduce the remaining Christians to true slavery.”<sup>30</sup>

Father Barruel, apparently recovering from his nightmares, made his peace with the new regime to which he had ascribed such evil origins, and accepted an appointment as canon of the Cathedral of Notre Dame. But others emerged to carry on his campaign. Such cataclysmic events as the French Revolution, the rise of Napoleon, the overthrow of most of the old regimes in Europe, and the installation of a new and radically different order in their place, could only be due, in the eyes of some of their less sophisticated opponents, to the working of evil and occult forces. The Freemasons, the Illuminati, the liberal philosophers, and the rest were all outward manifestations of the same underlying cause. The Jews, who had wrought so much evil at the time of the Crusades, had broken their bonds and were at work again. For some, Napoleon himself was a Jew. More commonly, he was an instrument in the hands of Jewish conspirators. Such arguments followed him even after his defeat and exile: according to one German pamphleteer, “although Napoleon is isolated on his rock in the ocean, his Jewish confidants hold the threads of a conspiracy which

stretches not only to France but also to Germany, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands, and with objectives consisting of nothing less than world revolution.”<sup>31</sup> Another German writer, in a utopian tract published in Nuremberg in 1811, warns his readers against the “philanthropic madness” of emancipation, which could lead to the advent of “circumcised kings on the thrones of Europe.”<sup>32</sup>

The enemies of Jewish emancipation could point to some telling evidence. Until the eighteenth century – later in the more backward parts of Europe – Jews had almost everywhere been despised outcasts, living on the fringes of European society, without rights or friends, without claims or hopes outside the limited circle of their own ghetto existence. With very few exceptions, they were excluded from all forms of participation, at the lowest as at the highest level, in the political life of the country where they lived; they made no contribution to its culture, and were excluded from all but specific and in the main, degraded occupations.

When, finally, in Western countries, they were permitted to emerge from the ghetto and enter into the life of European society, they displayed that additional energy and determination often found in penalized minorities that have to struggle to survive. In consequence, they did rather well. Jewish students thronged to the universities from which – with very few exceptions – they had been barred since the Middle Ages, and, not surprisingly, strove to excell. They tried harder, and often they did better than those other students for whom entry to the university required no special effort and was seen as no special privilege. Success breeds envy in any social situation, and it is the more resented when it is won by those previously regarded as inferiors and outcasts. The idea that Jews wielded some secret and diabolic power, which enabled them to triumph over good, honest Christians, now found new audiences even in the more advanced countries of northern and Western Europe. Only in this way could a few thousand inferior Jews impose themselves on many millions of superior Christians or gentiles.

In the Middle Ages, Jews had sometimes been accused of achieving their evil purposes by means of spells and incantations. The economic developments of the nineteenth century gave new scope to the idea of the other kind of sorcery, the power of money, which they used to conjure up immense forces to obey their commands and fulfill their Jewish purposes, and by which the Jews were able to possess and dominate the Christian world.

For a small but by no means insignificant number of European writers, the successes of the Jews could never have been won in fair competition, and could only be explained by the medieval stories of a dark and devious plot of the children of Satan, able to call on the powers of Hell at will, and seeking, as the French Catholic writer Bonald put it in 1806, “to reduce all

Christians until they are nothing more than their slaves.” A French sous-préfet in 1808 saw the problem as acute: “It would be better to drive the Jews out of Europe rather than be driven out by them.”<sup>33</sup> Such a conspiracy, and such a purpose, obviously required central direction, and in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries a number of different ideas were advanced on the nature of “the secret Jewish government.”

To support these and other charges against the Jews, or at least to make them acceptable to those who did not share the presumptions of the anti-Semites, some sort of evidence was needed. The Jews were known to be a highly literary people, who practiced a very bookish religion. In their religious books, written in strange languages and locked in the secrecy of an unknown script, the evil truth might be found. For Christians, it was difficult to attack the Old Testament, since the Church had made it part of the canon. Hostile attention was therefore focused on those religious books which were distinctively Jewish, namely the rabbinic collections, and especially the most famous and important of them, the Talmud. This is the name given to two great collections of rabbinic law, exegesis, and debate, both compiled during the early centuries of the Christian era, one in Babylonia, the other in the Roman province of Palestine. They are regarded by Orthodox Jews as containing an authoritative formulation of *Halakha*, that is, the rabbinic law that regulates Jewish life and worship. Already in the Middle Ages, Dominican inquisitors staged public burnings of rabbinic writings, and notably of the great codices of the Talmud. The most famous was the burning in Paris in June 1242. Despite the efforts of some Christian scholars, including churchmen, to defend the Talmud, the practice was continued in other Catholic countries, and as late as September 1553 the Talmud and other books were burned by official order, in Rome, Venice, Cremona, and elsewhere in Italy.<sup>34</sup>

A new phase began with Eisenmenger’s famous *Entdecktes Judentum*, published in 1711. Johann Andreas Eisenmenger was a professor of Oriental languages, and appears to have devoted some study to the Talmud. The result of his efforts was a massive two-volume work, in which by careful selection, occasional invention, and sweeping misinterpretation, due sometimes to ignorance and sometimes to malice, he presents the Talmud as a corpus of anti-Christian and indeed antihuman doctrines. The title of the book means Judaism (or Jewry) revealed (or unmasked), and indicates its author’s purpose. In the course of his book he resumes and attempts to confirm all the lies which had already by his time become standard in the anti-Semitic armory – the poisoning of wells, the Black Death, the ritual murder of children, and the rest. Eisenmenger’s book, though disproved again and again by both Christian and Jewish scholars, became a classic of anti-Semitic literature, and has remained a source book for anti-Semitic accusations until the present day. The use of the adjective “talmudical,” in

a variety of negative senses, became one of the characteristics of anti-Semitic writing, and to the present time, its use to denounce the actions or utterances of Israeli leaders is a generally reliable indication that the user is inspired by anti-Semitic prejudice and not merely by concern about the Middle East.

From the mid-nineteenth century some Christian theologians began to launch an attack against the Old Testament itself, despite its position as part of the Christian canon. A favorite approach was to contrast the harsh, vindictive, ruthless Jewish God of the Old Testament with the kind, gentle, forgiving Christian spirit of the New Testament. It is not difficult to refute this line of argument, by quoting injunctions to gentleness from the Old, and to severity from the New, but such refutations had little effect in halting this new line of attack. It was strengthened by the progress of archaeology and the decipherment of the ancient Middle Eastern languages, which enabled scholars, particularly in Germany, to find more ancient antecedents for some of the teachings of the Old Testament. The denigration of postbiblical, i.e., rabbinic, Judaism, already an established tradition in some Christian scholarship, continued; it was now buttressed by what was known as the Higher Criticism, which at once questioned the theology, the morality, and even the originality of the Hebrew Bible. The Greek New Testament, for the time being, remained immune to such criticism, and it was not surprising that some rabbis spoke of the Higher Criticism as a higher anti-Semitism. This accusation was no doubt unjust concerning many of the distinguished scholars of the time, some of whom indeed made great efforts to understand and interpret rabbinic literature, but it received some color from the practice of putting a distinguishing sign – a kind of bibliographical yellow star – against the names of Jewish authors whom they cited.<sup>35</sup>

Eisenmenger's book served as the basis of one of the major classics of nineteenth-century anti-Semitic literature, *Der Talmudjude* (The Talmud Jew), by the Canon August Rohling, professor at the Imperial University of Prague. The numerous misrepresentations and falsifications in this book were at once challenged and disproved, not only by Jewish but also by Christian scholars, and in 1885 Canon Rohling, denounced in print as a liar, a faker, and an ignoramus, was forced to bring a libel action from which he withdrew in circumstances so scandalous that he was obliged to resign from his university chair. This in no way impeded, and perhaps encouraged, the enormous success of the book. Three French translations, by three different translators, were published in 1889. Many other editions and translations followed, especially during the Hitler years. The most recent editions have been in Arabic.

Canon Rohling's book, which was at first endorsed in Rome by the semi-official Vatican journal *Civiltà Cattolica*, devotes great attention to

the theme of ritual murder, and makes it one of his main charges against the Jews. The wide circulation and academic endorsement of the blood libel in this period had practical effects. Between 1867 and 1914, twelve charges of alleged ritual murder against Jews were tried by jury in German and Austro-Hungarian courts. It says much for the judicial systems of the two Germanic empires at the time that eleven of the twelve trials ended in acquittals; in the twelfth, in Austria, the accused was found guilty of murder, but without ritual implications. This verdict gave rise to many appeals, including one from Thomas Masaryk, and the accused was later pardoned by the emperor. The most famous of these cases occurred at a place called Tisza-Eszlar in Hungary, where in 1882 fifteen Jews were charged with the ritual murder of a Christian girl. The case became an international sensation before the final verdict of not guilty.

Another case, which lasted far longer and attracted far greater attention, was the arrest in 1911 of a Jewish brickmaker called Mendel Beilis, in Kiev in the Ukraine, for the ritual murder of a Christian boy. This followed after the temporary halting of the pogroms in Russia under both international and domestic liberal pressures, and represented a new effort and a new direction on the part of the anti-Semites, by now entrenched at the highest reaches of the imperial Russian government. Two years were spent in preparing the case, which was concocted by an anti-Semitic organization, in cooperation with the minister of justice and the police. It was opposed by an impressive array of Russian liberals and socialists, including such figures as the writer Maxim Gorki and the psychologist Ivan Petrovich Pavlov. The trial opened at the end of 1913, and, like the Dreyfus trial in France, became the focus for a conflict between opposing political forces in Russia, and the cause of widespread protests in the democratic countries of the West. It was no doubt partly because of the latter that the trial ended in an acquittal of the accused, "for lack of evidence," and with no decision on the question of ritual murder.<sup>36</sup>

But if the charge of ritual murder was impeded and in some measure defeated by the courts and the law, the charge of secret conspiracy for world domination, less subject to judicial review, was making greater headway. As Jewish emancipation progressed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and Jews became more prominent in business and banking, literature and the arts, journalism and politics, the doctrine that "the Jew is underneath the lot" began to seem, to many who were frustrated and angry, to provide the answer to their questions and to indicate the solution to their problems.

For this doctrine, too, a proof text was needed, and since none existed, not even with the kind of distortions used by the anti-Semitic Talmudists, it had to be invented. It was for this purpose that the famous *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* were devised. Any rational modern reader of the

*Protocols* cannot but wonder at the crudity of the inventors of this text, and the credulity of those who believed it. Among the many strange “secrets” revealed in the book is that the Jews make the sons of the nobility study Latin and Greek as the best way of undermining their morals, and that the Jews ordered the building of underground railways in the major cities of Europe so that when the time comes they can blow up any capital which resists their rule. Nor do those who believe in the *Protocols* find it odd that the Jews, in their own secret writings, should cast themselves in the role of agents of evil, and should moreover do so in the specific terminology of Christian anti-Semitism. Yet despite these and many other similar absurdities, the book has gone through countless editions, been distributed in millions of copies, and must rank very near to the Bible in the number of languages into which it has been translated.<sup>37</sup>

The text has a curious history. In its earliest extant form, it has nothing whatever to do with either Jews or anti-Semites, but consisted of a pamphlet written in the 1860s against Napoleon III. The forgers took this pamphlet, substituted world Jewry for the French emperor, and added a number of picturesque details borrowed from an obscure German novel. The *Protocols* first appeared in about 1895, and were almost certainly the work of a group of members of the czarist Russian secret police stationed in Paris. For some time, the book was used only in Russia. It had little influence even there and none at all outside. Its worldwide fame began with the Russian Revolution of 1917. In the course of the bitter civil wars that raged across Russia in the years 1918–1921, the leaders of the White Russians used the *Protocols* extensively to persuade the Russian people that the so-called revolution was no more than a Jewish plot to impose a Jewish government on Russia, as a step toward the ultimate aim of Jewish world domination.

The *Protocols* and the doctrines which it was used to propagate had their effect in the brutal massacres of Jews during the Russian Civil War. At the same time, White Russian agents carried the *Protocols* to all the countries of Europe and the Americas, as evidence of their interpretation of the significance of the Revolution and the nature of the new government in Moscow. In this they achieved quite extraordinary success. In Britain, both the *Times* and the *Morning Post* gave the *Protocols* extensive treatment, and the *Spectator* even demanded a royal commission to decide whether British Jews were in fact “subjects of a secret government.” In America, the *Protocols* were widely circulated under the title *The Jewish Peril* and were in particular publicized and distributed by the automobile magnate Henry Ford, an obsessive anti-Semite who wrote a series of articles on “The International Jew,” which he later reprinted as a separate booklet.

In 1921, the *Times* newspaper of London published some articles by its Istanbul correspondent, who had discovered a copy of the original French

pamphlet and thus exposed the *Protocols* as a forgery;<sup>38</sup> in 1927 even Henry Ford admitted that his accusations were unfounded. From this time onward, in the English-speaking world, the *Protocols* were confined to the lunatic fringe. But in Hitler's Germany, they provided a major theme in Nazi anti-Semitic propaganda, and like the White Russian agents before them, Nazi peddlers of anti-Semitism were instrumental in distributing the *Protocols* all over the world.

The *Protocols*, though by far the most successful, were not the only anti-Semitic fabrication. Another, specially designed for an American audience, is a speech by Benjamin Franklin urging the Founding Fathers not to admit Jews to the new republic, and warning them of the dire consequences if they disregarded his words. The speech is a total fabrication, but was not without its effect. A less troublesome and widely used method was simply to assign a Jewish origin to anyone whom it was desired to discredit, and then to use that person to discredit the Jews.

## NOTES

- 1 On Marr, see P. G. J. Pulzer, *The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria*, London, 1964, pp. 47, 49–52; and Léon Poliakov, *Histoire de l'antisémitisme*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1961–77), 3: 432, 466, 4: 29–30. On the history of anti-Semitism, see further Jacob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction: Anti-Semitism, 1700–1933* (Cambridge, Mass., 1980), and Samuel Morag, ed. *Sinat Yisra'el le-doroteha* (Jerusalem, 1980).
- 2 See Albert Sicroff, *Les Controverses des statuts de "Pureté de sang" en Espagne du XV au XVII siècle* (Paris, 1960), pp. 223ff; and S. W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, 2nd edn. (New York, 1952 – vol. 8, 1969), p. 85.
- 3 Sicroff, pp. 90ff; Baron, 8: 88–9.
- 4 John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration with the Second Treatise of Civil Government*, ed. J. W. Gough (London, 1946), p. 160; cit. Arthur Hertzberg, *The French Enlightenment and the Jews* (New York and London, 1968), pp. 46–7, n. 3.
- 5 On anti-Semitic and antiblack sentiments and ideologies in eighteenth-century France, see Pierre Pluchon, *Nègres et juifs au XVIII siècle* (Paris, 1984).
- 6 Poliakov, 3: 233.
- 7 *Ibid.*, 3: 234.
- 8 *Ibid.*, 3: 107.
- 9 *Voltaire's Notebooks*, ed. Theodore Besterman (Geneva, 1952), pp. 31 and 233; Poliakov, 3: 114.
- 10 *Essai sur les mœurs*, ed. René Pomeau (Paris, 1963), 1: 478; Poliakov, 3: 106.
- 11 *Traité de métaphysique*, ed. Temple Patterson (Manchester, 1937), p. 33, cf. *ibid.*, p. 4.
- 12 Poliakov, 3: 115.

- 13 Karl Wilhelm Friedrich Grattenauer, *Wider die Juden: Ein Wort der Warnung an alle unsere christliche Mitbürger* (Berlin, 1803), 3: 29; cit. Poliakov, 3: 158.
- 14 Cited in Léon Poliakov, *Le Mythe aryen: Essai sur les sources du racisme et des nationalismes* (Paris, 1971), pp. 172–3.
- 15 Baron, 9: 32.
- 16 Poliakov, *Histoire*, 3: 243.
- 17 *Ibid.*, 3: 242–3.
- 18 Lessing, *Die Juden* (1749), scene 22, cf. Poliakov, *Histoire*, 3: 69, who interprets this remark differently.
- 19 T. S. Eliot, “Burbank with a Baedeker, Bleistein With a Cigar,” in *Poems 1909–1925* (London, 1925), p. 55. See further Edgar Rosenberg, *From Shylock to Svengali; Jewish Stereotypes in English fiction* (London, 1961); Moses Debré, *Der Jude in der französischen Literatur von 1800 bis zur Gegenwart* (Ansbach, 1909); Montagu Frank Modder, *The Jew in the Literature of England to the end of the 19th century* (New York-Philadelphia, 1939).
- 20 Solomon Rappaport, *Jew and Gentile, the Philo-Semitic Aspect* (New York, 1980).
- 21 Text in Pulzer, pp. 337–8.
- 22 Poliakov, *Histoire*, 4: 29–30.
- 23 Pulzer, p. 204. See further Robert S. Wistrich, *Socialism and the Jews: the Dilemmas of Assimilation in Germany and Austria-Hungary* (London and Toronto, 1982).
- 24 The curious reader may note that some of the more striking anti-Semitic phrases found in the English editions of Miss Christie’s detective stories were omitted from the American editions.
- 25 Poliakov, *Histoire*, 3: 336.
- 26 Mark Twain, *Concerning the Jews* (Philadelphia, 1985), reprinted from *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine*, September 1898.
- 27 William F. Money Penny and George E. Buckle, *Life of Disraeli* (London, 1929), 1: 885; Poliakov, *Histoire*, 3: 345.
- 28 Poliakov, *Histoire*, 3: 301.
- 29 St John Chrysostom, cit. James Parke in *Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue* (London, 1934), pp. 163–6; John G. Gager *The Origins of Anti-Semitism* (New York, 1983), pp. 118–20; Norman Cohn, “The Myth of the Demonic Conspiracy of Jews in Medieval and Modern Europe,” in Anthony de Reuck and Julie Knight, eds., *Caste and Race: Comparative Approaches* (London, 1967), pp. 240ff. See further Jeremy Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism* (Ithaca and London, 1982).
- 30 Father Barruel, pp. 58–62, cit. Poliakov, *Histoire*, 3: 296.
- 31 From a German pamphlet of 1816, *Das Judenthum in der Maurerey* (Judaism in Freemasonry). This pamphlet was much used in later Nazi literature. Poliakov, *Histoire*, 3: 297–8.
- 32 Poliakov, *Histoire*, 3: 298.
- 33 *Ibid.*, 3: 299.
- 34 Jacob R. Marcus, *The Jew in the Medieval World: A Source Book 1315–1791* (New York and Philadelphia, 1960), pp. 145ff, 161ff, 170ff.



- 35 Poliakov, *Histoire*, 4: 38, 39.
- 36 Rappoport, p. 180; S. Zeitlin in *Jewish Quarterly Review* (July 1968), pp. 76–80, review of *The Strange History of the Beiless Case* by Maurice Samuel.
- 37 Norman Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide*.
- 38 Anīs Maṣṣūr, an Egyptian journalist specializing in anti-Jewish polemics, has his own way of explaining the discoveries of the *Times* correspondent: “Anti-Semitism reached its peak with the publication of the secret plan to rule the world. The *Times* correspondent in Istanbul revealed in 1929 that the Jews had composed a book called the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, when their first Zionist Congress met in Bâle in Switzerland, and that at this Congress they had agreed on their devilish plan to rule the whole world. This book was translated in all the countries of the world. It was translated four times in Egypt, and I myself was the first to draw attention to it and translate parts of it 25 years ago” (Anīs Maṣṣūr, *Wajʿ fi qalb Isrāʿīl*, Cairo, 1977, p. 140).

Mr Maṣṣūr is wrong in every particular. The achievement of Philip Graves, the *Times* correspondent in Istanbul, was not to “reveal” the *Protocols*, which were already widely circulated at the time, but to expose them as a forgery. The year was not 1929 but 1921. (Philip Graves’s *Times* articles were reprinted in his little book *The Truth about the Protocols* [London: 1921].) Even Mr Maṣṣūr’s own claim to have been the first to draw attention to them in Arabic is unfounded. Arabic translations appeared in Palestine in 1926 and in Egypt in about 1927.

On the role of Eastern Christians in introducing anti-Semitism to the Middle East, Elie Kedourie aptly observes that they “had easier access to Western literature but not enough judgment to exercise critical and discriminating choice” (Kedourie, *The Chatham House Version*, London, 1970, p. 338).

## *From Weimar to Hitler*

ROBERT S. WISTRICH

The ill-fated Weimar Republic was established after 1918 in the wake of unparalleled national traumas. The unexpected defeat in the First World War, the abdication of the emperor, the threat of Communist revolution, the humiliation of the Versailles Treaty, and the prospect of huge reparations payments to the Western Allies weighed heavily on Germans. The specter of economic and political chaos could only benefit the enemies of the republic, especially those on the nationalist right.<sup>1</sup> They damned the government with the responsibility for signing a treaty that had accepted German “war guilt,” and blamed it for the substantial loss of territory, the “shame” of an emasculated army, and the dependence on foreign loans. While the Communists were forcibly put down in 1919, a further blow to the republic came with the massive inflation of 1923 and the consequent monetary collapse, which had a devastating effect on the working classes as well as on many in the middle strata of German society who lost their life savings. Although the Weimar Republic enjoyed a brief period of economic and political stability between 1924 and 1928, important changes beneath the surface were already weakening the middle ground in German politics. More liberal parties, such as the Democrats and the German National People’s Party, were steadily losing support. So, too, were the conservative nationalists whose share of the vote by 1928 had declined from 20 percent to 14 percent. The Social Democrats, the dominant party in the early years of the republic, also began to lose votes – mainly to the Communists, who never forgave them for 1919.<sup>2</sup> For its part, the Catholic Center Party, whose electoral base remained stable, was no longer willing to form a coalition with the socialists and began to move to the right.

Robert S. Wistrich, “From Weimar to Hitler,” from *Hitler and the Holocaust*, New York: Modern Library, 2001, pp. 31–58 and 248–53.

German Jews, who numbered slightly more than half a million, were less than 1 percent of the population in the 1920s, and clearly oriented to the liberal-left wing of German politics. They had little political influence, despite anti-Semitic legends to the contrary, but they were disproportionately prominent in publishing, journalism, the arts, the free professions, trade, private banking, and commerce, including the ownership of department stores, which began to develop at this time. In 1933, Jews were 11 percent of Germany's doctors and about 16 percent of its lawyers – a degree of visibility that was even more pronounced in the big cities. Middle-class anti-Semitism in Germany – especially rampant among doctors, lawyers, shopkeepers, artisans, small businessmen, academics, and students – was undoubtedly stimulated by professional jealousy and envy.<sup>3</sup> It was also nourished by the intensive post-1918 propaganda of *völkisch* anti-Semitic organizations that branded Jews with the stigma of wartime profiteering, black-market dealings, stock-exchange speculation, and responsibility for defeat in the war. The economic and political crises between 1918 and 1923 exacerbated these embittered feelings.<sup>4</sup>

A constant refrain of the political right was the singling out of radical socialists and Communists of Jewish origin for their roles in the abortive revolutions of 1918 and 1919, thus accrediting the idea that Jews were inclined toward subversive activity and revolution. And indeed, the Spartacist revolt in Berlin (a Communist uprising) was led by the Polish-born internationalist Rosa Luxemburg, who, like a number of the early leaders of the KPD (German Communist Party), was Jewish, though thoroughly alienated from her origins. In the Bavarian capital, Munich, after the downfall of the Wittelsbach dynasty, the first Independent Socialist prime minister, Kurt Eisner, was not only a Jew but also a bohemian intellectual, a Berliner, and a pacifist who had published documents attributing responsibility for the First World War to Germany.<sup>5</sup> These attributes made him an almost perfect target for the hate of the conservative and antirepublican elements in Bavarian society. The middle classes were even more panic-stricken when in 1919 a Munich Soviet Republic was established that featured a number of Russian Jews in leading positions. It was soon crushed by the local Freikorps (on instructions from the Social Democrats), who exacted a murderous revenge. Over the course of 1918 and 1919, some of the most prominent Jewish revolutionaries, including Luxemburg, Eisner, Gustav Landauer, Eugen Leviné, and a number of other radical Jews like the Independent Socialist Hugo Haase were either brutally assassinated or shot – a fate that also befell the Spartacist leader Karl Liebknecht, who was not a Jew.<sup>6</sup> This wave of assassinations culminated in the killing of Germany's first ever Jewish foreign minister, the highly assimilated and versatile industrialist Walther Rathenau, by youthful right-wing nationalist fanatics in 1922. Rathenau, an ardent Prussian

patriot who had contributed much to the efficiency of the Germany economy during the war, was demonized as an “Elder of Zion” and a “Jewish Bolshevik” by his blond, blue-eyed killers. Rathenau’s murder was a worrying omen for Germany Jewry.<sup>7</sup>

The stream of impoverished Polish Jews arriving in Berlin in the early 1920s was another troubling development to some Germans. These *Ostjuden* (eastern Jews) were frequently unemployed and disoriented by the postwar upheavals and revolutions in eastern Europe. Moreover, they were cultural outsiders and an easy target for xenophobic accusations (made also by Social Democrats) of economic parasitism. In the Weimar Republic, they made up approximately one fifth of the Jewish population. The more assimilated and established members of German Jewry tended to believe that the revival of anti-Semitism was directed primarily or even exclusively against the *Ostjuden*, but this turned out to be a tragic self-deception.

The most militant of the many disparate *völkisch* anti-Semitic sects that mushroomed in the aftermath of the war was the National Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP, or Nazi Party for short), founded in Munich in 1919. Its official party program of 24 February 1920 stood for “the uniting of all Germans within one Greater Germany” on the basis of national self-determination. The party called for the annulment of the Treaty of Versailles, demanding more land and soil for the German population; it advocated that the “yoke of interest-capital” be broken, favoring widespread nationalizations as well as profit sharing, land reform, the communalization of department stores, and other radical-sounding measures. Article 4 of the NSDAP program made it clear that only “persons of German blood” could be nationals (*Volksgenossen*) and therefore citizens. This automatically excluded Jews, who in the future, they hoped, would be permitted to live in Germany only as guests “subject to legislation for Aliens.” Article 23 insisted that publishers, journalists, and “all editors and editorial employees of German-language newspapers must be German by race.” It also called for laws against “trends in art and literature that have a destructive effect on our national life” (an implicit reference to Jews). Article 24 observed that the NSDAP stood for “positive Christianity” and fought “against the Jewish-materialistic spirit *within* and *without* us.”<sup>8</sup>

Until 1930, the Nazi Party remained a minor although highly vocal *völkisch* grouping that continued to advocate (without much success) a nationalist form of socialism underpinned by strong anti-Semitic foundations. Between 1919 and 1924, it remained confined to Bavaria, appealing mainly to ex-soldiers, anti-Communists, anti-Semites, and a hodge-podge of déclassé elements that were attracted to the vague slogans of a “national revolution.” Nevertheless, its leader, Adolf Hitler, a raucous,

spellbinding Austrian agitator who had been a corporal in the German Army during the First World War, had already attracted some national attention. On 8 and 9 November 1923, the thirty-four-year-old Hitler, together with the old war hero General Erich von Ludendorff, had attempted to seize power in Bavaria, hoping eventually to march on Berlin and overthrow the Weimar Republic. The putsch failed miserably when Hitler and his followers were fired on by the Munich police while marching through the city center. The putschists dispersed in some confusion. Following his arrest, Hitler managed, with the help of a sympathetic judge, to turn his trial into a harangue against the “traitors of 1918,” a public indictment of Weimar democracy, and a platform for his own extreme nationalist and anti-Semitic views. Though guilty of high treason, he was sentenced to a mere five years’ imprisonment, of which he served just nine months in Landsberg prison, where he wrote *Mein Kampf* (*My Struggle*). This sprawling, poorly written, primitive book was to become the Bible of the Nazi movement and a core anti-Semitic text as well.

As a political autobiography, *Mein Kampf* offers us vital insight into Hitler’s background and the formative influences on his worldview. Hitler had been born in the small town of Braunau on the Inn, which lay on the border between Austria and Bavaria, on 20 April 1889. In his adolescent years, spent partly in Linz, he had come under the influence of the Pan-German ideology of Georg von Schönerer, the leading German nationalist in Austria, who advocated the *Anschluss* (union) of the two German states into one German Reich. (Hitler fulfilled this dream in 1938.) The rancorous Schönerer passionately hated the cosmopolitan Habsburg ruling dynasty of Austria, the Czechs, and other neighboring Slavs who threatened German hegemony, the Roman Catholic Church, and especially Jews.<sup>9</sup> Schönerer had in 1885 proclaimed anti-Semitism the “main pillar of a true folkish mentality, and thus . . . the greatest achievement of this century.”<sup>10</sup> Schönerer turned his advocacy of “Germandom” into a matter of faith and early in his political career had added an “Aryan” clause excluding even the most ardent German nationalist Jews from membership in his movement. Hitler fully accepted Schönerer’s intransigent ethnic anti-Semitism (rooted in blood and race), adopted his hatred of the “Jewish press” and the “Jewish-led Social Democracy,” and shared his loathing for universal suffrage. He was no less scathing about parliamentarianism, liberal democracy, and the House of Habsburg, which he held responsible for betraying the German *Volk*. The young Hitler learned to identify with the Germanic cult of the *Führer* (leader) and adopted Schönerer’s German greeting of “Heil!”<sup>11</sup>

Another important Austrian role model for the young Hitler, to whom he devoted many pages in *Mein Kampf*, was the extremely popular and elegant mayor of Vienna, Karl Lueger, leader of the Christian-Social Party.

He had come to power largely through the skillful, demagogic use of anti-Semitism, focusing his attacks on the prominent role of Viennese Jews in the liberal press, in the stock exchange, and in banking and industrial capitalism.<sup>12</sup> In his propaganda, he fused Catholic prejudice against the “Christ killers” with the more modern anticapitalist resentments of a lower middle class facing economic crisis. Lueger cleverly mixed this with the xenophobic feelings of many Viennese toward the Ostjuden, who by 1900 already formed about 25 percent of Vienna’s 175,000-strong Jewish community. Hitler greatly admired Lueger and absorbed from him the lesson that anti-Semitism could be an extremely effective instrument of mass mobilization in crystallizing the resentments of the “little man.”<sup>13</sup> But he disliked the easygoing opportunism behind Lueger’s policy toward Jews and Slavs, the Viennese mayor’s refusal to embrace the racial principle, and his tight alliance with the Catholic Church, though he did appreciate the tactical shrewdness behind this strategy in prewar Austria. According to Hitler, Lueger, who still allowed Jews the escape route of baptism, was simply not radical enough. “Lacking was the conviction that this was a vital question for all humanity, with the fate of all non-Jewish peoples depending on its solution.”<sup>14</sup>

The other great influence on Hitler’s view of the Jews was the German nationalist composer Richard Wagner, whose operas he knew by heart and whose diatribes against the corrupting role of Jews in music and art he avidly consumed at an early age.<sup>15</sup> The intensity of Hitler’s emotional identification with Wagner gave special weight to this connection. Those passages in *Mein Kampf* which claim that Jews have never produced any creative art – least of all in music (!) and architecture – and which portray their “parasitic” cultural activity in exceptionally malevolent language could have been lifted verbatim from Wagner’s writings.<sup>16</sup> For Wagner, the Jews represented the “evil conscience of our modern civilization” or, in a phrase much repeated by the Nazis, “the plastic demon of the decline of mankind.”<sup>17</sup>

Nevertheless, there were distinctive features to Hitler’s anti-Semitism. One element, which he himself directly related to “the visual instruction of the Vienna streets,” derived from his stylized encounter with the caftan-wearing Orthodox Galician Jews from eastern Europe. The way he tells it, this “apparition in a black caftan and black hair locks” first made him wonder about the foreignness of the Jew and whether this strange being could possibly be a German.<sup>18</sup> The impact was apparently instantaneous: “For a few pennies, I bought the first anti-Semitic pamphlets of my life.” Once he had begun to take cognizance of the “Jewish question,” Hitler tells us that wherever he went he “began to see Jews, and the more I saw, the more sharply they became distinguished in my eyes from the rest of humanity.”<sup>19</sup> The climax of this psychodrama, which turned him (by his

own somewhat hysterical account) from a “weak-kneed cosmopolitan” into a “coldly rational” anti-Semite, was the realization that the internationalist Austrian Social Democracy was “Jewish” in character: “When I recognized the Jew as the leader of the Social Democracy, the scales dropped from my eyes. A long soul struggle had reached its conclusion.”<sup>20</sup>

Of course, Hitler’s account need not be taken literally. No doubt he had an interest in rationalizing his anti-Semitism, demonstrating its iron logic and continuity. We know that Hitler did in fact mix quite freely with Jews in prewar Vienna and relied on them to sell his picture-postcard sketches and paintings.<sup>21</sup> Yet much of what he writes still rings true and reflects the greater salience of the “Jewish question” and of anti-Semitism in the Austrian capital, especially compared to imperial Germany. The repressed sexual dimension to Hitler’s Judeophobia also seems striking: “With satanic joy in his face, the black-haired Jewish youth lurks in wait for the unsuspecting maiden whom he defiles with his blood, thus stealing her from her people. With every means he tries to destroy the racial foundations of the people he has set out to subjugate.”<sup>22</sup> Hitler drew a direct parallel between this highly personal racist fantasy, drawn from the back streets of imperial Vienna, and the postwar occupation of the Ruhr by black French colonial troops. In both cases, he saw a Jewish conspiracy: “It was and it is Jews who bring the Negroes into the Rhineland, always with the same secret thought and clear aim of ruining the white race by the necessarily resulting bastardization.”<sup>23</sup>

*Mein Kampf* is permeated by obsessions with “racial purity” as well as by the Social Darwinist principle of a relentless battle of each nation for its own self-preservation. In the case of the German *Volk*, its foremost vital need, Hitler wrote, was to acquire more *Lebensraum* in the east, at the expense of Soviet Russia, the menacing citadel of international Communism. Thus, for ideological, economic, and geopolitical reasons, Hitler called for an all-out war against “the Jewish doctrine of Marxism.” Its egalitarian doctrines contradicted “the significance of nationality and race,” denied the value of personality, and negated the “eternal laws of nature.”<sup>24</sup> In an apocalyptic prophecy of the kind that he was to invoke frequently after 1939, whenever he referred to the “Final Solution” of the “Jewish question,” Hitler wrote in *Mein Kampf*: “If, with the help of his Marxist creed, the Jew is victorious over the other peoples of the world, his crown will be the funeral wreath of humanity. . . . Hence today I believe that I am acting in accordance with the will of the Almighty Creator: by defending myself against the Jew, I am fighting for the work of the Lord.”<sup>25</sup>

Though Hitler had abandoned the simple Catholic faith of his boyhood, one can find in these and other passages crude echoes of popular Christian beliefs, transmuted into the new “political religion” of National

Socialism.<sup>26</sup> In claiming divine sanction for his fight against the Jews and “Jewish Marxism,” Hitler was signaling that he considered this political battle to be a crusade or holy war in which there could be no compromises. The “war against the Jews” was an existential matter of life and death, an “either-or” question in which the future of civilization itself was at stake.<sup>27</sup> There were also other related themes that in retrospect seem to prefigure the Holocaust, such as the statement that twelve to fifteen thousand “Hebrew corrupters” ought to have been gassed in the First World War, so that “the sacrifice of millions at the front would not have been in vain.”<sup>28</sup> This does not necessarily mean that Hitler envisioned gassing the Jews in 1924, but it is important to understand his peculiar logic in order to grasp its full implications. Like many demobilized soldiers of his generation, he was convinced that the German Fatherland had been betrayed in 1918 by pacifists and Marxists, deliberately incited by the Jews. This “betrayal” must never be allowed to recur, as Hitler made abundantly clear to the Czech foreign minister in early 1939: “We are going to destroy the Jews. They are not going to get away with what they did on 9 November 1918.”<sup>29</sup> The ninth of November symbolized for Hitler not only the disgrace of the German defeat and surrender but the chaos of Communist revolution and the advent of the hated “Jewish Republic.” He had entered politics to make sure this would never happen again. By implication, only the preventive gassing of the Jews could forestall a repetition of “the stab in the back” and ensure a future German victory.

War, revolution, and the Jews were inseparably locked together in Hitler’s mind. Revealingly enough, his first known statement about political affairs comes in a letter on the “Jewish question” dated 16 September 1919, in which he defines Jewry strictly as a “racial,” not a religious, group. He describes its actions in a horrifying metaphor as resulting “in a racial tuberculosis of peoples.”<sup>30</sup> Rejecting mere pogroms as a purely “emotional” response to the Jewish problem, Hitler called instead for a “rational anti-Semitism” that would revoke the Jews’ “special privileges.” The final objective, he wrote to his correspondent, “must be the complete removal [*Entfernung*] of the Jews.”<sup>31</sup> This ambiguous term could mean either their forced emigration, their extermination, or perhaps a mixture of both.

Hitler’s speeches of the early 1920s, like those of other leading Nazis in southern Germany such as Alfred Rosenberg, Julius Streicher, and Hermann Esser, constantly hammer away at the need to take ruthless, systematic measures against the Jews; to remove them from all government employment, newspaper offices, theaters, and cinemas; to “eliminate” their “spirit” from German culture and the economy; and to break their imagined political power by sweeping away the Marxist parties. In *Mein Kampf* as in many of his speeches, Hitler conjured up the specter of



Bolshevik Russia, where “the Jew” (frequently compared to a vampire or giant parasite) had “killed or starved about thirty million people with positively fanatical savagery, in part amid inhuman tortures, in order to give a gang of Jewish journalists and stock exchange bandits domination over a great people.” In his unpublished *Secret Book* of 1928, Hitler elaborated still further on the meaning of the “Jewish-Bolshevik” tyranny: “The end of the Jewish world struggle therefore will always be a bloody Bolshevization. In truth this means the destruction of all the intellectual upper classes linked to their peoples so that he can rise to become the master of a mankind become leaderless.”<sup>32</sup>

Marxism was thereby reduced to a weapon of terror that the Jews had ruthlessly used to destroy an “inherently anti-Semitic Russia” and to extirpate the Russian national intelligentsia along with the Russian upper classes. The massive atrocities in “this Jewish struggle for hegemony in Russia amounted to 28–30 million people in number of dead. This is fifteen times more than the world war cost Germany.”<sup>33</sup> The Bolshevik Revolution had not only destroyed marriage, sexual morality, and the bonds of social order, it had deliberately created a “chaotic bastardization” that left the Jews as its “only intellectual cement.” Hitler’s unbending conclusion from this so-called Jewish-Bolshevik genocide – which he regarded as the “most terrible crime of all times against mankind” – was that only the National Socialist movement could prevent a similar victory for Jewry in the bitter struggle that “is being waged in Germany at the present time.”<sup>34</sup> For Hitler, in other words, Germany was the pivotal land that would determine whether Communism (and Jewry) would triumph or not. The problem was that even the bourgeois parties were tools of Jewry. Behind “the Jew” stood not only Marxism, democracy, and “the so-called Christian Center” but also “the bourgeois national parties of the so-called national fatherland leagues” – in short, the entire parliamentary political spectrum. Hence, National Socialism in its *total war* against the Jews would have to completely destroy the Weimar “system” and replace its rotten foundations with a ruthless racist dictatorship.

It is evident that the Nazi discourse on these issues had qualitatively moved some distance beyond the familiar themes of pre-1914 anti-Semitism, whether Christian or anti-Christian. Hitler had adopted a political conception of Jewry that was ultimately derived from the war; he had embraced a mental universe of *Sieg oder Untergang* (victory or downfall) in relation to Communism and the Jews. Moreover, the latter were consistently dehumanized in zoological language either as an inferior race or as “vermin” to be cleansed or else as germs, bacilli, and microbes that attack and poison organisms unless they are eradicated.<sup>35</sup> Jewry is presented as the equivalent of a bubonic plague in the Middle Ages, only the medical metaphors in this case invoke more modern diseases like cancer

and tuberculosis. "The Jew" was invariably referred to in Nazi discourse as a type to which *all* Jews conformed, whether western or eastern, men or women, secular or religious, assimilated or unassimilated, bourgeois or proletarian. Even baptized Jews were irrevocably tainted in Nazi ideology by the stigma of degenerate blood. Jews as a "counter-race" were perceived as the polar opposite to the German "Aryans," being inherently destructive, parasitical, and agents of decomposition (*Zersetzung*).<sup>36</sup>

By virtue of their abstract intellect, mercenary egoism, and corrupt mentality, the Jews were a special danger to German women. Julius Streicher in *Der Stürmer*, the most pornographic of all Nazi anti-Semitic publications, specialized (much to Hitler's delight) in elaborating on the presumed sexual pathology of the "Jewish peril." Streicher regularly accused Jews of rape and of exploiting German girls for prostitution; he revived the medieval blood libel that Jews abducted German children for ritual murder purposes; he even claimed that Jews deliberately sought to poison the blood of German women through sexual intercourse.<sup>37</sup> *Der Stürmer* reveled, for example, in the absurd theories put forward by the racist author Arthur Dinter in his bestselling novel, *The Sin Against the Blood* (1918). Dinter had claimed in all seriousness that if a German woman had ever engaged in sexual relations with a Jew, she would transmit Jewish hereditary characteristics even to children conceived with German fathers. For Hitler, who had gnawing doubts about the possible taint of Jewish blood in his own family background, such obsessions had a special significance.<sup>38</sup> Intense, guilt-ridden sexual puritanism, the deeply rooted desire to avenge himself for early deprivations and social humiliation, together with a morbid fixation on blood and race heightened the irrational extremism of his Judeophobia.

But how far could such personal obsessions be shared by other groups in German society? To what extent, if any, did paranoid anti-Semitism help Hitler to win power? It is probably impossible to measure its impact on Germans in any convincing way. We do know that the consequences of the First World War encouraged many disillusioned former soldiers not only to despise the postwar republic and its democratic politicians but also to blame the Jews for the debacle. Right-wing nationalists, conservative monarchists, and members of the old elites, frightened by the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and the prospect of an encore in Germany, were often receptive to the myth of a Jewish conspiracy. Among the lower classes, many did indeed believe that Jews had profited from the war or the reparations. There were others, too, who resented Jewish immigration from the east or believed that the stock exchange and banking capital were mainly in the hands of Jewish financiers. Such arguments were hardly new. They had long attracted impoverished artisans, craftsmen, and small traders.<sup>39</sup> But now, in the overheated atmosphere of the early

postwar years, extreme anti-Semitism did seem to burst through traditional restraints. It extended from the semi-respectable DNVP (Deutschnationale Volkspartei, the German National People's Party) to the student fraternities, where it was especially violent; it penetrated the churches and found an echo in Communist efforts to play the nationalist card by denouncing "Jewish finance capital."<sup>40</sup> The notorious Russian anti-Semitic forgery, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, translated into German shortly after the war, briefly became a bestseller.<sup>41</sup> By 1933, there were more than four hundred anti-Semitic associations and societies in Germany, along with some seven hundred anti-Jewish periodicals. Some of the scurrilous pamphlets portrayed the Jews in the hysterical tones reminiscent of *Der Stürmer*. More respectable conservative opinion deplored the permissive mores, modernist culture, and radical politics of Berlin in the 1920s, which was attributed to Jewish and Marxist influence.<sup>42</sup>

On the other hand, throughout the 1920s the Nazi vote remained modest. Even in the 1928 Reichstag elections, they obtained only eight hundred thousand votes and a mere twelve seats in parliament. National Socialist success in using anti-Semitism seemed limited outside of regions where there was a preexisting historical tradition or local factors favoring it. Thus, anti-Semitism resonated in Franconia, Hesse, Westphalia, and some areas of Bavaria but was relatively muted in the Rhineland, Baden, Württemberg, and Schleswig-Holstein. Even among ordinary Nazi Party members, only a hard-core minority (though a very vocal one) regarded anti-Semitism as the critical issue. It was evidently less important than anti-Communism, nationalism, or the woes of unemployment in attracting new adherents to the movement. Nevertheless, in Nazi agitation among high-school and university students, anti-Semitism was undoubtedly a crucial weapon in recruitment, helping the Nazis to "capture" a commanding position at German universities by 1930.<sup>43</sup> Similarly, they had achieved some success among professional associations of physicians and teachers in spreading the anti-Jewish message. Since Jews in the Weimar Republic were well represented in the free professions, the universities, and cultural life, it was relatively easy to ignite competitive envy against them in these sectors.

Nazi penetration of the countryside and of urban middle-class groups just as the Great Depression began to bite in Germany after 1929 helps to explain the remarkable increase in their vote in the September 1930 elections. The movement leaped dramatically from 12 to 107 seats (18.3 percent of the total) in the Reichstag, making it the second largest party. In July 1932, the Nazis definitively emerged as the biggest party in the Reichstag, with 37.3 percent of the vote (230 seats), which was their peak performance under strictly democratic conditions. The staggering shift in their fortunes had coincided with their emergence as a catchall party

appealing to the unifying ideal of *Volksgemeinschaft* (national community). They appeared to be a movement that, unlike all its rivals, was able to transcend regional, class, religious, and party barriers. Though the Nazis made little impact on the solid electoral base of the Catholic and socialist parties, it did win over much of the youth vote, the disaffected *Mittelstand*, disillusioned supporters of the weakened middle-class parties, some sections of the unemployed, unskilled workers, and much of the farming constituency.<sup>44</sup> To achieve such a broad appeal, Hitler focused his message more intensely around integral nationalism. Between 1930 and 1933, he temporarily toned down the full-blooded anti-Semitism that lay at the core of his worldview.

Hitler had no difficulty in tailoring Nazi propaganda in order to attain power by legal means, once he recognized that anti-Semitism was not his most effective issue or central to the electorate. Instead, he underlined his unswerving rejection of a parliamentary democracy that had palpably failed. He acknowledged the urgent need to regenerate economic life in the face of mass unemployment and adapted his message to the longing for stability, law, and order felt by so many ordinary Germans. Hitler knew how to play with uncanny skill on the chord of wounded German pride and national humiliation while holding out the promise of a redemptive reawakening that would lift Germans from their despair. Anti-Semitism in this political context was a crucial policy adjunct, but it was not decisive. Nonetheless, it was employed with great effectiveness to exacerbate local grievances, to satisfy the radical anticapitalist urges of the SA (storm troopers) rank and file, and to reinforce street campaigns against the Marxist parties. Hitler was far too shrewd to allow it, though, to interfere in the complex political game that would bring him power in January 1933.

For a brief moment after the Nazi vote declined in the November 1932 elections, reducing their representation to 196 seats in the Reichstag, it seemed that they might have passed their peak. It was the backstage maneuverings of authoritarian conservative politicians, wealthy industrialists, and army leaders that unexpectedly opened the door to Hitler.<sup>45</sup> This conservative camarilla hoped to manipulate the Nazis for their own narrow purposes and dreamed of dealing the deathblow to the Weimar parliamentary system and finally smashing the left-wing parties. They unwisely gambled on their ability to control events. These reactionary elites who had always despised the republic thought they could tame Hitler and convince him to do their bidding. Especially naïve in this respect was the former chancellor and Catholic Center Party politician Franz von Papen. He desperately needed Hitler's electoral appeal to further his ambitions, since he lacked any popular support himself. Determined to take revenge on his hated rival, General Kurt von Schleicher, and to remove him from

the chancellorship, Papen was eager to promote a coalition of nationalists and Nazis. He persuaded the aging President Paul von Hindenburg to accept this coalition.

On 30 January 1933, Hitler became chancellor and Papen his deputy in a cabinet that contained eight conservatives and only two Nazi ministers. But in the new age of mass politics, such cabinet arithmetic counted for relatively little. During this realignment, the Nazi “war against the Jews” – not for the first or the last time – was temporarily suspended. The “Jewish question,” so central to Hitler’s own concerns, was quietly subordinated to the immediate task of seizing power. But any illusions that the assumption of office might moderate Nazi policy toward the Jews were to be swiftly and cruelly dashed.

Hitler’s accession to power marked the end of Jewish emancipation in Germany. In the next six years, a whole century of Jewish integration into German society and culture would be comprehensively and brutally reversed. From the outset, the Nazis instituted terroristic policies directed against political opponents and Jews, who were subjected to random violence by marauding gangs of SA thugs. On 1 April 1933, the German government officially proclaimed a one-day economic boycott of Jewish shops and businesses, organized by the fanatical Julius Streicher. It was ostensibly designed as a form of “self-defense” and a response to anti-German “atrocities” allegedly inspired by Jews abroad. Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels asserted that the boycott was a “spontaneous,” grassroots action, but this was belied by the public response of Germans, which was decidedly mixed. For German Jews, it was, however, a tremendous shock to suddenly become the targeted victims of government-inspired hate and to be turned into hostages whose safety would henceforth be conditioned on the “good behavior” of their co-religionists in the outside world. Within less than a week, the new Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service pensioned off civil servants of “non-Aryan” origin. In deference to President Hindenburg’s sensitivities as a field marshal and war hero, Jewish war veterans (whose relatively large number appears to have surprised the Nazis) were temporarily exempted from this legislation. Separate laws disbarred 1,400 lawyers as well as 381 Jewish judges and state prosecutors. By the end of 1934, 70 percent of all Jewish lawyers and 60 percent of all Jewish notaries had been dismissed. By mid-1935, more than half the Jewish doctors in Germany had been removed from their profession. Within less than five years, the medical purge became total.<sup>46</sup>

Goebbels moved rapidly against thousands of Jewish academics, artists, journalists, and writers, some of whom were Nobel laureates or enjoyed international reputations. Albert Einstein was only the most celebrated among the many prominent scientists and intellectuals

who emigrated. No fewer than two hundred Jewish academics followed suit in 1933 alone. Altogether in the first year of Nazi rule, about forty thousand Jews left Germany, those who were young and single having the best chance to begin a new life abroad. The purges in the artistic and cultural spheres were especially swift. The new Chamber of Culture, established by Goebbels in September 1933, immediately excluded Jews from employment in theater, film, and music, and a National Press Law likewise prevented Jews from being journalists. The result was an unprecedented hemorrhaging of talent, with Germany's loss a gain for the Western democracies, especially for Britain and America. This was not, however, the way the Nazis saw it. On 6 April 1933, Hitler had told representatives of the medical association in Berlin that the claim of Germany "to its own peculiar intellectual leadership must be met by the early elimination of the surplus Jewish intellectuals from cultural and intellectual life."<sup>47</sup>

In May 1933, as if to underline the point, Goebbels solemnly declared at a book-burning ceremony in the capital that "the era of an exaggerated Jewish intellectualism is forever over." The books of leading writers, both Jewish and Gentile but all considered "decadent" or opposed to Nazi ideology, were consigned to the flames in city squares all over the country, before excited crowds of Germans, with university students especially at the forefront. Alongside such well-known "Jewish" subversives as Marx, Freud, Einstein, Kurt Tucholsky, Heinrich Heine, and Leon Trotsky, the writings of non-Jews such as Thomas Mann, Bertolt Brecht, Erich Maria Remarque, Erich Kästner, and H. G. Wells went up in smoke in a gigantic execution of what was now called "un-German literature." In contrast to the economic boycott, neither the book burnings nor the purges in the arts or sciences elicited any public protests. The cultural "Aryanization" policy appeared to be popular, echoing a long-standing belief among many Germans that Jews were overrepresented in these areas. It held out the tempting promise of new career opportunities for ambitious non-Jewish Germans.

Jewish responses to this assault varied greatly. For some, the sudden vehemence of German anti-Semitism after 1933 came as a total shock, and there were those who hoped that it would pass away like a bad dream. Optimists easily persuaded themselves that Hitler was but a temporary aberration, a freak phenomenon who either would not last in office or would soon be forced by his blue-blooded coalition partners to moderate his policies. There were those who had built up family businesses over generations or were too deeply attached to the German language and culture to envisage any alternatives. There were the elderly, for whom a fresh start seemed inconceivable. Then there were the excessively well established, who had too much property to lose. Even after six years of

humiliating and degrading persecution, philologist Victor Klemperer, an assimilated, converted German Jew, could write the following in his diary.

Until 1933 and for at least a good century before that, the German Jews were entirely German and nothing else. Proof: the thousands and thousands of half- and quarter-Jews etc. Jews and “persons of Jewish descent”, proof that Jews and Germans lived and worked together without friction in all spheres of German life. The antisemitism which was always present is not at all proof to the contrary, because the friction between Jews and “Aryans” was not half so great as, for example, that between Protestants and Catholics, or between employers and employees, or between East Prussians, for example, and southern Bavarians, or Rhinelanders and Berliners. The German Jews were a part of the German nation, as the French Jews were part of the French nation etc. They played their part within the life of Germany, by no means as a burden on the whole. Their role was rarely that of the worker, still less of the agricultural labourer. They were, and remain (even though now they no longer wish to remain so), Germans, in the main intellectuals and educated people.<sup>48</sup>

For thoroughly Germanized Jews, the “Jewish question” was altogether artificial, based on a zoological concept of “blood purity” that had no connection with reality. Hence it is not surprising that Klemperer despised the Zionist solution to the Jewish problem as “something for sectarians,” a historical throwback and absurdity that was “contrary to nature,” not to say a crime against reason. “It seems complete madness to me,” he observed, “if specifically Jewish states are now to be set up in Rhodesia or somewhere. That would be letting the Nazis throw us back thousands of years.”<sup>49</sup>

But it was those like Klemperer, clinging on at all costs in Germany, who seemed increasingly out of touch with events. Nearly 10 percent of German Jews had already fled the country by the end of 1933, mostly to neighboring France, Belgium, Switzerland, and Holland, though these lands were themselves in the grip of economic depression, and Jewish refugees were not exactly welcomed. Moreover, as refugees, they had to forfeit much of their property, which had been confiscated by the German authorities, making emigration much more difficult. The Nazis cynically judged that the more destitute Jewish refugees appeared to be, the more of a burden they would become on potential host countries, thereby stirring up anti-Semitic sentiments there. The immigration quotas and closed-door policy of the United States and many other countries – including Canada, Australia, and South Africa, which had large territories and sparse populations within the British dominions – seemed to confirm their assessment. Nevertheless, about 200,000 Jews left Germany within the first six years of Nazi rule, and another 82,000 emigrated from Austria in 1938. Out of

all these Jewish refugees, the largest single group (132,000) found new homes in the United States; 55,000 Jews emigrated to British-controlled Palestine, 40,000 to England, 20,000 to Argentina and Brazil; 9,000 went to Shanghai, 7,000 were accepted in Australia, and another 5,000 in South Africa. But the absolute figures are deceptive unless one takes into account the size, population, and resources of the host countries.

Palestine, as the “Jewish National Home” designated by the League of Nations, appeared for the first time to be an increasingly realistic prospect for many German Jews. By then, alternative options were shrinking fast. Jewish emigration to Palestine was indeed initially encouraged by the Nazis as a way of making Germany *Judenrein* (free of Jews).<sup>50</sup> The Third Reich even signed a “transfer” agreement (*Ha'avara*) with the Zionist leadership of Palestinian Jewry (the Jewish Agency), which permitted Jews to take out a portion of their capital in the form of German goods. This much-criticized deal enabled thousands of German Jews to emigrate to Palestine, where they significantly strengthened the Jewish community through an influx of educated manpower and technical and organizational skills. Although the new immigrants received only a portion of their money, they were nonetheless better off than if they had emigrated to other destinations, where no such arrangements were in place. Above all, their lives were saved, since they were physically farther removed from the Reich than those in neighboring European countries were. Of course, had the British Eighth Army not defeated Rommel in late 1942 in the deserts of North Africa, even that outcome might have been less fortunate.

In the economic sphere, Hitler proceeded slowly against the Jews in the early years of Nazi rule, following the expert advice of Economics Minister Hjalmar Schacht.<sup>51</sup> He was well aware of Germany’s financial vulnerability and the vital importance of overcoming mass unemployment. Hence, government legislation mainly targeted small Jewish traders and professional people rather than Jewish-owned banking houses, department stores, and companies that were important to the German economy. Nevertheless, by 1935 about one quarter of all Jewish businesses had been dismantled or “Aryanized” at knockdown prices. It was only after June 1938, when the German economic recovery had been fully achieved, that the systematic dispossession and expropriation of Jewish property was finally undertaken. This definitive elimination of the Jews from the German economy obliged about 120,000 Jews to leave the country, almost penniless, within just more than one year.

Hitler’s anti-Jewish policy in the early years of Nazi rule had to be relatively cautious on account of his domestic and international situation. He could not initially afford to ignore President Hindenburg and the more conservative ministers in the Cabinet, such as Papen, Alfred Hugenberg, Foreign Minister Constantin von Neurath, and Schacht, who expected



him to preserve law and order while keeping in check the plebeian anti-Semitism of the more radical Nazis. The conservative nationalists were hardly “philo-Semites” or defenders of Jewish rights. They had no problem with the *numerus clausus* law, which had limited Jews to 1.5 percent of the places in high schools and universities, nor with the formal canceling of their citizenship on 23 March 1934. Strictly *legal* measures that aimed at isolating and excluding the Jews appeared acceptable to them, as they did to many Germans, including the leaders of the Protestant and Catholic churches.<sup>52</sup> Violent anti-Jewish street actions were another matter. Leading Nazi Party officials themselves euphemistically referred to such gangsterism as *Einzelaktionen* – the kind of SA rowdiness and sadistic hooliganism that was giving Germany a bad name abroad. Hence, Deputy Führer Rudolf Hess, citing Hitler’s need to refute “allegations of atrocities and boycotts made by Jews abroad,” gave a confidential order in April 1935 to party militants not to engage in acts of terror against individual Jews.<sup>53</sup> It was not easy, however, to pacify the Nazi rank and file, who could not understand why any Jewish banks, department stores, export houses, or industrial enterprises were permitted to function in a National-Socialist State that was reputedly at war with world Jewry.<sup>54</sup> The “little Nazis” greedily anticipated the liquidation or “Aryanization” of Jewish property, which they believed had been promised to them by the party program and by their leaders’ anticapitalist demagogery. But while Hitler profoundly sympathized with the violent impulses of the more fanatical anti-Semites, he knew that the time was not yet ripe to implement a truly radical approach.

The Nuremberg Race Laws of September 1935 were a kind of compromise between these countervailing pressures. The laws “for the Protection of German Blood and German Honour” formally stripped the Jews of their remaining rights as citizens.<sup>55</sup> They also forbade marriages and extramarital sexual intercourse between Jews and subjects of the state “of German or related blood”; they prohibited Jews from employing female German servants under forty-five years of age (presumably out of fear that Jewish men might seduce younger German women); they forbade Jews from flying the national flag (the swastika) or Reich colors. The Reich Citizenship Law also provided a new definition of who was, and who was not, a Jew. It differentiated among three categories: (1) full-blooded Jews, who were designated as persons descended from at least three fully Jewish grandparents, as were those who belonged to or had later joined the Jewish religious community, had two Jewish grandparents, or had married a Jew; (2) the *Mischlinge* (part-Jews or persons of mixed descent) “first degree,” who had two Jewish grandparents but had not married a Jew or been a member of the local synagogue; (3) the *Mischlinge* “second degree,” who had only one Jewish grandparent. According

to the somewhat inflated Nazi statistics, in 1935 there were no fewer than 750,000 Germans who fell into the category of first- or second-degree *Mischlinge*, in addition to the estimate of 475,000 “full Jews” who practiced their religion and another 300,000 who did not. Thus, there were more than 1.5 million Germans of “Jewish blood” in 1935, according to the peculiar Nazi categorizations. Time would show that differences among these labels could become life-and-death issues.

The declared objective of the Nuremberg Race Laws, according to Hitler’s own Reichstag speech, was “to find a separate secular solution [*eine einmalige säkulare Lösung*] for building a basis upon which the German nation can adopt a better attitude towards the Jews [*ein erträgliches Verhältnis zum jüdischen Volk*].”<sup>56</sup> The Nazi leader could simultaneously claim both that he was seeking to solve “the Jewish problem by legal means” and that by disenfranchising the Jews, he was finally fulfilling a cardinal point in the NSDAP program of 1920 – namely, that no Jew could ever be a *Volksgenosse* (racial comrade) or a *Reichsbürger* (citizen of the Reich). No less important, Hitler warned starkly that if workable arrangements with the Jews broke down, he might have to pass a law “handing the problem over to the National Socialist Party for final solution” (*zur endgültigen Lösung*).<sup>57</sup> Yet top Nazi officials, such as Interior Minister Wilhelm Frick, also made more reassuring remarks at this time. In December 1935, Frick declared that “the Jews will not be deprived of the possibility of living in Germany.”<sup>58</sup> The director of the German Press Agency even suggested that “Germany is helping Judaism to strengthen its national character and is making a contribution towards improved relations between the two peoples.”<sup>59</sup> The correspondent of *The Times* of London summarized the official commentary on the Nuremberg Race Laws as follows: “The members of the Jewish minority in Germany received through the new legislation the right to live their own cultural and national life. They can have their own schools, theatres and sports clubs. . . . But the participation of Jews in the political or social affairs of the German people is now and for ever (says the commentary) prohibited.” The correspondent even noted that Hitler had informed party leaders that he was against arbitrary “individual actions.”<sup>60</sup>

Although German Jews had been reduced to second-class citizens, many had not yet given up hope that they might still find a niche within the Third Reich. They clutched at the straw that racial separation might indeed stabilize their position, as some official rhetoric seemed to imply, by offering them a “legally protected” framework.<sup>61</sup> German Jews had been isolated from the rest of the population, but not all their means of livelihood had yet been destroyed. Some German Zionists also managed to find a few positive aspects to the race laws, though for different reasons. They particularly welcomed its contribution to the collapse of

“assimilationist” illusions. There were even those among them who misguidedly believed that the principle of racial separation offered good prospects for increased and more intense Jewish cultural activity.<sup>62</sup> Ironically, this proved to be true for the brief period before the radicalization of Nazi policy in 1938 brought the curtain down on any illusions of a semiautonomous Jewish existence within the Third Reich.

The spectacular extravaganza of the 1936 Berlin Olympics encouraged the hopes and delusions of German Jewry for a little while longer, as the worldwide attention led to a toning down of the more vicious abuse and a halt to more blatant acts of anti-Semitic terror. The Nazis even permitted the token participation of a few Jewish athletes on their Olympic team to appease international criticism.<sup>63</sup> Germans were ordered to be on their best behavior in order to radiate a positive image abroad of the new Reich as a law-abiding, peace-loving state. Significantly, Hitler postponed any act of vengeance against German Jewry for the assassination in February 1936 of the Swiss Nazi Party leader by David Frankfurter, a young Yugoslav Jew. But Hitler was only biding his time. As he told an assembly of regional Nazi leaders on 29 April 1937, he had long ago made himself an “expert” on the Jewish problem, and in the next two to three years it would of course “be settled one way or the other.”<sup>64</sup> Indeed, in a secret 1936 memorandum on his Four-year Plan, he made it clear that German Jewry would be expropriated in the event of the Reich going to war, an eventuality for which he was already planning. Toward the end of 1937, with full employment achieved, the drive to completely eliminate Jews from the German economy was noticeably accelerated. Not by accident, this coincided with the resignation of Schacht from the Economics Ministry, followed in February 1938 by the removal of Neurath as foreign minister as well as the sacking of War Minister von Blomberg and the chief of the Army High Command, Werner Freiherr von Fritsch. At a stroke, the Chancellor had rid himself of the last remaining representatives of aristocratic conservatism in high positions, thereby gaining full control over the armed forces and foreign policy.

A month later, Hitler annexed his former Austrian homeland. Vienna, with its prosperous community of nearly two hundred thousand Jews, quickly became a model for the rapid forced emigration of Jewry from the Reich. After a particularly violent and brutal campaign of intimidation, Jews were forced by the SA to scrub the pavements of Vienna with small brushes, watched by crowds of jeering spectators. Jewish businesses were expropriated with electrifying speed, and Jewish homes shamelessly looted by Austrian Nazi thugs.<sup>65</sup> The Austrian tradition of anti-Semitism (which had molded the young Hitler thirty years earlier) flared up again with an intensity that caught even the invading Germans by surprise. The hysterical reception accorded Hitler on his triumphant return to Vienna in

March 1938 provided the catalyst for this unprecedented outpouring of repressed hatred against the Jews.<sup>66</sup>

The Austrian model of radicalized anti-Jewish measures was immediately adopted in Germany itself. A full-scale "Aryanization" of the larger Jewish firms was initiated by Hermann Goering, the overseer of the Four-year Plan, as part of the broader policy of accelerated rearmament. A decree of 26 April 1938 obliged all Jews to report their total assets; in June 1938, drafts for the obligatory "Aryanization" of Jewish businesses were already in place. The mood in party circles and in the country was becoming more violently hostile to Jews. *The Times's* correspondent noted that even in Berlin, hitherto "the most tolerant German city in its treatment of Jews," slogans such as "Germans must not buy from Jews" or "Out with the Jews" were becoming visible.<sup>67</sup> Storm troopers were seen picketing Jewish shops and roughly handling their owners. A campaign of arrests led to about one thousand Jews being taken off to concentration camps, originally established in 1933 for political opponents.

The flood of anti-Jewish legislation, the expropriations of businesses, and the general aggression of the regime had inevitably produced a new wave of Jewish emigration from Nazi Germany that began to alarm the democratic countries. At the initiative of America's president, Franklin D. Roosevelt, an international conference was convened in July 1938 in Evian, France, ostensibly to address the plight of the Jewish refugees being ousted from Germany and Austria.<sup>68</sup> The organizers preferred, however, to emphasize that the talks covered political refugees from all countries. In attendance were representatives from twenty-nine governments, including Great Britain and its dominions, most of the Latin American republics, France, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, and three Scandinavian countries. The London *Daily Express* approvingly summarized some of the characteristic responses to the challenge of the hour made by individual delegates. The Australian minister for trade and customs explained that his country could do nothing more for Jewish refugees. Australia wanted only British immigrants, and they had no desire to import a "racial problem" by "encouraging any scheme of large-scale racial migration." The Canadian representative, whose country's record on Jewish immigration was abysmal, evoked economic uncertainties and unemployment problems. Argentina indicated that it was looking mainly for "experienced agriculturalists," which seemed to rule out most Jews. Belgium would not assume any international obligations "whose consequences she cannot foresee."<sup>69</sup>

Most disappointing of all was the refusal by the United States and Great Britain to contemplate taking in any substantial number of Jewish refugees. Indeed, once America, the sponsoring nation, made plain its unwillingness to open its own doors, it had virtually doomed the Evian Conference. In retrospect, the whole exercise seemed designed by the

American State Department as a way to *divert* refugees from the United States and forestall any international pressure to liberalize its own immigration laws.<sup>70</sup> The British attitude was no less hypocritical. The Foreign Office successfully managed to keep Palestine off the agenda and blocked any denunciation of the Nazi government. The delegation pleaded lack of resources to explain its own refusal to take any more Jews, while vaguely promising to investigate whether a limited number of refugees could not be settled in its East African colonies. *The Times* of London in an editorial on 16 July 1938 praised this offer and commented: "The refugee problem can be solved only by a mixture of mercy and cool calculation, both of which were shown in excellent proportion at Evian."<sup>71</sup> Golda Meir, the future prime minister of Israel and an observer at the Evian Conference, took a very different view, writing in her autobiography, "I don't think that anyone who didn't live through it can understand what I felt at Evian – a mixture of sorrow, rage, frustration and horror."<sup>72</sup>

Most revealing of all as a response to this fiasco was Hitler's contemptuous reaction. Even before the results of the conference were known, he mocked the humanitarian pretensions of the Western democracies (especially Britain and America) that claimed to be so solicitous of "these criminals" (i.e., the Jews). In January 1939, he referred again to the charade: it had been a "shameful spectacle to see how the whole democratic world is oozing sympathy for the poor tormented Jewish people, but remains hard-hearted and obdurate when it comes to helping them – which is surely, in view of its attitude, an obvious duty."<sup>73</sup> Indeed, the Nazi leadership could only have felt bolstered in its increasingly brutal policy on the "Jewish question" by the results of the Evian Conference. The whole miserable farce had demonstrated that Western nations were not at all willing to open their doors and accept Jewish refugees or to commit themselves to rescue Jews. Nor were they ready to publicly criticize Nazi anti-Semitic legislation – preferring instead to view it as an *internal* German matter. Finally, there was another troubling implication, which was as yet only dimly visible on the horizon. If Nazi Germany could no longer expect to export, sell, or expel its Jews to an indifferent world that plainly did not want them, then perhaps they would have to do something even more drastic.

## NOTES

- 1 Werner Jochmann, *Gesellschaftskrise und Judenfeindschaft in Deutschland* (Hamburg, 1991), 132–70.
- 2 See Hans Mommsen, *The Rise and Fall of Weimar Democracy* (Chapel Hill, 1996).

- 3 H. A. Winkler, "Anti-Semitism in Weimar Society," in Herbert A. Strauss, ed., *Hostages of Modernization: Studies in Modern Antisemitism, 1870–1939* (Berlin, 1993), 196–205.
- 4 Jochmann, *Gesellschaftskrise*, 171–94.
- 5 Werner T. Angress, "Juden im politischen Leben der Revolutionszeit," in Werner E. Mosse and Arnold Paucker, eds., *Deutsches Judentum in Krieg und Revolution, 1916–1923* (Tübingen, 1971), 235–51.
- 6 *Ibid.*, 254–308.
- 7 Ernst Schulin, *Walther Rathenau: Repräsentant, Kritiker, und Opfer seiner Zeit* (Göttingen, 1979); Peter Loewenberg, *Fantasy and Reality in History* (New York, 1995), 108–18.
- 8 Yitzhak Arad et al., *Documents on the Holocaust* (Jerusalem, 1981), 15–18.
- 9 Robert S. Wistrich, "Georg von Schoenerer and the Genesis of Modern Austrian Antisemitism," in Strauss, *Hostages*, 675–88.
- 10 Robert S. Wistrich, *The Jews of Vienna in the Age of Franz Joseph* (Oxford, 1989), 211.
- 11 Brigitte Hamann, *Hitler's Vienna: A Dictator's Apprenticeship* (New York, 1999), 244–5, 251–3.
- 12 Robert S. Wistrich, "Karl Lueger and the Ambiguities of Viennese Antisemitism," *Jewish Social Studies* 45 (1983): 251–62; Richard S. Geehr, *Karl Lueger: Mayor of Fin de Siècle Vienna* (Detroit, 1990), 171–207.
- 13 Hamann, *Hitler's Vienna*, 273–303.
- 14 *Mein Kampf*. 120. For other influences on Hitler's anti-Semitism stemming from sources such as Lanz von Liebenfels and Guido von List, see Jackson Spielvogel and David Redles, "Hitler's Racial Ideology: Content and Occult Sources," *Simon Wiesenthal Centre Annual (SWC)* (1986): 227–46; also Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and Their Influence on Nazi Ideology; The Ariosophists of Austria and Germany, 1890–1935* (New York, 1992), 33–48, 90–122, 192–204.
- 15 Hamann, *Hitler's Vienna*, 24–7, 38–9, 62–7; Paul Lawrence Rose, *Wagner: Race and Revolution* (London, 1992), 147, 181–3, Joachim Köhler, *Wagner's Hitler: The Prophet and His Disciple* (Cambridge, 2000), 191–208, 269–95; T. C. W. Blanning, "Hitler, Vienna, and Wagner," *German History* 18.4 (2000): 487–94; Saul Friedländer and Jörn Rüsen, eds., *Richard Wagner im Dritten Reich* (Munich, 2000), esp. the essay by Paul L. Rose, pp. 283–308.
- 16 Margaret Brearley, "Hitler and Wagner: The Leader, the Master, and the Jews," *Patterns of Prejudice* 22.2 (1988): 3–21.
- 17 Robert S. Wistrich, *Antisemitism: The Longest Hatred* (London: Thames Methuen, 1991), 57.
- 18 *Mein Kampf*, 55.
- 19 *Ibid.*
- 20 *Ibid.*, 60–2.
- 21 Hamann, *Hitler's Vienna*, 347–59. See also Ian Kershaw, *Hitler, 1889–1936: Hubris* (London, 1999), 36–69, on his period as a dropout.
- 22 *Mein Kampf*, 59.
- 23 *Ibid.*, 512. Arad, *Documents*, 445–8.
- 24 *Mein Kampf*, 445–8.

- 25 Ibid., 65.
- 26 Klaus Vondung, *Magie und Manipulation: Ideologische Kult und politische Religion des Nationalsozialismus* (Göttingen, 1971); James Rhodes, *The Hitler Movement: A Modern Millenarian Revolution* (Stanford, 1980), 29–84, and Ley and Schoeps, *Nationalsozialismus*, 151–85, 229–60.
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- 28 *Mein Kampf*, 772.
- 29 Hitler to Chvalkovsky, 21 January 1939, in *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918–1954, Series D* (Washington, DC, 1949–64), 190–5 (henceforth DGFP).
- 30 Werner Maser, ed., *Hitler's Letters and Notes* (New York, 1974), 215.
- 31 Ibid.
- 32 Gerhard L. Weinberg, ed., *Hitler's Zweites Buch: Ein Dokument aus dem Jahre 1928* (Stuttgart, 1961), 22–3.
- 33 Ibid., 222.
- 34 Wistrich, *Hitler's Apocalypse*, 43–4.
- 35 Alex Bein, “Der Jüdische Parasit-Bemerkungen zur Semantik der Judenfrage,” *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* (1965), 121–49 (henceforth VJfZ).
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- 37 Randall T. Bytwerk, *Julius Streicher* (New York, 1983); Kershaw, *Hitler*, 179, 560, 563–4; Fred Hahn, *Lieber Stürmer! Leserbriefe an das NS-Kampfblatt 1924 bis 1945* (Stuttgart, 1978), 84ff.
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- 39 Karl Dietrich Bracher, *The German Dictatorship* (London, 1991), 109–33, 195–213; Jochmann, *Gesellschaftskrise*, 117–54.
- 40 Jochmann, *Gesellschaftskrise*, 265ff.; Silberner, *Kommunisten*, 268–70.
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- 44 Richard Hamilton, *Who Voted for Hitler?* (Princeton, 1982), 355–419; Thomas Childers, *The Nazi Voter: The Social Foundations of Fascism in Germany, 1919–1933* (Chapel Hill, 1983), 142–269.
- 45 Bracher, *German Dictatorship*, 252–68. Henry A. Turner, *Hitler's Thirty Days to Power: January 1933* (London, 1996), 135–83, shows that his victory was by no means inevitable.

- 46 On the rampant anti-Semitism in the German medical community, see Robert Proctor, *Racial Hygiene: Medicine under the Nazis* (Cambridge, Mass., 1988), 131–76.
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## *Nation and Race*

ADOLF HITLER

There were few Jews in Linz. In the course of the centuries their outward appearance had become Europeanized and had taken on a human look; in fact, I even took them for Germans. The absurdity of this idea did not dawn on me because I saw no distinguishing feature but the strange religion. The fact that they had, as I believed, been persecuted on this account sometimes almost turned my distaste at unfavorable remarks about them into horror.

Thus far I did not so much as suspect the existence of an organized opposition to the Jews.

Then I came to Vienna.

Preoccupied by the abundance of my impressions in the architectural field, oppressed by the hardship of my own lot, I gained at first no insight into the inner stratification of the people in this gigantic city. Notwithstanding that Vienna in those days counted nearly two hundred thousand Jews among its two million inhabitants, I did not see them. In the first few weeks my eyes and my senses were not equal to the flood of values and ideas. Not until calm gradually returned and the agitated picture began to clear did I look around me more carefully in my new world, and then among other things I encountered the Jewish question.

I cannot maintain that the way in which I became acquainted with them struck me as particularly pleasant. For the Jew was still characterized for me by nothing but his religion, and therefore, on grounds of human tolerance, I maintained my rejection of religious attacks in this case as in others. Consequently, the tone, particularly that of the Viennese anti-Semitic press, seemed to me unworthy of the cultural tradition of a great nation. I was oppressed by the memory of certain occurrences in the Middle Ages, which I should not have liked to see repeated. Since the

newspapers in question did not enjoy an outstanding reputation (the reason for this, at that time, I myself did not precisely know), I regarded them more as the products of anger and envy than the results of a principled, though perhaps mistaken, point of view.

I was reinforced in this opinion by what seemed to me the far more dignified form in which the really big papers answered all these attacks, or, what seemed to me even more praiseworthy, failed to mention them; in other words, simply killed them with silence.

I zealously read the so-called world press (*Neue Freie Presse*, *Wiener Tageblatt*, etc.) and was amazed at the scope of what they offered their readers and the objectivity of individual articles. I respected the exalted tone, though the flamboyance of the style sometimes caused me inner dissatisfaction, or even struck me unpleasantly. Yet this may have been due to the rhythm of life in the whole metropolis.

Since in those days I saw Vienna in that light, I thought myself justified in accepting this explanation of mine as a valid excuse.

But what sometimes repelled me was the undignified fashion in which this press curried favor with the Court. There was scarcely an event in the Hofburg which was not imparted to the readers either with raptures of enthusiasm or plaintive emotion, and all this to-do, particularly when it dealt with the 'wisest monarch' of all time, almost reminded me of the mating cry of a mountain cock.

To me the whole thing seemed artificial.

In my eyes it was a blemish upon liberal democracy.

To curry favor with this Court and in such indecent forms was to sacrifice the dignity of the nation.

This was the first shadow to darken my intellectual relationship with the 'big' Viennese press.

As I had always done before, I continued in Vienna to follow events in Germany with ardent zeal, quite regardless whether they were political or cultural. With pride and admiration, I compared the rise of the Reich with the wasting away of the Austrian state. If events in the field of foreign politics filled me, by and large, with undivided joy, the less gratifying aspects of internal life often aroused anxiety and gloom. The struggle which at that time was being carried on against William II did not meet with my approval. I regarded him not only as the German Emperor, but first and foremost as the creator of a German fleet. The restrictions of speech imposed on the Kaiser by the Reichstag angered me greatly because they emanated from a source which in my opinion really hadn't a leg to stand on, since in a single session these parliamentary imbeciles gabbled more nonsense than a whole dynasty of emperors, including its very weakest numbers, could ever have done in centuries.

I was outraged that in a state where every idiot not only claimed the right to criticize, but was given a seat in the Reichstag and let loose upon the nation as a 'lawgiver,' the man who bore the imperial crown had to take 'reprimands' from the greatest babblers' club of all time.

But I was even more indignant that the same Viennese press which made the most obsequious bows to every rickety horse in the Court, and flew into convulsions of joy if he accidentally swished his tail, should, with supposed concern, yet, as it seemed to me, ill-concealed malice, express its criticisms of the German Kaiser. Of course it had no intention of interfering with conditions within the German Reich – oh, no, God forbid – but by placing its finger on these wounds in the friendliest way, it was fulfilling the duty imposed by the spirit of the mutual alliance, and, conversely, fulfilling the requirements of journalistic truth, etc. And now it was poking this finger around in the wound to its heart's content.

In such cases the blood rose to my head.

It was this which caused me little by little to view the big papers with greater caution.

And on one such occasion I was forced to recognize that one of the anti-Semitic papers, the *Deutsches Volksblatt*, behaved more decently.

Another thing that got on my nerves was the loathsome cult for France which the big press, even then, carried on. A man couldn't help feeling ashamed to be a German when he saw these saccharine hymns of praise to the 'great cultural nation.' This wretched licking of France's boots more than once made me throw down one of these 'world newspapers.' And on such occasions I sometimes picked up the *Volksblatt*, which, to be sure, seemed to me much smaller, but in these matters somewhat more appetizing. I was not in agreement with the sharp anti-Semitic tone, but from time to time I read arguments which gave me some food for thought.

At all events, these occasions slowly made me acquainted with the man and the movement, which in those days guided Vienna's destinies: Dr Karl Lüger<sup>1</sup> and the Christian Social Party.

When I arrived in Vienna, I was hostile to both of them.

The man and the movement seemed 'reactionary' in my eyes.

My common sense of justice, however, forced me to change this judgment in proportion as I had occasion to become acquainted with the man and his work; and slowly my fair judgment turned to unconcealed admiration. Today, more than ever, I regard this man as the greatest German mayor of all times.

How many of my basic principles were upset by this change in my attitude toward the Christian Social movement!

My views with regard to anti-Semitism thus succumbed to the passage of time, and this was my greatest transformation of all.

It cost me the greatest inner soul struggles, and only after months of battle between my reason and my sentiments did my reason begin to emerge victorious. Two years later, my sentiment had followed my reason, and from then on became its most loyal guardian and sentinel.

At the time of this bitter struggle between spiritual education and cold reason, the visual instruction of the Vienna streets had performed invaluable services. There came a time when I no longer, as in the first days, wandered blindly through the mighty city; now with open eyes I saw not only the buildings but also the people.

Once, as I was strolling through the Inner City, I suddenly encountered an apparition in a black caftan and black hair locks. Is this a Jew? was my first thought.

For, to be sure, they had not looked like that in Linz. I observed the man furtively and cautiously, but the longer I stared at this foreign face, scrutinizing feature for feature, the more my first question assumed a new form:

Is this a German?

As always in such cases, I now began to try to relieve my doubts by books. For a few hellers I bought the first anti-Semitic pamphlets of my life. Unfortunately, they all proceeded from the supposition that in principle the reader knew or even understood the Jewish question to a certain degree. Besides, the tone for the most part was such that doubts again arose in me, due in part to the dull and amazingly unscientific arguments favoring the thesis.

I relapsed for weeks at a time, once even for months.

The whole thing seemed to me so monstrous, the accusations so boundless, that, tormented by the fear of doing injustice, I again became anxious and uncertain.

Yet I could no longer very well doubt that the objects of my study were not Germans of a special religion, but a people in themselves; for since I had begun to concern myself with this question and to take cognizance of the Jews, Vienna appeared to me in a different light than before. Wherever I went, I began to see Jews, and the more I saw, the more sharply they became distinguished in my eyes from the rest of humanity. Particularly the Inner City and the districts north of the Danube Canal swarmed with a people which even outwardly had lost all resemblance to Germans.

And whatever doubts I may still have nourished were finally dispelled by the attitude of a portion of the Jews themselves.

Among them there was a great movement, quite extensive in Vienna, which came out sharply in confirmation of the national character of the Jews: this was the *Zionists*.

It looked, to be sure, as though only a part of the Jews approved this viewpoint, while the great majority condemned and inwardly rejected

such a formulation. But when examined more closely, this appearance dissolved itself into an unsavory vapor of pretexts advanced for mere reasons of expedience, not to say lies. For the so-called liberal Jews did not reject the Zionists as non-Jews, but only as Jews with an impractical, perhaps even dangerous, way of publicly avowing their Jewishness.

Intrinsically they remained unalterably of one piece.

In a short time this apparent struggle between Zionistic and liberal Jews disgusted me; for it was false through and through, founded on lies and scarcely in keeping with the moral elevation and purity always claimed by this people.

The cleanliness of this people, moral and otherwise, I must say, is a point in itself. By their very exterior you could tell that these were no lovers of water, and, to your distress, you often knew it with your eyes closed. Later I often grew sick to my stomach from the smell of these caftan-wearers. Added to this, there was their unclean dress and their generally unheroic appearance.

All this could scarcely be called very attractive; but it became positively repulsive when, in addition to their physical uncleanliness, you discovered the moral stains on this 'chosen people.'

In a short time I was made more thoughtful than ever by my slowly rising insight into the type of activity carried on by the Jews in certain fields.

Was there any form of filth or profligacy, particularly in cultural life, without at least one Jew involved in it?

If you cut even cautiously into such an abscess, you found, like a maggot in a rotting body, often dazzled by the sudden light – a kike!

What had to be reckoned heavily against the Jews in my eyes was when I became acquainted with their activity in the press, art, literature, and the theater. All the unctuous reassurances helped little or nothing. It sufficed to look at a billboard, to study the names of the men behind the horrible trash they advertised, to make you hard for a long time to come. This was pestilence, spiritual pestilence, worse than the Black Death of olden times, and the people was being infected with it! It goes without saying that the lower the intellectual level of one of these art manufacturers, the more unlimited his fertility will be, and the scoundrel ends up like a garbage separator, splashing his filth in the face of humanity. And bear in mind that there is no limit to their number; bear in mind that for one Goethe Nature easily can foist on the world ten thousand of these scribblers who poison men's souls like germ-carriers of the worse sort, on their fellow men.

It was terrible, but not to be overlooked, that precisely the Jew, in tremendous numbers, seemed chosen by Nature for this shameful calling.

Is this why the Jews are called the 'chosen people'?

I now began to examine carefully the names of all the creators of unclean products in public artistic life. The result was less and less favorable for my previous attitude toward the Jews. Regardless how my sentiment might resist, my reason was forced to draw its conclusions.

The fact that nine tenths of all literary filth, artistic trash, and theatrical idiocy can be set to the account of a people, constituting hardly one hundredth of all the country's inhabitants, could simply not be talked away; it was the plain truth.

And I now began to examine my beloved 'world press' from this point of view.

And the deeper I probed, the more the object of my former admiration shriveled. The style became more and more unbearable; I could not help rejecting the content as inwardly shallow and banal; the objectivity of exposition now seemed to me more akin to lies than honest truth; and the writers were – Jews.

A thousand things which I had hardly seen before now struck my notice, and others, which had previously given me food for thought, I now learned to grasp and understand.

I now saw the liberal attitude of this press in a different light; the lofty tone in which it answered attacks and its method of killing them with silence now revealed itself to me as a trick as clever as it was treacherous; the transfigured raptures of their theatrical critics were always directed at Jewish writers, and their disapproval never struck anyone but Germans. The gentle pinpricks against William II revealed its methods by their persistency, and so did its commendation of French culture and civilization. The trashy content of the short story now appeared to me as outright indecency, and in the language I detected the accents of a foreign people; the sense of the whole thing was so obviously hostile to Germanism that this could only have been intentional.

But who had an interest in this?

Was all this a mere accident?

Gradually I became uncertain.

The development was accelerated by insights which I gained into a number of other matters. I am referring to the general view of ethics and morals which was quite openly exhibited by a large part of the Jews, and the practical application of which could be seen.

Here again the streets provided an object lesson of a sort which was sometimes positively evil.

The relation of the Jews to prostitution and, even more, to the white-slave traffic, could be studied in Vienna as perhaps in no other city of Western Europe, with the possible exception of the southern French ports. If you walked at night through the streets and alleys of Leopoldstadt,<sup>2</sup> at every step you witnessed proceedings which remained concealed from the

majority of the German people until the War gave the soldiers on the eastern front occasion to see similar things, or, better expressed, forced them to see them.

When thus for the first time I recognized the Jew as the cold-hearted, shameless, and calculating director of this revolting vice traffic in the scum of the big city, a cold shudder ran down my back.

But then a flame flared up within me. I no longer avoided discussion of the Jewish question; no, now I sought it. And when I learned to look for the Jew in all branches of cultural and artistic life and its various manifestations, I suddenly encountered him in a place where I would least have expected to find him.

When I recognized the Jew as the leader of the Social Democracy, the scales dropped from my eyes. A long soul struggle had reached its conclusion.

Even in my daily relations with my fellow workers, I observed the amazing adaptability with which they adopted different positions on the same question, sometimes within an interval of a few days, sometimes in only a few hours. It was hard for me to understand how people who, when spoken to alone, possessed some sensible opinions, suddenly lost them as soon as they came under the influence of the masses. It was often enough to make one despair. When, after hours of argument, I was convinced that now at last I had broken the ice or cleared up some absurdity, and was beginning to rejoice at my success, on the next day to my disgust I had to begin all over again; it had all been in vain. Like an eternal pendulum their opinions seemed to swing back again and again to the old madness.

All this I could understand: that they were dissatisfied with their lot and cursed the Fate which often struck them so harshly; that they hated the employers who seemed to them the heartless bailiffs of Fate; that they cursed the authorities who in their eyes were without feeling for their situation; that they demonstrated against food prices and carried their demands into the streets: this much could be understood without recourse to reason. But what inevitably remained incomprehensible was the boundless hatred they heaped upon their own nationality, despising its greatness, besmirching its history, and dragging its great men into the gutter.

This struggle against their own species, their own clan, their own homeland, was as senseless as it was incomprehensible. It was unnatural.

It was possible to cure them temporarily of this vice, but only for days or at most weeks. If later you met the man you thought you had converted, he was just the same as before.

His old unnatural state had regained full possession of him.

[...]



The mightiest counterpart to the Aryan is represented by the Jew. In hardly any people in the world is the instinct of self-preservation developed more strongly than in the so-called 'chosen.' Of this, the mere fact of the survival of this race may be considered the best proof. Where is the people which in the last two thousand years has been exposed to so slight changes of inner disposition, character, etc., as the Jewish people? What people, finally, has gone through greater upheavals than this one – and nevertheless issued from the mightiest catastrophes of mankind unchanged? What an infinitely tough will to live and preserve the species speaks from these facts!

The mental qualities of the Jew have been schooled in the course of many centuries. Today he passes as 'smart,' and this in a certain sense he has been at all times. But his intelligence is not the result of his own development, but of visual instruction through foreigners. For the human mind cannot climb to the top without steps; for every step upward he needs the foundation of the past, and this in the comprehensive sense in which it can be revealed only in general culture. All thinking is based only in small part on man's own knowledge, and mostly on the experience of the time that has preceded. The general cultural level provides the individual man, without his noticing it as a rule, with such a profusion of preliminary knowledge that, thus armed, he can more easily take further steps of his own. The boy of today, for example, grows up among a truly vast number of technical acquisitions of the last centuries, so that he takes for granted and no longer pays attention to much that a hundred years ago was a riddle to even the greatest minds, although for following and understanding our progress in the field in question it is of decisive importance to him. If a very genius from the twenties of the past century should suddenly leave his grave today, it would be harder for him even intellectually to find his way in the present era than for an average boy of fifteen today. For he would lack all the infinite preliminary education which our present contemporary unconsciously, so to speak, assimilates while growing up amidst the manifestations of our present general civilization.

Since the Jew – for reasons which will at once become apparent – was never in possession of a culture of his own, the foundations of his intellectual work were always provided by others. His intellect at all times developed through the cultural world surrounding him.

The reverse process never took place.

For if the Jewish people's instinct of self-preservation is not smaller but larger than that of other peoples, if his intellectual faculties can easily arouse the impression that they are equal to the intellectual gifts of other races, he lacks completely the most essential requirement for a cultured people, the idealistic attitude.

In the Jewish people the will to self-sacrifice does not go beyond the individual's naked instinct of self-preservation. Their apparently great sense of solidarity is based on the very primitive herd instinct that is seen in many other living creatures in this world. It is a noteworthy fact that the herd instinct leads to mutual support only as long as a common danger makes this seem useful or inevitable. The same pack of wolves which has just fallen on its prey together disintegrates when hunger abates into its individual beasts. The same is true of horses which try to defend themselves against an assailant in a body, but scatter again as soon as the danger is past.

It is similar with the Jew. His sense of sacrifice is only apparent. It exists only as long as the existence of the individual makes it absolutely necessary. However, as soon as the common enemy is conquered, the danger threatening all averted and the booty hidden, the apparent harmony of the Jews among themselves ceases, again making way for their old causal<sup>3</sup> tendencies. The Jew is only united when a common danger forces him to be or a common booty entices him; if these two grounds are lacking, the qualities of the crassest egoism come into their own, and in the twinkling of an eye the united people turns into a horde of rats, fighting bloodily among themselves.

If the Jews were alone in this world, they would stifle in filth and offal; they would try to get ahead of one another in hate-filled struggle and exterminate one another, in so far as the absolute absence of all sense of self-sacrifice, expressing itself in their cowardice, did not turn battle into comedy here too.

So it is absolutely wrong to infer any ideal sense of sacrifice in the Jews from the fact that they stand together in struggle, or, better expressed, in the plundering of their fellow men.

Here again the Jew is led by nothing but the naked egoism of the individual.

That is why the Jewish state – which should be the living organism for preserving and increasing a race – is completely unlimited as to territory. For a state formation to have a definite spatial setting always presupposes an idealistic attitude on the part of the state-race, and especially a correct interpretation of the concept of work. In the exact measure in which this attitude is lacking, any attempt at forming, even of preserving, a spatially delimited state fails. And thus the basis on which alone culture can arise is lacking.

Hence the Jewish people, despite all apparent intellectual qualities, is without any true culture, and especially without any culture of its own. For what sham culture the Jew today possesses is the property of other peoples, and for the most part it is ruined in his hands.

In judging the Jewish people's attitude on the question of human culture, the most essential characteristic we must always bear in mind is that

there has never been a Jewish art and accordingly there is none today either; that above all the two queens of all the arts, architecture and music, owe nothing original to the Jews. What they do accomplish in the field of art is either patchwork or intellectual theft. Thus, the Jew lacks those qualities which distinguish the races that are creative and hence culturally blessed.

To what an extent the Jew takes over foreign culture, imitating or rather ruining it, can be seen from the fact that he is mostly found in the art which seems to require least original invention, the art of acting. But even here, in reality, he is only a 'juggler,' or rather an ape; for even here he lacks the last touch that is required for real greatness; even here he is not the creative genius, but a superficial imitator, and all the twists and tricks that he uses are powerless to conceal the inner lifelessness of his creative gift. Here the Jewish press most lovingly helps him along by raising such a roar of hosannas about even the most mediocre bungler, just so long as he is a Jew, that the rest of the world actually ends up by thinking that they have an artist before them, while in truth it is only a pitiful comedian.

No, the Jew possesses no culture-creating force of any sort, since the idealism, without which there is no true higher development of man, is not present in him and never was present. Hence his intellect will never have a constructive effect, but will be destructive, and in very rare cases perhaps will at most be stimulating, but then as the prototype of the 'force which always wants evil and nevertheless creates good.'<sup>4</sup> Not through him does any progress of mankind occur, but in spite of him.

Since the Jew never possessed a state with definite territorial limits and therefore never called a culture his own, the conception arose that this was a people which should be reckoned among the ranks of the *nomads*. This is a fallacy as great as it is dangerous. The nomad does possess a definitely limited living space, only he does not cultivate it like a sedentary peasant, but lives from the yield of his herds with which he wanders about in his territory. The outward reason for this is to be found in the small fertility of a soil which simply does not permit of settlement. The deeper cause, however, lies in the disparity between the technical culture of an age or people and the natural poverty of a living space. There are territories in which even the Aryan is enabled only by his technology, developed in the course of more than a thousand years, to live in regular settlements, to master broad stretches of soil and obtain from it the requirements of life. If he did not possess this technology, either he would have to avoid these territories or likewise have to struggle along as a nomad in perpetual wandering, provided that his thousand-year-old education and habit of settled residence did not make this seem simply unbearable to him. We must bear in mind that in the time when the American continent was being opened up, numerous Aryans fought for their livelihood as trappers,

hunters, etc., and often in larger troops with wife and children, always on the move, so that their existence was completely like that of the nomads. But as soon as their increasing number and better implements permitted them to clear the wild soil and make a stand against the natives, more and more settlements sprang up in the land.

Probably the Aryan was also first a nomad, settling in the course of time, but for that very reason he was never a Jew! No, the Jew is no nomad; for the nomad had also a definite attitude toward the concept of work which could serve as a basis for his later development in so far as the necessary intellectual premises were present. In him the basic idealistic view is present, even if in infinite dilution, hence in his whole being he may seem strange to the Aryan peoples, but not unattractive. In the Jew, however, this attitude is not at all present; for that reason he was never a nomad, but only and always a *parasite* in the body of other peoples. That he sometimes left his previous living space has nothing to do with his own purpose, but results from the fact that from time to time he was thrown out by the host nations he had misused. His spreading is a typical phenomenon for all parasites; he always seeks a new feeding ground for his race.

This, however, has nothing to do with nomadism, for the reason that a Jew never thinks of leaving a territory that he has occupied, but remains where he is, and he sits so fast that even by force it is very hard to drive him out. His extension to ever-new countries occurs only in the moment in which certain conditions for his existence are there present, without which – unlike the nomad – he would not change his residence. He is and remains the typical parasite, a sponger who like a noxious bacillus keeps spreading as soon as a favorable medium invites him. And the effect of his existence is also like that of spongers: wherever he appears, the host people dies out after a shorter or longer period.

Thus, the Jew of all times has lived in the states of other peoples, and there formed his own state, which, to be sure, habitually sailed under the disguise of ‘religious community’ as long as outward circumstances made a complete revelation of his nature seem inadvisable. But as soon as he felt strong enough to do without the protective cloak, he always dropped the veil and suddenly became what so many of the others previously did not want to believe and see: the Jew.

The Jew’s life as a parasite in the body of other nations and states explains a characteristic which once caused Schopenhauer, as has already been mentioned, to call him the ‘great master in lying.’ Existence impels the Jew to lie, and to lie perpetually, just as it compels the inhabitants of the northern countries to wear warm clothing.

His life within other peoples can only endure for any length of time if he succeeds in arousing the opinion that he is not a people but a ‘religious community,’ though of a special sort.

And this is the first great lie.

In order to carry on his existence as a parasite on other peoples, he is forced to deny his inner nature. The more intelligent the individual Jew is, the more he will succeed in this deception. Indeed, things can go so far that large parts of the host people will end by seriously believing that the Jew is really a Frenchman or an Englishman, a German or an Italian, though of a special religious faith. Especially state authorities, which always seem animated by the historical fraction of wisdom, most easily fall a victim to this infinite deception. Independent thinking sometimes seems to these circles a true sin against holy advancement, so that we may not be surprised if even today a Bavarian state ministry, for example, still has not the faintest idea that the Jews are members of a *people* and not of a '*religion*' though a glance at the Jew's own newspapers should indicate this even to the most modest mind. The *Jewish Echo* is not yet an official organ, of course, and consequently is unauthoritative as far as the intelligence of one of these government potentates is concerned.

The Jew has always been a people with definite racial characteristics and never a religion; only in order to get ahead he early sought for a means which could distract unpleasant attention from his person. And what would have been more expedient and at the same time more innocent than the 'embezzled' concept of a religious community? For here, too, everything is borrowed or rather stolen. Due to his own original special nature, the Jew cannot possess a religious institution, if for no other reason because he lacks idealism in any form, and hence belief in a hereafter is absolutely foreign to him. And a religion in the Aryan sense cannot be imagined which lacks the conviction of survival after death in some form. Indeed, the Talmud is not a book to prepare a man for the hereafter, but only for a practical and profitable life in this world.

The Jewish religious doctrine consists primarily in prescriptions for keeping the blood of Jewry pure and for regulating the relation of Jews among themselves, but even more with the rest of the world; in other words, with non-Jews. But even here it is by no means ethical problems that are involved, but extremely modest economic ones. Concerning the moral value of Jewish religious instruction, there are today and have been at all times rather exhaustive studies (not by Jews; the drivel of the Jews themselves on the subject is, of course, adapted to its purpose) which make this kind of religion seem positively monstrous according to Aryan conceptions. The best characterization is provided by the product of this religious education, the Jew himself. His life is only of this world, and his spirit is inwardly as alien to true Christianity as his nature two thousand years previous was to the great founder of the new doctrine. Of course, the latter made no secret of his attitude toward the Jewish people, and when necessary he even took to the whip to drive from the temple of the

Lord this adversary of all humanity, who then as always saw in religion nothing but an instrument for his business existence. In return, Christ was nailed to the cross, while our present-day party Christians debase themselves to begging for Jewish votes at elections and later try to arrange political swindles with atheistic Jewish parties – and this against their own nation.

On this first and greatest lie, that the Jews are not a race but a religion, more and more lies are based in necessary consequence. Among them is the lie with regard to the language of the Jew. For him it is not a means for expressing his thoughts, but a means for concealing them. When he speaks French, he thinks Jewish, and while he turns out German verses, in his life he only expresses the nature of his nationality. As long as the Jew has not become the master of the other peoples, he must speak their languages whether he likes it or not, but as soon as they became his slaves, they would all have to learn a universal language (Esperanto, for instance!), so that by this additional means the Jews could more easily dominate them!

To what an extent the whole existence of this people is based on a continuous lie is shown incomparably by the *Protocols of the Wise Men of Zion*, so infinitely hated by the Jews. They are based on a forgery, the *Frankfurter Zeitung* moans and screams once every week: the best proof that they are authentic. What many Jews may do unconsciously is here consciously exposed. And that is what matters. It is completely indifferent from what Jewish brain these disclosures originate; the important thing is that with positively terrifying certainty they reveal the nature and activity of the Jewish people and expose their inner contexts as well as their ultimate final aims. The best criticism applied to them, however, is reality. Anyone who examines the historical development of the last hundred years from the standpoint of this book will at once understand the screaming of the Jewish press. For once this book has become the common property of a people, the Jewish menace may be considered as broken.

## NOTES

- 1 Karl Lügner (1844–1910). In 1897, as a member of the anti-Semitic Christian Social Party, he became mayor of Vienna and kept the post until his death. At first opposed by the Court for his radical nationalism and anti-Semitism, toward the end of his career he became more moderate and was reconciled with the Emperor.
- 2 Second District of Vienna, separated from the main part of the city by the Danube Canal. Formerly the ghetto, it still has a predominantly Jewish population.

- 3 *'ursächlich vorhandene Anlagen.'* *'Ursächlich'* is no doubt intended as a refinement of *'ursprünglich'* (originally). The phrase would then read: 'their originally existing tendencies.'
- 4 Goethe's *Faust*, lines 1336–7: Mephistopheles to Faust.

*Nuremberg Law for the  
Protection of the German Blood  
and of the German Honour of  
15 September 1935*

Permeated by the knowledge that the purity of the German blood is the hypothesis for the permanence of the German people and animated by the inflexible determination to safeguard the German nation for all time, the Reichstag has unanimously decreed the following law which is hereby published:

1. (1) Marriages between Jews and citizens of German or similar blood are forbidden. Contracted marriages are invalid even if they are contracted abroad within the scope of this law.

(2) The proceedings for annulment can only be brought by the Public Prosecutors.

2. Extra marital intercourse between Jews and citizens of German and similar blood is forbidden.

3. Jews may not employ female citizens of German and similar blood under 45 years of age in their households.

4. (1) Jews are forbidden to hoist the Reich and national flag and to display the colors of the Reich.

(2) On the other hand, the display of the Jewish colors is permissible. The practice of this authorization is under State protection.

5. (1) Whoever acts contrary to the prohibition of 1 will be punished by penitentiary.

(2) The man who acts contrary to the prohibition of 2 will be punished by imprisonment or penitentiary.

“Nuremberg Law for the Protection of the German Blood and of the German Honour of 15 September 1935,” from *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of United States Chief of Counsel For Prosecution of Axis Criminality, vol. V, Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office: Washington, 1946, pp. 916–17. Translation of Document 3179-PS.



(3) Whoever acts contrary to the terms of 3 or 4 will be punished by imprisonment up to 1 year and by fine or by one of these penalties.

6. The Reich Minister of the Interior issues in agreement with the Fuehrer's Deputy and the Reich Minister of Justice the legal and administrative regulations necessary for the execution and supplementing of the law.

7. The law comes into force on the day of publication; "3" however only on 1 January 1936; Nuremberg, 15 September 1935; on the day of the Reich Party Rally of Freedom.

The Fuehrer and Reich Chancellor Adolf Hitler

The Reich Minister of the Interior Frick

The Reich Minister of Justice Dr Gürtner

The Fuehrer's Deputy R. Hess



PART II

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A Racial Europe: Nazi Population  
and Resettlement Policy



## *A Racial Europe: Nazi Population and Resettlement Policy*

The victims of the racially pure Germanic empire Hitler envisioned in his writings, speeches and policies extended beyond Jews. Part II explores the social and historical context in which these discriminatory practices developed. In particular, the selected entries examine these practices as a comprehensive program of racial imperialism that aimed to eradicate the threat of “degeneration” within Germany amongst the handicapped, homosexuals and gypsies, for example, and in the resettlement of civilian populations of Jews, ethnic Germans and Poles in the newly conquered territories from early victories in the Nazi war on Poland that began on September 1, 1939.

The direction of scholarly research in this area is reflected in the titles of some important books, *The Racial State: Germany 1933–1945* and *The Origins of Nazi Genocide: From Euthanasia to the Final Solution*. In “The Setting,” extracted from the latter book, Henry Friedlander argues that the threat of cultural degeneration was conceived in broadly socio-biological terms based on the construct of racial impurity, which itself drew on late nineteenth-century anthropological applications of Charles Darwin’s theories of selection and breeding. Whether or not Nazi antisemitism stands independently of Hitler’s broader bio-political assault on non-Jewish victim groups, consideration of these issues in relation to the development of Nazi anti-Jewish policy provides an effective means of comparative interpretation. A study of the targeting of non-Jewish victim groups allows the reader to see how genocidal policies evolved in a broader social framework of longstanding biological theories and enables an assessment of their origins in positive and negative eugenics. Positive eugenics aimed to increase the purity of populations through selective breeding, while negative eugenics sought to impede the reproductive processes of persons or groups not meeting standards of racial purity.

Friedlander clearly outlines how Nazi racial policy applied a general and transnational context of biological solutions to social problems of

crime, deviance and alleged sexual pathology. Eugenics, the improvement of races by selective breeding, had been broadly influential in medical and scientific circles in late nineteenth-century Europe and the United States, at times serving as a basis for laws applying to the definition and punishment of criminality. Criminality was thus associated not only with certain socio-economic classes, but was now attributed to biological causes. To introduce conditions and practices aimed at eliminating degeneration would, in the minds of racial experts and others, reduce social problems of crime and deviance. The aim of making a “national community” along the lines of racially pure, politically obedient behavioral practices and socially conformist beliefs led the Nazis to draw on theories of race hygiene, deviance and biologically inherited criminality. In this way, German society in the 1930s was racialized and divided by the Nazis into groups worthy and unworthy of life. Applied to the Nazi worldview of combatants in a racial struggle for survival, this provided a palatable justification for weeding out groups considered biologically unfit, such as Jews, gypsies, and the handicapped.

The Nazi decision to kill those individuals and groups it deemed biologically inferior evolved in several stages, with perhaps the most significant of them in the transition to the genocide of Jews the “Euthanasia” program, directed at the handicapped, which began in 1939. Friedlander makes a convincing case for “Euthanasia” as an extension of the Nazi policy of exclusion to Jews and to other groups, but it is clearly a major step beyond previous measures of persecution and segregation, one which laid the ground for later gassing in the “death camps.” At the same time, it also provided a basis for less extreme actions against other asocial groups such as prostitutes, beggars, vagabonds, and habitual criminals, whose behavior might also be associated, in the Nazi view, with biological origins.

Thus, the Nazi persecution of non-Jewish groups can be linked to the treatment of Jews from 1939 to 1941. Friedlander suggests that “[n]either the scientists nor the Nazi leadership saw a distinction between racial and eugenic policies. They joined hands in the common struggle against ‘degeneration’.” United by a common purpose, these policies differed in the ways they were applied, and this is one among a number of reasons why historians find tensions and inconsistencies in their attempts to interpret the origins of the “Final Solution.”

If persecution of the handicapped was initiated within Germany just before the outbreak of war, it was soon extended to include “eliminationist” solutions. Almost in continuity from this, Nazi policy towards Jews built toward its genocidal conclusion, beginning with their physical collection and concentration in segregated spaces under Nazi-controlled surveillance in administrative areas in occupied Poland. Raul Hilberg’s “Ghetto

Formation” in Part II provides a succinct overview of the bureaucracy, organization and administration of Jewish councils, which, under Nazi instruction, assumed responsibility for the internal management and regulation of ghetto communities. Although the article focuses on the administration of the ghettos in Łódź and Warsaw specifically, students would benefit from complementing his account with ghetto chronicles about life in those locations, which describe the serious practical impediments facing the ghetto’s internal Jewish leadership. One important feature of ghetto formation hinted at by Hilberg is underscored in such chronicles: the limitations on both social and physical mobility in residential accommodation and public spaces. The ghetto, a physically segregated area within a town or city and constricted in size, was a microcosm of urban and human despair: the most basic needs for the survival of the community – food, shelter – were addressed by the Jewish councils in the face of extreme material deprivation and constant uncertainty about the future.

The purpose of ghetto formation can be interpreted along two lines: firstly, it represented a cumulative step in the Nazi assault against Jews; and secondly, it was a part of a broader scheme of population respacing and demographic engineering of ethnic populations in “the East.” This second explanation is insufficient by itself, since the Nazis’ Jewish victims neither originated nor died exclusively in Poland; similar “concentration” policies were applied in other European countries such as France, Italy, Greece and Hungary. Thus, although historiographical debate about the “path to genocide” from 1939 to 1941 often looks to Eastern Europe as the experimental ground for the construction and administration of ghettos – confronting the constant lack of material supplies, overcrowding, starvation, disease, and the uses of Jewish labor for the German war effort – that account is insufficient when discussing the intersection of racial ideology and the policy of genocide in countries beyond it.<sup>1</sup>

Christopher Browning examines the practical difficulties caused by population respacing in “From ‘Ethnic Cleansing’ to Genocide to the ‘Final Solution’.” Browning’s views have become increasingly influential about how the order for the “Final Solution” evolved in the East from “ethnic cleansing” and the resettlement of ethnic Germans, Poles and Jews during the years 1939 to 1941, to genocide near the end of that period. While there is residual debate among historians about the respective merits of intentionalism and functionalism, Browning moves beyond that to interpret the development of anti-Jewish policy in the context of an evolving genocidal impulse practiced in experimental deportation and resettlement techniques. Unlike Hilberg, Browning’s article does not explicitly consider the ghettoization of Jews as a separate development of Nazi policy, but, rather, locates the Nazi movement of Jews into larger ghettos such as Warsaw and Łódź as an intersecting feature of the racial and

demographic restructuring of Poland and newly conquered eastern territories.

Browning questions the centrality of an original and continuous goal embodied in the “Final Solution.” Rather, he argues for a middle line that retains the ideological impetus in key Nazi decisions which radicalized their Jewish policy, while at the same time stressing that these decisions were influenced by practical frustrations hindering the effort at population resettlement of other groups.<sup>2</sup> An example of the shaky grounds on which the Nazi ideal of biological or racial purity was based is evident in Himmler’s “Some Thoughts on the Treatment of the Alien Populations in the East,” since he writes about the possibility of “remaking” the inferior peoples in the East, as a means of denationalizing those ethnic populations. Himmler’s stress on the cultural inferiority of these groups reflects still another, more extreme, version of the colonial impulse to improve and civilize by means of a “racial screening process” which must “form the basis of our concern to fish out the racially valuable people from this mishmash, take them to Germany and assimilate them there.”

## NOTES

- 1 For a general coverage, see Gustavo Corni, *Hitler’s Ghettos: Voices from a Beleaguered Society, 1939–1944*, trans. Nicola Rudge Iannelli (London: Arnold, 2002).
- 2 See Christopher R. Browning, with contributions by Jürgen Matthaeus, *The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939–March 1942* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004).

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## *The Setting*

HENRY FRIEDLANDER

Nazi genocide did not take place in a vacuum. Genocide was only the most radical method of excluding groups of human beings from the German national community. The policy of exclusion followed and drew upon more than fifty years of scientific opposition to the equality of man. Since the turn of the century, the German elite – that is, the members of the educated professional classes – had increasingly accepted an ideology of human inequality. Geneticists, anthropologists, and psychiatrists advanced a theory of human heredity that merged with the racist doctrine of ultra-nationalists to form a political ideology based on race.<sup>1</sup> The Nazi movement both absorbed and advanced this ideology. After their assumption of power in 1933, the Nazis created the political framework that made it possible to translate this ideology of inequality into a policy of exclusion. At the same time, the German bureaucratic, professional, and scientific elite provided the legitimacy the regime needed for the smooth implementation of this policy.<sup>2</sup>

The growing importance of the biological sciences in the nineteenth century, following the discoveries of Charles Darwin, led most scientists to advance theories of human inequality as matters of scientific fact.<sup>3</sup> In the middle of the century, a widely accepted theory maintained that there was a causal relationship between the size of the human brain and human intelligence.<sup>4</sup> In 1861 the anthropologist Paul Broca thus asserted that “there is a remarkable relationship between the development of intelligence and the volume of the brain,” and he argued that studies based on this premise showed that “in general, the brain is larger in mature adults than in the elderly, in men than in women, in eminent men than in men of mediocre talent, in superior races than in inferior races.”<sup>5</sup>

Henry Friedlander, “The Setting,” from *The Origins of Nazi Genocide: from Euthanasia to the Final Solution*, Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, 1995, pp. 1–22 and 304–9.

Belief in inequality coexisted with the principles of equality proclaimed by American and French revolutionaries. Scientists, themselves products of their times, constructed “rank-order or value-judgment hierarchies” that placed human beings on a single scale of intelligence, thus incorporating popular prejudices into their theories. As proof they offered meaningless, but carefully compiled, correlations between the size of the brain and presumed intelligence. But such scientific data, “no matter how numerically sophisticated, have recorded little more than social prejudice.”<sup>6</sup> Popular prejudice accepted that males were more intelligent than females, and in 1879 Gustave Le Bon, the founder of social psychology, concurred: “In the most intelligent races, as among the Parisians, there are a large number of women whose brains are closer in size to those of gorillas than to the most developed male brains. This inferiority is so obvious that no one can contest it for a moment; only its degree is worth discussion.”<sup>7</sup>

Popular prejudice also accepted as self-evident the superiority of the white race over all others, placing blacks at the bottom of a ranking order of races. In 1864 the German anatomist Carl Vogt reflected this prejudice by stating that “the grown-up Negro partakes, as regards his intellectual faculties, of the nature of the child, the female, and the senile white.”<sup>8</sup> Finally, the prejudices of the scientists themselves led them to conclude that the wealthy and the educated inherited greater intelligence than the lower socioeconomic classes. The American paleontologist E. D. Cope thus “identified four groups of lower human forms,” including – along with women, nonwhites, and Jews – all “lower classes within superior races.”<sup>9</sup>

In this way, the biological sciences of the nineteenth century simply recorded traditional prejudices. Without any evidence, scientists concluded that human differences were hereditary and unalterable, and in doing so, they “precluded redemption” because they imposed “the additional burden of intrinsic inferiority upon despised groups.”<sup>10</sup> Science thus showed “the tenacity of unconscious bias and the surprising malleability of ‘objective,’ quantitative data in the interest of a preconceived idea.”<sup>11</sup>

Darwinian evolution provided a biological basis for judging the human condition, but during most of the century, there existed two possible theories to explain heredity. The theory advanced by Jean-Baptiste Lamarck at the beginning of the century argued that acquired characteristics could be inherited and that environment could therefore influence group standing. This optimistic theory provided for the improvement of status for groups and individuals through social change. But at the end of the century, theories based on the work of Gregor Mendel gained ascendancy, maintaining that heredity followed a rigid pattern uninfluenced by environment. This pessimistic theory condemned selected groups and individuals to permanent inferiority.<sup>12</sup> The German zoologist August Weismann

advanced a Mendelian theory of an “independent, immutable germ plasm” to explain heredity, leading his followers to search for “single genes” that built “even the most complex” body parts and to argue that the social environment “was impotent to alter the human condition.”<sup>13</sup> But as we know today, “virtually every major feature of our body is built by the interaction of many genes with each other and with an external environment.”<sup>14</sup>

At the end of the nineteenth century, scientists turned from weighing human brains to measuring human skulls and other body parts. Previously, they had ranked human groups by intelligence and argued that inferior humans lacked culture; now they would also claim that such humans were immoral, deprived, and criminal. Anthropometric techniques served to bolster a new theory based on evolution. The German zoologist Ernst Haeckel suggested that human beings go through the chronological stages of evolution as they advance from embryo to adult. This “recapitulation” could be used to discover an individual’s standing on the scale of evolution, and measurements would reveal at what stage the individual’s maturation had been arrested.<sup>15</sup> Using anthropometric techniques, the Italian physician Cesare Lombroso, father of criminal anthropology, argued that recapitulation explained human criminality: “Criminals are apes in our midst, marked by the anatomical stigmata of atavism.”<sup>16</sup>

The work of Lombroso and his followers provided society with a biological basis for judging criminality. One of his followers explained that “a study of the anthropological factors of crime provides the guardians and administrators of the law with new and more certain methods in the detection of the guilty.”<sup>17</sup> The conclusions presented by Lombroso and his followers, then considered members of a “positive school of criminology,” also led to a reexamination of how police and courts should deal with criminals. Lombroso argued that some criminals were “born for evil” and could not change, and he concluded that since “atavism shows us the inefficacy of punishment for born criminals,” we are compelled “to eliminate them completely, even by death.”<sup>18</sup>

Lombroso not only attributed atavistic criminality to individuals from the lower classes who committed crimes but also depicted entire groups as criminal. The handicapped were one such group. He thus defined “epilepsy as a mark of criminality,” asserting “that almost every ‘born criminal’ suffers from epilepsy to some degree.”<sup>19</sup> The Gypsies were another group Lombroso characterized as criminal: “They are vain, like all delinquents, but they have no fear or shame. Everything they earn they spend for drink and ornaments. They may be seen barefooted, but with bright-colored or lace-bedecked clothing; without stockings, but with yellow shoes. They have the improvidence of the savage and that of the criminal as well.”<sup>20</sup>

As we shall see, the Nazi killers used the language of Lombroso to target the same victim groups, including Gypsies and the handicapped. Thus members of the judiciary considered the killing of convicted criminals if their “physical shape no longer deserved to be called human.”<sup>21</sup>

Still, while the use of measurements to analyze human traits continued to influence the biological and social sciences through much of the twentieth century, the belief that such measurements revealed intelligence slowly lost status. However, early in the century scientists discovered new ways to measure human intelligence. The French psychologist Alfred Binet discovered that intelligence tests produced better results than craniometry and developed the method that was eventually capable of producing an intelligence quotient – the so-called IQ – for each human being. Binet did not consider the IQ number an exact analogue of human intelligence, but his American followers – Henry H. Goddard, Robert M. Yerkes, and Lewis M. Terman – reified IQ numbers; they regarded the IQ as a measure of an “entity called intelligence,” assuming that it represented inherited, innate qualities and thus imposed immutable limits on personal development.<sup>22</sup> Later, two psychologists at London University – Charles Spearman and Sir Cyril Burt – used factor analysis, a sophisticated “mathematical technique,” to bolster the belief that knowledge and skills revealed by tests disclose a hereditary quality known as intelligence.<sup>23</sup> One critic pointed out the fallacy of such belief in reification: “To the statistician’s dictum that whatever exists can be measured, the factorist has added the assumption that whatever can be ‘measured’ must exist. But the relation may not be reversible, and the assumption may be false.”<sup>24</sup>

The American psychologists classified persons on the basis of IQ tests, labeling those judged feeble-minded in descending order as morons, imbeciles, or idiots.<sup>25</sup> Considering mental disabilities as innate and immutable qualities running in families by the laws of Mendelian heredity, they interpreted their findings, as had earlier scientists, to “prove” the validity of popular prejudices. But unlike their predecessors, they proposed to change the human population through the manipulation of heredity. The psychologists therefore joined like-minded scientists from the biological sciences in the growing eugenics movement.

The term “eugenics” was coined in 1881 by the British naturalist and mathematician Francis Galton and described by the leading American eugenicist, Charles B. Davenport, as “the science of the improvement of the human race by better breeding.”<sup>26</sup> Eugenics developed within the larger movement of Social Darwinism, which applied Darwin’s “struggle for survival” to human affairs. In the United States, Social Darwinism was used to justify unbridled economic competition and the “survival of the fittest” as a law of nature. Eugenics provided a biological basis for these ideas. Recruited from the biological and social sciences, or what today may be

called the life sciences, eugenicists firmly believed that just as the Mendelian laws governed the hereditary transmission of human traits like color blindness or a particular blood group, these laws also determined the inheritance of social traits. Davenport thus believed that a single Mendelian gene for thalassophilia (love of the sea) explained why “naval careers ran in families” and that “nomadism, the impulse to wander, was obviously hereditary because such racial groups as Comanches, Gypsies, and Huns were all nomadic.”<sup>27</sup>

Although various local eugenic societies and research groups existed in the United States, the most important center for eugenic research and dissemination of findings was the Eugenics Record Office (ERO) at Cold Spring Harbor in Long Island, New York, founded by Davenport, directed by Harry Hamilton Laughlin, and financed with Carnegie, Harriman, and Rockefeller money. The eugenics movement in general and the ERO specifically represented the special interests of the new class of professional managers and their financial benefactors. These professionals – biologists, geneticists, engineers, social workers, psychologists, and sociologists – wanted to introduce rational social planning into human affairs and believed that biological manipulation would achieve their ends.<sup>28</sup>

The eugenics movement in the United States and elsewhere pursued two connected policies. First, it sponsored research to investigate the transmission of social traits, especially undesirable ones, and undertook to classify individuals, groups, and nations on a scale of human worth. Second, it proposed biological solutions to social problems and lobbied for their implementation.

Eugenic research involved the construction of family trees and pedigree charts on the basis of questionnaires and fieldwork. In the United States, for example, the ERO investigated the “racial origin of inventiveness, hereditary lineage of aviators, [and] alien crime” and studied hereditary patterns in selected large families and entire small towns.<sup>29</sup> In Britain, Sir Cyril Burt sought to establish the preeminence of heredity by testing large numbers of “identical twins raised apart,” a favorite method of eugenic research.<sup>30</sup> American psychologists collected similar data by administering intelligence tests to large groups. During World War I, the Harvard psychologist Robert M. Yerkes persuaded the US Army to allow his team to administer the first mass-produced tests to 1.75 million soldiers in 1917.<sup>31</sup> The later evaluation of these test results yielded conclusions that matched those of the ERO eugenicists. Although many of the tests were given to recent immigrants unfamiliar with the English language and American culture, the psychologists concluded that the results revealed not cultural differences but hereditary intelligence.<sup>32</sup> These mass tests served as a model for others; for example, one of Yerkes’s followers, the Princeton psychologist Carl C. Brigham, later served as secretary of the College

Entrance Examination Board and developed the Scholastic Aptitude Test.<sup>33</sup>

Eugenic research, both anthropological fieldwork and psychological testing, was designed to isolate and record individuals with inferior intelligence and other social disabilities. Eugenicists claimed that their research on individuals and families proved the inferiority of entire groups. Using mass testing, the psychologists classified the American population by IQ on a ranking scale, predictably placing the wealthy and professionals at the top of the scale as the most intelligent. The psychologist Henry H. Goddard, director of research at the Vineland Training School for Feeble-Minded Girls and Boys in New Jersey, who had introduced the Binet scale to the United States and had coined the term “moron,” believed that “democracy means that the people rule by selecting the wisest, most intelligent and most human to tell them what to do to be happy.”<sup>34</sup> But apart from several investigations of the intelligent – for example, the “project to record the IQ of past geniuses” – eugenicists concentrated their research on the lower classes.<sup>35</sup> They used their findings to “prove” that class differences reflected intelligence. Stanford psychologist Lewis M. Terman, creator of the Stanford-Binet test, argued that “class boundaries had been set by innate intelligence”; his analysis of test scores led him to jump to the conclusion that “the children of successful and cultured parents test higher than children from wretched and ignorant homes for the simple reason that their heredity is better.”<sup>36</sup>

Eugenicists focused attention on the feeble-minded – labeled as idiots, imbeciles, or morons – and argued that their findings proved the existence of a relationship between low intelligence and both immorality and crime. They saw the cause of the social problems of their time, such as alcoholism and prostitution, as inherited feeble-mindedness and viewed the manifestations of poverty, such as intermittent unemployment and chronic illness, as a hereditary degeneracy.<sup>37</sup> Terman thus concluded: “Not all criminals are feeble-minded, but all feeble-minded persons are at least potential criminals. That every feeble-minded woman is a potential prostitute would hardly be disputed by anyone.”<sup>38</sup> Considering the acceptance of the connection between low intelligence and degenerate behavior, it is hardly surprising that Goddard, one of the scientists whose works were published by the ERO, commented, “How can there be such a thing as social equality with this wide range of mental capacity?”<sup>39</sup>

The eugenicists ascribed degeneracy not only to class but also to race and ethnic group. Yerkes concluded that the US Army test scores proved that the “darker peoples of southern Europe and the Slavs of eastern Europe are less intelligent than the fair peoples of western and northern Europe” and that the “Negro lies at the bottom of the scale” of intelligence.<sup>40</sup> Convinced of the inferiority and even criminality of other races,

the eugenicists wanted to maintain the purity of the American pioneer stock and opposed marriages between people of different races. The ERO director, Harry Hamilton Laughlin, “compared human racial crossing with mongrelization in the animal world” and argued that “immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, especially Jews, were racially so different from, and genetically so inferior to, the current American population that any racial mixture would be deleterious.”<sup>41</sup>

Confronted with low test scores of Jewish immigrants examined at Ellis Island and in the US Army on the one hand and the achievements of Jewish intellectuals on the other, Princeton psychologist Brigham theorized that “the able Jew is popularly recognized not only because of his ability, but because he is able and a Jew,” concluding that “our figures, then, would rather tend to disprove the popular belief that the Jew is highly intelligent.”<sup>42</sup>

Viewed from our vantage point, eugenic research during the first half of the twentieth century was seriously flawed. The data collected by the ERO was highly subjective.<sup>43</sup> The methodology that governed psychological mass testing was still rudimentary.<sup>44</sup> Later investigators found that Sir Cyril Burt had falsified his data on twin research.<sup>45</sup> It is not correct, however, to label the scientific research of eugenicists as pseudo-scientific. Fabricated results are not unknown in today’s respectable sciences, and at the start, many new scientific fields use faulty methodology. By the scientific standards of the time, eugenic research was on the cutting edge of science. Its practitioners were respected scholars from various scientific disciplines who occupied important positions in major universities and published their results in major scholarly journals. Their research tools were the most advanced available at the time, and they prided themselves on applying them meticulously. Their failing was not methodological error but their inability to recognize the ways in which their own prejudices corrupted their premises and tainted their conclusions. In their time, the results obtained by eugenicists were generally accepted by the scientific community, and only advances in neurosurgery and the discovery of DNA after World War II provided the tools to prove that their research conclusions had been faulty. Even the eugenic research conducted in Germany – as well as other places – which violated all ethical standards in its use of unprincipled methods, did not violate the canon of science.<sup>46</sup>

The research results of the eugenicists were accepted not only by fellow scientists but also by national policy makers. Pointing to their findings as proof of human inequality, eugenicists in Britain and the United States campaigned for changes in public policy to halt the degeneration of society. In Britain, this led to the introduction of the eleven-plus examinations, designed to exclude the unfit from higher education.<sup>47</sup> In the United



States, eugenicists labeled groups from southern and eastern Europe as inferior and campaigned to restrict the immigration of members of those ethnic groups. Their research and lobbying assured passage of the 1924 Johnson Act (Immigration Restriction Act), which imposed quotas that severely limited immigration from countries whose inhabitants were identified as unfit.<sup>48</sup>

Individuals from inferior races and ethnic groups could be prohibited from entering the country, but other solutions had to be found to deal with feebleminded individuals who already resided in the United States. Goddard advocated "colonization," a term he used to disguise incarceration in closed institutions, and Terman proposed "permanent custodial care."<sup>49</sup> But this was not a permanent solution to the problem of the unfit. The favorite solution proposed by the eugenicists was sterilization. Eugenicists viewed individuals with mental disabilities as a burden to society and a threat to civilization. In 1910 Charles Davenport thus advocated sterilization "to dry up the springs that feed the torrent of defective and degenerate protoplasm."<sup>50</sup> Similarly, in 1914 Goddard, who regarded handicapped individuals as immoral beings totally unable to control their sexual urges, stated a position that reflected universal eugenic opinion: "If both parents are feeble-minded all the children will be feeble-minded. It is obvious that such matings should not be allowed. It is perfectly clear that no feeble-minded person should ever be allowed to marry or to become a parent. It is obvious that if this rule is to be carried out the intelligent part of society must enforce it."<sup>51</sup>

The political campaign of the eugenics movement in favor of sterilization was relatively successful. In 1907 Indiana enacted the first sterilization law, and by the middle of the 1930s, more than half of the states had passed laws that authorized the sterilization of "inmates of mental institutions, persons convicted more than once of sex crimes, those deemed to be feeble-minded by IQ tests, 'moral degenerate persons,' and epileptics."<sup>52</sup> In 1927, one such law, a Virginia statute, which authorized directors of state institutions to order the compulsory sterilization of handicapped patients diagnosed as suffering from "an hereditary form of insanity or imbecility," reached the Supreme Court.<sup>53</sup> The case involved an order for the compulsory sterilization of a woman diagnosed as feebleminded, whose mother had been classified the same way, and whose child had also been stigmatized as retarded. In his prescient plea to the Court, I. P. Whitehead, attorney for plaintiff Carrie Bell, warned the justices that if the state can impose a procedure that "violates her constitutional right of bodily integrity," the results would be ominous:

If this Act be a valid enactment, then the limits of the power of the State (which in the end is nothing more than the faction in control of the

government) to rid itself of those citizens deemed undesirable according to its standards, by means of surgical sterilization, have not been set. We will have “established in the State the science of medicine and a corresponding system of judicature.” A reign of doctors will be inaugurated and in the name of science new classes will be added, even races may be brought within the scope of such regulation, and the worst forms of tyranny practiced.<sup>54</sup>

Oliver Wendell Holmes, speaking for the eight-man majority of the Court (Louis Brandeis, William Howard Taft, Harlan Fiske Stone, Willis Van Devanter, James C. McReynolds, George Sutherland, and Edward T. Sanford), pushed aside such arguments. His justification for upholding the Virginia law presaged the arguments used later to justify eugenic killings in Nazi Germany:

We have seen more than once that the public welfare may call upon the best citizens for their lives. It would be strange if it could not call upon those who already sap the strength of the State for these lesser sacrifices, often not felt to be such by those concerned, in order to prevent our being swamped with incompetence. It is better for all the world, if instead of waiting to execute degenerate offspring for crime, or to let them starve for their imbecility, society can prevent those who are manifestly unfit from continuing their kind. The principle that sustains compulsory vaccination is broad enough to cover cutting the Fallopian tubes. Three generations of imbeciles are enough.<sup>55</sup>

In the United States, eugenics eventually lost scientific acceptance and public support. New scientific discoveries led to the rejection of eugenic research results. Moreover, events in Nazi Germany during the 1930s, and the close cooperation between American and German eugenicists, seriously damaged the standing of the American eugenics movement, and the revelation of Nazi crimes in the 1940s discredited eugenic theories.<sup>56</sup>

The development of eugenics in Germany resembled developments in the United States, but there were differences. In Germany, university scientists enjoyed far greater status than they did in the United States, and they played a more active role in the eugenics movement. Most scientists in the eugenics movement were physicians, medical education being the preferred career path for research in biology and anthropology at the turn of the century. In the United States, psychologists played an active role in the movement, but their counterparts in Germany were academic psychiatrists, trained in medicine and biology, who staffed state hospitals and university clinics.<sup>57</sup> The psychiatrists shared the analysis about degeneration among the lower classes advanced by their colleagues from the fields of biology, genetics, and anthropology but also transformed the term

“degeneracy” into a “diagnostic concept,” applying it to such conditions as alcoholism, homosexuality, and hysteria.<sup>58</sup>

Until World War I, German eugenics paralleled the eugenics movement in the United States. German scientists did not differ from their European and American colleagues in using studies of the brain to determine intelligence, and they accepted the value judgments common to all scientists. Ernst Haeckel popularized Darwin’s theory of evolution in Germany, and, as elsewhere, Social Darwinism was widely accepted. Based on Weismann’s “independent, immutable germ plasm,” German scientists accepted the idea that heredity alone determined natural selection.<sup>59</sup> Similar to their colleagues in the United States, the German eugenicists studied family genealogies and problems of degeneration, dividing populations into superior (*hochwertig*) and inferior (*minderwertig*) individuals; they hoped to safeguard the nation’s “genetic heritage [*Erbgut*]” and viewed degeneration (*Entartung*) as a threat.<sup>60</sup>

Although the German eugenics movement, led until the Weimar years by Alfred Ploetz and Wilhelm Schallmayer, did not differ radically from the American movement, it was more centralized. Unlike in the United States, where federalism and political heterogeneity encouraged diversity even within a single movement, in Germany one society, the German Society for Race Hygiene (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Rassenhygiene), eventually represented all eugenicists, while one journal, the *Archiv für Rassen- und Gesellschafts-Biologie*, founded by Ploetz in 1904, remained the primary scientific publication of German eugenics.<sup>61</sup>

Until the defeat of Germany in World War I, the Germans focused on positive eugenics.<sup>62</sup> Of course, they shared the anxieties of their American colleagues about the degeneration of the lower classes and opposed social legislation enacted to aid the poor, arguing that this “social net” prevented the operation of natural selection.<sup>63</sup> They also shared the concerns of most fellow Germans that the “yellow peril” or the “Slavic threat” could lead to the “Slavization of Germany.”<sup>64</sup> However, they did not believe that they could win support for sterilization and therefore concentrated on positive measures, especially attempts to increase the birth rate of “superior” populations.<sup>65</sup>

During the period of the Empire and the Weimar Republic, support for eugenics came from all political parties – conservative, liberal, even socialist. The Social Democrat Alfred Grotjahn, who occupied the chair for social hygiene at the University of Berlin during the Weimar Republic, was a leading eugenicist who advocated colonization and sterilization of the unfit.<sup>66</sup> Eugenic thinking influenced policy toward public health on the left as well as on the right. Thus Karl Kautsky, the leading theoretician of German Social Democracy, opposed leaving abortion decisions to individual women as “unsocialist,” and the Vienna physicians allied with Austrian

Social Democracy proposed that such decisions be made only by physicians and only on “medical, social, and eugenic” grounds.<sup>67</sup> Of course, many on the left tended to favor a Lamarckian approach to eugenics to provide room for environmental influences on heredity, while those on the right, as well as some on the left, adhered to a strictly Mendelian approach.<sup>68</sup>

Whereas in the United States race and ethnicity were politically important, before World War I German eugenics focused on class and therefore race did not at first occupy a central role.<sup>69</sup> Nevertheless, two diverging approaches appeared at the beginning: the Nordic and the anti-Nordic. Alfred Ploetz, one of the founders of German eugenics, subscribed to the belief in the superior qualities of the Nordic or Germanic peoples, while Wilhelm Schallmayer, the other founder, did not share this enthusiasm for the so-called Aryan race. This division was perpetuated in the next generation of eugenicists, in which Fritz Lenz, Ernst Rüdin, Eugen Fischer, and Hans F. K. Günther supported the theory of Aryan supremacy, while Hermann Muckermann, Arthur Ostermann, and Alfred Grotjahn opposed it.<sup>70</sup> The Aryan supremacists did not, however, at first embrace racial antisemitism. This attitude changed in the Weimar Republic, as exemplified by Ploetz, and was abandoned completely after the Nazi assumption of power.<sup>71</sup>

The struggle over what to call eugenics in Germany reflected the movement’s diverging trends. The anti-Nordic faction at first favored the term “hereditary hygiene [*Erbhygiene*],” and Grotjahn proposed the variation “reproductive hygiene [*Fortpflanzungshygiene*],” but later “*Eugenik*” became the faction’s preferred designation. The Aryan supremacists chose Ploetz’s term “race hygiene [*Rassenhygiene*].” At first, it was not clear whether the name implied the entire human race or the individual races making up humanity, but in the end, race hygiene referred to the study of the “races,” with “a consequent hierarchy of racial worth.”<sup>72</sup> During the Weimar period, both designations – *Rassenhygiene* and *Eugenik* – were used in the name of the eugenics society.<sup>73</sup> After the Nazi assumption of power, when the society embraced racial antisemitism and expelled Jewish members, race hygiene was the only term used, and thereafter it became the appropriate term to designate eugenics in Germany.<sup>74</sup>

The early moderation on questions of race did not apply, however, to people with different skin colors, because the German eugenicists believed as strongly as their American colleagues in “the racial and cultural superiority of Caucasians.”<sup>75</sup> Although the German population did not include non-Caucasians, Germans did confront other races in their African colonies. In German Southwest Africa, today Namibia, the colonial administration repressed the native population and, when the Hereros and Hottentots revolted in 1904, waged a three-year war of annihilation against them.<sup>76</sup> Although German law permitted marriages between

Germans and Africans, German colonial governors prohibited intermarriages.<sup>77</sup> These colonies also served as a favorite laboratory for German race hygienists to conduct anthropological research.

The Freiburg anthropologist Eugen Fischer conducted his research in Southwest Africa in 1908, one year after the defeat of the Hereros and the Hottentots. He studied – that is, measured and observed – the Rehoboth Bastards, offspring of “legally recognized and religiously consecrated unions between Dutch men and Hottentot women,” who spoke Dutch and had Dutch names.<sup>78</sup> In 1913 Fischer published his results in *Die Rehoboter Bastards und das Bastardisierungsproblem beim Menschen* (The Rehoboth Bastards and the problem of miscegenation among humans). This study not only established his reputation but also influenced all subsequent German racial legislation, including the Nuremberg racial laws.<sup>79</sup> In his study, Fischer concluded: “We still do not know a great deal about the mingling of the races [*Rassenmischung*]. But we certainly do know this: Without exception, every European nation [*Volk*] that has accepted the blood of inferior races – and only romantics can deny that Negroes, Hottentots, and many others are inferior – has paid for its acceptance of inferior elements with spiritual and cultural degeneration.”<sup>80</sup> Thereupon Fischer proposed the following: “Consequently, one should grant them the amount of protection that an inferior race confronting us requires to survive, no more and no less and only for so long as they are of use to us – otherwise free competition, that is, in my opinion, destruction.”<sup>81</sup> Fischer not only rejected marriages between whites and blacks but also objected to “colored, Jewish, and Gypsy hybrids,” the so-called *Mischlinge*.<sup>82</sup>

Race hygiene changed during the Weimar Republic. The experiences of war and defeat, as well as the political, social, and economic turmoil of the postwar years, radicalized the professional classes. Rejecting Weimar democracy, large numbers of the professional classes embraced the racial ideology of radical Germanic nationalism. They sympathized with the movements that called for a strong leader to command a community based on racial purity and strength, a conception called *völkisch*. Adherents of the *völkisch* ideology occupied positions on all levels of German society.<sup>83</sup> These trends created a split between the Berlin and Munich chapters of the German Society for Race Hygiene. The Munich chapter embraced the Nordic ideology, while the Berlin chapter rejected Aryan supremacy.<sup>84</sup>

Fritz Lenz, after Ploetz the most prominent advocate of the Nordic ideology, led the Munich chapter and served as coeditor of the *Archiv*. In 1923 the University of Munich appointed Lenz to the first German chair in race hygiene, and after Hitler assumed power, Lenz occupied the race hygiene chair in Berlin.<sup>85</sup> In 1931, two years before Hitler’s assumption of power, Lenz provided the Nazi leader with the following testimonial:

“Hitler is the first politician with truly wide influence who has recognized that the central mission of all politics is race hygiene and who will actively support this mission.”<sup>86</sup> Eugen Fischer and Ernst Rüdin were closely associated with Lenz in the leadership of the Nordic wing of the society, while two younger race hygiene scientists, Otmar Freiherr von Verschuer and Hans F. K. Günther, played leading roles among the next generation of Nordic supremacists.

Eugen Fischer emerged, after the publication of his Southwest African research, as the leading scientific expert on race mingling, a firm proponent of Nordic supremacy, and a major patron of eugenic research. In 1927 he became director of the newly created Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology in Berlin-Dahlem and at the same time professor of anthropology at the University of Berlin.<sup>87</sup> Ernst Rüdin, a Swiss national, was one of the founding members of the Society for Race Hygiene and a leading member of its Nordic wing. In 1931 he became director of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Psychiatry in Munich, and in 1933 he was appointed by the Nazi regime to head the Society for Race Hygiene.<sup>88</sup> Otmar Freiherr von Verschuer, a physician specializing in genetics and internal medicine, was known for his eugenic research on twins. A proponent of Aryan supremacy, Verschuer served as a department head in Fischer’s institute, left Berlin in 1935 to head the Frankfurt Institute for Hereditary Biology and Race Hygiene, and returned to Berlin as Fischer’s successor in 1942.<sup>89</sup> Hans F. K. Günther, who was appointed in 1930 to the university chair in racial anthropology at Jena by Wilhelm Frick and later occupied the chair at Freiburg, became a Nazi party member in 1932 and was thus perhaps the only leading race hygiene figure to join the party prior to Hitler’s assumption of power (Rüdin joined in 1937 and both Fischer and Verschuer joined in 1940).<sup>90</sup>

The years of the Weimar Republic witnessed a growing interest in race hygiene. The Munich chair occupied by Lenz in 1923 was only the beginning; by 1932 more than forty courses on race hygiene were offered at German universities, and in the Nazi period, chairs were established at almost every university.<sup>91</sup> In 1921 the Munich publisher Julius Friedrich Lehmann issued the work that would become the classic text of the science of race, the *Grundriß der menschlichen Erblehre und Rassenhygiene* (Outline of human genetics and racial hygiene). The two-volume work had three authors – Erwin Baur, Eugen Fischer, and Fritz Lenz – and was thus commonly known as Baur-Fischer-Lenz.<sup>92</sup> Baur, who died in 1933, was a highly respected botanist and headed the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Plant Cultivation and Genetic Research.<sup>93</sup> The *Grundriß* deeply influenced the development and application of the science of race. Lehmann, the publisher, gave a copy of the 1923 second edition to the imprisoned Adolf Hitler, who read it and used its ideas in *Mein Kampf*, and later the

authors of the official commentaries on the Nazi racial laws quoted the work as their scientific basis.<sup>94</sup>

A number of research centers with a focus on eugenics were also established during the Weimar years, and they advanced the growth of the field of race hygiene in Germany, serving as models for the vast number of similar institutes established during the Nazi period.<sup>95</sup> Two of these institutes were of special importance, both founded under the umbrella of the prestigious Kaiser Wilhelm Society, sponsor of major scientific research. The German Research Institute for Psychiatry in Munich, established in 1918 with funds from the Rockefeller Foundation, became associated with the society in 1924 as the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Genealogy and Demography of the German Research Institute for Psychiatry (Kaiser Wilhelm Institut für Genealogie und Demographie der Deutschen Forschungsanstalt für Psychiatrie), and, as we have seen, was headed by Ernst Rüdin after 1931.<sup>96</sup> The Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology, Human Heredity, and Eugenics (Kaiser Wilhelm Institut für Anthropologie, menschliche Erblehre und Eugenik) opened in 1927 in the Berlin suburb of Dahlem. Headed by Eugen Fischer, the board of directors (Kuratorium) included Alfred Grotjahn and Erwin Baur. The institute had three departments: racial anthropology headed by Fischer, human heredity headed by Verschuer, and eugenics headed by Hermann Muckermann. After Muckermann was fired in 1933, Lenz assumed direction of the third department, and after Verschuer left to head his own institute in Frankfurt in 1935, Fischer and Lenz became joint heads of the second department. Other departments – tuberculosis research (Karl Diehl), race science (Wolfgang Abel), experimental genetic pathology (Hans Nachtsheim), and embryology (Wouter Ströer) – were later also established.<sup>97</sup>

Although the leaders of the Nordic supremacy wing of the race hygiene movement stressed the superiority of the “Aryan race,” they “found [Hitler’s] maniacal anti-Semitism too extreme.”<sup>98</sup> They did, however, sympathize with the antisemitic movement as represented, for example, by the Gobineau Society, and they applauded the Nazi program without joining the party. Their contact with the publisher Lehmann placed them among the circle that included leading Nazis, and, as we have seen, they praised Hitler and his commitment to race hygiene.<sup>99</sup> But before the victory of the Nazis altered the rules of the game for academics, they did not consider Jews inferior or demand their exclusion. They only argued that Jews were different and that racial mingling of Jews and Aryans was undesirable.<sup>100</sup> One observer has speculated that their public positions remained moderate because they “valued and feared” their successful Jewish colleagues.<sup>101</sup> But privately they sometimes went further. In 1924 Verschuer told students that “the German, *völkisch* struggle is primarily directed against the

Jews, because alien Jewish penetration [*jüdische Überfremdung*] is a special threat to the German race.”<sup>102</sup>

The attitude exhibited by scientists toward the disabled “degenerates” among the lower classes could not, however, be described as moderate. As early as 1920, two eminent scholars proposed the most radical solution to the problem posed by institutionalized handicapped patients in Germany. In that year, Karl Binding and Alfred Hoche published a polemical work entitled *Die Freigabe der Vernichtung lebensunwerten Lebens* (Authorization for the destruction of life unworthy of life). Karl Binding, a widely published legal scholar who died just before the book appeared, argued that the law should permit the killing of “incurable feebleminded” individuals.<sup>103</sup> Alfred Hoche, a psychiatrist and specialist in neuropathology, analyzed Binding’s arguments from a “medical perspective.”<sup>104</sup> Both men lived in Freiburg, a city that was also the center of the Nordic wing of the race hygiene movement. Hoche was a professor at Freiburg University, and Binding, who had taught at Leipzig, had retired in Freiburg. Both Binding and Hoche were right-wing nationalists who rejected individual rights and championed the rights of the national community.<sup>105</sup>

Binding argued that suicide, which he labeled a “human right,” should not be unlawful.<sup>106</sup> He also maintained that euthanasia, that is, assisted suicide, should not be penalized, referring to the desire for assisted suicide of many critically ill individuals dying a painful death. As an example, he pointed to terminal cancer patients who receive from their physicians a “deadly injection of morphine” and die “without pain, perhaps also faster, but possibly only after a somewhat longer time.”<sup>107</sup>

The discussion of suicide and terminal cancer patients was ancillary to Binding’s main concern. His polemic focused on the fate of individuals considered “unworthy of life [*lebensunwert*],” which could mean both individuals whose lives were no longer worth living because of pain and incapacity and individuals who were considered so inferior that their lives could be labeled unworthy. He used the argument that the terminally ill deserved the right to a relatively painless death to justify the murder of those considered inferior. Binding and all subsequent proponents of his argument consciously confused the discussion by pointing to the suicide rights of terminal cancer patients facing a certain and painful death when in reality they wanted to “destroy” the “unworthy life” of healthy but “degenerate” individuals.

Binding’s definition of unworthy life was not very precise, but he did make it clear that he referred to inferiors who should be killed even if they could live painlessly for many years. He added a new criteria when he asserted that whether a life was worth living was determined not only by its worth to the individual but also by its worth to society.<sup>108</sup> Emphasizing in a footnote that millions had given their lives for their fatherland during



the world war, Binding made the following point to underline his argument: "If one thinks of a battlefield covered with thousands of dead youth . . . and contrasts this with our institutions for the feeble-minded [*Idioteninstitute*] with their solicitude for their living patients – then one would be deeply shocked by the glaring disjunction between the sacrifice of the most valuable possession of humanity on one side and on the other the greatest care of beings who are not only worthless but even manifest negative value."<sup>109</sup> Binding's comparison of the death of worthy individuals in the service of their nation and the survival of pampered inferiors was a staple of eugenic argumentation and, as we have seen, mirrored the argument in favor of sterilization advanced by Oliver Wendell Holmes.

Describing the individuals whose lives were unworthy of life as suffering from "incurable feeble-mindedness," Binding argued that their lives were "without purpose" and imposed a "terribly difficult burden" on both relatives and society. Although they had no value, the care of such individuals, Binding argued, occupied an entire profession of healthy individuals, which was a total misappropriation of valuable human resources.<sup>110</sup> Alfred Hoche fully supported his coauthor's argument. Hoche offered a variety of definitions of unworthy life, such as, for example, incurable mental retardation or incurable feeble-mindedness, but he did not hesitate to use the popular term "*Ballastexistenzen*," that is, beings who are nothing but ballast that can be jettisoned.<sup>111</sup> He also advanced a utilitarian argument, bemoaning the loss of "national resources" for "nonproductive purposes," concluding that "it is a distressing idea that entire generations of nurses shall vegetate next to such empty human shells [*leeren Menschenhülsen*], many of whom will live to be seventy years or even older."<sup>112</sup>

Hoche did not accept the traditional obligation of physicians to do no harm. Dismissing the Hippocratic oath as a "physician's oath of ancient times," he argued that physicians always balance benefits against risks and thus protect "higher values." He did not expect opposition from the medical profession, pointing out that young physicians no longer follow absolute ethical rules but orient themselves according to the teachings of their professors and the opinions of their peers.<sup>113</sup>

In two areas of special concern to physicians, Hoche added to the arguments advanced by Binding. First, he insisted that physicians must be protected against prosecution for euthanasia, because even relatives who ask for the death of patients sometimes change their minds.<sup>114</sup> Second, he argued that the killing of defective patients would expand research opportunities, particularly brain research.<sup>115</sup>

In conclusion, Binding discussed the procedures necessary to implement the destruction of unworthy life. The handicapped patient, the physician, or the patient's relatives could apply for euthanasia, but Binding reserved

the right to authorize the killing to the state, which would appoint an "authorization committee" composed of one jurist and two physicians to make an "objective expert evaluation."<sup>116</sup> Binding added a number of further requirements: the decision had to rest on advanced scientific knowledge, the means to accomplish the killing had to be appropriate and "absolutely painless," and only an expert (*Sachverständiger*) could actually kill.<sup>117</sup> Binding acknowledged the possibility of error (*Irrtumsrisiko*), except perhaps with "idiots," but he argued that "humanity loses due to error so many members, that one more or less really does not make a difference."<sup>118</sup>

The Binding-Hoche polemic was followed by other publications favoring euthanasia for those deemed unworthy of life, and, although the idea was never officially accepted during the Weimar Republic, it was widely discussed in German medical circles.<sup>119</sup> In the United States and Great Britain, where public discussion of euthanasia centered on mercy killing for terminal patients and not the killing of unworthy life, the Binding-Hoche polemic made no impression.<sup>120</sup> In Germany, however, it was very influential; eventually the Nazi killers would adopt many of its arguments and later use them as justification. Although the German race hygienists did not originally advocate eugenic euthanasia, they did accept it as "the logical outgrowth of the cost-benefit analysis at the heart of race hygiene."<sup>121</sup>

We might ask why American eugenics withered and died while German race hygiene succeeded in imposing on society its radical vision of a biological-social utopia. The answer is politics. The political climate of the Weimar Republic, especially the ideology of the right-wing *völkisch* movements, provided a hospitable milieu where race hygiene could prosper. But most important, in January 1933 the National Socialist German Workers Party (Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter Partei, or NSDAP) captured the German government. This assumption of power by the Nazis, the most radical *völkisch* movement, made the implementation of the race hygiene utopia possible. The Nazis had pledged to preserve the "purity of German blood," that is, they were determined to cleanse the German gene pool.<sup>122</sup> To accomplish that end, the Nazi regime introduced radical social engineering designed to create a society racially homogeneous, physically hardy, and mentally healthy.<sup>123</sup>

A policy of exclusion stood at the center of the Nazi utopia. Killing operations were only the most radical, final stage of exclusion. As we shall see, Adolf Hitler, who was totally committed to the politics of exclusion, ordered the killings once domestic and foreign restraints were removed. The party leaders, the uniformed party formations, and the civil service promptly implemented his orders. And the professional classes, protected by Hitler's authorization, readily cooperated in the killings.

Exclusion institutionalized human inequality. It was applied to entire groups of human beings who simply did not fit into this utopian community, including all those long designated as degenerate (*entartet*) by the teachings of race scientists. First, exclusion was applied to the handicapped, that is, the physically malformed, mentally disturbed, and intellectually retarded. In 1932 the prominent Social Democratic physician Julius Moses predicted that the medical profession under the Nazis would “destroy and exterminate” incurable patients because they were “unproductive” and “unworthy.”<sup>124</sup> And as race scientists had always considered criminality an outgrowth of degeneration, exclusion of the handicapped was also designed to apply to individuals considered antisocial or criminal – prostitutes, beggars, vagabonds, habitual criminals – and was later extended to include anyone whose behavior was “alien to the community [*gemeinschaftsfremd*].” The adjective “antisocial” is translated in German as *asozial*; race scientists transformed this adjective into the noun *Asozial* in order to label and stigmatize individuals and groups. One official definition of members of the *Asozialen* group described them as “human beings with a hereditary and irreversible mental attitude, who, due to this nature, incline toward alcoholism and immorality, have repeatedly come into conflict with government agencies and the courts, and thus appear unrestrained and a threat to humanity.”<sup>125</sup>

Second, exclusion was applied to racially alien peoples whose physical and intellectual penetration of the so-called Aryan race was also viewed as degeneration. All non-Caucasian races were to be excluded, but the policy primarily concerned two ethnic groups residing in Germany and designated as alien (*artfremde*) races: Jews and Gypsies.<sup>126</sup> Although they may have emphasized different dangers posed by specific groups, the Nazis thus applied exclusion to exactly the same groups that had been targeted by the Aryan supremacist wing of the race hygiene movement. During the 1930s, exclusion became official German government policy.

Exclusion was applied differently to each group. The exclusion of the handicapped, who were for the most part already institutionalized, did not pose a serious administrative problem. In the Weimar Republic, psychiatrists and others in the race hygiene movement had argued that cost containment must apply to institutions caring for the handicapped, and in 1932 Prussia reduced support for so-called defectives. During the 1930s, conditions imposed on the institutionalized handicapped deteriorated precipitously because physicians considered it “obvious” that incurable patients should receive less food than those able to return to work.<sup>127</sup> During the war, conditions became even worse when institutions for the disabled, the senile, alcoholics, and others were denied the additional food regular hospitals received.<sup>128</sup> Antisocial individuals were committed to concentration camps as early as 1933 and were sent to the camps in

growing numbers after 1937.<sup>129</sup> During the war, psychiatrists even sought to transfer troublesome handicapped patients from state hospitals to concentration camps.<sup>130</sup> Also, in 1932 the Weimar bureaucracy drafted a voluntary sterilization law for the handicapped, which the Nazi regime implemented in 1933 as a compulsory law.<sup>131</sup>

The method of exclusion applied to those considered aliens on the basis of race depended on the size and importance of the group. For example, the small number of German blacks – children of black French soldiers and German women – were sterilized during the 1930s to prevent future black offspring. This sterilization, illegal even under German law in the Nazi era, was validated by scientific recommendations from Eugen Fischer, Fritz Lenz, Hans F. K. Günther, Alfred Ploetz, and others.<sup>132</sup> Against the larger group of German Gypsies – Roma and Sinti – the regime simply intensified existing discriminatory laws traditionally enforced by the police. In 1936 German scientists embarked on a massive effort to register and classify all Gypsies, while the police severely limited their mobility and incarcerated large numbers in special Gypsy camps.<sup>133</sup>

These simple methods of exclusion could not be imposed as easily on Jews, members of the largest and most visible minority considered alien on the basis of race. Although Hitler and the Nazi movement were fixated on the threat supposedly presented by “international Jewry,” they found it difficult to reverse immediately the legal, social, and economic integration of Jews into German society. The process of exclusion required a number of years and involved both domestic and foreign policy considerations. Racial laws and regulations, as well as general harassment, slowly excluded Jews from active participation in the life of the nation. But during the 1930s, the party and state bureaucracy considered the emigration of Jews from Germany as the most promising and the most feasible form of total exclusion.<sup>134</sup>

The Nazi regime issued numerous laws and regulations during the 1930s to implement its eugenic and racial program, and, as we shall see, the practitioners of race hygiene – anthropologists, geneticists, psychiatrists, and physicians – were involved in drafting and applying them. Of course, their role had changed. They profited from being governed by a regime that favored race hygiene, but they also had to accommodate themselves to the regime’s political needs. They continued to consider the Nazis “vulgar and ordinary” and Nazi antisemitism somewhat extreme, but they accepted, even applauded, Nazi policies because they reflected an ideology they as individuals and as scientists had long supported.<sup>135</sup> But even though they may have tried to maintain a certain scientific detachment, their assistants and students enthusiastically embraced all aspects of Nazi ideology.<sup>136</sup>

At times, however, Nazi ideology made life inconvenient for the race scientists. Fritz Lenz discovered the futility of objecting to one of Heinrich

Himmler's pet projects. At a committee meeting attended by Himmler, Lenz opposed equality for illegitimate children because he believed it would have a negative impact on the quality of the transmitted germ plasm. Himmler disagreed. The powerful Reich leader SS argued that illegitimacy was not a disgrace in the "real world" and that equality was needed to assure a high birthrate and to prevent the spread of homosexuality and abortion.<sup>137</sup>

German science was rapidly synchronized (*gleichgeschaltet*) with Nazi ideology after 1933, especially after scientists opposed to the new regime, as well as those with the wrong ethnic background, were fired. There was no effective resistance. Still, not all science was dominated by Nazi ideology in disregard of the German scientific tradition. For example, the attempt to establish an Aryan physics failed as older traditions reasserted themselves.<sup>138</sup>

Such restraints did not apply in the biological sciences concerned with questions of race and heredity. There Nazi ideology and German scientific tradition complemented each other. Without hesitation, the race scientists fired their Jewish colleagues. Eugen Fischer dismissed Jewish faculty as Rektor of the University of Berlin. This housecleaning also took place in the Kaiser Wilhelm Society, where Richard Goldschmidt, for example, was forced to retire as director of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Biology. Two leading members of the anti-Nordic wing of race hygiene, Hermann Muckermann and Arthur Ostermann, were also forced to resign. The German Society for Race Hygiene, synchronized under the command of Ernst Rüdin, adopted new by-laws, restricting membership to "Germans of Aryan ancestry."<sup>139</sup> While the dismissal of scientists devastated physics, surprisingly only a few of the prestigious and influential chairs in psychiatry changed occupants after 1933. Only three vacancies occurred, and the regime had to wait for normal retirements to make new appointments in psychiatry.<sup>140</sup>

The scientists of race hygiene thus rapidly adjusted to the new political realities, adopting the language and tenor of the new regime. Neither the scientists nor the Nazi leadership saw a distinction between racial and eugenic policies. They joined hands in their common struggle against "degeneration." Newly empowered party and government officials – for example, Arthur Gütt of the Reich Ministry of Interior and Walter Gross of the Nazi party's Office for Race and Politics – admired the work and supported the goals of the scientists.<sup>141</sup> In turn, leading scientists – for example, Rüdin, Verschuer, and Theodor Mollison of Munich – adopted the harsh position on race espoused by the Nazi movement.<sup>142</sup> Spreading the gospel of race hygiene, the scientists offered courses on race and eugenics to public health officers, SS physicians, teachers, nurses, and civil servants.<sup>143</sup> Profiting from the increased demand for genealogies created

by the new race laws, they provided anthropological, racial evaluations of individuals – both living and dead – to prove or disprove Aryan descent.<sup>144</sup> They fully supported the regime's policy of exclusion, designed to improve the racial stock of the German nation. In the language used by both the Nazis and the scientists, this policy was called "*Aufartung durch Ausmerzung*," which can be translated as "improvement through exclusion." But this translation does not fully transmit the perversion and brutality of the phrase. A better translation is "physical regeneration through eradication," that is, the Nazi regime and its scientists wanted to improve the stock of the German *Volk* through the eradication of its inferior members and of the racial aliens dwelling among them.<sup>145</sup>

The policy of exclusion required precise definitions of groups and individuals, which only race science could provide. However arbitrary, the "criteria for selection" had to be scientific, and the cooperation of the scientists was an important prerequisite for the successful implementation of the policy of exclusion. Scientific exactitude provided *Rechtssicherheit*, that is, legal reassurance for the masses that the law would protect their own security.<sup>146</sup>

Exclusion not only stripped individuals of rights and standing but also barred them from receiving the state's assistance. Of course, the removal of the safety net for inferiors had always been one of the central themes of eugenics, both in Germany and elsewhere, and opposition to public welfare expenditures had become even more vocal during the depression.<sup>147</sup> It is thus not surprising that the Nazi regime manipulated public welfare to exclude Jews and Gypsies.

The German public welfare system was both expensive and tightly regulated, and the regime could thus use its control of both administration and finances to bar undesirables from receiving public welfare. The Reich authorities responsible for the regulations governing welfare used them to exclude undesirable groups. Obviously, local governments responsible for paying the mandated welfare costs attempted to relieve their burden by excluding as many undesirables as possible from the welfare rolls. The Reich complied by forcing Jewish welfare agencies to assume all responsibility for Jewish welfare recipients. The Reich also decreed that Gypsies were to receive the same treatment as Jews, but because Gypsies did not possess their own welfare agencies, their level of welfare was left to the discretion of local welfare offices; however, Gypsies were to receive less aid than Aryans.<sup>148</sup>

As the Nazi regime moved toward war, Hitler authorized state and party planners to proceed from the exclusionary policies of emigration, incarceration, and sterilization to the most radical exclusionary solution of killings. The first group targeted were the handicapped. They were excluded by being institutionalized, but this was not enough. Hostile to their existence, institutions reduced services and sought to cut the costs of

caring for mental and disabled patients. Excluded, incarcerated, sterilized, and neglected, the handicapped were viewed as expendable, and thus a logical progression led to the killing of the handicapped in the so-called euthanasia program.<sup>149</sup> The other group of undesirables – the *Asozialen* – were treated similarly: those committed to institutions by the courts were among the first killed; others were later selected for killing when euthanasia was applied within the concentration camps.<sup>150</sup>

In 1940 and early 1941, when the radical killing solution was already being applied to the handicapped, the policy toward Jews did not yet include killings. At that time, limited emigration, ghettoization, and schemes calling for the establishment of Jewish reservations remained the only exclusionary policy options for Jews. But when international conditions and the progress of the war made a more radical solution possible, the killings were expanded to include Jews.<sup>151</sup>

The much smaller group of Gypsies was also not at first a target of the killing solution. Gypsies were initially subjected to persecution by the police, who incarcerated them as criminals and *Asoziale* by virtue of social stereotype. Then they were studied and sterilized by anthropologists and psychiatrists, in a close collaboration between the police and health authorities. Eventually, after they had been classified by the race scientists as racially inferior, they were killed alongside Jews.<sup>152</sup>

The killing operations that commenced with the start of World War II were the result of old beliefs and recent policies. Although the Nazi policies of exclusion, including compulsory sterilization, provided a crucial stepping-stone toward the implementation of the killings, old beliefs that predated Hitler's assumption of power were equally essential. As we have seen, as early as 1920 Binding and Hoche had called for the "destruction of life unworthy of life," euphemistically called euthanasia. The Nazi regime merely put their proposal into practice.

The euthanasia killings – that is, the "systematic and secret execution" of the handicapped<sup>153</sup> – were Nazi Germany's first organized mass murder, in which the killers developed their killing technique. They created the method for selecting the victims. They invented techniques to gas people and burn their bodies. They employed subterfuge to hide the killings, and they did not hesitate to pillage the corpses.

The euthanasia killings proved to be the opening act of Nazi genocide. The mass murder of the handicapped preceded that of Jews and Gypsies; the final solution followed euthanasia. In euthanasia, the perpetrators recognized their limitations and, to avoid popular disapproval, transferred the killings from the Reich to the East. No substantive difference existed, however, between the killing operations directed against the handicapped, Jews, and Gypsies. The killing technique that had been developed and tested in euthanasia was used again and again. The killers who learned

their trade in the euthanasia killing centers of Brandenburg, Grafeneck, Hartheim, Sonnenstein, Bernburg, and Hadamar also staffed the killing centers at Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka. The instigators had learned that individuals selected at random would carry out terrible crimes “without scruples.”<sup>154</sup>

## NOTES

- 1 See *Hundert Jahre deutscher Rassismus*; Proctor, *Racial Hygiene*; and Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution*.
- 2 See Müller-Hill, *Tödliche Wissenschaft*.
- 3 I have based this discussion on the analysis (and works cited) in Gould, *Mismeasure of Man*.
- 4 See Bergmann, Czarnowski, and Ehmman, “Objekte humangenetischer Forschung,” p. 122.
- 5 Cited in Gould, *Mismeasure of Man*, p. 83.
- 6 Ibid., pp. 242–3 (quote on p. 28). On the construction of hierarchies, see Allen, “Misuse of Biological Hierarchies,” pp. 105–7.
- 7 Cited in Gould, *Mismeasure of Man*, p. 104.
- 8 Cited *ibid.*, p. 103.
- 9 Ibid., p. 115.
- 10 Ibid., p. 31.
- 11 Ibid., p. 147.
- 12 Proctor, *Racial Hygiene*, pp. 30–8.
- 13 Graham, “Science and Values,” p. 1135; Gould, *Mismeasure of Man*, p. 162; Proctor, *Racial Hygiene*, p. 34.
- 14 Gould, *Mismeasure of Man*, p. 162. See also Müller-Hill, “Selektion,” pp. 138–9.
- 15 Gould, *Mismeasure of Man*, pp. 113–22.
- 16 Cited *ibid.*, p. 134.
- 17 Cited *ibid.*, p. 138.
- 18 Cited *ibid.*, p. 139.
- 19 Cited *ibid.*, p. 134.
- 20 Cited *ibid.*, p. 126.
- 21 Cited in Klee, “Euthanasie” *im NS-Staat*, p. 360. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.
- 22 Gould, *Mismeasure of Man*, pp. 146–57.
- 23 Ibid., pp. 234–320.
- 24 Cited *ibid.*, p. 310n.
- 25 Ibid., pp. 158–9. In Germany, the highest grade of feeble-mindedness (*Schwachsinn*), equivalent to the American “moron,” was called *Debilität* from the French *débile*, while the other two grades – *Imbezillität* and *Idiotie* – are direct equivalents of the American labels. See Gütt, Rüdin, and Ruttke, *Gesetz zur Verhütung erbkranken Nachwuchses* (2nd rev. edn.), p. 119.
- 26 Cited in Allen, “Eugenics Record Office,” p. 225.



- 27 Ibid., pp. 244–5.
- 28 Ibid., pp. 226–7, 255, 260–4.
- 29 Ibid., pp. 243, 246.
- 30 Gould, *Mismeasure of Man*, pp. 234–9.
- 31 Ibid., pp. 192–4.
- 32 Ibid., pp. 195–9.
- 33 Ibid., p. 199.
- 34 Ibid., pp. 157–8, 161.
- 35 On the genius project, see *ibid.*, pp. 183–8.
- 36 Cited *ibid.*, p. 183.
- 37 Ibid., pp. 160–1.
- 38 Cited *ibid.*, p. 181.
- 39 Cited *ibid.*, p. 161. On the connection between Goddard and the ERO, see Allen, “Eugenics Record Office,” p. 242.
- 40 Gould, *Mismeasure of Man*, p. 197.
- 41 Allen, “Eugenics Record Office,” p. 248.
- 42 Cited in Gould, *Mismeasure of Man*, p. 225.
- 43 Allen, “Eugenics Record Office,” pp. 242–3.
- 44 Gould, *Mismeasure of Man*, pp. 217–22, 225–30.
- 45 Ibid., pp. 235–6.
- 46 Ibid., p. 322; Müller-Hill, “Selektion,” pp. 153–5. See also Graham, “Science and Values,” pp. 1157–64.
- 47 Gould, *Mismeasure of Man*, pp. 293–6.
- 48 Allen, “Eugenics Record Office,” pp. 247–8.
- 49 Cited in Gould, *Mismeasure of Man*, pp. 164, 181.
- 50 Allen, “Eugenics Record Office,” p. 258.
- 51 Cited in Gould, *Mismeasure of Man*, p. 164.
- 52 Allen, “Misuse of Biological Hierarchies,” p. 122.
- 53 *Buck v. Bell*, 274 U.S. 200 (1927).
- 54 Ibid., p. 202.
- 55 Ibid., p. 207.
- 56 See, for example, Allen, “Misuse of Biological Hierarchies,” pp. 125–6, and “Eugenics Record Office,” pp. 250–3; and Gould, *Mismeasure of Man*, p. 22.
- 57 Proctor, *Racial Hygiene*, p. 8; Weiss, “Race Hygiene Movement,” pp. 197, 209; Müller-Hill, “Selektion,” p. 139; Thom and Caregorodcev, *Medizin unterm Hakenkreuz*, p. 130.
- 58 Bergmann, Czarnowski, and Ehmann, “Objekte humangenetischer Forschung,” p. 122.
- 59 Graham, “Science and Values,” pp. 1134–6; Schmuhl, *Rassenhygiene, Nationalsozialismus, Euthanasie*, pp. 31–2, 58.
- 60 Weiss, “Race Hygiene Movement,” p. 210; Graham, “Science and Values,” p. 1136; Müller-Hill, “Selektion,” p. 139.
- 61 Weiss, “Race Hygiene Movement,” pp. 206–9.
- 62 Ibid., p. 212.
- 63 Ibid., p. 201; Bergmann, Czarnowski, and Ehmann, “Objekte humangenetischer Forschung,” p. 122.
- 64 Weiss, “Race Hygiene Movement,” p. 212.

- 65 Weiss, "Race Hygiene Movement," pp. 210–11; Bergmann, Czarnowski, and Ehmann, "Objekte humangenetischer Forschung," p. 123.
- 66 Roth, "Alfred Grotjahn," pp. 31–56.
- 67 Graham, "Science and Values," p. 1140.
- 68 *Ibid.*, pp. 1142–3.
- 69 Weiss, "Race Hygiene Movement," p. 195. See also Kühl, *Nazi Connection*, chap. 6.
- 70 Weiss, "Race Hygiene Movement," p. 194; Proctor, *Racial Hygiene*, pp. 20–30, 55–6.
- 71 Weiss, "Race Hygiene Movement," pp. 202, 226–8.
- 72 Graham, "Science and Values," pp. 1138–9; Weiss, "Race Hygiene Movement," p. 201.
- 73 Weiss, "Race Hygiene Movement," p. 222.
- 74 *Ibid.*, pp. 226–8.
- 75 *Ibid.*, p. 194; Kühl, *Nazi Connection*, p. 71.
- 76 See Bridgman, *Revolt of the Hereros*.
- 77 Bergmann, Czarnowski, and Ehmann, "Objekte humangenetischer Forschung," pp. 129–30.
- 78 Bridgman, *Revolt of the Hereros*, p. 25. See also Bergmann, Czarnowski, and Ehmann, "Objekte humangenetischer Forschung," pp. 127–8.
- 79 Bergmann, Czarnowski, and Ehmann, "Objekte humangenetischer Forschung," pp. 128, 131.
- 80 Cited in Pross and Aly, *Wert des Menschen*, p. 98. See also *Hundert Jahre deutscher Rassismus*, pp. 22–3.
- 81 Cited in Bergmann, Czarnowski, and Ehmann, "Objekte humangenetischer Forschung," p. 128.
- 82 *Ibid.*, p. 130.
- 83 For the *völkisch* movements, see Mosse, *Crisis of German Ideology*; Stern, *Politics of Cultural Despair*; and Waite, *Vanguard of Nazism*.
- 84 Weiss, "Race Hygiene Movement," pp. 214, 219.
- 85 *Ibid.*, pp. 214, 221; *Hundert Jahre deutscher Rassismus*, p. 78.
- 86 Cited in Graham, "Science and Values," p. 1143, n. 24.
- 87 Bergmann, Czarnowski, and Ehmann, "Objekte humangenetischer Forschung," pp. 121, 124.
- 88 Weiss, "Race Hygiene Movement," pp. 207, 221, 226; Thom and Caregorodcev, *Medizin unterm Hakenkreuz*, p. 139.
- 89 Weiss, "Race Hygiene Movement," p. 232; Bergmann, Czarnowski, and Ehmann, "Objekte humangenetischer Forschung," p. 125; Müller-Hill, "Selektion," p. 141. On Verschuer's research, see BAK, R73/15341–2.
- 90 BDC, NSDAP master file. See also Weinreich, *Hitler's Professors*, p. 270.
- 91 Weiss, "Race Hygiene Movement," p. 221; Proctor, *Racial Hygiene*, p. 80. See also Weindling, *Health, Race, and German Politics*, p. 339, chart.
- 92 Erwin Baur, Eugen Fischer, and Fritz Lenz, *Grundriß der menschlichen Erblichkeitslehre und Rassenkunde* (Munich, 1921). The third revised edition appeared in two volumes as *Grundriß der menschlichen Erblichkeitslehre und Rassenhygiene* (Munich, 1927–31), with the original work as volume 1 entitled *Menschliche Erblichkeitslehre* (1927), and volume 2 by Lenz entitled *Menschliche*

- Auslese und Rassenhygiene* (1931). The fifth revised edition appeared as *Menschliche Erblehre und Rassenhygiene* (Munich, 1940). J. F. Lehmann published all editions. An English edition of volume 1 appeared as *Human Heredity*, trans. Eden Paul and Cedar Paul (New York, 1931). See also Müller-Hill, *Tödliche Wissenschaft*, p. 12; Weiss, "Race Hygiene Movement," p. 214; Bergmann, Czarnowski, and Ehmann, "Objekte humangenetischer Forschung," p. 126; and *Hundert Jahre deutscher Rassismus*, pp. 75–9.
- 93 *Hundert Jahre deutscher Rassismus*, p. 77; Gilsenbach, "Erwin Baur," pp. 184–97.
- 94 Müller-Hill, "Selektion," p. 142; Bergmann, Czarnowski, and Ehmann, "Objekte humangenetischer Forschung," p. 126.
- 95 See Weindling, *Health, Race, and German Politics*, pp. 515–17, chart.
- 96 Weiss, "Race Hygiene Movement," p. 221; Macrakis, *Surviving the Swastika*, pp. 125–30. See also BAK, R73/14095, concerning projects of the Rüdín institute.
- 97 Bergmann, Czarnowski, and Ehmann, "Objekte humangenetischer Forschung," pp. 124–5; Macrakis, *Surviving the Swastika*, pp. 125–30.
- 98 Weiss, "Race Hygiene Movement," p. 216.
- 99 Bergmann, Czarnowski, and Ehmann, "Objekte humangenetischer Forschung," pp. 131–2.
- 100 Müller-Hill, "Selektion," p. 144.
- 101 Ibid.
- 102 Cited *ibid.*, p. 141.
- 103 Binding did not use the term *Schwachsinn* for feeble-mindedness but instead used the less scientific and less specific term *Blödsinnig*. Hoche used the same term. Binding and Hoche, *Vernichtung lebensunwerten Lebens*, pp. 31, 51.
- 104 Ibid., p. 45.
- 105 See Weindling, *Health, Race, and German Politics*, pp. 393–8.
- 106 Binding and Hoche, *Vernichtung lebensunwerten Lebens*, pp. 6–16.
- 107 Ibid., pp. 16–17.
- 108 Ibid., pp. 27–8.
- 109 Ibid., p. 27.
- 110 Ibid., pp. 29–32.
- 111 Ibid., pp. 47, 51, 55.
- 112 Ibid., pp. 54–5.
- 113 Ibid., pp. 45–7, 49–50.
- 114 Ibid., pp. 47–8.
- 115 Ibid., pp. 48–9.
- 116 Ibid., pp. 35–6.
- 117 Ibid., p. 37.
- 118 Ibid., pp. 39–40.
- 119 See Hafner and Winau, "Karl Binding und Alfred Hoche," p. 233, n. 46.
- 120 Ibid., p. 252.
- 121 Weiss, "Race Hygiene Movement," p. 234.
- 122 Compare, for example, the language about "blood" used in the Nuremberg racial laws. See also Kater, "Gesundheitsführung," p. 350.

- 123 See, for example, Aly, "Der saubere und der schmutzige Fortschritt," pp. 9–78.
- 124 Cited in Pross and Aly, *Wert des Menschen*, p. 92.
- 125 Cited in DÖW, file 19134: VG bei dem LG Wien, Urteil Maximilian Thaller, Vg 11e Vr 5502/46 (Hv 328/48), 25 Oct. 1948. See also Roth, "Ein Mustergau gegen die Armen, Leistungsschwachen und 'Gemeinschaftsunfähigen,'" in Ebbinghaus, Kaupen-Haas, and Roth, *Heilen und Vernichten im Mustergau Hamburg*, pp. 7–17. For evidence on the treatment of the Asozialen during the war, see the documents in DÖW, file E19198, Reichsgau Wien, Hauptgesundheitsamt. See also Müller-Hill, "Selektion," pp. 147–8.
- 126 See Walk, *Sonderrecht für die Juden*, p. 146, no. 81.
- 127 StA Hamburg, Verfahren Friedrich Lensch und Kurt Struve, 147 Js 58/67, Gesundheitsbehörde Bd. 1: memo from psychiatrist Holm, "Verpflegung, insbesondere Butterausgabe an die Kranken der Klinik Eilbeckthal," 22 Nov. 1937; BAK, R36/881: Verpflegungskosten in Heil- und Pflegeanstalten, 28 Feb. 1939. See also Weiss, "Race Hygiene Movement," pp. 223–4, and Ebbinghaus, "Kostensenkung, 'Aktive Therapie' und Vernichtung," in Ebbinghaus, Kaupen-Haas, and Roth, *Heilen und Vernichten im Mustergau Hamburg*, pp. 136–46.
- 128 ZStL, Heidelberg Docs. 127,084, 127,088: copy of "Die Krankenanstalten in der Kriegsernährungswirtschaft," in *Für das gesamte Krankenhauswesen*, Heft 3, and cover letter from Paul Nitsche to Hans Heinze, 30 Oct. 1942. The so-called Heidelberg Documents contain papers of Professor Paul Nitsche, the last medical chief of adult euthanasia.
- 129 See Broszat, "Konzentrationslager," pp. 66–72, 76–8; Friedlander, "Nazi Concentration Camps," pp. 41–2; Pingel, *Häftlinge unter SS-Herrschaft*, pp. 70–4; Tuchel, *Konzentrationslager*, p. 155, n. 134; and Drobisch and Wieland, *System der NS-Konzentrationslager*, pp. 199–204.
- 130 ZStL, Heidelberg Docs. 127,947–50: Otto Hebold to Paul Nitsche, 23 Mar. 1944, and Nitsche note, 29 Mar. 1944.
- 131 See Bock, *Zwangsterilisation*, and Nowak, "Euthanasie" und Sterilisierung. See also Weiss, "Race Hygiene Movement," pp. 225, 229.
- 132 See Bergmann, Czarnowski, and Ehmann, "Objekte humangenetischer Forschung," p. 132, and Pommerin, "Sterilisierung der Rheinlandbastarde."
- 133 See Müller-Hill, *Tödliche Wissenschaft*, pp. 59–61; Hohmann, *Ritter und die Erben der Kriminalbiologie*; Brucker-Boroujerdi and Wippermann, "'Zigeunerlager' Berlin-Marzahn"; Hase-Mihalik and Kreuzkamp, *Du kriegst auch einen schönen Wohnwagen*; and Milton, "Gypsies and the Holocaust."
- 134 For the anti-Jewish policies of the Nazi regime during the 1930s, see Adam, *Judenpolitik*, and Schleunes, *Twisted Road to Auschwitz*. For an example of harassment, see the files in BAK, R36/2118, concerning the campaign to prevent the burial of Jews in German cemeteries.
- 135 Müller-Hill, "Selektion," pp. 144, 146.
- 136 *Ibid.*, p. 145.

- 137 BAK, R18/5518: "Mitschrift über die Besprechung am 15. Juni 1937 betr. Fragen der unehelichen Mutterschaft."
- 138 See Beyerchen, *Scientists under Hitler*, and Macrakis, *Surviving the Swastika*.
- 139 Bergmann, Czarnowski, and Ehmann, "Objekte humangenetischer Forschung," pp. 131–2; Weiss, "Race Hygiene Movement," pp. 226–8.
- 140 Thom and Caregorodcev, *Medizin unterm Hakenkreuz*, pp. 139–40.
- 141 See Bergmann, Czarnowski, and Ehmann, "Objekte humangenetischer Forschung," p. 124, and Weinreich, *Hitler's Professors*, pp. 269–70. See also BAK, R73/15341: DFG Vermerk, 6 Dec. 1935, concerning Gütt's support for race hygiene research.
- 142 Weiss, "Race Hygiene Movement," p. 228.
- 143 Ibid., p. 233; Bergmann, Czarnowski, and Ehmann, "Objekte humangenetischer Forschung," p. 124. See also BAK, R73/15341: Verschuer memo for DFG, 16 Nov. 1936.
- 144 Bergmann, Czarnowski, and Ehmann, "Objekte humangenetischer Forschung," p. 132; Müller-Hill, "Selektion," p. 144.
- 145 On Nazi language, see Klemperer, *LTI: Aus dem Notizbuch eines Philologen*.
- 146 Müller-Hill, "Selektion," pp. 146–7.
- 147 Weiss, "Rassenhygienische Bewegung," p. 170.
- 148 See BAK, R18/1022, 1023, Fürsorge für Juden und Zigeuner.
- 149 For early postwar accounts of the killing of handicapped patients, see Mitscherlich and Mielke, *Medizin ohne Menschlichkeit*, and Platen-Hallermund, *Die Tötung Geisteskranker*. For a later account, based also on postwar trials in West Germany, see Kaul, *Nazimordaktion T4*. The three recent works by Ernst Klee provide the most detailed account: "Euthanasie" im NS-Staat, *Dokumente*, and *Was sie taten – Was sie wurden*.
- 150 See Emmerich, "Forensische Psychiatrie," and Grode, "Sonderbehandlung 14f13."
- 151 See Reitlinger, *Final Solution*; Hilberg, *Destruction*; and Adler, *Der verwaltete Mensch*.
- 152 See Zimmermann, *Verfolgt, Vertrieben, Vernichtet*; Zülch, *In Auschwitz vergast*; Thurner, *Zigeuner in Österreich*; and Milton, "Context of the Holocaust." See also BAK, R73/14005: DFG files on Robert Ritter.
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## *Ghetto Formation*

RAUL HILBERG

As early as the beginning of November 1939, Frank issued instructions that all “Jews and Jewesses” (*Juden und Jüdinnen*) who had reached the age of twelve be forced to wear a white armband with a blue Jewish star.<sup>1</sup> His order was carried out by the decree of November 23, 1939.<sup>2</sup> In the incorporated territories a few *Regierungs-präsidenten* imposed markings of their own. For the sake of uniformity, *Reichsstatthalter* Greiser of the Wartheland ordered that all Jews in his *Reichsgau* wear a four-inch (ten-centimeter) yellow star sewed on the front and back of their clothes.<sup>3</sup> The Jews took to the stars immediately. In Warsaw, for example, the sale of armbands became a regular business. There were ordinary armbands of cloth and fancy plastic armbands that were washable.<sup>4</sup>

In conjunction with the marking decrees, the Jews were forbidden to move freely. The *Generalgouvernement* decree of December 11, 1939, signed by the Higher SS and Police Leader Krüger, Jews were forbidden to change residence, except within the locality, and they were forbidden to enter the streets between 9 p.m. and 5 a.m.<sup>5</sup> Under the decree of January 26, 1940, the Jews were prohibited also from using the railways, except for authorized trips.<sup>6</sup>

The most important concentration measure prior to the formation of the ghettos was the establishment of Jewish councils (*Judenräte*). According to the *Generalgouvernement* decree of November 28, 1939, every Jewish community with a population of up to 10,000 had to elect a *Judenrat* of twelve members, and every community with more than 10,000 people had to choose twenty-four.<sup>7</sup> The decree was published after many of the councils had already been established, but its issuance signified an assertion of civil jurisdiction over the councils and a confirmation of their character as public institutions.

Raul Hilberg, “Ghetto Formation,” from *Destruction of the European Jews*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003, pp. 217–37.

In Poland, as in the Reich, the Judenräte were filled with prewar Jewish leaders, that is to say, men who were holdovers from Jewish community councils that had existed in the Polish republic, or who had served on municipal councils as representatives of Jewish political parties, or who had held posts in Jewish religious and philanthropic organizations.<sup>8</sup> As a rule, the prewar council chairman (or, in the event of his unavailability, his deputy or some other willing council member) would be summoned by an Einsatzgruppen officer or a functionary of the new civil administration and told to form a Judenrat.<sup>9</sup> Often the rapid selection of the membership resulted in many retentions and few additions. In Warsaw and Lublin, for example, most of the remaining old members were renamed, and new appointments were made primarily in order to assemble the required twenty-four men. If there was a subtle shift in the traditional alignment of leaders, it manifested itself in the greater presence of men who could speak German and in fewer inclusions of Orthodox rabbis, whose garb or speech might have been provocative to the Germans, or of socialists, whose past activities might have proved dangerous.<sup>10</sup>

Radically different from the old days were the circumstances surrounding the newly installed Judenräte. However eager some of the Judenrat members might have been for public recognition before the occupation, now they felt anxieties as they thought about the unknowns. One veteran Jewish politician chosen to serve in the Warsaw Judenrat recalls the day when Adam Czerniaków (a chemical engineer by training) met with several of the new appointees in his office and showed them where he was keeping a key to a drawer of his desk, in which he had placed a bottle containing twenty-four cyanide pills.<sup>11</sup>

Before the war, these Jewish leaders had been concerned with synagogues, religious schools, cemeteries, orphanages, and hospitals. From now on, their activities were going to be supplemented by another, quite different function: the transmission of German directives and orders to the Jewish population, the use of Jewish police to enforce German will, the deliverance of Jewish property, Jewish labor, and Jewish lives to the German enemy. The Jewish councils, in the exercise of their historic function, continued until the end to make desperate attempts to alleviate the suffering and to stop the mass dying in the ghettos. But, at the same time, the councils responded to German demands with automatic compliance and invoked German authority to compel the community's obedience. Thus the Jewish leadership both saved and destroyed its people, saving some Jews and destroying others, saving the Jews at one moment and destroying them at the next. Some leaders refused to keep this power, others became intoxicated with it.

As time passed, the Jewish councils became increasingly impotent in their efforts to cope with the welfare portion of their task, but they made

themselves felt all the more in their implementation of Nazi decrees. With the growth of the destructive function of the Judenräte, many Jewish leaders felt an almost irresistible urge to look like their German masters. In March 1940 a Nazi observer in Kraków was struck by the contrast between the poverty and filth in the Jewish quarter and the businesslike luxury of the Jewish community headquarters, which was filled with beautiful charts, comfortable leather chairs, and heavy carpets.<sup>12</sup> In Warsaw the Jewish oligarchy took to wearing boots.<sup>13</sup> In Łódź the ghetto “dictator,” Rumkowski, printed postage stamps bearing his likeness and made speeches that contained expressions such as “my children,” “my factories,” and “my Jews.”<sup>14</sup> From the inside, then, it seemed already quite clear that the Jewish leaders had become rulers, reigning and disposing over the ghetto community with a finality that was absolute. On the outside, however, it was not yet clear to whom these absolute rulers actually belonged.

Under the Generalgouvernement decree of November 28, 1939, the Judenräte were placed under the Stadthauptmänner (in the cities) and the Kreishauptmänner (in the country districts). Similarly, in the incorporated territories the Judenräte were responsible to the Bürgermeister in the cities and to the Landräte in the country (see table 6.1).

Under the decree of November 28, the authority of the regional offices over the Judenräte was unlimited. The members of a Judenrat were held personally responsible for the execution of all instructions. In fact, the Jewish leaders were so fearful and tremulous in the presence of their German overlords that the Nazi officers merely had to signal their desire. As Frank pointed out in a moment of satisfaction and complacency: “The Jews step forward and receive orders [*die Juden treten an und empfangen Befehle*].”<sup>15</sup> But this arrangement did not remain unchallenged.

Table 6.1 German controls over Jewish Councils

<i>Incorporated territories</i>	<i>Generalgouvernement</i>
Reichsstatthalter (or Oberpräsident)   Regierungspräsident /                    \ (City)                    (Rural) Bürgermeister           Landrat                                        Judenrat                            Judenräte	Generalgouverneur   Gouverneur /                    \ (City)                    (Rural) Stadthauptmann           Kreishauptmann                                        Judenrat                            Judenräte

On May 30, 1940, at a meeting in Kraków, the SS and Police made a bid for power over the Judenräte. Opening the attack, the commander of the Security Police and Security Service units in the Generalgouvernement, Brigadeführer Streckenbach, informed his civilian colleagues that the Security Police were "very interested" in the Jewish question. That was why, he said, the Jewish councils had been created. Now, he had to admit that local authorities, by close supervision of the councils' activities, had gained something of an insight into Jewish methods. But, as a result of this arrangement, the Security Police had been partly edged out, while all sorts of agencies had stepped into the picture. For example, in the matter of labor procurement everyone was planlessly approaching the Judenräte.

This problem required a clear "solution." First, it would have to be "decided" who was in charge of the Judenräte: the Kreishauptmann, the Gouverneur, the Stadthauptmann, or possibly even the Sicherheits-polizei (the Security Police). If Streckenbach recommended his Security Police, he did so for "functional reasons." Sooner or later, he said, all questions pertaining to Jewish matters would have to be referred to the Security Police, especially if the contemplated action required "executive enforcement" (*Exekutiveingriff*). Experience had shown, furthermore, that only the Security Police had a long-range view of conditions affecting Jewry. All this did not mean in the least that the Security Police desired to skim off the cream, so to speak. The Security Police were not interested in Jewish property; they were receiving all their money from Germany and did not desire to enrich themselves. Streckenbach would therefore propose that the Jewish councils "and thereby Jewry as a whole" be placed under the supervision of the Security Police and that all demands upon Jewry be handled by the Security Police. If the Jewish communities were to be further exploited as much as they already had been, then one day the Generalgouvernement would have to support millions of Jews. After all, the Jews were very poor; there were no rich Jews in the Generalgouvernement, only a "Jew proletariat." He would therefore welcome the transfer of power to the Security Police. To be sure, the Security Police were by no means eager to shoulder this additional burden, but experience had shown that the present arrangement was not "functional."

At the conclusion of the speech, Frank remained silent. The Gouverneur of Lublin, Zörner, gave an account of conditions in his district. Since Frank had not spoken, the Gouverneur ventured to suggest that the Security Police could not handle the Judenräte because of insufficient numerical strength. After Zörner had finished, the Gouverneur of Kraków, Wächter, made a speech in which he alluded to Streckenbach's remarks by pointing out that in Jewish matters the civil administration could not get along without the Security Police and that, conversely, the Security Police could not act without the civil apparatus. Cautiously Wächter suggested that

perhaps the two bodies could cooperate. Finally, Frank spoke up. In terse legal language he rejected Streckenbach's suggestions. "The police," he said, "are the armed force of the Reich government for the maintenance of order in the interior... The police have no purpose in themselves."<sup>16</sup>

The opening move by the police had failed. Yet the challenge had been made, and for the next few years the struggle over the Jews was to continue unabated. Ultimately the police emerged victorious, but their prize was a heap of corpses.

The three preliminary steps – marking, movement restrictions, and the establishment of Jewish control machinery – were taken in the very first few months of civil rule. But then a full year passed before the actual formation of the ghettos began in earnest. Ghetto formation, that is to say, the creation of closed Jewish districts, was a decentralized process. The initiative in each city and town was taken by the competent Kreishauptmann or Stadthauptmann and, in the case of major ghettos only, by a Gouverneur or by Frank himself.

Military headquarters (the *Oberfeldkommandantur*, or OFK) in the Warsaw district complained that, because each Kreishauptmann had been allowed to decide the manner of gathering up his Jews (*die Art der Durchführung der Judenzusammenlegung in seinem Kreis*), the migration, rather than presenting a uniform picture, created an impression of constant movements this way and that.<sup>17</sup> In cities, uniform planning was completely out of the question, if only because of complex population distributions, intertwined economic activities, and intricate traffic problems.

The earliest ghettos appeared in the incorporated territories during the winter of 1939–40, and the first major ghetto was established in the city of Łódź in April 1940.<sup>18</sup> During the following spring the ghetto-formation process spread slowly to the Generalgouvernement. The Warsaw ghetto was created in October 1940;<sup>19</sup> the smaller ghettos in the Warsaw district were formed in the beginning of 1941.<sup>20</sup> For the Jews remaining in the city of Kraków, a ghetto was established in March 1941.<sup>21</sup> The Lublin ghetto was formed in April 1941.<sup>22</sup> The double ghetto of Radom, shaped into two separate districts was finished that same month.<sup>23</sup> The ghettos of Częstochowa<sup>24</sup> and Kielce<sup>25</sup> in the Radom district also came into existence at that time. In August 1941 the Generalgouvernement acquired its fifth district, Galicia, an area that the German army had wrested from Soviet occupation. The Galician capital, Lwów (Lemberg), became the site of Poland's third-largest ghetto in December 1941.<sup>26</sup> The ghetto-formation process in the Generalgouvernement was, on the whole, completed by the end of that year.<sup>27</sup> Only a few ghettos remained to be set up in 1942.<sup>28</sup>

Although the creation of the closed districts did not proceed from any order or basic plan, the procedure was remarkably similar in all cities. This should hardly be surprising, for the problems of ghetto formation

were largely the same everywhere. Let us look at the first major ghetto-forming operation, which was the prototype of all subsequent operations: the establishment of the Łódź ghetto.

On December 10, 1939, the Regierungspräsident in Kalisz, Uebelhoer, appointed a "working staff" to make preparations for the formation of the ghetto. Uebelhoer himself took over the chairmanship. He appointed his representative in Łódź, Oberregierungsrat Dr Moser, as deputy. The working staff also included members of the party, the offices of the city, the Order Police, the Security Police, the Death Head Formation of the SS, the Łódź Chamber of Industry and Commerce, and the Financial Office in Łódź. The preparations were to be made in secret; the moving was to be sudden and precise (*schlagartig*). As we shall see, this secrecy was needed in order to assure the hurried abandonment of a lot of Jewish property, which could then be conveniently confiscated.

Uebelhoer did not look upon the ghetto as a permanent institution. "The creation of the ghetto," he said in his order, "is, of course, only a transition measure. I shall determine at what time and with what means the ghetto – and thereby also the city of Łódź – will be cleansed of Jews. In the end, at any rate, we must burn out this bubonic plague [*Endziel muss jedenfalls sein, dass wir diese Pestbeule restlos ausbrennen*]." <sup>29</sup>

The working staff selected a slum quarter, the Bałuty area, as the ghetto site. The district already contained 62,000 Jews, but more than 100,000 Jews who lived in other parts of the city and its suburbs had to be moved in. <sup>30</sup> On February 8, 1940, the Polizeipräsident of Łódź, Brigadeführer Schäfer, issued his sudden and precise orders. Poles and ethnic Germans had to leave the ghetto site by February 29. <sup>31</sup> The Jews had to move into the ghetto in batches. Every few days the Polizeipräsident published a moving schedule affecting a certain quarter of the city. All Jews living in that quarter had to move into the ghetto within the time allotted. The first batch had to vacate its apartments between February 12 and February 17, <sup>32</sup> the last moved in on April 30. Ten days later, on May 10, Polizeipräsident Schäfer issued the order that closed off the ghetto population from the rest of the world. "Jews," he ordered, "must not leave the ghetto, as a matter of principle. This prohibition applies also to the Eldest of the Jews [Rumkowski] and to the chiefs of the Jewish police.... Germans and Poles," he continued, "must not enter the ghetto as a matter of principle." Entry permits could be issued only by the Polizeipräsident. Even within the ghetto, Jews were not allowed freedom of movement; from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. they were not permitted to be on the streets. <sup>33</sup>

After the movements had been completed, the Germans threw a fence around the ghetto. The fence was manned by a detachment of the Order Police. <sup>34</sup> The more intriguing job of secret police work was entrusted to the Security Police. This organization consisted of two branches: State

Police (Gestapo) and Criminal Police (Kripo). The State Police, as its title implies, concerned itself with enemies of the state. Since the Jews were enemies par excellence, the State Police established an office within the ghetto. The Criminal Police was competent in the handling of common crimes. A Criminal Police detachment of twenty men was consequently attached to the Order Police that guarded the ghetto. The function of the detachment was to prevent smuggling, but the arrangement irked the Criminal Police. Like their colleagues of the Gestapo, the Criminal Police men wanted to be *inside* the ghetto. Accordingly, Kriminalinspektor Bracken drafted a memorandum in which he set forth the reason for the urgent necessity of moving his detachment across the fence. "In the ghetto," he said, "live, at any rate, about 250,000 Jews, all of whom have more or less criminal tendencies." Hence the necessity for "constant supervision" by officials of the Criminal Police.<sup>35</sup> The detachment moved in.

As Regierungspräsident Uebelhoer had predicted, the ghetto was a transitional measure, but the transition did not lead to emigration. It led to annihilation. The inmates of the Łódź ghetto either died there or were deported to a killing center. The liquidation of the ghetto took a very long time. When it was finally broken up in August 1944, it had existed for four years and four months. This record was unequalled by any ghetto in Nazi Europe.

Across the border from the incorporated territories, in the General-gouvernement, three specific arguments were made for the formation of ghettos. One was put forth by German physicians, who were convinced that the Jewish population was spreading typhus (*Fleckfieber*).<sup>36</sup> Another was the allegation that Jews, as urban residents and as holders of ration cards that – in the words of the Food and Agriculture chief of the Warsaw district – entitled them for practical purposes only to bread, were bidding for unrationed foods and creating a black market in rationed items.<sup>37</sup> The third was the claim that suitable apartment space was unavailable to German officials and members of the armed forces.<sup>38</sup> The answer each time appeared to be ghettoization. To be sure, when the ghettos were in place, spotted fever was rising in the congested Jewish houses, smuggling by Jews was increasing to stave off starvation, and apartments were still needed by Germans. In fact, the three principal explanations for creating the ghettos were going to be revived at a later time as reasons for dissolving them and for removing their Jewish inhabitants altogether.

Ghetto formation was not an easy undertaking from the start. In the case of Warsaw, where the process took a year, the first step was taken early in November 1939, when the military commander established a "quarantine" (*Seuchensperrgebiet*) in an area within the old part of the city, inhabited largely by Jews, from which German soldiers were to be barred.<sup>39</sup> On November 7, Gouverneur Fischer of the Warsaw district



proposed that the Warsaw Jews (whose number he estimated at 300,000) be incarcerated in a ghetto, and Frank gave his immediate consent to the proposal.<sup>40</sup> During the winter, Fischer created a Resettlement Division (*Umsiedlung*) under Waldemar Schön, who was going to have a major role in ghetto planning and who was subsequently deputized to carry out the plan. The first idea, in February, to locate the ghetto on the eastern bank of the Vistula River, was turned down in a meeting on March 8, 1940, on the ground that 80 percent of Warsaw's artisans were Jews and that, since they were indispensable, one could not very well "encircle" them (*zernieren*). Doubts were also expressed about supplying a closed ghetto with food.<sup>41</sup> On March 18, 1940, Czerniaków noted cryptically: "A demand that the Community ring the 'ghetto' with wire, put in fenceposts, etc., and later guard it all."<sup>42</sup> The quotation marks around the word *ghetto* refer to the previously established quarantine. By March 29, Czerniaków noted that the ghetto was to be "walled in," and the next day he argued with Stadtkommandant Leist about the "virtual impossibility of building a wall (damaging the water installations, electric and telephone cables, etc.)."<sup>43</sup> Wall building was actually suspended in April, while the Germans were considering a short-lived idea of dumping the Jews in the Lublin district. Schön's Division Umsiedlung then examined the feasibility of setting up two ghettos, one in a western section (Koło and Wola) and another in the east (Grochów) to minimize any disturbance in the city's economy and traffic flow, but this plan was abandoned after word of the Madagascar project had reached Warsaw.<sup>44</sup> Czerniaków, on July 16, noted a report to the effect that the ghetto was not going to be formed after all.<sup>45</sup> In August 1940, however, Subdivision Health of the Generalgouvernement's Interior Division, pointing to increased troop concentrations in the area, demanded the formation of ghettos in the district. The nonmedical officials of the Interior Division, acquiescing, argued only against sealing the ghettos hermetically, lest they could not survive economically. On September 6, 1940, Obermedizinalrat Dr. Walbaum, citing statistics of typhus among Jews, insisted in a *ceterum censeo* speech on their incarceration in a closed ghetto as a health-political measure.<sup>46</sup> Six days later Frank announced during a conference of main division chiefs that 500,000 Jews in the city were posing a threat to the whole population and that they could no longer be allowed to "roam around."<sup>47</sup> Czerniaków, who had still harbored hopes for an "open" ghetto that would have combined compulsory residence with freedom of movement, knew of this decision by September 25. On that day he wrote "ghetto" without any doubt about its character.<sup>48</sup>

The "Jewish district" (*Wohnbezirk*) of Warsaw was established over a period of six weeks during October and November 1940, in an area covering about two-thirds of the old quarantine.<sup>49</sup> In the course of the move, 113,000 Poles left the ghetto site and 138,000 Jews took their

place.<sup>50</sup> T-shaped, the ghetto was narrowest at a point where an “Aryan” wedge separated the larger, northern portion from the smaller, southern one. The borders, drawn with a view to utilizing existing fire walls and minimizing the security problem, were not final. During September 1941, in a spirit of creeping annexationism, some German officials considered severing the southern part of the ghetto. At this point, an unusual man in the German administration made an unusual move. He was the chief physician of the German city apparatus, Dr Wilhelm Hagen. In a blunt letter to the Stadthauptmann, he predicted a worsening of the typhus epidemic and called the proposed plan “insanity” (*Wahnsinn*).<sup>51</sup> The southern ghetto remained, but more blocks were chopped off, more wall building was ordered, and, as the only link between the two ghetto sections, there was now a foot bridge over what had become an “Aryan” corridor.

The Warsaw ghetto was never open to unhindered traffic, but at the beginning there were twenty-eight points for exit and entry, used by about 53,000 persons with passes. The Warsaw district health chief, Dr Lambrecht, objected to the number of permits, arguing that they defeated the entire purpose of the ghetto. The gates were then reduced to fifteen.<sup>52</sup> The Warsaw police regiment (Lt Col. Jarke) was responsible for guarding the ghetto. This duty was carried out by a company of the 304th Battalion (from the second half of 1941, the 60th), augmented by Polish police and the Jewish Ordnungsdienst. At each gate, one man from each of these services might have been seen, but inside there were 2,000 men of the Order Service.<sup>53</sup>

After the Warsaw ghetto had been closed, Stadthauptmänner and Kreishauptmänner in all parts of the Generalgouvernement followed suit. In town after town, local officials followed the same three-stage process. They selected the location of the ghetto, issued the sudden (*schlagartige*) movement orders, and sealed off the finished ghetto. There were some variations. A number of small Jewish communities were incarcerated in ghetto towns; that is, whole towns became ghettos.<sup>54</sup> The larger communities were crowded into closed-off city districts, each of which became a city within a city.

As may be seen from the statistics in table 6.2, a ghetto was usually a tightly packed slum area without parks, empty lots, or open spaces. In spite of its small size, a ghetto, placed in the middle of a metropolis, invariably created traffic problems. In Warsaw, trolley lines had to be rerouted,<sup>55</sup> in Łódź the city administration had to install a new bus line that skirted the ghetto,<sup>56</sup> while in Lublin, Stadthauptmann Saurmann had to build a detour road around the Jewish quarter.<sup>57</sup> Traffic problems also determined to a large extent the method of sealing a ghetto. Only a few cities, such as Warsaw, Kraków, Radom, and Nowy Sącz surrounded their ghettos with massive, medieval-like walls and built-in gates.<sup>58</sup> Some

Table 6.2 Densities in the ghettos of Warsaw and Łódź

	<i>City of Warsaw, March 1941</i>	<i>“Aryan” Warsaw</i>	<i>Ghetto of Warsaw</i>	<i>Ghetto of Łódź, September 1941</i>
Population	1,365,000	920,000	445,000	144,000
Area (square miles)	54.6	53.3	1.3	1.6
Rooms	284,912	223,617	61,295	25,000
Persons per room	4.8	4.1	7.2	5.8

NOTE: The Warsaw statistics were taken from the archives of the Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw, by Isaiah Trunk and published by him in an article entitled “Epidemics in the Warsaw Ghetto,” *YIVO Annual of Jewish Social Science*, vol. 8. p. 87. The figures on apartment density in the Warsaw ghetto are confirmed by Stroop (SS and Police Leader in Warsaw) in a report to Krüger, May 16, 1943, PS-1061. Stroop mentions 27,000 apartments with an average of 2½ rooms each. Łódź statistics from report by Ventzki to Uebelhoer, September 24, 1941, Himmler Files, Folder 94.

ghettos, such as Łódź, were fenced in only with barbed wire. Still others, including Lublin, could not be sealed at all.

While not every ghetto could be closed completely, no Jew was permitted to remain outside its boundaries. In Łódź, Jews in mixed marriage with their Polish spouses, and Mischlinge of all degrees were pushed into the ghetto.<sup>59</sup> On February 26, 1941, the First Secretary of the Soviet Embassy, Bogdanov, inquired why certain nationals of the Soviet Union were forced to live in certain places. Unterstaatssekretär Wörmann of the Foreign Office replied that the nationals involved were Jews (*dass es sich um Juden handele*) and that Jews of Soviet nationality were receiving the same treatment as Jews of other nationalities.<sup>60</sup>

By the end of 1941 almost all Jews in the incorporated territories and the Generalgouvernement were living in the ghettos. Their incarceration was accompanied by changes in German control machinery and enlargements of the Jewish bureaucracy. In Łódź and Warsaw, new German offices for ghetto supervision came into being.<sup>61</sup>

The Łódź Jewish Council was placed under a “Food and Economic Office Ghetto” (*Ernährungs- und Wirtschaftsstelle Getto*). Originally this office regulated only economic questions affecting the ghetto. Soon, however, its title was changed to *Gettoverwaltung Litzmannstadt* (Ghetto Administration, Łódź), and with the change of title there was also a change of function. The office took charge of all ghetto affairs. The place of the *Gettoverwaltung* in the local governmental structure is indicated in table 6.3.

In Warsaw the administrative changes also took place in stages. Initially the Judenrat was answerable to Einsatzgruppe IV, and thereafter it received instructions from the Stadthauptmann.<sup>62</sup> During the process of

Table 6.3 German controls over the Łódź Ghetto

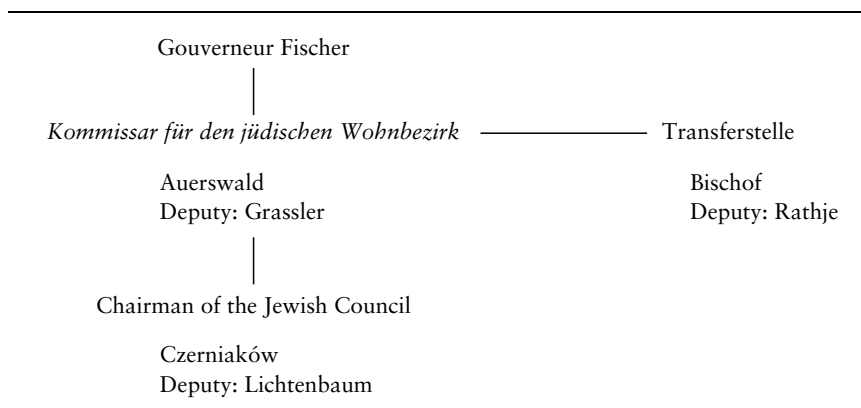
	Reichsstatthalter Greiser Regierungspräsident Uebelhoer	Representative of Regierungspräsident in Łódź: Oberregierungsrat Dr Moser
Polizeipräsident: Bgf. Schäfer (succeeded by Bgf. Albert)	Oberbürgermeister Ventzki (Deputy: Bürgermeister Dr Marder)	
	Gettoverwaltung Litzmannstadt Chief: Diplom Kaufmann Hans Biebow Deputy: Ribbe Eldest of the Jews: Rumkowski	

NOTE: For the appointment of Diplom Kaufmann Hans Biebow as chief of the Gettoverwaltung and other personnel questions, see Biebow to DAF Ortsgruppe Rickmers, April 30, 1940, and Biebow to Bürgermeister Dr. Marder, November 12, 1940, *Dokumenty i materialy*, vol. 3, pp. 253, 256–57. Diplom Kaufmann was the title of a graduate from a school of business administration.

ghetto formation, control over the council passed into the hands of the Resettlement Division (Schön) of the district administration. Schön formed a Transferstelle (under Palfinger) to regulate the flow of goods to and from the ghetto. By May 1, 1941, a Kommissar for the Jewish district was appointed by Gouverneur Fischer. The office was occupied by a young attorney, Heinz Auerswald, who had previously served as a section chief in the Interior Division for Population and Welfare. Adam Czerniaków was almost twice his age. The Transferstelle was placed under an experienced banker (formerly employed by the Länderbank, Vienna), Max Bischof, who held the position under a contract.<sup>63</sup> The Auerswald–Bischof administration is depicted in table 6.4.

Ghettoization generated a far-reaching metamorphosis in the Jewish councils. In their original form, the Judenräte had been fashioned into a link between German agencies and the Jewish population, and their early activities were concentrated on labor recruitment and welfare. In the ghetto each chairman of a Judenrat became, *de facto*, a mayor (Czerniaków received the title as well), and each council had to perform the functions of a city administration. The incipient Jewish bureaucracy, heretofore consisting of small staffs engaged in registration or finance, was now being expanded and diversified to address such urgent problems as housing, health, and public order. The apparatus was swelled with a multitude of functionaries, paid and unpaid, capable and incompetent,

Table 6.4 German controls over the Warsaw Ghetto



Based on Yad Vashem microfilms JM 1112 and JM 1113.

honest and self-serving. Patronage, favoritism, and outright corruption became inviting possibilities and soon enough were commonplace.<sup>64</sup>

There were some differences between ghettos, both in the extent of council operations and in the mode of council government. Some ghettos, notably Łódź, maintained shops and industries, whereas others, such as Warsaw, featured private enterprise. Some functioned in a dictatorial manner, and in others responsibilities were shared or divided in various ways.<sup>65</sup>

Measured in its powers to regulate and interfere with the life of the inhabitants, the Jewish bureaucracy of the Łódź ghetto was probably the most totalitarian of all ghetto bureaucracies. The following is a list of the offices operated under the Łódź Judenrat in 1940:<sup>66</sup>

The Eldest of the Jews

Council of Elders with the Eldest of the Jews

Central Bureau (*Zentrale*)

Central Negotiations Office (*Zentral-Verhandlungsstelle*)

Correspondence Division (*Präsidialabteilung*)

Personnel Bureau

Main Treasury and Bookkeeping

Information Office

Cemetery Division

Rabbinical Office

Bureau of the Eldest of the Jews for the Children's Colony

Registration and Records

Registration Office

Records Office  
 Statistical Division  
 Police Headquarters (*Ordnungsdienst Kommando*)  
   Law Division  
   4 Precincts  
   2 Reserves (Mobile)  
   Auxiliary Police (*Hilfsordnungsdienst* or “Hido”)  
   Sanitation Control  
   Price Enforcement  
   Special Commando (*Sonderkommando*)  
 Fire-fighting Division  
 Main Post Office and Post Office Branch  
 Control Commission for German and Polish Property in the Ghetto  
 Housing Division  
 Finance Division  
   Rent Office  
   Tax Office  
   Executor’s Office (*Vollstreckungsstelle*)  
   Bank (Main Building and Branch)  
   Purchasing Office for Valuables and Clothes  
 Economy Division  
   Real Estate Administration  
   Janitor Division  
   Chimney Sweeps  
   Technical Renovation  
   Garbage and Sewage Disposal (*Müll- und Fäkalienabfuhr*)  
   Warehouses  
   Sales Office for Household Items  
 Agricultural Division (Main Office and Branch)  
 School Division  
 Central Bureau for Labor  
   4 Tailors’ Divisions  
   2 Carpenters’ Divisions  
   1 Shoemakers’ Division  
   1 Textile Workers’ Division  
 Public Works Division  
   Works Assignment Office  
   Construction Office  
 Supply Division  
   Receiving Station  
   Central Bureau  
   Auditing Office  
   Main Depot

- Vegetable Depot
- Coal Depot
- Dairy Depot
- Meat Depot
- Meat Cold Storage Depot
- Cigarette and Tobacco Depot
- Community Bakery
- 36 Food Distribution Points
- 17 Stores for Sale of Milk, Butter, and Foods Purchasable upon Doctor's Prescription
- 14 Butcher Shops
- Welfare Division
  - Relief Division (Money and Products)
  - Nursery
  - 2 Orphanages
  - Home for the Aged
  - Invalids' Home
  - Collecting Point for Homeless People
  - Public Kitchens
  - Children's Colony
  - Children's Sanatorium
- Health Division
  - Central Bureau
  - 4 Hospitals
  - 4 Dispensaries
  - Dental Clinic
  - Central Drug Store and 6 Branch Drug Stores
  - 2 Ambulance Units
  - Laboratory
  - Laboratory for Bacteriological Examination
  - Disinfection Division

The Jewish machinery in Łódź reflected in its very organization the peculiar double role of the ghetto in the destruction process. The survival function of the ghetto is illustrated primarily by the three divisions on the bottom of the list: health, welfare, and supply. The destructive function is recognized most clearly in the Central Bureau, the Registration and Records Office, and, above all, in the police. It is characteristic that the office that was most openly destructive in its function, the police, followed the German model even in its organization. A close look at the structure of the ghetto police reveals that it was divided into a kind of Order Police (complete with precincts, reserves, auxiliaries, and sanitation control) and a kind of Security Police: a price-control force that had criminal functions,

and a Sonderkommando that had Gestapo functions. In one respect the Łódź ghetto machine was even more advanced than its Nazi prototype: the Judenrat had no separate justice department; the only legal office in the ghetto was incorporated into its police.

The Warsaw council was organized in a more complex manner. Council deliberations mattered in the Warsaw ghetto, and the regular agendas of council meetings were prepared by commissions, initially composed of council members but eventually including experts who wanted to exercise influence.<sup>67</sup> The administrative departments, whose heads were not necessarily council members, included Order Service, Hospitals, Health, Housing, Labor, Economy, Law, Finance, Social Welfare, Cemeteries, Appeals, Education, Real Property, Vital Statistics, Audit, Contributions, Postal Service, and even Archives. Four important divisions were actually transformed into independent bodies. The Provisioning Division, which dispensed food and coal, became the Provisioning Authority, the Production Division was incorporated as the Jüdische Produktion GmbH, the Trade Division was reorganized as a sales firm for deliveries outside the ghetto (Lieferungsgesellschaft), and the Bank Division was renamed the Genossenschaftsbank für den jüdischen Wohnbezirk.

Police was a special problem. The Order Service of the Warsaw ghetto was the largest Jewish police force in occupied Poland. (At its peak it numbered about two thousand.) Czerniaków, insisting on professionalism especially in this component of the ghetto administration, appointed to some of the top positions people with police experience. Such individuals, especially the chief, former Lieutenant Colonel of Polish Police Szeryński, were converts to Christianity. Given the special role of these people in the operation of the ghetto, Czerniaków did not hear the end of discontent and protest about their employment.<sup>68</sup> Complicating Czerniaków's life was the existence of another Jewish police, similar to the one in the Łódź Ghetto, which was suspected by the Jewish inhabitants of serving under German Security Police auspices. Its official name was "The Control Office for Combatting the Black Market and Profiteering in the Jewish District" (*Überwachungsstelle zur Bekämpfung des Schleichhandels und der Preiswucherei im jüdischen Wohnbezirk*), but the popular designation, based on the address of its headquarters on 13 Leszno Street, was "The Thirteen." In addition to "The Thirteen," which had about five hundred men, there was a smaller but equally suspect "Ambulance Service." In August 1941, Czerniaków succeeded, with the help of Kommissar Auerswald, to dissolve the troublesome Control Office, which had interfered with the principle of undivided jurisdiction in the offices of Czerniaków and Auerswald alike.<sup>69</sup> In this respect, at least, the struggle of a ghetto leader and that of his German supervisor could be waged on a parallel plane.



## Ghetto Maintenance

The ghetto was a captive city-state in which territorial confinement was combined with absolute subjugation to German authority. With the creation of the ghettos, the Jewish community of Poland was no longer an integrated whole. Each ghetto was on its own, thrown into sudden isolation, with a multiplicity of internal problems and a reliance on the outside world for basic sustenance.

Fundamental to the very idea of the ghetto was the sheer segregation of its residents. Personal contacts across the boundary were sharply curtailed or severed altogether, leaving in the main only mechanical channels of communication: some telephone lines, banking connections, and post offices for the dispatch and receipt of letters and parcels. Physically the ghetto inhabitant was henceforth incarcerated. Even in a large ghetto he stood never more than a few minutes' walk from a wall or fence. He still had to wear the star, and at night, during curfew hours, he was forced to remain in his apartment house.

### NOTES

- 1 Summary of discussion between Frank and Kraków's Gouverneur, Dr. Wächter, November 10, 1939, Frank diary, PS-2233. The document, Frank Diary, PS-2233, has been reprinted in International Military Tribunal, *Trial of the Major War Criminals* (Nuremberg, 1947-9), 42 vols (in German) and Office of the United States Counsel for Prosecution of Axis Criminality, *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression* (Washington, DC, 1946-8, 8 vols and 2 suppl. (in translation). On the contents of the Frank diary, see Hilberg, *Destruction of the European Jews*, vol. 3, Appendix C, "Notation on Sources," pp. 1323-4, note 1, and p. 1329.
- 2 *Verordnungsblatt des Generalgouverneurs*, 1939, p. 61. The principal source of German law was the *Reichsgesetzblatt* (RGBl). In addition, central ministries and regional authorities in areas outside the Reich published ordinances in gazettes of their own. Examples of territorial gazettes published in occupied territory are the *Verordnungsblatt des Reichsprotektors in Böhmen und Mähren* and the *Verordnungsblatt des Generalgouverneurs*. Large collections of these decrees may be found in the Columbia Law Library and in the Foreign Law Division of the Library of Congress.
- 3 Order by Regierungspräsident in Kalisz (Uebelhoer), December 11, 1939, amending his instructions of November 14, 1939, Centralna Żydowska Komisja Historyczna w Polsce, *Dokumenty i materiały do dziejów okupacji niemieckiej w Polsce* (Warsaw, Łódź and Kraków, 1946, 3 vols), vol. 3, p. 23.
- 4 "Warschauer Juden ganz unter sich," *Krakauer Zeitung*, December 4, 1940, Generalgouvernement page.
- 5 *Verordnungsblatt des Generalgouverneurs*, 1939, p. 231.

- 6 *Verordnungsblatt des Generalgouverneurs* I, 1940, p. 45.
- 7 *Verordnungsblatt des Generalgouverneurs*, 1939, p. 72. For statistical compilation of the Jewish population in eastern European cities, see Peter-Heinz Seraphim, *Das Judentum im osteuropäischen Raum* (Essen, 1938), pp. 713–18.
- 8 Isaiah Trunk, *Judenrat: The Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), pp. 29–35.
- 9 *Ibid.*, pp. 8–10, 28.
- 10 *Ibid.*, pp. 32–3.
- 11 Hartglas, “Czerniakow,” *Yad Vashem Bulletin* 15 (1964): 7. Hartglas, a former member of the Polish parliament, emigrated to Palestine at the beginning of 1940.
- 12 Dr Dietrich Redecker, “Deutsche Ordnung kehrt im Ghetto ein,” *Krakauer Zeitung*, March 13, 1940.
- 13 Emanuel Ringelblum, *Notitsn fun Varshever Ghetto* (Warsaw, 1952), p. 291, as quoted in English translation by Philip Friedman (ed.), *Martyrs and Fighters*, pp. 81–2. Ringelblum, a historian, was killed by the Germans. His notes were found after the war.
- 14 Solomon Bloom, “Dictator of the Lodz Ghetto,” *Commentary*, February 1949, pp. 113, 115. Leonard Tushnet, *The Pavement of Hell* (New York, 1972), pp. 1–70.
- 15 Verbatim minutes of interview of Frank by correspondent Kleiss of *Völkischer Beobachter*, February 6, 1940, Frank diary, PS-2233.
- 16 Summary of police meeting with verbatim remarks by Frank, May 30, 1940, Frank diary. PS-2233.
- 17 OFK 393 to Wehrmachtbefehlshaber im Generalgouvernement, November 18, 1941, Polen 75022/17. Original folder once in Federal Records Center, Alexandria, Virginia.
- 18 Philip Friedman, “The Jewish Ghettos in the Nazi Era,” *Jewish Social Studies*, 16 (1954), 80. On Łódź see documents in *Dokumenty i materialy*, vol. 3, pp. 35–49.
- 19 *Krakauer Zeitung*, October 16, 1940, Generalgouvernement page.
- 20 Generalgouvernement conference, January 15, 1941, Frank diary, PS-2233.
- 21 *Krakauer Zeitung*, March 23, 1941, p. 18.
- 22 Proclamation by Gouverneur Zörner of Lublin, March 24, 1941, *ibid.*, March 30, 1941, p. 8.
- 23 *Ibid.*, April 6, 1941, p. 5.
- 24 Undated draft of order by Stadthauptmann Dr. Wendler of Częstochowa, Yad Vashem microfilm JM 1489.
- 25 *Krakauer Zeitung*, April 8, 1941, p. 6.
- 26 *Ibid.*, November 15, 1941, p. 5.
- 27 Armament Inspectorate, Generalgouvernement to OKW/Wi Rü/Rü IIIA, report covering July 1, 1940, to December 31, 1941, dated May 7, 1942, pp. 102–3, Wi/ID 1.2.
- 28 Friedman, “Jewish Ghettos,” *Jewish Social Studies* 16 (1954): 83.
- 29 Uebelhoer to Greiser, Party District Łódź, Representative of the Regierungspräsident in Łódź (Moser), City Administration of Łódź, Polizeipräsident of Łódź, Order Police in Łódź, Security Police in Łódź, Łódź Chamber of Industry and Commerce, and Finance Office in Łódź, December 10, 1939, *Dokumenty i materialy*, vol. 3, pp. 26–31.

- 30 Statistical report on the Łódź ghetto, apparently prepared by the Jewish Council for the German administration and covering the period May 1, 1940 to June 30, 1942, Łódź Ghetto Collection No. 58.
- 31 Order by Schäfer, February 8, 1940, *Dokumenty i materialy*, vol. 3, pp. 35–7.
- 32 Police order, February 8, 1940, *ibid.*, pp. 38–49.
- 33 Order by Schäfer, May 10, 1940, *ibid.*, 83–4.
- 34 The units guarding the ghetto belonged to the Schutzpolizei. For instructions to the Schutzpolizei detachments to “shoot on sight,” see order by commander of Łódź Schutzpolizei, Oberst der Polizei Keuck, April 11, 1941, *ibid.*, 86–7.
- 35 Memorandum by Kriminalinspektor Bracken, May 19, 1940, *ibid.*, pp. 92–4. See also memorandum by the chief of the Criminal Police in Łódź, Kriminaldirektor Zirpins, October 23, 1940, *ibid.*, pp. 100–1.
- 36 Remarks by Obermedizinalrat Dr. Walbaum at meeting of Generalgouvernement division chiefs, April 12, 1940, in Werner Präg and Wolfgang Jacobmeyer, eds., *Das Diensttagebuch des Deutschen Generalgouverneurs in Polen*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1975, p. 167.
- 37 Generalgouvernement food meeting of March 3, 1940, *ibid.*, p. 142.
- 38 Stadthauptmann Saurmann of Lublin complained in a monthly report dated December 31, 1940, that the city was overcrowded. Yad Vashem microfilm JM 814. The daily demand for rooms by Germans in Radom was reported by Stadthauptmann Wendler on March 8, 1941, JM 814.
- 39 See Czerniaków’s entries for November 4 and 5, 1939, in *The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniaków*, eds., Raul Hilberg, Stanislaw Staron, and Josef Kermisz, New York: Stein and Day, 1979, p. 87.
- 40 Summary of discussion between Fischer and Frank, November 7, 1939, Frank diary, PS-2233.
- 41 Report by Schön, January 20, 1941, reproduced in large excerpt in Jüdisches Historisches Institut Warschau, *Faschismus-Getto-Massenmord*, East Berlin: Rütten & Loenig, 1961–2, pp. 108–13.
- 42 Hilberg, Staron, and Kermisz, eds., *Warsaw Diary*, p. 130.
- 43 *Ibid.*, p. 134.
- 44 Schön report, *Faschismus-Getto-Massenmord*, pp. 108–13.
- 45 Hilberg, Staron, and Kermisz, eds., *Warsaw Diary*, p. 174.
- 46 Summary of discussion between Frank, Dr. Walbaum, and Warsaw district Health Chief Dr Franke, September 6, 1940, Frank diary, PS-2233.
- 47 Summary of conference of main division chiefs, September 12, 1940, Frank diary, PS-2233.
- 48 Hilberg, Staron, and Kermisz, eds., *Warsaw Diary*, p. 201. On September 26, Czerniaków wrote: “The Ghetto!” *Ibid.*
- 49 See map, prepared by Yad Vashem cartographer, in Hilberg, Staron, and Kermisz, eds., *Warsaw Diary*, pp. x–xi.
- 50 Schön report, *Faschismus-Getto-Massenmord*, pp. 108–13.
- 51 Hagen to Leist, September 22, 1941. Zentrale Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen, Ludwigsburg, Polen 365c, p. 58.
- 52 Summary of interagency conference on ghetto, December 2, 1940, Yad Vashem microfilm JM 1113. Schön report, *Faschismus-Getto-Massenmord*, pp. 108–13.
- 53 On police jurisdiction, see conference under Auerswald and Schön, November 8, 1941, Yad Vashem microfilm JM 1112. Auerswald was then Ghetto Kommissar,

- Schön was in the Warsaw district Interior Division. The strength of the police company, as reported by Schön on January 20, 1941, was eighty-seven men under a first lieutenant. Identification of police units from various documents.
- 54 For a description of such a ghetto town, see Gustav Andraschko, "Das fiel uns auf in Szydlowiec . . ." *Krakauer Zeitung*, June 21, 1941, pp. 6–7.
  - 55 *Ibid.*, November 27, 1941, Generalgouvernement page.
  - 56 Office of the Mayor of Łódź (Dr. Marder) to Office of the Regierungspräsident in Łódź, July 4, 1941, *Dokumente i materialy*, vol. 3, pp. 177–9.
  - 57 Report by Saurmann in conference attended by Frank, October 17, 1941, Frank diary, PS-2233.
  - 58 Photograph of Radom wall in *Krakauer Zeitung*, November 20, 1940, Generalgouvernement page. Photograph of Kraków wall, *ibid.*, May 18, 1941, p. 5.
  - 59 Representative of the Regierungspräsident in Łódź (signed Moser) to Polizeipräsident in Łódź, August 26, 1940, enclosing letter by Reichsstatthalter's office in the Wartheland (signed Coulon) to Representative of the Regierungspräsident in Łódź, August 6, 1940, *Dokumente i materialy*, vol. 3, p. 172.
  - 60 Unterstaatssekretär Wörmann (chief, Political Division) via deputy chief of Political Division to Section V of the Division (Soviet affairs), February 24, 1941, NG-1514. However, the release of Soviet Jews was under consideration; see report by Representative of Foreign Office in Generalgouvernement (Wühlisch) to Foreign Office, February 7, 1941, NG-1528.
  - 61 Later, Białystok also acquired such an administration. Trunk, *Judenrat*, pp. 270–1.
  - 62 See Czerniaków's entries for February 6, March 21, and April 26, 1940, in Hilberg, Staron, and Kermisz, eds., *Warsaw Diary*, pp. 115, 131, 143. The first two incumbents were Otto and Dengel. In April the city was taken over by Ludwig Leist.
  - 63 Text of contract, effective March 15, 1941, Yad Vashem microfilm JM 1112.
  - 64 Trunk, *Judenrat*, pp. 354, 360–4.
  - 65 *Ibid.*, pp. 55–60.
  - 66 Based upon organization chart of the Jewish Council in the Łódź ghetto, August 20, 1940, Wi/ID 1.40. The records of the Łódź Jewish Council and its divisions (in Yiddish) are preserved in the Łódź ghetto collection in the YIVO Institute, New York City. For a description of the Łódź ghetto offices, see also the article by Bendet Hershkovitch, "The Ghetto in Litzmannstadt (Łódź)," *YIVO Annual of Jewish Social Science* 5 (1950): 85–122.
  - 67 The following commissions existed at the end of December 1940: Hospitals, Health, Labor, Social Welfare, Personnel, Audit, Finance, Economy, Grievance. In addition, the important Commission on Trade and Industry concerned itself with policy for allocating raw materials and distributing food in the ghetto. See weekly reports by Czerniaków for December 13–19 and December 20–6, 1940, Yad Vashem microfilm JM 1113.
  - 68 See Czerniaków's entry of July 27, 1941, in Hilberg, Staron, and Kermisz, eds., *Warsaw Diary*, p. 262–3.
  - 69 Order by Auerswald disbanding Control Office, August 4, 1941, and protocol on its dissolution, August 5, 1941, signed by Gancwajch, Sternfeld, and Lewin (Control Office), Zabludowski and Glücksberg (Jewish Council), and Szeryński (Order Service), *ibid.*, pp. 264–7.

*From “Ethnic Cleansing” to  
Genocide to the “Final Solution”:  
The Evolution of Nazi Jewish  
Policy, 1939–1941*

CHRISTOPHER R. BROWNING

Why the emphasis on decision and policy making, it might be asked. Is this not an exhausted topic whose time has come and gone with the intentionalist/functionalist controversy of the late 1970s and early 1980s, characterized by unduly polarized alternative interpretations? The intentionalists emphasized the centrality of Adolf Hitler’s ideology, predetermined plans, and opportunistic decision making, whereas the functionalists emphasized the dysfunction and unplanned destructive implosion of an unguided bureaucratic structure and tension-filled political movement that had driven themselves into a dead end. One approach perceived the Final Solution as being more like the Manhattan Project, a massive and well-planned program that produced the destruction intended, whereas the other perceived it as a kind of Chernobyl, the unintended but all too predictable by-product of a dysfunctional system.

If the intentionalist/functionalist controversy in this highly polarized form is no longer at the center of Holocaust research, nonetheless a much more nuanced debate over Hitler and the origins of the Final Solution, based on a much vaster documentary collection, has found new life in the 1990s. In this debate, virtually all the participants agree on the centrality of the year 1941 and an incremental decision-making process in which Hitler played a key role. What is being debated are the relative weighting of the different decisions taken in 1941 and the different historical contexts invoked to explain the importance and timing of those decisions.

Christopher R. Browning, “From ‘Ethnic Cleansing’ to Genocide to the ‘Final Solution’,” from *Nazi Policy, Jewish Workers, German Killers*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 1–25.



Map 2 Wartime Poland and its boundaries

What is at stake is our differing understandings of how Hitler and the Nazi system functioned and how historically the fateful line was crossed between population decimation and genocide on the one hand and the Final Solution and Holocaust on the other.

The most recent controversy in this ongoing debate over the decisions for the Final Solution is the topic of my second lecture. But part of my argument is that the pattern of decision making that was practiced and the frustrations and failures that the Nazis experienced in racial empire building in Poland in the years 1939–41 are important for understanding the “fateful months” in which the Final Solution emerged. One crucial historical context for understanding the origins of the Final Solution, until recently overshadowed by the history of European and German anti-Semitism, the development of the eugenics movement, and the functioning of the Nazi system of government, is the visions of demographic engineering and plans for population resettlement that both inspired and frustrated Nazi racial imperialism in Poland between 1939 and 1941. I will argue that the theory and practice of what we now call ethnic cleansing was an important prelude to the decisions for the Final Solution that followed.

More specifically, I will argue that between September 1939 and July 1941, Nazi Jewish policy, as one component of a broader racial imperialism in the east, evolved through three distinct plans for ethnic cleansing to a transitional phase of implicit genocide in connection with preparations for the war of destruction against the Soviet Union. Hitler was both the key ideological legitimizer and decision maker in this evolutionary process, which also depended crucially upon the initiatives and responses elicited from below. For Hitler the historical contexts for his key decisions were the euphoria of victory in Poland and France and the galvanizing anticipation of a territorial conquest of *Lebensraum* and an ideological and racial crusade against “Judeo-Bolshevism” in the Soviet Union. Additionally, for the middle and lower echelon, regional and local authorities, key factors were not only their identification with Hitler’s goals and personal ambition to make a career but also frustration over the impasse created by the ideological imperatives of the regime and their failure to implement the previous policies of ethnic cleansing.

In the months before the invasion of Poland, Hitler made clear on several occasions that the outbreak of war would set a new level of expectation on his part. For instance, in his Reichstag speech of January 1939, he prophesied that a world war would mean the destruction of the Jews in Europe. And to his generals on August 22, he called for a “brutal attitude,” “the destruction of Poland,” and the “elimination of living forces.”<sup>1</sup> When Quartermaster General Eduard Wagner asked Reinhard Heydrich about the tasks of the Einsatzgruppen, he was bluntly informed: “Fundamental cleansing: Jews, intelligentsia, clergy, nobles”

(*Flurbereinigung: Judentum, Intelligenz, Geistlichkeit, Adel*).<sup>2</sup> But what did *Flurbereinigung* mean? How were Hitler's prophesies and exhortations transformed by his eager subordinates, especially Heinrich Himmler and Heydrich, into specific and concrete policies?

The arrest and decimation of Poland's leadership classes seem to have been decided even before the invasion.<sup>3</sup> But plans for a more sweeping demographic reorganization of Poland, including a solution to the Jewish question, emerged only during the month of September. On September 7 Heydrich told his division heads that Poland would be partitioned and Germany's boundary would be moved eastward. Poles and Jews in the border region annexed to the Third Reich would be deported to whatever remained of Poland.<sup>4</sup> A week later Heydrich discussed the Jewish question before the same audience and noted: "Proposals are being submitted to the Führer by the Reichsführer, that only the Führer can decide, because they will be of considerable significance for foreign policy as well."<sup>5</sup> The nature of these proposals was revealed the following week, when Heydrich met not only with his division heads but also the Einsatzgruppen leaders and his expert on Jewish emigration, Adolf Eichmann. Concerning Poles, the top leaders were to be sent to concentration camps, the middle echelon were to be arrested and deported to rump Poland, and "primitive" Poles were to be used temporarily as migrant labor and then gradually resettled, as the border territories became pure German provinces. According to Heydrich, "The deportation of Jews into the non-German region, expulsion over the demarcation line is approved by the Führer." This "long-term goal," or *Endziel*, would be achieved over the next year. However, "in order to have a better possibility of control and later of deportation," the immediate concentration of Jews into ghettos in the cities was an urgent "short-term goal," or *Nahziel*. The area east of Cracow and north of the Slovak border was explicitly exempted from these concentration measures, for it was to this region that the Jews as well as "all Gypsies and other undesirables" were eventually to be deported.<sup>6</sup>

This plan was slightly altered the following week when Germany surrendered Lithuania to the Soviet sphere and received in return Polish territory around the city of Lublin between the Vistula and Bug Rivers. On September 29, Hitler told Alfred Rosenberg that all Jews, including those from the Reich, would be settled in this newly acquired territory between the Vistula and the Bug. Central Poland west of the Vistula would be an area of Polish settlement. Hitler then broached yet a third resettlement scheme. Ethnic Germans repatriated from the Soviet sphere would be settled in western Polish territories incorporated into the Third Reich. Whether "after decades" the German settlement belt would be moved eastward, only time would tell.<sup>7</sup>



In short, by the end of September 1939 Himmler had proposed and Hitler had approved a grandiose program of demographic engineering based on racial principles that would involve the uprooting of millions of people. These policies were fully consonant with Hitler's underlying ideological assumptions: a need for *Lebensraum* in the east justified by a Social-Darwinist racism, a contempt for the Slavic populations of eastern Europe, and a determination to rid the expanding German Reich of Jews. These policies were also very much in tune with widely held views and hopes in much of German society concerning the construction of a German empire in eastern Europe. There was no shortage of those who now eagerly sought to contribute to this historic opportunity for a triumph of German racial imperialism. And the degree to which the widely held hopes and visions of these eager helpers would subsequently founder on stubborn reality, the greater their willingness to resort to ever more violent solutions. The broad support for German racial imperialism in the east was one foundation upon which the future consensus for the mass murder of the Jews would be built.<sup>8</sup>

Heydrich's plans for the immediate concentration of Jews in urban ghettos had to be postponed owing to army concerns over undue disruption.<sup>9</sup> But that did not deter one young and ambitious Schutzstaffel (SS) officer from taking the initiative to jump from the short-term to the long-term goal and implement the immediate expulsion of the Jews. On October 6, 1939, Eichmann met with the head of the Gestapo, Heinrich Müller, who ordered him to contact Gauleiter Wagner in Kattowitz concerning the deportation of 70,000 to 80,000 Jews from East Upper Silesia. Eichmann noted the wider goal of this expulsion: "This activity shall serve first of all to collect experiences, in order... to be able to carry out evacuations in much greater numbers."<sup>10</sup>

Within days Eichmann had expanded this program to include deportations from both Mährisch Ostrau in the Protectorate and Vienna. He had also located a transit camp at Nisko on the San River on the western border of the Lublin district, from which the deportees were to be expelled eastward. By October 11, German officials in Vienna were informed that Hitler had ordered the resettlement of 300,000 Reich Jews, and Vienna would be completely cleared of Jews in 9 months.<sup>11</sup> And on October 16, Eichmann confidently informed Artur Nebe, head of the Criminal Police, that Jewish transports from the Old Reich would begin in 3 to 4 weeks, to which train cars of "Gypsies" could also be attached.<sup>12</sup>

In short, between mid-September and mid-October 1939, Nazi plans for the ethnic cleansing of the Third Reich of Jews and "Gypsies" from both its old and new territories had taken shape in the form of a vast deportation and expulsion program to the farthest extremity of Germany's

new eastern empire – the Lublin district on the German–Soviet demarcation line.

Barely was implementation of the Nisko Plan underway, however, when it was abruptly aborted. On October 19, as the second and third transports were being prepared for departure, Gestapo Müller from Berlin ordered “that the resettlement and deportation of Poles and Jews in the territory of the future Polish state requires central coordination. Therefore permission from the offices here must on principle be in hand.” This was quickly followed by the clarification that “every evacuation of Jews had to be stopped.”<sup>13</sup>

The stop order in fact came personally from Himmler, which he justified to the irate Gauleiter of Vienna on the basis of so-called technical difficulties.<sup>14</sup> But what difficulties had caused Himmler to abort the Nisko Plan just days after it had been set in motion? Expelling Jews and “Gypsies,” it turned out, was not the most urgent item on Himmler’s agenda for the demographic reorganization of eastern Europe. Himmler had just gained jurisdiction over the repatriation and resettlement of ethnic Germans, and the first Baltic Germans had arrived in Danzig on October 15.<sup>15</sup> The problem of finding space for the incoming ethnic Germans now took priority over deporting Jews from East Upper Silesia, the Protectorate, and Vienna. The geographic center of Nazi resettlement actions suddenly shifted northward to West Prussia and the Warthegau as policy priorities shifted from expelling Jews to finding lodging and livelihood for ethnic Germans.

But despite the sudden demise of the Nisko Plan, the goal of ethnic cleansing remained, though it was now to be implemented in more gradual stages. On October 18 Hitler reiterated that “Jews, Polacks and riff-raff” (“*Juden, Polacken u. Gesindel*”) were to be expelled from Reich territory – both old and new – into what remained of Poland, where “devils’ work” (“*Teufelswerk*”) remained to be done.<sup>16</sup> On October 30, Himmler issued overall guidelines for the *Flurbereinigung* of the incorporated territories that Hitler had once again sanctioned. Within 4 months, all Jews (estimated at 550,000) were to be expelled from the incorporated territories to a Lublin reservation between the Vistula and Bug Rivers. Also to be expelled were post-1919 Polish immigrants (so-called Congress Poles) and a sufficient number of anti-German Poles to bring the total to 1 million.<sup>17</sup> Jews in the recently established General Government were to be moved from west to east of the Vistula the following year.<sup>18</sup>

No one misunderstood the implications of this plan for a Jewish reservation in Lublin. Arthur Seyss-Inquart reported that the “extreme marshy nature” of the Lublin region “could induce a severe decimation of the Jews.”<sup>19</sup> And the newly appointed general governor, Hans Frank, exulted: “What a pleasure, finally to be able to tackle the Jewish race physically. The more that die, the better.”<sup>20</sup>

Clearly there were many Germans who were intoxicated by Hitler and Himmler's vision of vast and brutal population transfers within 4 months and who welcomed the loss of life, particularly Jewish life, that this would entail. But turning this vision into reality would prove difficult for the Germans actually entrusted with the task of implementation. The first flood of ethnic Germans arrived in Danzig–West Prussia, where space was found by both brutally clearing half the population of Gdynia (Gotenhafen)<sup>21</sup> and murdering the patients of mental hospitals.<sup>22</sup> But Gauleiter Albert Forster proved increasingly uncooperative about resettling further ethnic Germans.<sup>23</sup> By late November the higher SS and police leader for Danzig and West Prussia, Richard Hildebrandt, announced that “in the Danzig district itself the Baltic Germans will no longer remain but rather be sent on.”<sup>24</sup>

On November 28, Heydrich intervened from Berlin, drastically scaling down the immediate task facing the Germans to a “short-range plan” (*Nahplan*) that differed from Himmler's guidelines of October 30 in significant ways. First, immediate expulsions were to take place only from the Warthegau rather than throughout the incorporated territories. Second, the quota was sharply cut from 1 million to 80,000 “Poles and Jews,” whose removal would make room for 40,000 “incoming Baltic Germans.” And finally, the racial and political criteria emphasized by Himmler gave way to more practical concerns. Housing and livelihoods had to be procured for incoming ethnic Germans, and “urgently needed” manual laborers were to be exempted.<sup>25</sup>

As a consequence, the emphasis on deporting Jews was diminished. Although by far the largest concentration of Jews in the Warthegau, those in the city of Lodz were not to be included, because it was not yet clear whether that city would ultimately be part of the General Government or end up within the boundaries of the Third Reich. Other Warthegau Jews were to constitute a deportation reservoir and be expelled only when needed to fill gaps and prevent delays, if the other priority-target groups were not available in sufficient numbers to fill the deportation quotas.<sup>26</sup>

The Germans in the Warthegau exceeded the quota and reported triumphantly that they had succeeded in deporting over 87,000 “Poles and Jews” by December 17, 1941. The primary thrust of the “first short-range plan” (1. *Nahplan*) was not to solve the Jewish question but rather to remove Poles who posed “an immediate danger” and find space for the Baltic Germans.<sup>27</sup> The reason why the precise number or percentage of Jews among the expellees was not reported becomes clear from local documents. In Lodz local authorities had been too incompetent or inefficient to identify “politically suspicious and intellectual Poles” in sufficient numbers to fill their quotas. Thus they had “had to fall back on Jews.”<sup>28</sup> The indiscriminate seizure of Jews was obviously administratively easier

than the selective seizure of Poles. In the end, about 10,000 Jews were deported, mostly from Lodz after all, owing to the insufficient number of deportable Poles identified and listed by the local authorities. This figure of 10,000 Jewish deportees from Lodz was not included in the self-congratulatory final reports on the "first short-range plan," because it was evidence not of a success in deporting Jews but rather of a failure to identify and seize Polish political activists and intelligentsia.

Immediately following the conclusion of the "first short-range plan," Heydrich's Jewish experts in Berlin once again posed the question "whether a Jewish reservation shall be created in Poland..."<sup>29</sup> Heydrich's response was threefold: he appointed Eichmann as his "special adviser" (*Sonderreferent*),<sup>30</sup> for the moment postponed any Jewish deportations from the Old Reich,<sup>31</sup> and ordered a "second short-range plan" for "the complete seizure of all Jews without regard to age or gender" in the incorporated territories and "their deportation into the General Government."<sup>32</sup> On January 4, 1940, Eichmann reaffirmed that "On the order of the Reichsführer-SS the evacuation of all Jews from the former Polish occupied territories is to be carried out as a priority."<sup>33</sup>

However, despite the German recommitment to the immediate expulsion of all Jews from the incorporated territories, the problems that stood in the way of realization of expelling both Jews and Poles only multiplied in the new year. The arrival of 40,000 Baltic Germans was to be quickly followed by a further deluge of 120,000 Volhynian Germans. Hans Frank, so enthusiastic the previous fall, was now considerably sobered. He complained bitterly about the impact of the chaotic deportations of the "first short-range plan" and emphasized the limited absorptive capacity of the General Government.<sup>34</sup> The latter had been a matter of no concern in the fall of 1939 but increasingly became so as Hermann Göring insisted upon harnessing the productive capacities of the conquered territories to the war effort.<sup>35</sup> There were other problems as well. No trains were available until mid-February.<sup>36</sup> And Himmler, worried about a sufficient stock of German blood to repopulate the incorporated territories, insisted that cases of contested ethnic German status and Poles capable of Germanization not be deported without screening; hence only Jews and recent Polish emigrants but not longtime Polish residents were to be deported.<sup>37</sup> But that often meant exempting the political and economic leadership classes whose property was needed for accommodating incoming ethnic Germans while deporting the propertyless Polish workers most needed for economic production. The labor issue was intensified further when the Warthegau was targeted to provide 800,000 agricultural workers for the Reich. German occupation authorities immediately demanded that further deportations to the General Government had to be stopped if local labor needs were to be covered.<sup>38</sup>

Thus within the overall scheme for a demographic reorganization of eastern Europe that Himmler had proposed and Hitler approved in the fall of 1939, the Nazis had set for themselves three tasks: the ethnic cleansing of Jews from the Third Reich, of Poles from the Third Reich, and the repatriation of ethnic Germans from abroad. The plan for expelling the Jews had not been generated by the need to make space for the ethnic Germans but rather preceded it. But then the immediate urgency of resettling the Baltic Germans led to the temporary curtailment of Jewish expulsion, for the latter did not provide the necessary housing and jobs for the former. This conflict within German racial and resettlement policy was soon complicated by additional economic factors: the concern for labor and production, the shortage of trains, and the limited absorptive capacity of the General Government. The Nazi empire builders and demographic engineers had tied themselves in knots.

The Nazi leadership attempted to solve this welter of self-imposed contradictions with very limited success. On January 30, 1940, Heydrich chaired a meeting of leading officials from the occupied east, his own Reich Security Main Office, and Göring's representative, at which the hoped-for expulsion of all Jews was postponed once again. The deportation of 40,000 Jews and Poles for the purpose of "making room" (*Platzschaffung*) for the remaining Baltic Germans – the so-called intermediate plan (*Zwischenplan*) – was now to be followed by "another improvised clearing" of 120,000 Poles to provide space for the Volhynian Germans – a "second short-range plan." Unlike the urban Baltic Germans, the Volhynian Germans were a rural population, for whom the removal of Jews was even less relevant. Thus the evacuation of all Jews from the incorporated territories would take place only "as the last mass movement."<sup>39</sup>

The discussion was continued at a higher level yet, when Göring hosted Himmler, Frank, and the eastern Gauleiter at his Karin hall estate on February 12, 1940. Göring insisted that the first priority was to strengthen the war potential of the Reich, and in this regard the incorporated territories were to be the granary of Germany. Thus, "all evacuation measures are to be directed in such a way that useful manpower does not disappear." Jewish transports were to be sent only in an orderly manner, with prior notification and approval. Frank immediately adhered to Göring's position.

Himmler took for granted that the Baltic and Volhynian resettlements would continue in what were now designated the "intermediate" and "second short-range" plans. But Himmler agreed to postpone the resettlement of a further 40,000 Lithuanian Germans, 80,000 to 100,000 Bukovian Germans, and 100,000 to 130,000 Bessarabian Germans, as well as the ethnic Germans west of the Vistula. However, the 30,000 ethnic

Germans in the Lublin district east of the Vistula would have to be resettled, he insisted, because their present homeland was destined to become the *Judenreservat*. Finally, Himmler assured Frank that they “would reach agreement upon the procedures of future evacuations.”<sup>40</sup>

Back in the General Government in early March, Frank explained what he thought had been agreed upon. The General Government would receive 400,000 to 600,000 Jews, who would be placed along the eastern border. “It is indescribable, what views have formed in the Reich, that the region of the General Government east of the Vistula is increasingly considered as some kind of Jewish reservation,” he noted. The final goal was to make the German Reich free of Jews, but “that that shall not occur in a year and especially not under the circumstances of war, Berlin also recognizes.” Moreover, no resettlement actions would take place without prior approval from the General Government. And most important, “the great resettlement ideas have indeed been given up. The idea that one could gradually transport 7.5 million Poles to the General Government has been fully abandoned.”<sup>41</sup>

When Himmler attempted to exceed the Karinhall agreement and add Jewish deportations from Stettin to the “intermediate” and “second short-range plans,” Göring and Frank exercised their power to block unauthorized transports. Himmler had to concede once again that the expulsion of Jews would commence only in August after the completion of the Volhynian Aktion or “second short-range plan.”<sup>42</sup>

Himmler had seen his grandiose design for the sweeping racial reorganization of eastern Europe steadily whittled away. In the fall of 1939, he had envisaged the deportation of 1 million people (including *all* Jews) from the incorporated territories by March 1940, and eventually the removal of all Poles as well. By the spring of 1940, however, the deportation of Jews had been postponed to August, and Frank was boasting that the expulsion of 7.5 million Poles from the incorporated territories had been “fully abandoned.” Moreover, Hitler himself seemed to have lost interest in the Lublin reservation as a solution to the Jewish question as well, indicating even to foreign visitors in mid-March 1940 that he had no space available for Jews there.<sup>43</sup>

Then suddenly Germany’s stunning victory in France emboldened Himmler once again to try to override the pragmatic considerations of Göring and Frank. Himmler seized the propitious opportunity to revitalize his plans for the total expulsion of Poles from the incorporated territories and to suggest an even more radical expulsion plan for the Jews.

Sometime in May 1940 Himmler drafted a memorandum entitled “Some Thoughts on the Treatment of Alien Populations in the East.” The 15 million people of the General Government and 8 million of the incorporated territories – “ethnic mush” (*Völkerbrei*) in Himmler’s view – were

to be splintered into as many ethnic groups as possible for “screening and sifting” (*Sichtung und Siebung*). Himmler wanted “to fish out of this mush the racially valuable” to be assimilated in Germany, with the rest to be dumped into the General Government, where they would serve as a reservoir of migrant labor and eventually lose their national identity.

Along with the denationalization, in effect cultural genocide, of the various ethnic groups of eastern Europe, the Jews were to disappear in a different way. “I hope completely to erase the concept of Jews through the possibility of a great emigration of all Jews to a colony in Africa or elsewhere,” he proposed. Concerning this systematic eradication of the ethnic composition of eastern Europe, Himmler concluded: “However cruel and tragic each individual case may be, this method is still the mildest and best, if one rejects the Bolshevik method of physical extermination of a people out of inner conviction as un-German and impossible” (“*So grausam und tragisch jeder einzelne Fall sein mag, so ist diese Methode, wenn man die bolschewistische Methode der physischen Ausrottung eines Volkes aus innerer Überzeugung als ungermanisch und unmöglich ablehnt, doch die mildeste und beste*”).

With impeccable timing, Himmler submitted his memorandum to Hitler on May 25, a week after the German army had reached the English Channel. “The Führer read the six pages through and found them very good and correct” (*sehr gut und richtig*), Himmler noted. Moreover, “The Führer desires that I invite Governor Frank back to Berlin, in order to show him the memorandum and to say to him that the Führer considers it correct.” Not content with this triumph, Himmler obtained Hitler’s authorization also to distribute the memorandum to the eastern Gauleiter and Göring as well, with the message that the Führer had “recognized and confirmed” (*anerkannt und bestätigt*) the guidelines.<sup>44</sup>

This episode is of singular importance in that it is the only firsthand account by a high-ranking participant – Himmler – of just how a Hitler decision was reached and a “Führer order” disseminated in the shaping of Nazi racial policy during this period. Hitler indicated a change in expectations, in this case his abandonment of the Lublin reservation. At the opportune moment, Himmler responded with a new initiative in the form of a general statement of intent and policy objectives known to be in line with Hitler’s general ideological outlook. Hitler indicated not only his enthusiastic agreement but also with whom this information could be shared. He gave no specific orders to the likes of Göring, Frank, and the eastern Gauleiter but simply allowed it to be known what he wanted or approved. The stage was then set for a new round of planning in the search for a solution to the Jewish question through expulsion or ethnic cleansing.

Heydrich rather than Himmler in fact met with Hans Frank on June 12. However, “in view of the dire situation” in the General Government it

was agreed for the moment not to go beyond the Karinhall accord – that is, the Volhynian action then in progress followed by the general expulsion of Jews scheduled for August.<sup>45</sup> For Frank, even these expulsions loomed as catastrophic, given the food shortages in the General Government.<sup>46</sup> For the beleaguered Frank, a surprising order from Himmler suddenly stopping the impending expulsion of the Jews into the General Government came as a veritable deliverance.<sup>47</sup> Himmler had found his colony in Africa for the Jews!

For decades the island of Madagascar had exercised a fantastical attraction for European anti-Semites as a place for Europe's expelled Jews.<sup>48</sup> It had been frequently mentioned by leading Nazis since 1938, most recently by Frank in January 1940.<sup>49</sup> With the lightning defeat of France, it was a freakish idea whose time had suddenly come. In another example of timely initiative from below that dovetailed with changes in circumstance and policy at the top, the newly appointed Jewish expert of the German Foreign Office, Franz Rademacher, proposed that in planning for the peace treaty with France, Germany consider removing the newly acquired west European Jews to the French colony of Madagascar.<sup>50</sup> The proposal not only moved up the hierarchy with incredible speed but also was quickly expanded to include all European Jews. On June 18, both Hitler and Joachim von Ribbentrop mentioned the plan to use Madagascar for a Jewish reservation to Benito Mussolini and Galeazzo Ciano respectively in their talks in Munich over the fate of the French empire.<sup>51</sup> By June 24, 1940, Heydrich had gotten wind of the project and asserted his long-standing jurisdiction over Jewish emigration. He insisted that he be included in any discussions Ribbentrop was planning on a "territorial solution" to the Jewish question.<sup>52</sup> Ribbentrop immediately conceded, and henceforth planning on the Madagascar Plan was a mixture of cooperation and competition between the Foreign Office and SS.<sup>53</sup>

The demise of the Lublin reservation and the emergence of the new Madagascar Plan was, in Frank's words, a "colossal relief" ("*kolossale Entlastung*") for German officials in the General Government.<sup>54</sup> Two fundamental changes in policy immediately resulted. First, "an order from Cracow [Frank's capital] was issued to stop all work on ghetto construction in view of the fact that, according to the plan of the Führer, the Jews of Europe were to be sent to Madagascar at the end of the war and thus ghetto building was for all practical purposes illusory."<sup>55</sup> Second, when Frank met with Gauleiter Arthur Greiser of the Warthegau in late July, the latter conceded that according to Himmler the Jews were now to be sent overseas. Nevertheless, as an interim measure he was still desperate to resettle Jews from the starving Lodz ghetto into the General Government in August as previously planned. Frank flatly refused and advised Greiser



instead to see that the Lodz Jews were considered first in line for Madagascar if their situation were so impossible.<sup>56</sup>

Planning for Madagascar continued fervently until the end of August and then stopped abruptly. The defeat of France and seemingly imminent victory over Great Britain had promised both the colonial territory and the merchant fleet necessary for the plan's realization. But failure to defeat Great Britain was fully apparent in September, and the frenetic urgency behind its preparation in the summer months suddenly dissipated. Like Eichmann's Nisko Plan, Rademacher's Madagascar Plan was a timely low-level initiative that offered a way to implement policy decisions just made at the top. And like Nisko, real work on Madagascar was abruptly halted when circumstances changed. Just as the idea of the Lublin reservation continued as the official goal, even though it was consistently postponed in favor of more limited but temporarily more urgent Polish expulsions tied to ethnic German repatriation, Madagascar lingered as the official policy until an alternative was proclaimed. Not a "phantom solution" at first, it became one. Like Nisko/Lublin, Madagascar implied a murderous decimation of the Jewish population. If actually implemented, Hitler's Reichstag prophecy would have been proclaimed as completely fulfilled. And like the failure of Nisko/Lublin, the failure of Madagascar left the frustrated German demographic planners receptive to ever more radical solutions.

In the summer and fall of 1940, German ethnic cleansing continued to encounter difficulties. The Germans expelled over 70,000 people from Alsace-Lorraine and blocked the return of an additional 70,000 refugees who had fled.<sup>57</sup> Gauleiter Robert Wagner took the opportunity to propose expelling the Jews of Baden and Pfalz at the same time, and Hitler "impulsively" agreed.<sup>58</sup> Some 6,500 German Jews were expelled over the demarcation line into southern France, but the ensuing diplomatic complications with the Vichy government ensured that this measure was not repeatable.

In the east, the "second short-range plan" was somewhat expanded and considerably delayed. As part of the expanded plan, the so-called Cholmer Aktion for the repatriation of ethnic Germans from the eastern border of the Lublin district was particularly significant because it also involved the reciprocal exchange of Poles and ethnic Germans between the Lublin district and the incorporated territories.<sup>59</sup> These ethnic Germans came from within the German sphere and were thus in no imminent danger. In short, repatriating ethnic Germans to the incorporated territories was not just a reactive measure to rescue ethnic Germans from the Soviet sphere but a program carried out for its own sake. The vision of Germanizing the new borderlands fired Himmler's imagination as a historic mission of great consequence. This was the construction of German *Lebensraum* as understood at the time. Two years later, the Germans would try to reverse the

Cholmer Aktion with the Zamosc Aktion, resettling Germans in areas from which they had in fact been recently removed. With ethnic German resettlement as with the Lublin and Madagascar plans, the hindsight perspectives of Generalplan Ost and Auschwitz are not the proper yardstick by which to measure Himmler's ideological horizon in the summer of 1940.

By the time the "second short-range plan" was concluded six months behind schedule in December 1941, the Germans had expelled some 460,000 people, of whom at least 36,000 or approximately 8 percent were Jews.<sup>60</sup> (Vastly greater numbers of Jews, of course, had fled on their own as refugees from the incorporated territories to the General Government and from the General Government over the demarcation line into the Soviet sphere.) The Nazis, therefore, had achieved only a pathetic fraction of the overall goals and expectations of ethnic cleansing that they had set in the fall of 1939. Progress toward solving their self-imposed Jewish problem in particular was even more scant. In the repatriation of ethnic Germans, at least from the Soviet zone, they had come closer to meeting expectations, but the difficulties and delays in moving them from transit camps to permanent resettlement was yet another source of frustration.

Not surprisingly, therefore, the Nazis attempted to reinvigorate their lagging schemes for ethnic cleansing at the end of 1940. On three occasions – in the successive months of October, November, and December 1940 – Hitler made clear to Frank his "urgent wish" that more Poles be taken into the General Government, along with the Jews of Vienna.<sup>61</sup> With Hitler's support to override Frank, who now had no choice but to accept the expulsions as "one of the great tasks that the Führer has set for the General Government," Heydrich produced his "third short-range plan" (3. *Nahplan*) for 1941. Ethnic Germans were to be repatriated from the Balkans (Bessarabia, Bukovina, and Dobrudja) as well as a remnant from Lithuania. To make room in the incorporated territories, over 1 million Poles (200,000 of them at the behest of the army to clear land for a vast military training ground) were to be expelled into the General Government in one year, dwarfing the expulsions of 1939–40.<sup>62</sup>

As the pioneering research of Götz Aly has now shown, the "third short-range plan" for the intensified expulsion of Poles was paralleled by yet another plan for the expulsion of the Jews beyond those of Lublin and Madagascar. On December 4, Eichmann submitted to Himmler a brief summary on the status of the Jewish question, noting that 5.8 million European Jews had to be taken into consideration for resettlement to a destination mysteriously characterized as "a territory yet to be determined" (*ein noch zu bestimmendes Territorium*). Clearly the General Government was not this mysterious destination, for its Jews formed the

bulk of the 5.8 million to be expelled, and as Himmler wrote concerning the General Government, in notes for a speech delivered 1 week later: “Jewish emigration and thus yet more space for Poles” (“*Judenauswanderung und damit noch mehr Platz für Polen*”).<sup>63</sup> Himmler’s speech was given on the eve of the finalization of two important policies in December 1941, namely the “third short-range plan” for sending more than 1 million Poles from the incorporated territories into the General Government and the decision to invade the Soviet Union. The latter, because it obviously could not be talked about openly, had to be referred to in code language as a “territory yet to be determined” and was to provide the destination for Jewish expulsion. This in turn would break the demographic impasse in the General Government and create space for the realization of the ambitious “third short-range plan.”

Planning for Operation Barbarossa remained secretive, and hence use of code language about “a territory yet to be determined” continued. The most detailed reference to this planning is contained in a memorandum written by Eichmann’s close associate, Theodore Dannecker, on January 21, 1941:

In conformity with the will of the Führer, at the end of the war there should be brought about a final solution of the Jewish question within the European territories ruled or controlled by Germany.

The Chief of the Security Police and the Security Service [Heydrich] has already received orders from the Führer, through the Reichsführer-SS, to submit a project for a final solution. . . . The project in all its essentials has been completed. It is now with the Führer and the Reichsmarschall [Göring].

It is certain that its execution will involve a tremendous amount of work whose success can only be guaranteed through the most painstaking preparations. This will extend to the work preceding the wholesale deportation of Jews as well as to the planning to the last detail of a settlement action *in the territory yet to be determined* [italics mine].<sup>64</sup>

That Heydrich had indeed prepared and submitted a plan to Göring is confirmed in a meeting of the two on March 26, 1941. Heydrich’s memorandum of the meeting, another archival find by Götz Aly, noted as point 10:

Concerning the solution to the Jewish question, I reported briefly to the Reichsmarschall and submitted my draft to him, which he approved with one amendment concerning the jurisdiction of Rosenberg and ordered to be resubmitted.

As Aly has pointed out, the reference to Rosenberg’s jurisdiction – he was soon to be designated the future minister of the occupied Soviet

territories – indicates once again that the proverbial territory yet to be determined was the Soviet Union.<sup>65</sup>

If Heydrich was busy drafting and submitting plans in the early months of 1941, what did Himmler think about it? There is an indication that at least in one regard he was somewhat troubled. In early 1941 he approached Viktor Brack of the Führer Chancellery and expressed concern that “through the mixing of blood in the Polish Jews with that of the Jews of Western Europe a much greater danger for Germany was arising than even before the war. . . .” It is important to emphasize that such a concern made sense in the bizarre mental world of Heinrich Himmler only if a massive concentration of east and west European Jews were actually being envisaged in some area of resettlement, where this mix of Jews would produce offspring reaching adulthood in some 20 years! Clearly in Himmler’s mind, this expulsion plan was not merely a cover for an already decided upon policy of systematic and total extermination. Himmler asked Brack, who worked with the “many scientists and doctors” assembled for the euthanasia program, to investigate the possibility of mass sterilization through X-rays. Brack submitted a preliminary report on March 28, 1941, which Himmler acknowledged positively on May 12.<sup>66</sup> Thereafter, however, Himmler showed no further interest.

The documentation for this last plan for expelling Jews into the Soviet Union is quite fragmentary and elusive in comparison to the Lublin and Madagascar Plans. This was due in part to the need to preserve secrecy concerning the identity of “the territory yet to be determined.” And perhaps it was also because the Nazi leadership was caught up in the immediate preparations for Operation Barbarossa. But perhaps it was also because their hearts were no longer in it – that in the minds of Hitler, Himmler, and Heydrich the notion was beginning to take shape of another possibility *in the future*, if all went well with the imminent military campaign. Indeed, it was precisely in March 1941 that Hitler’s exhortations for a war of destruction against the Soviet Union – like his earlier exhortations in 1939 preceding the invasion of Poland – were setting radically new parameters and expectations for Nazi racial policies.

Hitler’s declarations that the war against the Soviet Union would not be a conventional war but rather a conflict of ideologies and races and that one avowed war aim was the “removal” of “Judeo-Bolshevik intelligentsia”<sup>67</sup> evoked responses from both the SS and the Wehrmacht. Himmler and Heydrich created the Einsatzgruppen and procured military agreement for their operation up to the front lines. The German military itself stripped the civilian population of protection of law by restricting military court martial jurisdiction and mandating collective reprisal. And it prepared to make its own contribution to the elimination of Judeo-Bolshevism through dissemination of the infamous “commissar order” and

the equally infamous guidelines for troop behavior that equated Jews with Bolshevik agitators, guerrillas, and saboteurs.<sup>68</sup>

German preparations for the economic exploitation and demographic transformation of Soviet territory implied even greater destruction of life. The Economic Staff East (*Wirtschaftsstab Ost*) of General Georg Thomas made plans for both feeding the entire German occupation army from local food supplies and exporting vast amounts of food to Germany.<sup>69</sup> The staff had no doubt that the “inevitable” result would be “a great famine,” and that “tens of millions” of “superfluous” people would either “die or have to emigrate to Siberia.”<sup>70</sup> The state secretaries fully concurred: “Umpteen million people will doubtless starve to death when we extract what is necessary for us. . . .”<sup>71</sup>

Himmler was not to be outdone by the military and ministerial plans for the starvation death of “umpteen million” Soviet citizens and the forced migration to Siberia of millions more. Meeting on June 12–15, 1941, in his renovated Saxon castle at Wewelsburg with his top SS associates and the designated higher SS and police leaders (*HSSPF*) for Soviet territory, Himmler sketched out his own vision of the coming conflict. “It is a question of existence, thus it will be a racial struggle of pitiless severity, in the course of which 20 to 30 million Slavs and Jews will perish through military actions and crises of food supply.”<sup>72</sup> And on June 24, 1941, Himmler entrusted one of his demographic planners, Professor Konrad Meyer, with drawing up *Generalplan Ost*, which in one version would call for the expulsion of 31 million Slavs into Siberia.<sup>73</sup> In short, within the SS, ministerial bureaucracy, and military, there was a broad consensus on what the German scholar Christian Gerlach has aptly dubbed the “hunger plan” as well as ever vaster schemes of “ethnic cleansing.”<sup>74</sup>

None of the *Barbarossa* planning documents or criminal orders of this period contain explicit plans concerning the fate of the Jews on Soviet territory. Certainly verbal orders were given to the *Einsatzgruppen* just prior to the invasion, the “most important” of which Heydrich relayed to the *HSSPF* “in compressed form” on July 2, 1941. Along with the general exhortation to carry out pacification measures “with ruthless severity,” Heydrich’s explicit orders for those to be executed included Communist functionaries, anyone engaged in any form of resistance, and “Jews in state and party positions.”<sup>75</sup> Some historians, such as Helmut Krausnick, have interpreted this Heydrich execution order “in compressed form” as code language for the explicit and comprehensive verbal order given to the *Einsatzgruppen* prior to the invasion to murder all Soviet Jewry.<sup>76</sup> In contrast, I now share the view first advanced by Alfred Streim<sup>77</sup> and Christian Streit<sup>78</sup> and gradually endorsed by many other scholars<sup>79</sup> that the ultimate decision was made and orders were given for the Final Solution on Soviet territory beginning some 4 weeks after the invasion.

In my opinion, the last months before and the first weeks after the invasion of the Soviet Union can best be seen as an important transition period in the evolution of Nazi Jewish policy. The first two resettlement plans had failed and the third languished as the feverish and murderous preparations for Operation Barbarossa rendered it increasingly obsolete. Clearly, plans for the war of destruction entailed the death of millions of people in the Soviet Union, and in such an environment of mass death, Soviet Jewry was in grave peril. Indeed, Nazi plans for the war of destruction, when seen in the light of the past Nazi record in Poland, *implied* nothing less than the *genocide* of Soviet Jewry. In Poland, when large numbers of people had been shot, Jews had been shot in disproportionate numbers. When massive expulsions had taken place, it was never intended that any Jews would be left behind. And when food had been scarce, Jews had always been the first to starve. Now mass executions, mass expulsions, and mass starvation were being planned for the Soviet Union on a scale that would dwarf what had happened in Poland. No one fully aware of the scope of these intended policies could doubt the massive decimation and eventual disappearance of all Jews in German-occupied Soviet territories. Within the framework of a war of destruction, through some unspecified combination of execution, starvation, and expulsion to an inhospitable Siberia, Soviet Jewry, along with millions of other Slavs, would eventually be destroyed.

But the *implied genocide* in the future of Jews on Soviet territory was not yet the Final Solution for all Soviet Jewry, much less the other Jews of Europe. The old resettlement plans were dead, replaced by a vague genocidal vision that was unspecific about timetable and means and still comingled the fates of Jewish and non-Jewish victims. However, this vagueness and lack of specificity would soon come to an end. In the "fateful months" following Operation Barbarossa, a series of decisions would be made. Out of these decisions would emerge what the Nazis called "the Final Solution to the Jewish Question," a program of systematic and total mass murder, to begin and be completed as soon as feasibly possible, and for the first time with clear priority for the implementation of Jewish policy over the various other Nazi demographic schemes affecting ethnic Germans and Slavs.

## NOTES

- 1 *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression* (hereafter cited as NCA), III, p. 665 (1014-PS); Franz Halder, *Kriegstagebuch* (Stuttgart, 1962), I, p. 25; Winfried Baumgart, "Zur Ansprache Hitlers vor den Führern der Wehrmacht am 22. August 1939," *Vierteljahresheft für Zeitgeschichte* (hereafter cited as VfZ), 1968, pp. 120-49.

- 2 Halder, *Kriegstagebuch*, I, p. 79.
- 3 Heydrich and Quartermaster General Eduard Wagner reached agreement in August that the Einsatzgruppen would arrest all potential enemies – that is, all “who oppose the measures of the German authorities, or obviously want and are able to stir up unrest due to their position and stature” (*die sich dem Massnahmen der deutschen Amtsstellen widersetzen oder offensichtlich gewillt und auf Grund ihrer Stellung und ihres Ansehens in der Lage sind, Unruhe zu stiften*). According to Wagner, the Einsatzgruppen had lists of 30,000 people to be sent to concentration camps. Edward Wagner, *Der Generalquartiermeister: Briefe und Tagebuch Eduard Wagners*, ed. by Elisabeth Wagner (Munich, 1963), pp. 103–4. In early September, Wilhelm Canaris pointed out to Wilhelm Keitel that he “knew that extensive executions were planned in Poland and that particularly the nobility and the clergy were to be exterminated.” Keitel confirmed that “the Führer had already decided on this matter.” NCA, V, p. 769 (3047-PS).
- 4 National Archives (hereafter cited as NA), T175/239/2728499–502 (conference of Heydrich’s division heads, 7.9.39).
- 5 NA, T175/239/2728513–5 (conference of Heydrich’s division heads, 14.9.39).
- 6 NA, T175/239/2728524–8 (conference of Heydrich’s division heads, 21.9.39); NCA, VI, pp. 97–101 (3363-PS); Helmuth Groscurth, *Tagebücher eines Abwehroffiziers 1938–40*, ed. by Helmuth Krausnick and Harold Deutsch (Stuttgart, 1970), p. 362 (document nr. 14, Groscurth memorandum over verbal orientation by Major Radke, 22.9.39).
- 7 *Das politische Tagebuch Alfred Rosenbergs*, ed. by Hans-Günther Seraphim (Göttingen, 1956), p. 81. NA, T175/239/2728531-2 (conference of Heydrich’s division heads, 29.9.39). According to Götz Aly, “*Endlösung*”: *Völkerverschiebung und der Mord an den europäischen Juden* (Frankfurt/M., 1995), p. 39, the decision to repatriate all Baltic Germans from the Soviet sphere was reached between Hitler and Himmler only on September 27.
- 8 Aly, “*Endlösung*,” esp. pp. 13–17; Aly and Susanne Heim, *Vordenker der Vernichtung. Auschwitz und die Pläne für eine neue europäische Ordnung* (Hamburg, 1991); Michael Burleigh, *Germany Turns Eastward. A Study of Ostforschung in the Third Reich* (Cambridge, 1988); Hans Mommsen, “Umvolkungspläne des Nationalsozialismus und der Holocaust,” *Die Normalität des Verbrechens: Bilanz und Perspektiven der Forschung zu nationalsozialistischen Gewaltverbrechen* (Berlin, 1994), pp. 68–84. Deborah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt, *Auschwitz: 1270 to the Present* (New York, 1996), pp. 66–159.
- 9 Klaus-Jürgen Müller, *Das Heer und Hitler. Armee und nationalsozialistisches Regime 1933–40* (Stuttgart, 1969), pp. 671–2 (document nr. 47: Heydrich to Einsatzgruppen leaders, 30.9.39).
- 10 Yad Vashem Archives (hereafter cited as YVA), O-53/93/283, Eichmann Vermerk, 6.10.39. For general studies of the Nisko Plan, see: Seev Goshen, “Eichmann und die Nisko-Aktion im Oktober 1939,” *VfZ* 19/1 (January 1981), pp. 74–96; Jonny Moser, “Nisko: The First Experiment in Deportation,” *The Simon Wiesenthal Center Annual*, II (1985), pp. 1–30; H. G. Adler, *Der Verwaltete Mensch* (Tübingen, 1974), pp. 126–40.

- 11 Gerhard Botz, *Wohnungspolitik und Judendeportation in Wien 1938 bis 1945: Zur Funktion des Antisemitismus als Ersatz nationalsozialistischer Sozialpolitik* (Vienna, 1975), pp. 164–86 (document VII: Becker memorandum, 11.10.39).
- 12 YVA, O-53/93/299–300 (Eichmann to Nebe, 16.10.39) and 227–9 (Günther-Braune FS-Fernspräch, 18.10.39).
- 13 YVA, O-53/93/235–8 (R. Günther Tagesbericht, 19.10.39), 220 (undated R. Günther telegram), and 244 (R. Günther Vermerk, 21.10.39).
- 14 Botz, *Wohnungspolitik und Judendeportationen*, p. 196 (document X, Himmeler to Bürckel, 9.11.39).
- 15 Hans Umbreit, *Deutsche Militärverwaltungen 1938/39* (Stuttgart, 1977), p. 218.
- 16 *Trials of the War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal* (hereafter cited as IMT), vol. 26, pp. 378–9, 381–3 (864-PS).
- 17 *Faschismus, Getto, Massenmord* (hereafter cited as FGM) [Berlin (East), 1960], pp. 42–3 (NO-4059); YVA, JM 21/1, Frank Tagebuch: Streckenbach report of 31.10.39; *Biuletyn Glownej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich W Polsce* (hereafter cited as *Biuletyn*), XI, pp. 11F–14F, and Hans Frank, *Diensttagebuch des deutschen Generalgouverneurs in Polen 1939–1945*, ed. by Werner Präg and Wolfgang Jacobmeyer (Stuttgart, 1975), pp. 60–1 (conference of 8.11.39).
- 18 United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (hereafter cited as USHMM), RG 15.005m, 2/104/15 (Müller, RSHA, to EG VI in Posen, 8.11.39).
- 19 IMT, vol. 30, p. 95 (2278-PS).
- 20 FGM, p. 46 (Frank speech in Radom, 25.11.39).
- 21 Umbreit, *Militärverwaltung*, pp. 216–21.
- 22 Aly, “*Endlösung*,” pp. 114–26.
- 23 Herbert Levine, “Local Authority and the SS State: The Conflict over Population Policy in Danzig–West Prussia,” *Central European History*, II/4 (1969), pp. 331–55.
- 24 YVA: O-53/69/639–41 (Polizeisitzung in Danzig, 15.11.39) and 642–3 (conference of 20.11.39); JM 3582 (Hildebrandt speech, 26.11.39).
- 25 *Biuletyn*, XII, pp. 15F–18F (Heydrich to HSSPF Cracow, Breslau, Posen, Danzig, 28.11.39; and Heydrich to Krüger, Streckenbach, Koppe, and Damzog, 28.11.39).
- 26 USHMM, RG 15.015m, 1/5/4–7 (Rapp draft, 10.11.39) and 2/99/1–5 (Koppe circular, 12.11.39).
- 27 *Biuletyn*, XII, pp. 22F–31F, and USHMM, RG 11.001m, 1/88/185–202 (Rapp report, 18.12.39); YVA, JM 3582, and USHMM, RG 15.015m, 3/208/1–12 (Rapp report, 26.1.40).
- 28 USHMM, RG 15.015m, 3/218/13–14 (undated Richter report) and 27–35 (Richter report, 16.12.39).
- 29 YVA, JM 3581 (RSHA II/112 an den Leiter II im Hause, 19.12.39).
- 30 YVA, JM 3581 (Heydrich to Sipo-SD in Cracow, Breslau, Posen, Danzig, and Königsberg, 21.12.39).
- 31 YVA, JM 3581 (Müller to all Staatspolizeistellen, 21.12.39).
- 32 USHMM, RG 15.015m, 2.97/1–7 (2. Nahplan, 21.12.39).



- 33 *Biuletyn*, XII, pp. 37F–39F (Abromeit Vermerk of 8.1.40 on conference of 4.1.40).
- 34 *Biuletyn*, XII, pp. 37F–39F (Abromeit Vermerk of 8.1.40 on conference of 4.1.40; FGM, pp. 48 and 53 (reports of Gschliesser and Wächter); *Documenta Occupationis* (hereafter cited as DO), vol. 8, pp. 37–8 (report of Mattern); IMT, vol. 26, pp. 210–12. (661-PS); Frank, *Diensttagebuch*, pp. 93–7 (Abteilungsleitersitzung, 19.1.40).
- 35 Aly, “*Endlösung*,” pp. 113–14.
- 36 USHMM, RG 15.015m, 1/96/12–13 (Krumey report, 30.1.40, on Leipzig Fahrplanbesprechung of 26–27.1.40).
- 37 Nuremberg Document NO-5411 (Creutz to Koppe, 18.1.40); *Biuletyn*, XII, pp. 44F–45F (Vermerk of Eichmann Seidl conversation, 22–23.1.40).
- 38 USHMM, RG 15.015m, 2/146/9–15 (meeting of 11.1.40).
- 39 *Biuletyn*, XII, pp. 66F–75F (NO-5322: conference of 30.1.40); USHMM, RG 15.015 m, 12/109/1–3 (Rapp Vermerk, 1.2.40).
- 40 IMT, vol. 36, pp. 300–6 (EC-305).
- 41 Frank, *Diensttagebuch*, pp. 131 and 146–7 (Sitzung des Reichsverteidigungsausschuss, Warsaw, 2.3.40, and Dienstversammlung der Kreis und Stadthauptmänner des Distrikts Lublin, 4.3.40).
- 42 Frank, *Diensttagebuch*, pp. 158 (entry of 5.4.40) and 204 (entry of 19.5.40); *Dokumenty i Materialy Do Dziejow Okupacji Niemieckiej W Polsce*, III, *Getto Lodzkie* (Warsaw, 1946), pp. 168–9 (Regierungspräsident to officials of Bezirk Lodz and Kalish, 8.5.40).
- 43 *Documents on German Foreign Policy*, D, VIII, p. 912–13.
- 44 Helmut Krausnick, ed., “Einige Gedanken über die Behandlung der fremdvölkischen im Osten,” *VfZ*, V/2 (1957), pp. 194–8.
- 45 *Biuletyn*, XII, pp. 94F–95F (R. Günther to Höppner, 1.7.40).
- 46 Frank, *Diensttagebuch*, pp. 210, 216 (Polizeisitzung, 30.5.40); Nuremberg Document NG-1627 (Frank to Lammers, 25.6.40).
- 47 *Biuletyn*, XII, pp. 96F–97F (Vermerk on Höppner-IV D 4 discussion, 9.7.40).
- 48 For the most recent scholarship on the European anti-Semitic tradition and the Madagascar Plan, see: Magnus Brechtken, “*Madagaskar für die Juden*”: *Antisemitische Idee und politische Praxis 1935–1945* (Munich, 1997), and Hans Jansen, *Der Madagaskar-Plan: Die beabsichtigte Deportation der europäischen Juden nach Madagaskar* (Munich, 1997).
- 49 IMT, vol. 26, pp. 210–22 (661-PS).
- 50 Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes (hereafter PA), Inland II A/B 347/3, Rademacher memorandum “Gedanken über die Arbeit und Aufgaben des Ref. D III, 3.6.40.” A synopsis of this memorandum is Nuremberg Document NG-5764.
- 51 Paul Schmidt, *Hitler’s Interpreter* (New York, 1951), p. 178; Galeazzo Ciano, *The Ciano Diaries 1939–43* (Garden City, NY, 1947), pp. 265–6. Two days later, on June 20, Hitler repeated his intention to resettle the European Jews on Madagascar to Admiral Raeder. Klaus Hildebrand, *Vom Reich zum Weltreich: Hitler, NSDAP, und koloniale Frage 1919–1945* (Munich, 1969), pp. 651–2.
- 52 PA, Inland IIg 177, Heydrich to Ribbentrop, 24.6.40.

- 53 For the details of this planning, see: Christopher R. Browning, *The Final Solution and the German Foreign Office* (New York, 1978), pp. 35–43.
- 54 Frank, *Diensttagebuch*, p. 248 (entry of 10.7.40) for HSSPF Friedrich Wilhelm Krüger's announcement of the news), and pp. 252 and 258 (Abteilungsleitersitzung, 12.7.40, and entry of 25.7.40) for Frank's boisterous reception.
- 55 FGM, p. 110 (Schön report, 20.1.40).
- 56 Frank, *Diensttagebuch*, pp. 261–3 (entry of 31.7.40).
- 57 IMT, vol. 31, pp. 283–94 (2916-PS); Akten der Partei-Kanzlei der NSDAP, 101 23821 (Chef der Zivilverwaltung in Elsass, 22.4.41, to Martin Bormann).
- 58 Bundesarchiv Koblenz, All. Proz. 6/Eichmann Interrogation, I, pp. 141–5; Jacob Toury, "Die Entstehungsgeschichte des Austreibungsbefehle gegen die Juden der Saarpfalz und Baden (22/23. Oktober 1940) – Camp de Gurs," *Jahrbuch des Instituts für Deutsche Geschichte*, Beihefte X (1986), pp. 435–64.
- 59 USHMM, RG 15.015m: 2/115/38 (conference of Ansiedlungstab, Posen, 12.7.40), 40–1 (Höppner to Eichmann and Ehlich, 12.7.40), and 50 (Krumey Aktenvermerk, 21.8.40); 3/228/3 (Aufstellung der Cholmer Aktion).
- 60 The sources for these statistics are too lengthy to include here but are based on my manuscript, "The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939–March 1942," to be published as part of Yad Vashem's multivolume history of the Holocaust.
- 61 At the October 2, 1940, meeting of Hitler and the eastern Gauleiter: IMT, vol. 39, pp. 426–9 (USSR-172). At the November 2, 1940, meeting of Hitler with Frank and Greiser: Frank, *Diensttagebuch*, p. 302 (entry of 6.11.40). For December: *ibid.*, p. 327 (entry of 15.1.41). For the Vienna Jews: NCA, IV, p. 592 (1950-PS).
- 62 Frank, *Diensttagebuch*, p. 327 (conference of 15.1.41); USHMM, RG 15.105m, 3/199/4-6 (Vermerk on conference of 8.1.41) and 8–9 (Höppner Aktenvermerk on Fahrplankonferenz in Posen on 16.1.41); *Biuletyn*, XII, p. 127F (Krumey to Eichmann, 6.1.41); YVA, JM 3582 (Abschlussbericht 1941).
- 63 Susanne Heim and Götz Aly, eds., *Beiträge zur nationalsozialistischen Gesundheits- und Sozialpolitik*, vol. 9: *Bevölkerungsstrukture und Massenmord: Neue Dokumente zur deutschen Politik der Jahre 1938–1945* (Berlin, 1991), pp. 24–7 (Eichmann summary "submitted to the RFSS," 4.12.40; Aly, "Endlösung," pp. 195–200).
- 64 Cited in: Serge Klarsfeld, *Vichy-Auschwitz: Die Zusammenarbeit der deutschen und französischen Behörden bei der "Endlösung der Judenfrage: in Frankreich* (Nördlingen, 1989), pp. 361–3. In February 1941 Heydrich also dropped reference to the Madagascar Plan and wrote Undersecretary Martin Luther in the Foreign Office about a "later total solution to the Jewish question" ("*späteren Gesamtlösung des Judenproblems*") to be achieved through "sending them off to the country that will be chosen later" ("*nach dem zukünftigen Bestimmungslande abzutransportieren*") PA, Inland II A/B 809–41 Sdh. III, Bd. 1, Heydrich to Luther, 5.2.41.
- 65 Cited in: Aly, "Endlösung," p. 270, with Aly's analysis, pp. 271–2. The document is from the Moscow Special Archives, 500/3/795.

- 66 *Trials of the War Criminals before the American Military Tribunal*, I, p. 732 (testimony of Viktor Brack, May 1947); Nuremberg Documents NO-203 (Brack to Himmler, 28.3.41) and NO-204 (Tiefenbacher to Brack, 12.5.41).
- 67 *Kriegstagebuch des Oberkommandos der Wehrmacht 1940–1941*, I, pp. 341–2 (entry for 3.3.41).
- 68 For the growing body of literature on Germany's preparation for a war of destruction in the Soviet Union, see: Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, "Kommissarbefehl und Massenexekutionen sowjetischer Kriegsgefangener," *Anatomie des SS-Staates* (Freiburg, 1965), II, pp. 161–278; Andreas Hillgruber, "Die 'Endlösung' und das deutsche Ostimperium als Kernstück des rassenideologischen Programmes des nationalsozialismus," *VfZ*, 20 (1972), pp. 133–53; Christian Streit, *Keine Kameraden: Die Wehrmacht und die sowjetischen Kriegsgefangenen, 1941–1945* (Stuttgart, 1978); Helmut Krausnick and Hans-Heinrich Wilhelm, *Die Truppe des Weltanschauungskrieges: Die Einsatzgruppen der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD, 1938–1942* (Stuttgart, 1981); Helmut Krausnick, "Kommissarbefehl und 'Gerichtsbarkeiterlass Barbarossa' in neuer Sicht," *VfZ*, 25 (1977), pp. 682–738; and especially the contributions of Jürgen Förster in *Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg*, IV, *Der Angriff auf die Sowjetunion* (Stuttgart, 1983), pp. 3–37, 413–47, 1030–88.
- 69 For military plans for economic exploitation: Rolf-Dieter Müller, "Von Wirtschaftsallianz zum kolonial Ausbeutungskrieg," *Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg*, IV, *Der Angriff auf dem Sowjetunion*, esp. pp. 125–29 and 146–52.
- 70 IMT, vol. 36, pp. 141–5 (126-EC: report of Wirtschaftsstab Ost, 23.5.41).
- 71 IMT, vol. 31, p. 84 (2718-PS: state secretaries' meeting, 2.5.41).
- 72 The Wewelsburg meeting has now been dated to June 12–15, 1941, according to Himmler's Terminkalendar found in the Moscow Secret Archives (Osobyi 1372-5-23. The accession number for the copy in the US Holocaust Memorial Museum is: 1997.A.0328). I am grateful to Dr. Jürgen Matthäus for providing me with a copy of this document. Testifying at the trial of Karl Wolff in Munich, Bach-Zelewski erroneously dated the meeting to March 1941. JNSV, XX (Nr. 580, LG München II 1 Ks 1/64), p. 413. At his even earlier Nürnberg testimony, Bach-Zelewski said that it had taken place early in 1941. IMT, vol. 4, pp. 482–8.
- 73 Dietrich Eichholz, "Der 'Generalplan Ost.' Über eine Ausgeburt imperialistischer Denkart und Politik," *Jahrbuch für Geschichte*, 26 (1982), p. 256 (Doc. Nr. 2: Meyer to Himmler, 15.7.41). Richard Breitman, *The Architect of Genocide: Himmler and the Final Solution* (New York, 1991), p. 168. Helmut Heiber, "Der Generalplan Ost," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 3 (1958), 300–13 (Doc.Nr. 2: Stellungnahme und Gedanken zum Generalplan Ost des Reichsführer SS, by Wetzell, 27.4.42).
- 74 Christian Gerlach, *Krieg, Ernährung, Völkermord: Forschungen zur deutschen Vernichtungspolitik im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Berlin, 1998) pp. 13–30.
- 75 Heydrich to HSSPFs Jeckeln, v.d. Bach, Prützmann, and Korsemann, 2.7.41, printed in: Peter Klein, ed., *Die Einsatzgruppen in der besetzten Sowjetunion 1941/42: Die Tätigkeits und Lageberichte des Chefs der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD* (Berlin, 1997), pp. 324–5.

- 76 Helmut Krausnick and Hans-Heinrich Wilhelm, *Die Truppe des Weltanschauungskrieges: Die Einsatzgruppen der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD 1938–1942* (Stuttgart, 1981), pp. 150–65; *Der Mord an den Juden im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, ed. by Eberhard Jäckel and Jürgen Rohwer (Stuttgart, 1985), pp. 88–106.
- 77 Alfred Streim, *Die Behandlung sowjetsicher Kriegsgefangenen im “Fall Barbarossa”* (Heidelberg and Karlsruhe, 1981), pp. 74–93.
- 78 Christian Streit, *Keine Kameraden: Die Wehrmacht und die sowjetischen Kriegsgefangenen 1941–1945* (Stuttgart, 1978), pp. 127 and 356.
- 79 In particular, see: Peter Longerich, “Vom Massenmord zur ‘Endlösung.’ Die Erschiessungen von jüdischen Zivilisten in den ersten Monaten des Ostfeldzuges im Kontext des nationalsozialistischen Judenmords,” *Zwei Wege Nach Moskau: Vom Hitler-Stalin-Pakt zum ‘Unternehmen Barbarossa,’* ed. by Bernd Wegner (Munich, 1991), pp. 251–74; and Ralf Ogorreck, *Die Einsatzgruppen und die “Genesis der Endlösung”* (Berlin, 1996).

## *Some Thoughts on the Treatment of the Alien Population in the East*

HEINRICH HIMMLER

In our treatment of the foreign ethnic groups in the east we must endeavour to recognize and foster as many such individual groups as possible, i.e. apart from the Poles and the Jews, the Ukrainians, White Russians, Gorales, Lemkes, and Kaschubians. If there are any more ethnic splinter groups to be found then these too.

I mean to say that we not only have a major interest in not uniting the population in the east but, on the contrary, we need to divide them up into as many parts and splinter groups as possible.

Also, within the ethnic groups themselves we have no interest in leading them to unity and greatness or in gradually giving them a sense of national consciousness and national culture, but rather in dissolving them into countless little splinter groups and particles.

We will of course use the members of all these ethnic groups and, in particular, the small ones, as policemen and mayors.

The senior positions in such ethnic groups must be restricted to mayors and local police authorities; in the case of the Gorales, the individual chieftains and tribal elders, who are in any case always feuding. There must not be a concentration of these groups at a higher level because only the dissolution of this ethnic mishmash of fifteen million in the General Government and eight million in the eastern provinces will enable us to carry through the racial screening process which must form the basis of our concern to fish out the racially valuable people from this mishmash, take them to Germany and assimilate them there.

Heinrich Himmler, "Some Thoughts on the Treatment of the Alien Population in the East," from *Nazism 1919-1945: A Documentary Reader, Vol. 3: Foreign Policy, War and Racial Extermination*, edited by J. Noakes and G. Pridham, new edn, Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2001, pp. 324-6.

For example, within a few years – I imagine four or five – the term ‘Kaschubian’ must have been forgotten because there will no longer be a Kaschubian people (that also applies, in particular, to the West Prussians). I hope to see the term ‘Jew’ completely eliminated through the possibility of a large-scale emigration of all Jews to Africa or to some colony. Over a slightly longer period it must also be possible to ensure the disappearance of the ethnic categories of Ukrainians, Gorales, and Lemkes from our territory. Making allowances for the larger area involved, what has been said about these splinter groups should also apply in the case of the Poles.

A basic issue as far as the solution of all these questions is concerned is the question of schools, and therefore that of sifting and assessing the young people. The non-German population of the eastern territories must not receive any education higher than that of an elementary school with four forms. The objective of this elementary school must simply be to teach: simple arithmetic up to 500 at the most, how to write one’s name, and to teach that it is God’s commandment to be obedient to the Germans and to be honest, hard working, and well-behaved. I consider it unnecessary to teach reading.

There must be no schools at all in the east apart from this type of school. Parents who wish to provide their children with a better education both in the elementary school and later in a secondary school, must make an application to the Higher SS and Police Leader. The decision on the application will be primarily determined by whether or not the child is racially first class and comes up to our requirements. If we recognise such a child as being of our blood then the parents will be informed that the child will be placed in a school in Germany and will remain in Germany indefinitely.

However cruel and tragic each individual case may be, if one rejects the Bolshevik method of physically exterminating a people as fundamentally un-German and impossible, then this method is the mildest and best one.

The parents of these children of good blood will be given the choice of either giving up their child – they will then probably not produce any more children and so remove the danger that this sub-human people of the east might acquire a leader class from such people of good blood, which would be dangerous for us because they would be our equals – or they would have to agree to go to Germany and become loyal citizens there. One has a strong weapon against them in their love of their child whose future and education would depend on the loyalty of the parents.

Apart from the examination of the petitions which parents put forward for a better education, all 6–10 year-olds will be sifted each year to sort out those with valuable blood and those with worthless blood. Those who are selected as valuable will be treated in the same way as the children who are admitted on the basis of the approval of the parents’ petition.

I consider it obvious both from an emotional and from a rational point of view that the moment the children and parents arrive in Germany they should not be treated in school and life as outcasts but – after changing their names and despite being treated with vigilance – should be integrated into German life on the basis of trust. The children must not be made to feel rejected; for, after all, we believe in our own blood, which through the mistakes of German history has flowed into a foreign nation, and are convinced that our ideology and ideals will find an echo in the souls of these children which are racially identical to our own. In this respect, above all, teachers and HJ leaders must change their tune and we must never again make the same mistake as was made in the past with the people of Alsace and Lorraine of, on the one hand, wanting to win them over to become Germans and, on the other hand, of using every opportunity to hurt their pride, offend their sense of honour, and undermine their human dignity through mistrust and abuse. Abusive expressions such as ‘Polack’ or ‘Ukrainian’ and such like must be out of the question.

Education must be carried out in a pre-school and after four forms one can then decide whether to let the children continue in a German elementary school or whether they should be transferred to a National Political Educational Institution [Napola].

After these measures have been systematically implemented during the next ten years, the population of the General Government will inevitably consist of an inferior remnant, which will include all the people who have been deported to the eastern provinces as well as from those parts of the German Reich which contain the same racial and human type (for example parts containing the Sorbs and Wends).

This population will be available as a leaderless labouring class and provide Germany with migrant and seasonal workers for special work projects (road building, quarries, construction); even then they will get more to eat and have more from life than under Polish rule and, while lacking in culture themselves, under the strict, consistent and fair leadership of the German people will be called upon to participate in their eternal cultural deeds and monuments and, in view of the amount of heavy labour required to produce them, may even make them feasible at all.





PART III

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War and the Turn to Genocide



## *War and the Turn to Genocide*

As analyzed in the preceding section, the Nazi declaration of war on Poland in September 1939 marked the beginning of the concentration phase of anti-Jewish policy, as well as the resettlement of other ethnic groups. A still more radical and sustained physical assault against Jews began with the German invasion of the USSR on June 22, 1941. Code-named “Operation Barbarossa,” the Nazi war in the USSR was accompanied by pervasive ideological propaganda. Historians have seen the war in the East as an extremely brutal military campaign without respect for international laws of war and for either enemy combatants or innocent civilians. The conquest of Poland was one crucial step in the achievement of living space (*Lebensraum*) in the race war. The brutality involved in achieving decisive victory in that country and in the USSR was measured not only in the number of victims, but also in motivating the perpetrators to participate in the shootings and massacres of Jewish men, women, and children, not to mention political commissars, and enemy combatants.

Historians see the invasion of the Soviet Union as marking a crucial point of transition from the massacres of Soviet Jewry to a coordinated blueprint for the genocide of European Jewry with the latter decision made sometime between July and December 1941. The articles in Part III do not provide a definitive date for that order, but, rather, they describe how that decision would have been authorized in a wartime climate “without limits” – one in which the *Einsatzgruppen* actions and the complicity of the *Wehrmacht* converged. As Peter Longerich has commented, though the “Final Solution” originated orally from a decision at the highest level, its implementation and progress could not be sustained effectively by one such order alone. Thus, Longerich argues that the implementation of the “Final Solution” involved a series of decisions that had to be reinforced, pursued and adapted to specific local conditions of implementation and authority. These decisions were tempered where necessary and radicalized wherever possible. In this sense, a consensus to

exterminate existed not only “from above,” but also in the actions of the thousands of perpetrators who more directly provided the means of mass murder.<sup>1</sup>

The “Commissar Decree” of June 6, 1941, directed the German soldiers in their campaign in the USSR, and their treatment of enemy and combatant civilians. The document “Affidavit of SS Gruppenführer Otto Ohlendorf,” commandant of *Einsatzgruppe* D, which appears in Part III, at once points to a Hitler order for the “Final Solution” and the criminal license given to the *Einsatzgruppen* to treat the ill-defined enemy groups encountered in the East without reference to international laws of war. Ohlendorf’s words highlight the antiseptic interpretation of individual versus collective responsibility, the language of rationalization for committing mass murder, and the denial of moral culpability and accountability. It also remains a typical narrative of defense in the testimonies of many Nazi officials prosecuted for war crimes in postwar trials.

In “Operation Barbarossa as a War of Conquest and Annihilation” Jürgen Förster outlines the operational and political preface to the German invasion of Russia. He argues that the “war of annihilation” in the East was presented in terms of national security, with the familiar enemy of Jewish Bolshevism posing the primary national, cultural, and racial threat. The mission of the *Einsatzgruppen* is best understood, in Förster’s view, in the context of a generalized situation in which the conquest of *Lebensraum* and elimination of Judeo-Bolshevism were its two main objectives.

In relation to the Jewish question, the role of the *Einsatzgruppen*, or mobile killing units, is of prime importance, as Ohlendorf’s affidavit attests. Attached to the rear of German army units, these four units totaling no more than 3,000 men were assigned the task of “liquidating” Jewish civilians in the Eastern territories. Peter Longerich’s brief but detailed “From Mass Murder to the ‘Final Solution’: The Shooting of Jewish Civilians during the First Months of the Eastern Campaign within the Context of the Nazi Jewish Genocide” addresses the question of exactly when and how the *Einsatzgruppen* were informed of their order to exterminate Soviet Jewry, and whether that order came before or after the launch of Operation Barbarossa. The answers to these questions bear directly on the understanding of the importance of genocidal antisemitism in the Nazi project as a whole.

The contribution of the *Wehrmacht* or German army (in contrast to the SS) in perpetrating massacres in the USSR is addressed by Omer Bartov in “Savage War.” Bartov applies the term “war” to all aspects of Nazi political, social and demographic organization, since, in his view, these all were part of the racial assault against Jews and other inferior races or groups. Setting out from his analysis of the actions and crimes of the German

army in wartime, Bartov goes on to examine “clean” representations of the army, and the social and political contexts which contributed to that development. This myth of the “clean army” as an institution removed from the influence of Nazi racial and political propaganda was exploded, Bartov points out, by the evidence uncovered of the *Wehrmacht’s* atrocities in Poland from 1939, and the USSR from 1941, as well as in countries of occupation like Italy, Greece and Serbia, where no directive for a “war of annihilation” had been given.<sup>2</sup>

The constellation of forces, actions, frustrations and victories which produced a decision for a “Final Solution” in relation to the war against the USSR were seen to have exacted a heavy psychological toll on its perpetrators – evidence perhaps of even their own misgivings about that “solution.” However one judges this aspect of the actions of the *Einsatzkommandos*, one other conclusion emerged that is still more definitive and important: the experimental gas vans used by Ohlendorf’s group for the murder of women and children provided a new template of mass killing for the remainder of European Jewry.

## NOTES

- 1 See Peter Longerich, *Policy of Destruction: Nazi Anti-Jewish Policy and the Genesis of the “Final Solution,”* Occasional Paper (Washington, DC: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2001): 6. See also Peter Longerich, *The Unwritten Order: Hitler’s Role in the Final Solution* (Stroud: Tempus, 2001).
- 2 *War of Extermination: The German Military in World War II, 1941–1944*, eds. Hannes Heer and Klaus Naumann (New York: Berghahn Books, 1999). On Poland specifically, see Alexander B. Rossino, *Hitler Strikes Poland: Blitzkrieg, Ideology, and Atrocity* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2003).

## SUGGESTED READING

- Omer Bartov, *Eastern Front: 1941–45: German Troops and the Barbarisation of Warfare*. New York: Palgrave, 2001.
- Omer Bartov, Atina Grossman, and Mary Nolan (eds.), *Crimes of War: Guilt and Denial in the Twentieth Century*. New York: New Press, 2002: ix–xxiv.
- Jeffrey Diefendorf (ed.), *Lessons and Legacies VI: New Currents in Holocaust Research*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2004.
- Jürgen Förster, “Complicity of Entanglement? Wehrmacht, War, and Holocaust,” in Michael Berenbaum and Abraham J. Peck (eds.), *The Holocaust and History: The Known, the Unknown, the Disputed, and the Reexamined*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998: 266–83.
- Ronald Headland, *Messages of Murder: A Study of the Reports of the Einsatzgruppen of the Security Police and the Security Service, 1941–1943*. Rutherford,

- NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1992.
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- Yaacov Lozowick, "Rollbahn Mord: The Early Activities of Einsatzgruppe C," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 2 (1987): 221–41.
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- Christian Streit, *Keine Kameraden: die Wehrmacht und die sowjetischen Kriegsgefangenen 1941–1945*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1978.
- Gerhard L. Weinberg, *Germany, Hitler, and World War II: Essays in Modern German and World History*. Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

# The “Commissar Decree,” June 6, 1941

## Document No. 12 *Kommissarbefehl*

OKW Operations Staff/Section L (IV/Qu)  
No. 44822/41 TOP SECRET

Führer H.Q.6.6.41  
[Stamped] TOP SECRET  
By hand of Officer only

Further to the Führer decree of 14 May regarding the exercise of military jurisdiction in the area of ‘Barbarossa’ (OKW/Ops. St./ Sec. L IV/Qu No. 44718/41 TOP SECRET), the attached document ‘General instructions on the Treatment of Political Commissars’ is circulated herewith. You are requested to limit its distribution to the Commanders of Armies or *Luftflotten* (air force territorial commands) and to arrange for its further communication to lower commands by word of mouth.

*Chef, Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*  
by order Sgd. Warlimont

[Nuremberg Document NOKW-1076]

### Annexe to OKW/Ops. St./Sec. L IV/Qu No. 44822 Top Secret

#### Instructions on the Treatment of Political Commissars

In the struggle against Bolshevism, we must *not* assume that the enemy’s conduct will be based on principles of humanity or of international law. In particular hate-inspired, cruel and inhuman treatment of prisoners can be expected on the part of *all grades of political commissars*, who are the real leaders of resistance.

“The ‘Commissar Decree’, June 6, 1941. Helmut Krausnick, Hans Buchheim, Martin Broszat, and Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, *Anatomy of the SS State*, vol. 2, translated by Richard Barry, Marian Jackson, and Dorothy Long. New York: Walker and Company, 1968, pp. 532–4.

The attention of all units must be drawn to the following:

- 1 To show consideration to these elements during this struggle or to act in accordance with international rules of war is wrong and endangers both our own security and the rapid pacification of conquered territory.
- 2 Political Commissars have initiated barbaric, Asiatic methods of warfare. Consequently they will be dealt with *immediately* and with maximum severity. As a matter of principle they will be shot at once whether captured *during operations or otherwise showing resistance*.

The following regulations will apply:

### 1 *Theatre of Operations*

- i Political Commissars *who oppose our forces* will be treated in accordance with the decree on 'The exercise of Military Law in the area of Barbarossa'. This applies to every kind and rank of Commissar even if only suspected of resistance or sabotage or incitement to resist. In this connection see 'General Instructions on the Conduct of Troops in Russia'.
- ii Political commissars *serving with enemy forces* are recognizable by their distinctive insignia – a red star interwoven with a hammer and sickle on the sleeve band (see details in 'Armed Forces of the USSR', OKH Gen. StdH OQu IV. Section: Foreign Armies East (11) No. 100/41 of 15.1.41, annexe 9d). On capture they will be immediately separated from other prisoners on the field of battle. This is essential to prevent them from influencing in any way the other prisoners. Commissars will not be treated as soldiers. The protection afforded by international law to prisoners of war will not apply in their case. After they have been segregated they will be liquidated.
- iii *Political commissars* who are *neither guilty nor suspected of being guilty* of hostile actions will be initially exempt from the above measures. Only as our forces penetrate further into the country will it be possible to decide whether remaining officials should be allowed to stay where they are or whether they should be handed over to the *Sonderkommandos*, who should where possible carry out the investigation themselves. In reaching a verdict of 'guilty or not guilty', greater attention will be paid to the character and bearing of the commissar in question than to his offence, for which corroborative evidence may not be forthcoming.



- iv Under i and ii a short report (on a report form) on the case will be forwarded
  - a by divisional units to divisional headquarters (Intelligence Section)
  - b by units directly subordinate to a Corps, Army Group or Armoured Group to the Intelligence Section at Corps or higher headquarters.
- v None of the above measures must be allowed to interfere with operations. Systematic screening and cleansing operations by combat units will therefore not take place.

## 2 *In the zone of communications*

Commissars who are apprehended in the zone of communications for acting in a suspicious manner will be handed over to the *Einsatzgruppen* or *Einsatzkommandos* of the SD.

## 3 *Modification of General and Regimental Courts Martial*

General and regimental courts martial will not be responsible for carrying out the measures in Sections 1 and 2.

### OKH Distribution List

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## *Affidavit of SS Gruppenführer Otto Ohlendorf*

### **Affidavit**

I, Otto Ohlendorf, being first duly sworn, declare:

I was chief of the Security Service (SD), Amt III of the main office of the chief of the Security Police and the SD (RSHA), from 1939 to 1945. In June 1941 I was designated by Himmler to lead one of the special commitment groups [Einsatzgruppen], which were then being formed, to accompany the German armies in the Russian campaign. I was the chief of the Einsatzgruppe D. Chief of the Einsatzgruppe A was Stahlecker, department chief in the foreign office. Chief of Einsatzgruppe B was Nebe, chief of Amt V (KRIPO) of the Main Office of the chief of the security police and the SD (RSHA). Chief of Einsatzgruppe C was first Rasch (or Rasche) and then Thomas. Himmler stated that an important part of our task consisted of the extermination of Jews – women, men, and children – and of communist functionaries. I was informed of the attack on Russia about 4 weeks in advance.

According to an agreement with the armed forces high command and army high command, the special commitment detachments [Einsatzkommandos] within the army group or the army were assigned to certain army corps and divisions. The army designated the areas in which the special commitment detachments had to operate. All operational directives and orders for the carrying out of executions were given through the chief of the SIPO and the SD (RSHA) in Berlin. Regular courier service and radio communications existed between the Einsatzgruppen and the chief of the SIPO and the SD.

“Affidavit of SS Gruppenführer Otto Ohlendorf,” from *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of United States Chief of Counsel For Prosecution of Axis Criminality, vol. V, Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office: Washington, 1946, document 2620-PS, pp. 341–2.

The Einsatzgruppen and Einsatzkommandos were commanded by personnel of the Gestapo, the SD, or the criminal police. Additional men were detailed from the regular police [Ordnungspolizei] and the Waffen SS. Einsatzgruppe D consisted of approximately 400 to 500 men and had about 170 vehicles at its disposal.

When the Germany army invaded Russia, I was leader of the Einsatzgruppe D in the Southern sector, and in the course of the year, during which I was leader of the Einsatzgruppe D, it liquidated approximately 90,000 men, women, and children. The majority of those liquidated were Jews, but there were among them some communist functionaries too.

In the implementation of this extermination program the special commitment groups were subdivided into special commitment detachments, and the Einsatzkommandos into still smaller units, the so-called Special Purpose Detachments [Sonderkommandos] and Unit Detachments [Teilkommandos]. Usually, the smaller units were led by a member of the SD, the Gestapo, or the criminal police. The unit selected for this task would enter a village or city and order the prominent Jewish citizens to call together all Jews for the purpose of resettlement. They were requested to hand over their valuables to the leaders of the unit, and shortly before the execution to surrender their outer clothing. The men, women and children were led to a place of execution which in most cases was located next to a more deeply excavated antitank ditch. Then they were shot, kneeling or standing, and the corpses thrown into the ditch. I never permitted the shooting by individuals in the group D, but ordered that several of the men should shoot at the same time in order to avoid direct, personal responsibility. The leaders of the unit or especially designated persons, however, had to fire the last bullet against those victims which were not dead immediately. I learned from conversations with other group leaders that some of them demanded that the victims lie down flat on the ground to be shot through the nape of the neck. I did not approve of these methods.

In the spring of 1942 we received gas vehicles from the chief of the security police and the SD in Berlin. These vehicles were made available by Amt II of the RSHA. The man who was responsible for the cars of my Einsatzgruppe was Becher. We had received orders to use the cars for the killing of women and children. Whenever a unit had collected a sufficient number of victims, a car was sent for their liquidation. We also had these gas vehicles stationed in the neighborhood of the transient camps into which the victims were brought. The victims were told that they would be resettled and had to climb into the vehicles for that purpose. Then the doors were closed and the gas streamed in through the starting of the vehicles. The victims died within 10 to 15 minutes. The cars were then driven to the burial place, where the corpses were taken out and buried.

I have seen the report of Stahlecker [document L-180] concerning Einsatzgruppe A, in which Stahlecker asserts that his group killed 135,000 Jews and communists in the first 4 months of the program. I know Stahlecker personally, and I am of the opinion that the document is authentic.

I was shown the letter which Becher has written to Rauff, the head of the technical department of Amt II, in regard to the use of these gas vehicles. I know both these men personally, and am of the opinion that this letter is an authentic document.

[signed] Ohlendorf

Subscribed and sworn to before me this fifth day of November 1945 at Nurnberg, Germany.

[signed] Smith W. Brookhart  
Lt. Col. IGD

Ex O – Ohlendorf  
Nov. 5, 45  
R. R. Kerry, Reporter.

# *Operation Barbarossa as a War of Conquest and Annihilation*

JÜRGEN FÖRSTER

## I Plans and Preparations for Securing 'Living-space'

The 'dual face of the eastern campaign' – as a military operation and as an ideological war – is fully revealed only when, in addition to operational plans, acquisition of allies, and preparations for economic exploitation, the measures are outlined for the domination of the 'living-space' in the east and for the annihilation of 'Jewish Bolshevism'.

Reflections on securing, exploiting, and administering the conquered Soviet territories began in OKH and OKW in the summer of 1940, simultaneously with the first draft operations plans. Major-General Marcks in his study of 5 August 1940 proposed that initially a military administration should be set up in the occupied territories. Subsequently, administration of the Ukraine, the Baltic countries, and Belorussia would be transferred to 'native non-Bolshevik governments'.<sup>1</sup> Although on 31 July 1940 Hitler had mentioned that the Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Belorussia were to come to Germany, he had left open the question of their juridical attachment to the Reich. Lieutenant-Colonel (General Staff) von Loßberg in his 'operations study East' of 15 September 1940 similarly envisaged for the Ukraine the establishment of a 'government' in line with German requirements, in order to facilitate security for Army Group South in its extensive rear areas.<sup>2</sup> When the Army High Command on 5 December 1940 submitted its operations plan to Hitler, he envisaged the establishment of three new political entities on Soviet territory, this time described as 'buffer states'.<sup>3</sup> Four weeks later he told the top Wehrmacht leaders that as a result of the conquest of the 'Russian space' the Reich

Jürgen Förster, "Operation Barbarossa as a War of Conquest and Annihilation," in *Germany and the Second World War: The Attack on the Soviet Union, Vol. IV*, edited by Horst Boog et al., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998, pp. 481–90.

would become unassailable and capable 'of waging war even against continents'. That space contained 'immeasurable wealth'. Germany must dominate it economically and politically, but not incorporate it.<sup>4</sup>

In February 1941 Major-General Wagner, the senior Army General Staff officer in charge of 'war administration', issued instructions on military sovereignty, security, and administration in the rear areas.<sup>5</sup> These envisaged a military administration as a non-political instrument of the executive. This was not – as in western Europe in 1940 – planned as a close network, because, for one thing, the 'primitive conditions in Russia' did not seem to make that necessary and, for another, the prerequisites in terms of staff and material were lacking. On the principle that preservation of the army's mobility was the supreme law of warfare, security and ruthless utilization of the country were to have precedence initially over an orderly administration in the interest of the Soviet population. The main tasks, in Wagner's view, were: securing of food-supply bases, safeguarding supplies and reinforcements, seizure and utilization of important supply assets for the forces, and relieving supplies from the Reich, as well as the guarding, putting to work, and rearward transportation of prisoners of war. In addition, German forces would have to be quick in ensuring control of the 'assets of the country for the strengthening of the German war economy'.

The decisive planning phase began when on 3 March 1941 Hitler returned the OKW draft of 'Guidelines in special fields concerning Directive No. 21', instructing General of Artillery Jodl, chief of the Wehrmacht operations staff, to revise it:

The impending campaign is more than a clash of arms; it also entails a struggle between two ideologies. To conclude this war it is not enough, given the vastness of the space, to defeat the enemy's forces. The entire territory must be dissolved into states with their own governments. Any revolution of major dimensions creates facts which can no longer be expunged. The socialist idea... alone can form the domestic basis for the creation of new states and governments. The Jewish-Bolshevik intelligentsia, as the oppressor in the past, must be liquidated.... Our task is to set up, as soon as possible, and with a minimum of military force, socialist state structures which are dependent on us. These tasks are so complex that one cannot expect the army to perform them.<sup>6</sup>

A few days earlier Hitler had remarked that what mattered in the war against the Soviet Union was 'first of all to quickly finish off the Bolshevik leaders'.<sup>7</sup>

In unambiguously defining his target as 'Jewish Bolshevism' Hitler not only proceeded from his dogma, but he also saw the 'Jewish-Bolshevik

intelligentsia' as the germ-cell of any resistance to a long-term German occupation of large parts of the Soviet Union. Hitler's idea of a 'socialist ... republic without Stalin' was no doubt that of a Greater Germanic empire in Europe – as it emerged a few months later – an egalitarian 'people's community' under NSDAP rule. Hitler did not wish to see either Russian *émigrés* or Communists play any part in this. The disenfranchised and decimated Slav masses were to eke out the existence of helots.<sup>8</sup>

In accordance with Hitler's directives Jodl instructed his staff on how the draft for the organization of an administration in the occupied territories of the Soviet Union was to be amended: although the army needed a theatre of operations, this should be limited in depth as far as possible. Behind it no military administration was to be set up. Instead, Reich commissars would take over in large regions to be delineated on ethnic grounds; their duty would be the swift political development of new state structures. They would be assisted by 'Wehrmacht commanders' who, for their purely military matters, would come under the commander-in-chief of the army, and in all other matters under the Wehrmacht High Command. Security in the Reich commissariats would be provided by police forces, the bulk of which would come under the Reich commissar, while the rest would remain under the 'Reich leader of the SS and chief of the German police', who would also be represented by other bodies. For the phase of military administration in the theatre of operations Jodl did not envisage any military jurisdiction, either for punishable acts by the civilian population against the Wehrmacht or for disputes of the local inhabitants with each other. 'Military courts... were to concern themselves only with judicial matters within the army.' The question of whether SS authorities should be employed also in the army's theatre of operations, alongside the army's secret field police, was to be examined in consultation with Himmler, although Jodl believed that the 'need to render all Bolshevik bigwigs and commissars instantly harmless'<sup>9</sup> would be an argument in favour. Jodl allowed the Wehrmacht operations staff to make contact with the Army High Command about these questions, but regarded contacts with the ministry of the interior as unnecessary for the time being.

Hitler's directives and Jodl's instructions for the revision of the 'Guidelines in special fields concerning Directive No. 21' triggered the usual activities in the relevant departments of OKW and OKH. Military men and jurists set out to formulate the planned limitation of military jurisdiction in legally valid shape. Hitler's determination to conduct the war against the Soviet Union also as a struggle between two antagonistic ideologies did not encounter any resolute opposition in the Wehrmacht or in the army commands. The revised draft went to the high commands of the Wehrmacht services for comment as early as 5 March.<sup>10</sup> Without



having undergone any significant amendments, the 'Guidelines in special fields concerning Directive No. 21' were issued by the Wehrmacht chief of staff on 13 March.<sup>11</sup> The occupied territory was to be separated from the army's theatre of operations as soon as military operations permitted and 'dissolved' into states with their own governments. By analogy with the three Army Groups North, Centre, and South, the establishment of three Reich commissariats (Baltic, Belorussia, and Ukraine) was initially envisaged. The political executive would be in the hands of each Reich commissar, who would receive his directives from Hitler. The task of military security, both internally and against any external threat, was assigned to a Wehrmacht commander, who would also be responsible for making use of the country in order to supply the fighting forces.<sup>12</sup> The OKW directives assigned to Himmler 'special tasks on the Führer's instructions' in the army's theatre of operations. These tasks, which arose 'from the final struggle between two opposing political systems', were to be performed by SS agencies independently and on their own responsibility. This represented a limitation of the executive power of the commander-in-chief of the army in the theatre of operations. There is no record of the army command having objected to these arrangements. An official of the naval command, on the other hand, commented on the transfer of those 'special tasks' to the SS with the words: 'Now that means something!'<sup>13</sup> Objections on the part of the army might indeed have been expected after its unpleasant experiences with the SS in Poland; after all, in 1941 the Army High Command, in contrast to 1939, could no longer assume that it could control the activity of Himmler's agencies in the rear of the operational zone. It seems therefore that the army command viewed the SS as support for the security divisions, which it believed were too weak for the pacification of the conquered territories. As early as mid-January 1941 the operations staff had recommended the deputy chief of staff 'to take up the offer of police regiments made [at the time] by the police for the west',<sup>14</sup> so that as few army formations as possible were lost to the actual combat operations. The operations staff had moreover envisaged the strengthening of the security forces of Army Group South by the Romanian, Hungarian, and Slovak armies, even though neither Hungary nor Slovakia was then included in Hitler's plans as a potential ally.

While the guidelines of 13 March 1941 announced the issue of special orders relating to the troops' behaviour *vis-à-vis* the Soviet population and to the tasks of Wehrmacht courts, the armed forces high command kept silent about Hitler's demand, also made on 3 March, for the annihilation of the 'Jewish-Bolshevik intelligentsia'. That was to prove of significance later on.

A fortnight later Hitler repeated to the army the guidelines he had given the Wehrmacht command on the character of the war in the east.

After a conference on strategic matters with Colonel-General Halder and Colonel (General Staff) Heusinger, chief of the operations department, and after a report by the deputy chief of staff for supplies, he made clear the further objectives of Barbarossa: 'The intelligentsia put in by Stalin must be exterminated. The controlling machinery of the Russian empire must be smashed... Force must be used in its most brutal form. The ideological ties holding together the Russian people are not yet strong enough and the nation would break up once the functionaries are eliminated.'<sup>15</sup> This ideologically based assumption of Hitler's was not contradicted by the chief of the general staff, even though since the autumn of 1940 he had been aware of a contrary assessment by the German embassy in Moscow. Embassy Counsellor Gebhardt von Walther had pointed out that in a defensive war the Soviet government would not have to fear 'any kind of signs of disintegration among the population or in the army on social or national grounds'.<sup>16</sup> No doubt Halder, Wagner, and Heusinger believed that Hitler's planned policy of extermination of parts of the civilian population did not concern the army, since its participation was not explicitly required. At least Halder and Wagner then realized, since negotiations had already begun between the army and the SS on the use of Himmler's agencies in the theatre of operations, that special commandos of the security police and the SD would hunt down so-called 'enemies of the state and the Reich' in the occupied regions of the Soviet Union. They evidently accepted the need for radical measures by those units against real and putative opponents in the rear areas. Field Marshal von Brauchitsch, addressing the top commanders of the eastern army at Zossen on 27 March 1941, drew their attention to the special character of the war against the Soviet Union. On the treatment of the enemy he declared, anticipating Hitler's speech on that subject: 'The troops have to realize that this struggle is being waged by one race against another, and proceed with the necessary harshness.'<sup>17</sup>

The OKW guidelines of 13 March, together with its earlier reflections, provided the basis for the 'Special instructions on supplies, part C' by the Generalquartiermeister of 3 April 1941.<sup>18</sup> These also regulated the organization and security in the operations area behind the combat zone. Because of its size the 'operations area' was to be divided up. Within the *Armeegebiet* ('army area') the army group commanders were to exercise executive power and be responsible for securing and utilizing the country. The provost services employed on these tasks were to come under the 'commandant of the rearward army area'. Behind these areas, *Heeresgebiete* ('rearward landforces areas') were to be set up in the sectors of the army groups, where the 'commander of the rearward land forces area' would exercise military sovereignty in accordance with the directives of the commander-in-chief of the relevant army group. For the discharge

of their tasks the commanders in the rearward land forces areas each had assigned to them three mopping-up divisions, to each of which one motorized battalion of uniformed police was in turn subordinated. Field or local HQs were to be set up at important supply-bases and transport centres. In addition to field gendarmerie and secret field police, however, the commander was entitled, in case of need, to draw also on the *Waffen-SS* and uniformed police units employed in his area for the performance of security tasks, though these came under the command of the 'senior *SS* and police leader'. As for the treatment of the civilian population, the Army High Command had ruled that any active or passive resistance was to be quashed with rigorous punitive measures. 'Self-assured and ruthless behaviour towards anti-German elements will prove an effective preventive means.' As for prisoners of war, other ranks were to be regarded as valuable labour to be immediately employed by the troops for their purposes. 'Willing work' was to be rewarded by adequate nourishment and good care, while rigorous measures were to be taken against 'disobedience'. The 'leadership personnel (officers, political commissars, and NCOs)', on the other hand, were to be urgently separated out and transported to the organization based in Germany established by OKW. Beyond the statement that captured field kitchens were to be left to the POW detachments, nothing was said about the feeding of prisoners. However, the OKW guidelines on prisoners of war, dated 16 June 1941, foreshadowed a special order on the subject.<sup>19</sup> Until then the existing regulations would remain in force. These (i.e. army instruction 38/2 of 22 October 1939) ruled, in line with the stipulations of the Geneva Convention, that the rations of prisoners of war should be 'equivalent in quantity and quality to those of depot troops'. In the treatment of prisoners of war the troops, according to the directives, should proceed from the realization that Bolshevism was the mortal enemy of National Socialist Germany. In consequence, 'extreme reserve and greatest vigilance' were 'called for towards captured Red Army men. Insidious behaviour has to be expected from prisoners of war, especially those of Asiatic origin. Therefore: ruthless action at the least sign of disobedience, especially towards Bolshevik agitators. Total liquidation of any active or passive resistance!'<sup>20</sup> The OKW guidelines, however, also pointed out that the Geneva Convention of 27 July 1929 on the treatment of prisoners of war, to which the Soviet Union had not acceded, provided the basis of the treatment of prisoners of war. 'Leader personnel' (officers and NCOs) were to be separated out and transported back. Directives issued meanwhile on the treatment of political commissars had resulted, through quartermaster channels, in their removal from the list of categories to be transported to Germany. In the organization based in Germany the other ranks were to be sorted according to ethnic criteria. Removal of prisoners of war from the

operations area was envisaged as follows: from the collecting-points at division level the prisoners were to be taken to army prisoner collecting-points, and from there to transit camps ('Dulag') in the rearward land-force areas; these camps came under the local district commandant. Only back on Reich territory and in occupied Poland were OR camps ('Stalag') and officers' camps ('Oflag') set up; these came under the prisoner-of-war department of the general Wehrmacht department in OKW. Others were to be established in the Reich commissariats. The camps in Poland, Belorussia, the Ukraine, and the Baltic countries were to be kept filled 'to the utmost limit of capacity' before transports were sent to the Reich, as the camps on Reich territory were ready to take a total of only 790,000 prisoners. Accurate registration and reports on captured Red Army men to the Wehrmacht information centre, which maintained contact with the International Red Cross, were not considered necessary.

Given the strategic deployment of the German army and the assumption that the Red Army would stand and fight west of the Dnieper and Dvina, OKW and OKH were bound to expect large numbers of prisoners. It proved impossible, however, to arrive at any conclusion in precise figures. A supply exercise of the quartermaster-general of Army Group South in February–March 1941, which has been preserved, assumed the taking of 72,000 prisoners over the first four days of the attack, with a further 122,000 over the next six days. Problems of accommodation and food supplies were expected. In order to relieve its supply situation, Armoured Group I in the map exercise urgently requested the removal of 37,000 prisoners as food supplies at Polonnoe were down to one day's provision.<sup>21</sup> It should be remembered in this connection that the prisoners of war – like the Wehrmacht generally, in fact – were expected to live off the land. Overall responsibility for the economic utilization of the occupied territories was with the specially created 'economic staff East'.<sup>22</sup> Administration of the conquered Soviet territory, according to the OKW guidelines of 13 March 1941, was initially to be in the hands of three Reich commissars. Their authority, however, was circumscribed from the outset by the fact that military sovereignty was to be exercised by the Wehrmacht commander in question, with economic duties being discharged by the economic staff East. The Reich commissars were to receive their directives for the political administration from Hitler. On 2 April 1941 he therefore instructed Alfred Rosenberg, Reich leader of the NSDAP, to 'set up a central political office for eastern affairs'.<sup>23</sup> Rosenberg, unaware that approved plans by the armed forces high command were already in existence, demanded in an extensive memorandum responsibility not only for issuing binding instructions concerning occupation, but also concerning security for vital deliveries from the occupied territories to the Reich. In Rosenberg's opinion the 'political shattering of the great empire in the east' was to be along national or geographical lines:

- (a) Greater Russia with Moscow as its centre;
- (b) Belorussia with Minsk or Smolensk as its capital;
- (c) Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania;
- (d) the Ukraine and the Crimea with Kiev as its centre;
- (e) the Don region with Rostov as its capital;
- (f) the Caucasus region;
- (g) Russian Central Asia or Russian Turkestan.<sup>24</sup>

The 'Jewish-Bolshevik state administration' was to be totally annihilated, 'undesirable elements of the population' – these also included the Latvian intelligentsia and 'racially inferior' Lithuanians – were to be resettled in 'Muscovite Russia', while the Baltic was to become a 'German settlement region in the future, with the assimilation of the racially most suitable'.

A few days later Rosenberg made personal recommendations for the appointment of Reich commissars: Gauleiter Hinrich Lohse for the 'Baltic provinces and White Ruthenia [Belorussia]', State Secretary Backe for the 'Caucasus', Stabsleiter Arno Schickedanz for the 'Ukraine', Minister President Dr Dietrich Klagges for the 'Don and Volga region', and Gauleiter Erich Koch for 'greater Russia'. Finally, Rosenberg proposed himself as the head of an 'authoritarian' office, directly subordinated to Hitler and furnished with the necessary full powers, to be called the 'Protectorate-General for the occupied eastern territories'.<sup>25</sup> On 20 April Hitler appointed Rosenberg his 'Delegate for the central examination of questions concerning the east European space'. He was entitled to call on the closest co-operation of the supreme Reich authorities and to bring in their representatives for consultation. These were primarily the armed forces high command, the Four-year Plan authority, and the Reich ministry of economic affairs.<sup>26</sup>

On 2 May Rosenberg had himself briefed by OKW on the instructions already issued by the military command concerning the delimitation of the area of operations, the arrangements between army and SS, and the duties of the army commander attached to the Reich commissar.<sup>27</sup>

During the time left before the beginning of the war, Rosenberg was anxious to receive the powers he was striving for in order to get his ideas on the structure and tasks of the political administration in the east to prevail. Although special instructions for the Reich commissar for the Ukraine and for the Reich commissar Ostland ('Eastland'),<sup>28</sup> as well as general directives for all the Reich commissars, had been issued by the beginning of May 1941,<sup>29</sup> Hitler had not yet finally decided on the boundaries and administrative centres of the planned four Reich commissariats. The views of the different authorities – the Rosenberg office, the ministry of the interior, and the Reich leader of the SS – on the political reorganization of the occupied territories diverged considerably. No decisions had

yet been made on what parts of the Soviet Union were to be annexed by Germany, or administered by her, or given autonomous governments.<sup>30</sup> Although a 'Führer decree on the administration of the newly occupied eastern territories' was available in draft form, Hitler decided on 16 May to leave matters open for the time being and to have separate conversations with the competitors. For the time being, at any rate, he had agreed in principle that there should be four Reich commissariats. Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, together with Belorussia and the Smolensk administrative district, were to form the Baltenland (Baltic land); the Ukraine was to be enlarged by the Saratov district and the Crimea; the region of the Caucasus mountains with their foothills as far as the Volga was to form the Reich commissariat 'Caucasia', and the territory inhabited by Russians was to come under the Reich commissar for the 'administrative district Russia' (see map 3).

In Rosenberg's view the political objective of Operation Barbarossa was not to conduct a crusade against Bolshevism, but to 'pursue German military policy and make the German Reich secure'.<sup>31</sup> Organic state structures should be carved out of the USSR's territory and built up against Moscow, 'in order to free the German Reich of its eastern nightmare for centuries to come. . . . Reversing the Russian dynamism towards the east [is] a task [demanding] the strongest characters.' The second 'gigantic task' according to Rosenberg – though this was up to Göring – was to 'safeguard Germany's food supplies and war economy'. There was absolutely no obligation 'to feed the Russian people as well'. A few days earlier Otto Bräutigam, the deputy-chief designate of the political department of the future eastern ministry, had pleaded in an internal memorandum that the war against the Soviet Union should be 'a political campaign, not an economic war of pillage'. If the sympathies of the broad masses were to be won, the conquered territory 'as a whole must not be viewed as an object of exploitation'. Moreover, a differentiated treatment was necessary for the different peoples of the USSR.<sup>32</sup> But against the directives worked out by the economic control staff East (the 'Green Folder')<sup>33</sup> this programme stood no chance of realization.

## NOTES

- 1 *'Operationsentwurf Ost'*, 120.
- 2 Bezymenskij, *Sonderakte 'Barbarossa'* (1968), 311.
- 3 *KTB OKW* i. 205 (5 Dec. 1940).
- 4 *Ibid.* 257 (9 Jan. 1941).
- 5 OKH/GenStdH/GenQu/Qu i/IIa No. I/050/41 g. Kdos., Feb. 1941, app. 15 and supplements to the working directives for the military administration,



Map 3 Rosenberg's plan for a civil administration in the East, May 1941

Source: BA-MA RW 4/v. 759

Verhalten der Bevölkerung im allgemeinen [Behaviour of the population generally] (OKH/GenStdH/GenQu/Ib/Qu 2 No. 098/40, 3 Apr. 1940), BA-MA RH 3/v. 132, and OKH/GenStdH/GenQu/Qu 1/II No. I/059/41, 10 Feb. 1941, BA-MA RH 2/v. 427. See Müller, 'Kriegsrecht', 139 ff., Nos. 2, 3.

- 6 KTB OKW i. 341 (3 Mar. 1941). Hitler was not the only one to equate Jewry with Bolshevism. As early as the summer of 1918 Maj. Karl Freiherr von Bothmer, the Supreme Army Command's plenipotentiary in Moscow, identified the Bolsheviks with a 'gang of Jews' and wished 'to see a few hundred of those Jewish louts, next to one another... hanging on the Kremlin wall. If

- possible in such a way that death takes place slowly, in order to heighten the effect' (quoted according to Baumgart, *Ostpolitik*, 221 n. 45).
- 7 Minute by Inf. Gen. Thomas on his report to Göring, 26 Feb. 1941, g.Kdos., BA-MA RW 19/185.
  - 8 See *Hitler's Secret Book*, 44–5; Hitler, *Monologe*, 48, 54–5 (27 July and 8–11 Aug. 1941).
  - 9 KTB OKW i. 341 (3 Mar. 1941). See Förster, 'German Army'.
  - 10 OKW/WFSt/Abt. L (IV/Qu) No. 44125/41 g.Kdos. Chefs., Mar. 1941, BA-MA RW 4/v. 575. See Halder, *Diaries*, 820 (5 Mar. 1941).
  - 11 *Hitlers Weisungen*, No. 21a (not in trans.). See OKW/WFSt/Abt. L IV/Qu No. 254/41, 22 June 1941, PA, U.St.S., Rußland I.
  - 12 See also Hitler's decree on the appointment of Wehrmacht commanders in the occupied territories: *Ursachen und Folgen*, xvii, No. 3152a.
  - 13 Marginal gloss on the copy of the OKW directives intended for OKM, BA-MA RM 7/985.
  - 14 OKH/GenStdH/Op.Abt. (I/N) No. 025/40 g.Kdos. Chefs., 15 Jan. 1941, signed Gehlen, BA-MA RH 2/v. 1325.
  - 15 Halder, *Diaries*, 833 (17 Mar. 1941).
  - 16 Gibbons, 'Opposition', 337–8.
  - 17 Minute of 1. GenSt.Offz. des AOK 18 [Eighteenth Army first general-staff officer], BA-MA 18. Armee, 19601/2. See Halder, *Diaries*, 842 (27 Mar. 1941).
  - 18 OKH/GenStdH/GenQu/Abt. Kriegsverwaltung No. II/0315/41 g.Kdos. Chefs., 3 Apr. 1941, BA-MA RH 22/12; *Fall Barbarossa*, No. 91.
  - 19 OKW/AWA/Abt. Kriegsgefangene No. 26/41 g.Kdos., Chefs., 16 June 1941, BA-MA RW 4/v. 578.
  - 20 Ibid.
  - 21 OKH/GenStdH/GenQu/Qu 1/Abt. Kriegsverwaltung (Qu 4) No. I/050/41, VII. Angelegenheit, 4 Mar. 1941, BA-MA RH 3/v. 132.
  - 22 See sect. I.III.2(d) at n. 172 (Müller).
  - 23 Memorandum of 2 Apr. 1941 concerning USSR: *Ursachen und Folgen*, xvii, No. 3132b, pp. 116 ff. See Rich, *War Aims*, i. 218 ff.; *Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg*, v/I. 85ff.
  - 24 Memorandum of 2 Apr. 1941: *Ursachen und Folgen*, xvii, No. 3132b, pp. 116ff.
  - 25 Appendix to memorandum No. 2 of 7 Apr. 1941, *ibid.* 122–3.
  - 26 Letter from Hanns Lammers, Reich minister and head of the Reich chancellery, 21 Apr. 1941, BA-MA RW 4/v. 759.
  - 27 Abt. Landesverteidigung [Home-defence department], Besprechung beim Reichsleiter Rosenberg [Conference at Reich Leader Rosenberg's office], 1 May 1941, *ibid.*
  - 28 *IMT* xxvi. 567 ff., 573 ff.
  - 29 *Ursachen und Folgen*, xvii, Nos. 3132–3, pp. 126 ff.
  - 30 Letter from Lammers, 20 May 1941, with three draft decrees, BA-MA RW 4/v. 759. See also *DGFP* D. xii, Nos. 573, 591.
  - 31 Speech of 20 June 1941, *IMT* xxvi. 610 ff.
  - 32 Gibbons, 'Richtlinien', 259.
  - 33 See sect. I.III.2 (f) (Müller).



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*From Mass Murder to the  
“Final Solution”:  
The Shooting of Jewish Civilians  
during the First Months of the  
Eastern Campaign within the  
Context of the Nazi Jewish Genocide*

PETER LONGERICH

In June 1941, German SS and police *Spezialeinheiten* (special units) penetrated Soviet territory immediately to the rear of the attacking Wehrmacht forces in order to shoot hundreds of thousands of civilians considered to be either real or potential enemies (partly with the tacit approval of, and partly with the active support of the Wehrmacht).<sup>1</sup> The four *Einsatzgruppen* (a total of only about 3,000 men), who were recruited from various branches of the police force, the SD and the Waffen-SS, were divided into several *Einsatzkommandos* which operated independently. The victims of the mass murders committed by these units were mostly Jews. To 15 October 1941, *Einsatzgruppe A*<sup>2</sup> reported 118,430 executed Jews from the Baltic States and *Weißruthenien* (Belorussia) alone, while *Einsatzgruppe C* killed about 75,000 Jews<sup>3</sup> up until 20 October. On 14 November, *Einsatzgruppe B*<sup>4</sup> gave a total figure of 45,467 executions (reached on 31 October at the latest), while *Einsatzgruppe D*, on 12 December, reported 54,696 civilians killed, at least 90 percent of them also Jews.<sup>5</sup>

Peter Longerich, “From Mass Murder to the ‘Final Solution’. The Shooting of Jewish Civilians during the First Months of the Eastern Campaign within the Context of the Nazi Jewish Genocide,” from *From Peace to War: Germany, Soviet Russia and the World, 1939–1941*, edited by B. Wegner, Providence; Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1997, pp. 253–75.

In addition to these *Einsatzgruppen*, there were other SS and police units operating in the occupied Soviet territories. They mounted independent 'campaigns' in which they combed the Rear Zones. For example, *Einsatzkommandos* were set up in the *Generalgouvernement* by the East Prussian Gestapo and the Commanders of the *Sicherheitspolizei* and the SD. These *Einsatzkommandos* carried out so-called 'mopping-up operations' (*Säuberungen*) in the border areas, while the Senior SS and Police Officers (*Höhere SS- und Polizeiführer*) in the occupied Eastern territories conducted further mass shootings, using both their own police units and SS brigades (at the disposal of Himmler) that were assigned to them from time to time. The number of Jews shot by these units was certainly greater than 100,000, so that the terrible total for the first five months of the Eastern campaign can be estimated at around half a million murdered Jews.

This mass murder was continued during the winter of 1941/2. *Einsatzgruppe A* alone reported a further 229,052 shot Jews for the period 16 October 1941 to the end of January 1942.<sup>6</sup> At this time the shootings became part of the pan-European process called 'the final solution to the Jewish question'. Following a phase in which Jews were 'resettled' into ghettos, a second wave of killings occurred between August and November. A document from this time gives the figure of another 363,211 Jewish dead.<sup>7</sup>

## I

This is how we can express the awful mass murder in figures, a crime which was portrayed in detail in several court cases and dealt with by a multitude of historical works on the subject. Although the course and approximate extent of these terrible events are known, there are different interpretations concerning how the mass shootings committed during the first months of the Eastern campaign fit into the historical framework of the genocide of European Jewry. There are, for example, two sources of controversy which, in their different ways, pose the question of where the mass shootings should be 'placed', historically speaking. Firstly, there is the attempt at a complete portrayal of the Jewish genocide, written by American historian Arno Mayer;<sup>8</sup> and, secondly, there is the argument between two specialists who have written crucial scientific works on the subject – Helmut Krausnick, former director of the Institut für Zeitgeschichte, an expert who was called upon to give his opinion in many court cases involving the *Einsatzgruppen*, and Alfred Streim, long-time Head of the Ludwigsburg Zentralstelle für die Ermittlung von NS-Verbrechen (Centre for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes).

In his book Mayer attempts to grasp the Jewish genocide, which he calls 'Judeocide', as an integral part of a complex crisis extending across the entire epoch from 1914 to 1945. He sees three great joint aims within the Nazi movement – the conquest of *Lebensraum*, the combatting of Bolshevism, and anti-Semitism. At first the German attack on the Soviet Union was primarily aimed at conquering Soviet territory and destroying the Communist system. When Mayer describes the German Eastern campaign as a 'crusade' against 'Judeo-Bolshevism', he means to say that the Jews were treated as part of the Bolshevik system first of all – in other words, the Germans had no intention of annihilating Soviet Jewry in the summer of 1941. On the contrary, they had originally intended to resettle the European Jews, including the Soviet Jews, in a kind of reservation between the River Volga and the Ural Mountains. There had, of course, been horrific pogroms in the occupied Soviet territories immediately following the arrival of German troops, but these had been committed by local militias and not by the Wehrmacht or the *Einsatzgruppen*. During the first four or five weeks of Operation 'Barbarossa', there were no systematic massacres of Jews led by the SS. Not until the autumn and winter, in view of the worsening military situation, did the German method of warfare become radicalised, and did the orders change to allow the systematic mass murder of Soviet Jews.<sup>9</sup> Mayer places the decision also to murder the other Jews at a later date, certainly after the so-called 'Wannsee Conference'.<sup>10</sup>

Mayer makes clear his aim in writing this book in his 'prologue' – the author thinks the survivors' memories, valuable in themselves, have turned into a cult with sectarian tendencies, possessing its own ceremonies, holidays, shrines, memorials, and places of pilgrimage. However important these things are, in order to keep the memories alive, they have nonetheless played a large part in taking the Jewish catastrophe out of its historical context. Using the concept of the 'Holocaust', a term with religious connotations, a collective memory is presented which makes it increasingly difficult to form a critical, logical opinion of the Jewish catastrophe. The fate of the Jews under the Nazis is, in this way, seen as a unique event, removed from any kind of historical analysis. Mayer attempts to combat this process by historicising the mass murder of the Jews.

As soon as the English edition came on to the market, Mayer's book received extremely critical (if not to say incensed) reviews. On the one hand, certain statements made by Mayer, such as his portrayal of the pogroms, and his view that the *Einsatzgruppen* did not shoot Jews during the initial phase of the Eastern campaign, were rejected outright. Critics were particularly quick to point out that Mayer fails to provide evidence for his provocative theories by way of footnotes. On the other hand, his attempt at historicisation, and the analysis of the main goals of Nazi

policy upon which this is based, was seen as false and misleading. The critics accused him of bending the facts to suit his ideology.<sup>11</sup>

While the above controversy involves fundamental questions concerning a historical understanding of the Holocaust, the Krausnick-Streim debate seems, at first glance, to be about a fairly minor aspect. The two experts deal with the following question:<sup>12</sup> at what point were the commanders of the *Einsatzgruppen* and *Einsatzkommandos* informed of their mission to wipe out all Soviet Jews? While Krausnick, as a historian and an expert, has always maintained that such a general order was given shortly before the Russian campaign began, Streim questions this thesis, which has been accepted both in court judgements<sup>13</sup> and in historical literature.<sup>14</sup> According to Streim, this general order was not given until later, for example, in July or August 1941. Streim does not, however, dispute the fact that there had already been a general plan to annihilate all Soviet Jews at the start of the campaign.

In this chapter, then, the connection between mass shootings and the 'final solution', dealt with in both controversies, will be subjected to further scrutiny. To this end, the source material on the activities of the *Einsatzgruppen* will be examined for statements offering hints concerning their mission. Then, on the basis of this information, we will attempt to place the mass shootings in a historical context.

## II

During the so-called 'Einsatzgruppe trial',<sup>15</sup> the majority of the commanders, in their statements, kept to the line given by the Commander of Einsatzgruppe D, Ohlendorf, during the War Crimes Trial in Nuremberg.<sup>16</sup> According to this statement, a Führerbefehl (Führer order) ordering the annihilation of all Soviet Jews was presented to the commanders of the Einsatzkommandos just before the beginning of the Eastern campaign, in the Pretzsch assembly area, by the Chief of Department I (Amtschef I) of the Reich Security Central Office (Reichssicherheitshauptamt), Streckenbach. In addition, three of the accused mentioned that they had had a meeting with Heydrich in the Reichssicherheitshauptamt in Berlin (there is written evidence of such a meeting's having taken place on 17 June). In the course of this meeting Heydrich explained the coming mission in general terms. Only the Commander of *Einsatzkommando* (EK) 5, Erwin Schulz, departed from this line, saying that he had not received the general order to murder the Jews until August 1941.<sup>17</sup>

After Streckenbach, who was assumed killed in action, returned from Soviet captivity in 1955 and vehemently denied having issued the above order, the commanders of the *Einsatzkommandos* (some of whom, in the

meantime, had been pardoned and released from prison after a few years) revised their statements. They either named Heydrich and/or Müller, rather than Streckenbach, as the issuer of the order<sup>18</sup> (also varying in their memory of the exact date and place), or else they changed over to Schulz's line,<sup>19</sup> giving July/August as the time when they received the order. Only one commander kept to the Streckenbach version.<sup>20</sup>

After carefully collating the various statements, Streim advanced the theory that Ohlendorf had persuaded the commanders to adopt a single line of defence at Nuremberg, and thus caused them to perjure themselves in order to present their *Einsatzkommandos'* crimes as actions committed upon higher orders from the beginning. Following Streckenbach's unexpected reappearance, this house of cards was bound to collapse, a fact which might explain some of the many variations in the details (i.e. place, person, exact date). Krausnick, on the other hand, argued against Streim's theory and in favour of his own version in later publications.

On closer examination of the various statements and the arguments contributed by both Streim and Krausnick, we find that the source material is at the same time highly complicated and contradictory, particularly in view of the fact that most of those questioned made differing statements on different occasions, and if we also concede that gaps in the memory are unavoidable. Of course, another reason is that the *Einsatzgruppe* members wanted to clear their own names or those of their 'comrades'. Interpretation of the evidence is further complicated when we consider that both the defence strategy that Streim claims to have discovered in the statements about the earlier issuing of the order, and the statement that the order was not given until later, can equally be viewed as an attempt to protect the accused.<sup>21</sup>

We cannot hope to cover in detail all statements and all aspects of interpretation in this essay. It is, however, clear that neither Streim nor Krausnick succeeds in irrefutably harmonising all the details given by the SS commanders with their portrayal of events. Streim tries to disarm those statements which point to the order's having been given prior to 22 June (thus undermining his theory) in the following way: three times he describes the earlier annihilation order as a 'preliminary' or 'preparatory order',<sup>22</sup> which was to be followed by the real order to murder all Jews, and five times he points out that there may have been confusion or a tactical intent on the part of the *Einsatzkommando* commanders.<sup>23</sup>

But Krausnick is also unable to refute completely the arguments pointing towards the order's having been given in July or August. Although in one case (Bradfish), he can present a witness statement<sup>24</sup> contradicting this commander, in a further case (Herrman), he refers to a



different questioning<sup>25</sup> to that mentioned in Streim's book, whereas in three other cases (Schulz, Noßke, Ehrlinger), he does not deal with his opponent's arguments in detail but rather reiterates the opinion he formed in the first case.

Without going into too much detail about this complicated discussion between experts, it is nonetheless obvious that evidence and counter-evidence can be found for both sides, and that a clear picture of the actual events can scarcely be gleaned from the statements made by those involved in them. Thus we will use two other groups of sources as back-up, i.e. the orders governing the activities of the *Einsatzgruppen*, and also the *Einsatzgruppen* reports, which were collated in the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* and sent on from there as a dossier entitled *Ereignismeldungen UdSSR* ('After Action Reports USSR').

### III

The mission of the *Einsatzgruppen* can only be grasped if it is seen in the context of the general situation at the beginning of the Russian campaign. The 'conquest of *Lebensraum*' and the annihilation of 'Judeo-Bolshevism' were the two main strategic goals when the German leadership began the Russian campaign in the summer of 1941.<sup>26</sup> The resulting methods of warfare and rule by occupation were highly ideologised and extremely brutal, inhumane to a hitherto unknown degree. It seems that the attack on the Soviet Union combined many previously Utopian Nazi aims in racial, military-economical, and political terms, and realised them in the most radical manner possible – the liquidation of European Jewry, the destruction of Communism, the subjection of the Slav peoples, the creation of *Lebensraum* for German colonists, and the procurement of the necessary foodstuffs and raw materials to be able to continue this war and prepare for new conflicts.

In the following essay we will look once again at the goal of 'annihilation', based on the Nazi concept of race, using the central directives issued by the German Reich's political and military leadership prior to 22 June 1941.<sup>27</sup>

In March 1941 Hitler had made it clear to the Wehrmacht commanders what basic line was to be taken. This can be proved by referring to the directives issued to the Head of Wehrmacht High Command (*Chef des OKW*)<sup>28</sup> at the beginning of March, as well as to a speech Hitler made to his generals at the end of the month. The subject of these documents was the coming final struggle between two diametrically opposed world views, and the completely new dimension this gave to the way this war was to be fought, making it different from all other previous conflicts.

How these tasks were militarily realised can be illustrated by four basic orders:

- (a) In the 'Guidelines for the Barbarossa Special Areas' (*Richtlinien auf Sondergebieten Barbarossa*) issued by *Chef OKW* on 13 March (after the abovementioned Hitler directive on the same subject issued at the beginning of March), Himmler was given 'special tasks in preparing political administration on behalf of the Führer', connected with 'the final struggle between two opposing political systems', which he was to carry out 'independently' and 'on his own authority'.<sup>29</sup>
- (b) A draft of an order, which was drawn up by the *Generalquartiermeister des Heeres*, after negotiations with Heydrich, was presented to Army High Command (OKH) on 26 March, and was finally promulgated on 28 April 1941,<sup>30</sup> informed the Wehrmacht elements that special *Einsatzkommandos* of the *Sicherheitspolizei* were to operate behind the front independently and 'on their own authority', tasked in particular with the 'location and destruction of anti-state and anti-Reich tendencies' inside the army's Rear Zones.
- (c) By means of the 'Erlaß über die Ausübung der Krieggerichtsbarkeit im Gebiet Barbarossa und über besondere Maßnahmen der Truppen'<sup>31</sup> ('Decree concerning the Exercise of Military Jurisdiction in the Barbarossa Area and Special Military Measures'), dated 13 May and personally signed by Hitler, crimes committed by Soviet civilians were expressly taken out of German military jurisdiction. Instead, the decision whether or not to shoot suspects was left in the hands of Wehrmacht officers. In addition to this, the obligation to prosecute, in the case of crimes committed by German soldiers against enemy civilians, was suspended.
- (d) The *Kommissarbefehl*,<sup>32</sup> issued by the OKW in an order dated 6 June 1941, envisaged the shooting of all Soviet army commissars purely because of their function. Apart from this, civilian commissars were also to be executed if they showed any kind of animosity whatsoever.

For the SS and police forces there were also orders governing the activities of the special *Einsatzgruppen*, for example the telegram by Heydrich dated 29 June regarding 'self-cleansing campaigns' (*Selbstreinigungskaktionen*),<sup>33</sup> as well as his mission order<sup>34</sup> to the *Höhere SS- und Polizeiführer* dated 2 July. The latter contains a detailed list of those enemies who were to be executed by the *Einsatzgruppen*: 'Comintern functionaries (and Communist professional politicians generally); higher, middle and (radical) lower functionaries of Party central, regional, and local committees; People's Commissars; Jews in party and state positions; other radical elements (saboteurs, propagandists, snipers, attempted political murderers, agitators, etc.).'

As well as these executions, Heydrich's order (and also his telegram of 29 July) envisaged that the local population was to be persuaded to start pogroms during the period of military occupation. As he put it, 'the attempts at self-cleansing on the part of anti-Communist or anti-Semitic elements in the areas to be occupied are not to be hindered. On the contrary, they are to be encouraged, albeit without leaving traces, so that these local 'vigilantes' cannot say later that they were given orders or (offered) political concessions'. Furthermore, Heydrich made it clear that 'for obvious reasons, such actions are only possible during the initial period of military occupation'.

In the light of the abovementioned Hitler directives and the Wehrmacht guidelines, Heydrich's order must be seen as giving the *Einsatzgruppen* *carte blanche* to commit mass murder among the Jewish civilian population. It would be totally missing the point to say that this order was merely an instruction to shoot certain Jews who had distinguished themselves under the Soviet regime (i.e. in 'party and state positions'). The very mention of planned pogroms (which, once started, were intended to get out of control), makes such a limited aim seem impossible.<sup>35</sup>

#### IV

The aim expressed in the order, i.e. the mass murder of the Jewish population as a whole, becomes crystal-clear when we include in our interpretation the fact that this directive was unanimously accepted by the *Einsatzgruppen* themselves, as can be seen from the after-action reports of the following days and weeks:

- (a) The *Einsatzgruppen* reports on the so-called 'self-cleansing tendencies' are the most obvious signs that Heydrich's plan to have the Germans direct the pogroms was already being put into effect. Only a few days after the advance into Soviet territory, the *Einsatzkommandos* report on pogroms' having been provoked by them, for example by EK 1b in its report dated 30 June ('Lithuanian partisan groups have already shot several thousand Jews in the last three days'), EK 7a's report of 1 July ('Self-cleansing tendencies among anti-Communist and anti-Semitic elements are being encouraged'), and by EK 9 in an entry for 5 July ('pogroms have been started').<sup>36</sup> Finally, also on 5 July, *Einsatzgruppe A* reported the creation of a local auxiliary police force and also two 'further independent groups to carry out pogroms',<sup>37</sup> the result being as follows: 'All synagogues destroyed – 400 Jews liquidated up to now.'

- (b) At the same time we can also find proof, in the *Einsatzkommando* reports,<sup>38</sup> that the order to execute ‘Jews in party and state positions’ was being carried out. These reports make it clear that the above term had deliberately been kept vague so that it could be applied to a completely arbitrarily chosen Jewish upper echelon if necessary. One example will emphasise how absurd it would be to imagine that the *Einsatzkommandos* did any research into the social position or function of their victims. This is a report<sup>39</sup> made by EK 4b about the murder of ‘members of the Jewish intelligentsia’ in Vinnica. At first, the report says, ‘the search for leading Jews had led to an unsatisfactory result’. Because of this, EK 4b’s commander adopted a new method.

He sent for the town’s chief rabbi and gave him the task of collecting together all educated Jews within twenty-four hours, saying they were needed for certain registration work. Because this first round-up did not satisfy the commander in terms of numbers, those educated Jews who did appear were sent away, each with instructions to collect up more of his fellows and to bring them along the next day. This was repeated a third time, with the result that almost all of the Jewish intelligentsia was caught and liquidated in this way.

But it was the disproportionately high numbers of Jewish victims above all that showed that the *Einsatzgruppen* had seen the term ‘other radical elements’ (including the fateful ‘etc.’ following the list of examples) as giving them *carte blanche* to act against the Jews in particular, using excuses which are almost interchangeable: ‘reprisals’, ‘mopping-up’, the prevention of ‘looting’, the putting down of so-called ‘riots’ or the punishment of some kind of unruly behaviour. It is obvious from the reports that the *Einsatzkommandos* were fully aware of the true implications of the term ‘other radical elements’, which went beyond the written orders.

There are many examples of the arbitrariness<sup>40</sup> with which the *Einsatzgruppen* gave primary reasons for the shootings. For instance, in a report made by *Einsatzgruppe A* at the beginning of June 1941, ‘100 Jews were shot by a joint *Sicherheitspolizei-SD Einsatzgruppe*’ because a German prisoner of war was allegedly beaten to death by ‘a Jew from Riga’. The ‘Special Tasks’ *Einsatzkommando* (EK ‘z.b.V.’), in a progress report dated mid-August, stated the following: ‘A militiaman was shot in an ambush near Pinsk. In retaliation for this act 4,500 Jews were liquidated.’ On the same day *Einsatzgruppe C* reported from the village of Januszpol that ‘the Jewish women especially had behaved in a cheeky and insulting manner’, ‘tearing

the clothing from their own bodies and those of their children'. Following this, 'as a temporary reprisal measure... in the first instance fifteen male Jews were shot by the *Einsatzkommando*, which did not arrive until law and order had been restored. Further reprisals are to follow'.<sup>41</sup>

Often the various motives or enemy categories were combined, for example in a report by *Einsatzgruppe B* dated 24 July, in which 381 shot Jews were listed as 'Jewish activists, functionaries, and looters',<sup>42</sup> or in one by *Einsatzgruppe C*, a few days later in Zhitomir, who had 'shot a total of around 400 Jews, Communists and NKVD informants'. In some cases there was no attempt to give reasons, and the reports simply state the figures of those liquidated.

- (c) Whereas the motives given for the shootings were interchangeable, the reports, on the other hand, show that the *Einsatzgruppen* went about their business in a planned way.

The commander of *Einsatzgruppe B*, for instance, noted the following in a report on a series of mass shootings<sup>43</sup> dated 13 July: 'The executions are continuing at the same rate.' In the same report we read that, in the towns of Grodno and Lida, 'only 96 Jews have been executed in the first few days. I have ordered that greater efforts must be made'. 'The work of all *Einsatzkommandos* has run smoothly. The liquidations in particular have become routine, and are now taking place daily on a large scale. Thus the necessary [!] liquidations will be carried out at all costs.' In a report by *Einsatzgruppe C*, from the beginning of August, comes this statement: 'Finally, planned reprisals against looters and Jews are continuing.'

Proof positive that, from the beginning, the shootings were not limited to Jews in 'party and state positions', but rather that the *Einsatzgruppen* were given authority to go beyond the letter of the orders (as was implied in the expression 'other radical elements') can be found in the wording of one progress report made by EK 8 on 9 July 1941: 'Liquidation of state and party functionaries has begun. Regarding Jews, we have done likewise according to the orders.'

Although the *Einsatzgruppen* reports undoubtedly portray the scene of a comprehensive mass murder that began in the first few days of the campaign, women and children were mostly spared from the shootings during the initial weeks of the war. Thus Krausnick's version of a general annihilation order only seems plausible if one assumes that the *Einsatzgruppe* commanders had deliberately held back during this period.<sup>44</sup>

Strong objections can also be raised against a further argument used by Krausnick to support his theory, i.e. the so-called 'mopping-up operations', which were carried out by East Prussian Gestapo and SD forces

(*Einsatzkommando Tilsit*) in a strip of territory just inside the border with Lithuania from the end of June 1941. While it is true that a large number of people, mostly Jews, were killed during these ‘mopping-up operations’ (a total of 3,302 people up to 18 July 1941, according to the after-action reports),<sup>45</sup> including women and children, these shootings did not, however, take place to the same extent and with such systematic murderous intent as can be seen during the later ‘final solution’. Krausnick then proceeds to support his argument with the findings of two courts, according to which the commander of *Einsatzgruppe A*, Stahlecker, shortly before the campaign was to take place, informed the responsible Stapo chief that all Jews, including women and children, were to be killed. Of course, this is based upon a witness statement,<sup>46</sup> which leads us back to the problem of sources mentioned at the start of this essay. However, even leaving this objection aside, Krausnick’s attempted link between this alleged order to the commander of *Einsatzkommando Tilsit* and the original order issued to all EK commanders is by no means solid. It could easily be that the orders issued for the ‘mopping-up operations’ in the border zone were phrased more directly than other orders.

As further proof of the existence of an earlier general order Krausnick presents a memorandum<sup>47</sup> dated 6 August 1941, which was written by the commander of *Einsatzgruppe A*, Stahlecker, and which only came to light a few years ago. In this letter he criticises guidelines drawn up by *Reichskommissar* Lohse for the treatment of Jews in his area as too lenient, since they fail to consider the ‘possibility of dealing with the Jewish question in a radical manner for the first time’ in the East. In addition, Stahlecker mentions ‘basic orders, issued by higher authority to the *Sicherheitspolizei*, which must not be referred to in writing’. However, even this statement does not conclusively prove the theory of an order to murder all Jews before 22 June 1941, particularly in view of the fact that Stahlecker, as we will see later,<sup>48</sup> admitted in October 1941 that it was clear, from the first mass shootings in Lithuania and Latvia (as early as July), that it was impossible to ‘completely wipe out’ the Jews at that time.

The methods used by the *Einsatzgruppen* altered somewhat at the end of July and the beginning of August 1941: Whereas the first after-action reports tell of a quickly stabilising, almost routine process, later ones increasingly hint at difficulties and hurdles. On the other hand, the shootings were now systematically extended to include women and children.

The abovementioned difficulties can be traced back to two root causes. On the one hand, it became clear, as Heydrich had prophesied in his order of 2 July, that, four to six weeks after the invasion, the ‘self-cleansing’ process could no longer be continued as planned. For instance, *Einsatzgruppe A* reported from Kaunas (Kovno) on 11 July that, while ‘a total of 7,800 Jews have been wiped out, partly owing to a pogrom, partly

through shootings carried out by Lithuanian *Einsatzkommandos*...’,<sup>49</sup> ‘further mass shootings are no longer possible’. The same *Einsatzgruppe* encountered similar problems in the neighbouring country: ‘Self-cleansing tendencies began only after some hesitation in Latvia... Jewish temerity made it necessary to increase the level of self-cleansing [!], with the result that all towns and cities in Latvia began to engage in pogroms, the destruction of synagogues and the liquidation of Jews and Communists... self-cleansing is continuing in Latvia at this time’.

The further the *Einsatzgruppen* penetrated through the areas that were not incorporated into the Soviet Union until 1939, and advanced into the Soviet heartland, the less opportunity they found in general (apart from in the Ukraine) to organise ‘self-cleansing’. *Einsatzgruppe B*, for example, reported the following from the Belorussian Republic at the beginning of August: ‘In addition, as we found in Minsk and the former Polish areas, there is no real anti-Semitism here. It is true that the population feels hate and fury towards the Jews and approves of the German actions... , however, it is incapable of taking the initiative into its own hands in dealing with the Jews.’ There were many other similar reports concerning the tailing-off of willingness to engage in pogroms.

The second difficulty encountered by the *Einsatzgruppen* was the mass exodus of the Jews. ‘Of the Jews originally living here, 70 percent to 90 percent have fled’, according to one report made by *Einsatzgruppe C* on 11 September, while a report by *Einsatzgruppe B* on September 4 states that, owing to the high numbers of Jews that had fled, it was ‘scarcely possible to maintain the level of liquidations, simply because there are no longer enough Jews’.<sup>50</sup>

It is quite clear from the *Einsatzgruppen* reports, however, that their activities received a new impetus at around the same time as these difficulties were being reported, i.e. in August. The executions now systematically included women and children, and the *Einsatzgruppen* began to murder all Jews found in the individual towns and villages. Apart from the general situation *vis-à-vis* the Jews, which was clearly tending towards a European ‘final solution’, we can see this step as a reaction to the decreasing willingness of local populations to engage in pogroms and the exodus, with the result that the *Einsatzgruppen*, who were used to operating in a certain manner and to maintaining a certain ‘level’ of liquidations, extended the categories of victims they executed.

The so-called *Jäger-Bericht* of 1 December 1941, i.e. the commander of EK 3’s ‘end of year list’ of executions carried out by this *Einsatzkommando*, clearly shows that the number of Jewish women shot, which had increased markedly since the beginning of August, leapt from 9 August onwards, at times even overtaking the number of men murdered, while the shooting of children was reported for the first time. In some cases the

*Einsatzkommando* had returned to villages and towns already ‘cleansed’ of Jewish men in order to kill the women and children also.<sup>51</sup> The number of Jewish women executed<sup>52</sup> also increased in leaps and bounds in other reports made at about the same time. In a report dated 22 August, *Einsatzgruppe C* stated that the plan was ‘to herd together all the Jews in some villages, wipe them out, and then do the same to the villages themselves’.

The *Einsatzgruppen* gradually began to claim that they had to render single towns, then areas, and finally the whole mission area ‘free of Jews’ (*judenfrei*). This term (and the claim to have ‘cleansed’ certain regions of Jews) starts to appear more and more often in reports, as in that of EK 5 dated 17 September<sup>53</sup> (‘Therefore this area . . . is pretty much cleared’), of EK 3 dated 19 September (referring to a total of five Lithuanian parishes), as well as in a report by *Einsatzgruppe D* of 20 September, while *Einsatzgruppe C*, a few days later, speaks of some villages’ having been ‘completely cleansed’. At the same time a new motive for the shootings appears in the *Einsatzgruppe* reports – the danger of epidemics<sup>54</sup> was included in the list of threats emanating from the Jews, and presented as the reason for the mass executions.

The fact that, in August and September, the *Einsatzgruppen* began shooting the Jewish population in general does not necessarily disprove Krausnick’s assumption of a universal order prior to 22 June 1941. It is conceivable that the *Einsatzkommando* and *Einsatzgruppe* commanders received a kind of timetable, so that they only gradually informed their men of the true extent of the planned murder. But this theory can also be disproved by taking into consideration those reports in which the *Einsatzgruppe* commanders spoke frankly about the sense and the goal of their activities.

Thus, in the after-action reports for 23 July, *Einsatzgruppe B*<sup>55</sup> is quoted as follows: ‘In this area it seems unfeasible to solve the Jewish problem during the war, as this can only be done by means of resettlement, owing to the immense number of Jews.’ In the comprehensive report<sup>56</sup> written by the commander of *Einsatzgruppe A* on 15 October 1941 (the so-called Stahlecker report) it says, on the one hand, that ‘mopping-up operations as per basic orders’ had had ‘the aim of wiping out the Jews to the greatest possible extent’. However, on the other hand, it had become clear ‘after the initial mass executions in Lithuania and Latvia were carried out that a complete liquidation of the Jews is not feasible, at least not at the moment’. Stahlecker explained that most of the crafts in Lithuania and Latvia were in Jewish hands, some being exclusively carried out by Jews.

At the beginning of September *Einsatzgruppe C* had also pointed out<sup>57</sup> that it was almost impossible to exclude the Jews from trade in the



Ukraine, as they had supplied 95 percent of all traders before the war. Small industries also continued to rely on Jews. In an 'experience report'<sup>58</sup> by EK 5 concerning the previous developments in the Eastern Ukraine, dated 17 September, we read the following on the policy to be adopted towards the Jews:

Even if Jewry was to be completely done away with, the source of political danger would still not be removed. Bolshevism depends upon Jews, Russians, Georgians, Armenians, Poles, Latvians, Ukrainians; the Bolshevik *apparatus* is by no means identical with the Jewish population. Because of this fact it would be contrary to the aim of political security if we were to neglect the main task of destroying the Communist system in favour of the easier job of destroying the Jews. In addition, concentrating on the Bolshevik functionary also robs the Jews of their most capable men so that the solution of the Jewish problem increasingly turns into a purely organisational problem.

Apart from this, 'in the Western and Central Ukraine... Jewry is almost identical with the workers, artisans, and tradesmen in the towns. Were we to dispense with Jewish labour completely, it would become almost impossible to rebuild Ukrainian industry and administrative centres in the towns'. Thus there was only one alternative, one which the German administration in the *Generalgouvernement* had 'failed to grasp for a long period': 'Solution of the Jewish question by means of putting the Jews to work on a large scale. This would lead to a gradual liquidation of Jewry, a process suited to the economic situation in the country.'

A further factor is touched upon by a report<sup>59</sup> from EK 6 dated 12 September: 'Seventy to ninety per cent of the Jewish population, in some cases 100 percent', had fled. This could, however, 'be seen as an indirect success for the *Sicherheitspolizei*, since the free transport of hundreds of thousands of Jews (mostly across the Urals, according to reports) represents a major contribution to the solution of the Jewish question in Europe'.

These statements seem to me to contain the main arguments against a universal order to annihilate all Soviet Jews, since we can see that, well into September 1941, in spite of the mass shootings going on at the same time, there were still alternative ideas concerning the 'final solution'.

## V

Thus we arrive at the following scenario, in answer to the question of how the orders were issued to the *Einsatzgruppen*: the commanders received, before 22 June, a kind of *carte blanche* to murder an unlimited number of

Jews in the conquered areas, at first mostly males. In about August 1941, the Germans began systematically to extend the mass shootings so as to include the whole Jewish population, and thus increasingly large areas were 'freed of Jews' during September. The reasons for this can be seen in the fact that this murderous work caused the *Einsatzgruppen* to lose their inhibitions, and also in the fact that they had to adopt a new policy, in view of the population's decreasing willingness to start pogroms and the mass flight of the Jews. But there was also the general tightening-up of the German 'Jewish policy', which I will deal with shortly. However, the idea of effecting a complete 'final solution' by means of shootings had not won the upper hand even as late as September 1941. The statements made by some of those involved that they had received an order to wipe out all Soviet Jews before 22 June 1941 is, on the other hand, an attempt on their part to shorten the time-scale after the event. Nevertheless this statement is correct, in so far as the orders were deliberately kept vague at the beginning of the campaign, thus encouraging the tendency towards mass murder without exceptions.

If we now turn our attention to the development of the 'Jewish question' outside the Soviet Union, there are clear parallels between the mass shootings described above and the so-called 'Wehrmacht reprisals' in Serbia.<sup>60</sup> In this case, the German military administration, following the attack upon the Soviet Union, began to demand that the Jewish communities supply hostages. From the beginning, Jews were among the hostages liquidated as reprisals for attacks by Communist insurgents from June 1941 onwards. At the beginning of October, the military administration started to shoot 100 hostages, mostly interned male Jews, for each German soldier killed. Even the Wehrmacht command in Serbia at this time equated the Jews and the Communists to such an extent that the shootings, described as 'retaliation', were continued in the autumn of 1941 until all male Jews were killed.

This mass murder pre-dated the real 'final solution', as did the shootings in the Soviet Union. The decision to annihilate all European Jews, however, occurred at about the same time as the radicalisation in the methods of the *Einsatzgruppen*, which can be noted from about August 1941. On 31 July, Heydrich had Goering issue him with the famous authorisation<sup>61</sup> 'to make all necessary organisational, technical, and material preparations for a complete solution to the Jewish question in the German sphere of influence in Europe'. We know from the autobiography written by Höß, the commander of Auschwitz, that he had been informed by Himmler in 'the summer of 1941' concerning Hitler's order to annihilate all Jews in the German sphere of influence. One of the reasons for this was that the 'existing death camps in the east are unable to carry out the planned large-scale campaigns'. Eichmann declared at Nuremberg that

Heydrich had confronted him with Hitler's order about two to three months after the beginning of the Russian campaign.

Following this basic decision in the late summer, which was mentioned many times by witnesses, there was a phase during which the 'final solution' was prepared in technical and administrative terms, until, on 8 December, the first Polish Jews entered the gas chambers and, on 20 January, the Eastern administrative chiefs were informed by Heydrich about the complete plan, which was by now assuming a definite form. The lack of direction on the part of the *Einsatzgruppe* commanders concerning the execution of the mass murder that can still be seen in September, fits into this picture of an interim phase in which, while the basic decision on the final solution had already been taken, it was only gradually becoming clear how it was to be put into practice, and the group of those in the know was only gradually being extended.

We will now, by way of a conclusion, deal with two major factors connected with the beginning of the 'final solution' during this period. Ulrich Herbert has recently pointed out that this did not occur until after the decision had been taken, in October 1941, to use Soviet POWs as forced labour. This decision meant that, for the time being, there was to be no use of Jewish labour, something that was alluded to in the above-quoted reports by the *Einsatzgruppe* commanders (who only saw their particular part of the situation) as an alternative to genocide. Czeslaw Madajczyk, in his turn, emphasised the time connection between the preparations for the 'final solution to the Jewish question' and the work on the *Generalplan Ost*, the gigantic programme of resettlement and colonisation, which began around the autumn of 1941.<sup>62</sup>

The methods used by the *Einsatzkommandos*, as portrayed in the *Ereignismeldungen UdSSR* and summarised in this essay, show clearly that Mayer's theories about initial passivity on the part of the *Einsatzgruppen* concerning the pogroms, and the alleged connection between impending defeat and German intent to annihilate the Jews, are completely unfounded. Neither did Mayer make use of this major source of vital material, nor did he take into account the studies based upon it. Such behaviour is totally irresponsible; Mayer has thus disqualified himself from taking further part in the discussion.

While Mayer's book suffers from lack of information, we could say that the discussion between Krausnick and Streim is characterised by an over-narrow interpretation of the source material. The question of how the *Einsatzgruppen* were informed about their real mission is not something that can be reduced to the system of command and execution. In this regard, we might also ask ourselves whether both Krausnick's and Streim's methodology, based as it is upon procedural argumentation, does not lead to the danger of too little detachment from the sources, which

might possibly not sufficiently emphasise the whole phenomenon, i.e. that of a systematic mass murder with thousands of active, and tens of thousands of passive, participants. While Krausnick's assumption of an early, universal annihilation order can clearly be disproved, we should, on the other hand, go further than Streim in emphasising that the task allotted to the *Einsatzgruppen*, prior to 22 June, involved a mass murder whose limits were unclear. This order already contained within it the tendency towards total annihilation, and it was deliberately left up to the death squads themselves to decide what limits to place on the killings. Here we see a form of issuing of orders which relied upon interaction, fully in keeping with Nazi tradition.

This command technique is explained by a document<sup>63</sup> dealing with another of the 'highlights' of Nazi 'Jewish policy' – the so-called *Reichskristallnacht* pogrom. The document in question is the final report of the Nazi Party Supreme Court (*Oberstes Parteigericht der NSDAP*), which was given the task of deciding what was to be done with those party members who had committed crimes during the pogrom. The court's explanation was that it was 'obvious to active National Socialists from the *Kampfzeit* . . . that orders for campaigns in which the Party does not want its role as organiser to be known need not be completely clear and detailed. They are also accustomed to reading more into such an order than is written or said, just as the issuer of this order has often become adept, in the Party's interest (especially in the case of illegal political rallies), at leaving the order unclear and at merely sketching out its aim'.

The controversy surrounding Mayer's book, as I have already pointed out, is not due just to his grave factual errors but also to his attempt to question the validity of certain received images from the 'Holocaust' in the name of 'historicisation'. In other words, he wants to bring the attention of his American readers to the Nazis' anti-Communism as an underestimated factor, and thus bring the 'Holocaust' back from its ahistoric singularity to a level where it can be analysed.

The argument between Streim and Krausnick, which, on the surface, involves the solution of a date problem or the accurate reconstruction of a decision-making process, also has a deeper significance. In his last essay, Streim clearly points to the goal of his line of argumentation – several law courts based their judgements upon Krausnick's version of the order's being issued prior to the attack on the Soviet Union. They sentenced the death squad commanders as 'accessories before the fact' rather than 'perpetrators', thus classifying the killing of thousands of people as manslaughter and in some cases giving the accused short prison sentences. When Streim talks about historians' tendency towards 'exclusive jurisdiction'<sup>64</sup> in this regard, the subjective background to his debate with Krausnick is revealed.

We should, however, clarify two things here: firstly, a specialist historian who gives expert opinions to the best of his knowledge should not be held responsible for questionable verdicts passed by the courts; secondly, Streim's critique, which is partly justified, cannot detract from the services rendered by Helmut Krausnick (meanwhile unfortunately deceased) in his work on the history of the *Einsatzgruppe* murders. Indeed, Krausnick's version, i.e. that the mission of the *Einsatzgruppen* was clearly stated from the beginning (an idea which can be seen as part of the 'intentionalist' school of thought), has a special significance today, outside academic circles, owing to its effects on the judgement of Nazi crimes in court.

## NOTES

- 1 For more detail on this point see the standard works by Raul Hilberg, *Die Vernichtung der europäischen Juden*, Berlin 1982, p. 197ff., and Helmut Krausnick and Hans-Heinrich Wilhelm, *Die Truppe des Weltanschauungskrieges. Die Einsatzgruppen der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD 1938–1942*, Stuttgart 1981.
- 2 Institut für Zeitgeschichte (IfZ), *Nürnberger Dokumente* (ND), L180; in addition there were 3,387 victims described as Communists.
- 3 IfZ, Fb 114: Der Chef der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD, *Ereignismeldungen UdSSR* (hereafter: EM); here: EM 128, 3.11.1941; the total number of victims was around 80,000.
- 4 *Ibid.*, EM 133.
- 5 *Ibid.*, EM 145.
- 6 IfZ, Fb 101/35, Gesamtbericht EG A, Anlage 7.
- 7 IfZ, ND, NO 511, Meldung an den Führer über Bandenbekämpfung, no. 51, dated 20.12.1942.
- 8 Arno J. Mayer, *Why did the Heavens not Darken? The 'Final Solution' in History*, New York 1988; for the following pp. 201, 237, 257 and 263.
- 9 *Ibid.*, p. 274. In doing this Mayer continues (albeit rather exaggeratingly) a line of argumentation that had been brought up by Martin Broszat, 'Hitler und die Genesis der "Endlösung"'. Aus Anlaß der Thesen von David Irving', *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte (VfZg)*, 25 (1977), pp. 737–75, and Hans Mommsen, Die Realisierung des Utopischen. Die "Endlösung der Judenfrage" im "Dritten Reich", *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 9 (1983), pp. 383–420. Unfortunately Mayer is not aware of the counterarguments presented by Christopher R. Browning, 'Zur Genesis der "Endlösung"'. Eine Antwort an Martin Broszat', *VfZg*, 29 (1981), pp. 96–109, as well as his essay, 'The Decision Concerning the Final Solution', in *idem, Fateful Months. Essays on the Emergence of the Final Solution*, New York, London 1985, pp. 9–38.
- 10 Mayer, *Heavens*, as in note 8, p. 279.
- 11 Thus, in agreement, Lucy Dawidowicz, 'Perversions of the Holocaust', *Commentary*, 88 (1989), 4, pp. 56–60, and Daniel J. Goldhagen, 'False Witness', *New Republican*, 17.4.1989, pp. 39ff.

- 12 Helmut Krausnick, 'Judenverfolgung', in *Anatomie des NS-Staates*, 2nd edn, ed. Hans Buchheim *et al.*, Munich, 1979, pp. 235–365, esp. pp. 297ff. (expert opinion presented during the Auschwitz trial in 1964); on the mission of the *Einsatzgruppen* see Krausnick and Wilhelm, *Die Truppe*, as in note 1, p. 150; Alfred Streim, *Die Behandlung sowjetischer Kriegsgefangener im 'Fall Barbarossa': Eine Dokumentation*, Heidelberg, 1981, pp. 71ff.; idem, 'The Tasks of the SS Einsatzgruppen', *Simon Wiesenthal Center Annual*, 4 (1987), pp. 309–28; also the essays by both historians *Der Mord an den Juden im Zweiten Weltkrieg. Entschlußbildung und Verwirklichung*, ed. Eberhard Jäckel and Jürgen Rohwer, Frankfurt am Main, 1987, pp. 88–106 and 107–19; further statements by Krausnick and Streim can be found in *Simon Wiesenthal Center Annual*, 6 (1989), pp. 311–47; for an appraisal of both points of view cf. the continuing thoughts in Browning, 'Decision', as in note 9, pp. 17ff. Within the confines of this essay it is not possible to give a comprehensive list of specialist literature on this subject; for this reason the reader is directed towards the essays in the above mentioned 1987 anthology edited by Jäckel and Rohwer, *Der Mord an den Juden* (pp. 179–98) as well as two more recent works: Yaacov Lozowick and Rollbahn Mord, 'The Early Activities of Einsatzgruppe C', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 2 (1987), pp. 221–41; and Ronald Headland, 'The Einsatzgruppen. The Question of their Initial Operations', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 4 (1989), pp. 401–12.
- 13 Landgericht (LG) Ulm of 29.5.1958; LG München of 21.7.1961; LG Koblenz of 12.6.1961; LG Köln of 12.5.1964; printed in: *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen. Sammlung deutscher Strafurteile wegen nationalsozialistischer Tötungsverbrechen 1945–1966*, ed. Irene Sagel-Grande, H.H. Fuchs, and C.F. Rüter, Amsterdam, 1968–, vol. 15, pp. 1ff., vol. 17, pp. 657ff. and 497ff., vol. 20, pp. 163ff.
- 14 According to Eberhard Jäckel in the foreword to the anthology of which he was co-editor, *Der Mord an den Juden*, as in note 12, pp. 16f.; Jürgen Förster, 'Das Unternehmen 'Barbarossa' als Eroberungs- und Vernichtungskrieg', in Horst Boog *et al.*, *Der Angriff auf die Sowjetunion*, Stuttgart 1983 (= *Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg*, vol. 4), p. 426; Andreas Hillgruber, 'Die "Endlösung" und das deutsche Ostimperium als Kernstück des rassen-ideologischen Programms des Nationalsozialismus', *VfZG*, 20 (1972), pp. 133–55.
- 15 Streim, *Behandlung*, as in note 12, pp. 75 ff.; the relevant statement by Blume, commander of *Sonderkommando 7a*, can be found in: *Die Ermordung der europäischen Juden. Eine umfassende Dokumentation des Holocaust*, ed. Peter Longeric in collaboration with Dieter Pohl, pp. 113 ff.
- 16 *Der Prozeß gegen die Hauptkriegsverbrecher vor dem Internationalen Militärgerichtshof (International Military Tribunal), Nürnberg 14. November 1945–1. Oktober 1946*, 42 vols, Nuremberg 1947–9, vol. IV, p. 350.
- 17 *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals*, Vol. IV, as in note 16, p. 519; Affidavit, 26.5.1947, *ibid.*, pp. 135ff.
- 18 Streim, *Behandlung*, as in note 12, pp. 76ff., referring to a judgement by LG Darmstadt.

- 19 Ibid., p. 85; Noßke, Schulz (August 1941), Bradfisch (maybe mid-July), Ehrlinger (first of all June 29, later retracted this statement), Herrmann (order was initially issued, corresponding to that of 2.7., and later – maybe middle to end of July – order was extended to include Jews); Streim also refers to statements by other, unnamed SS commanders who were allotted to the Kommandos and who confirmed the period July/August. The statements by Schulz, Noßke, and Herrmann are printed in Longerich, *Ermordung*, as in note 15, pp. 114f.
- 20 Ibid., p. 82; pp. 80ff.
- 21 Krausnick, 'Hitler' (essay in the Jäckel and Rohwer anthology, see note 12), p. 91 points out that in this way it was possible to portray the participation in the shootings as innocent involvement in an action with consequences unforeseeable from the beginning.
- 22 Streim, *Behandlung*, as in note 12, pp. 87ff.: Batz, Jäger, Blume (on Blume see also Streim's essay 'Tasks' in the *Simon Wiesenthal Center Annual*, as in note 12, pp. 337ff.).
- 23 Streim, *Behandlung*, as in note 12, p. 89: Blobel, Ehlers, Filbert, Klingelhöfer, Sandberger, Zapp.
- 24 Krausnick's essay 'Tasks' in the *Simon Wiesenthal Center Annual*, as in note 12, p. 317.
- 25 Krausnick's essay 'Tasks' in the *Simon Wiesenthal Center Annual*, as in note 12, p. 323; on this point also Streim in the same issue, p. 339.
- 26 On the whole issue see Hillgruber, 'Endlösung', as in note 14.
- 27 On this point cf. Förster, 'Das Unternehmen "Barbarossa"', as in note 14, pp. 421ff.
- 28 *Kriegstagebuch des Oberkommandos der Wehrmacht (Wehrmachtführungsstab) 1940–1945*, principal editors H. Greiner and P.E. Schramm, 4 vols, Frankfurt am Main 1961–79, vol. 1, pp. 340ff.; see also vol. 2, pp. 336ff.
- 29 IfZ, ND, NOKW 2080, printed in Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, 'Kommissarbefehl und Massenexekutionen sowjetischer Kriegsgefangener', in *Anatomie des SS-Staates*, as in note 12, vol. 2, pp. 137–232, pp. 166ff.
- 30 IfZ, ND, NOKW 2080, printed *ibid.*, pp. 171ff. Förster, 'Das Unternehmen "Barbarossa"', as in note 14, p. 423, points out that the order issued on 2 April, concerning the mission of the *Sicherheitspolizei* and the SD in the Balkan campaign, also expressly described Communists and Jews as the enemy.
- 31 IfZ, ND, NOKW 209; printed in Jacobsen, 'Kommissarbefehl', as in note 29, pp. 181ff.
- 32 *Richtlinien für die Behandlung politischer Kommissare*, IfZ, ND, NOKW 1076, printed *ibid.*, pp. 189ff.; the *Richtlinien für das Verhalten der Truppe in Rußland*, drawn up by the *Abteilung Wehrmachtpropaganda* in May 1941, and promulgated immediately following the start of the attack, was meant to accustom the men to the tasks that lay before them: IfZ, ND, NOKW 1692, printed *ibid.*, pp. 187ff.
- 33 BA, R 70 Sowjetunion/32; printed in Longerich, *Die Ermordung der Juden*, as in note 15, pp. 118ff.
- 34 BA, R 70 Sowjetunion/32; printed *ibid.*, pp. 217ff.

- 35 To a certain extent it seems to me that the argumentation in Streim, *Behandlung*, as in note 12, p. 84, is based too closely upon the wording of the 29.6. and 2.7. 1941 orders.
- 36 IfZ, EM 9, EM 13.
- 37 Krausnick's essay 'Tasks' in *Simon Wiesenthal Center Annual*, as in note 12, p. 323; on this point see also Streim in the same issue, p. 339.
- 38 See e.g. IfZ, EM 11, *Bericht des EK 7a*, from Vilnius, dated 3.7.1941: 'Komsomol functionaries and Jewish [Communist] Party functionaries liquidated.'
- 39 IfZ, EM 47, 9.8.1941.
- 40 Cf. also Headland, 'The Einsatzgruppen', as in note 12, pp. 404ff.
- 41 IfZ, EM 58.
- 42 IfZ, EM 32; EM 37, 29.7.1941; EM 24, 16.7.1941: 'Up to now 1,150 Jews have been shot by the EK 1b in Dünaburg.' During the first months of the campaign *Einsatzgruppe B* supplied the numbers of those liquidated without giving any reason for their execution.
- 43 IfZ, EM 21; for the following EM 47 and EM 17.
- 44 Thus Krausnick's line in the anthology co-edited by Jäckel, *Der Mord an den Juden*, as in note 12, pp. 99 ff.
- 45 IfZ, EM 19 and EM 26.
- 46 This is in fact a statement made by the Chief of the Stapo office in Tilsit, who alleges that the word-of-mouth order was confirmed by a lightning telegram from the RSHA: LG Ulm, 29.8.1958, as in note 13. This witness also stated that he had received a letter marked '*Geheime Reichssache*', which was not to be opened until the morning of June 22, and which contained the order for 'special treatment' for Communists and Jews. It is unclear why the reservations Krausnick places upon this alleged order do not also apply to the 'lightning telegram': Krausnick, *Die Truppe des Weltanschauungskrieges*, as in note 1, pp. 162 ff.
- 47 Printed in: *Herrschaftsalltag im Dritten Reich*, ed. Hans Mommsen, Düsseldorf 1988, pp. 467–71.
- 48 See below, note 56.
- 49 IfZ, EM 19; EM 40, 1.8.1941; EM 43, 5.8.1941; EM 47, 9.8.1941, *Einsatzgruppe C*; EM 67, 29.8.1941, *Einsatzgruppe B*; EM 81, 12.9.1941, EK 6.
- 50 IfZ, EM 80; EM 73.
- 51 IfZ, Fb 101/29, printed in: *NS-Prozesse. Nach 25 Jahren Strafverfolgung: Möglichkeiten – Grenzen – Ergebnisse*, ed. Adalbert Rückerl, Karlsruhe, 1971.
- 52 For example, it is reported in IfZ, EM 88, that a *Sonderkommando* under the command of the HSSPF 'executed 1,303 Jews, among them 876 Jewesses over 12 years of age' on 1. and 2.9.41 in Berdichev. For the following: IfZ, EM 60. See also EM 80, 11.9.41, 'Erschießungen des Sonderkommandos 4a in Fastov'.
- 53 IfZ, EM 86. Lozowick's statement in idem and Rollbahn Mord, 'Early Activities', as in note 12, p. 234, that the term *judenfrei* (free of Jews) was coined on 20.10., is therefore wrong. See also EM 88, EM 89 and EM 94 of 19.9., 20.9. and 25.9.1941.
- 54 *Einsatzgruppe C*, EM 88, 19.9.1941, and EM 92, 23.9.1941.



- 55 IfZ, EM 31, 23.7.1941, *Stimmung und Lage in den besetzten Gebieten*. Owing to his not considering the three words 'während des Krieges', Headland, 'The Einsatzgruppen', as in note 12, p. 407, does not get the full sense of this sentence.
- 56 IfZ, ND, L 180.
- 57 IfZ, EM 74, 5.9.1941.
- 58 IfZ, EM 86.
- 59 IfZ, EM 81.
- 60 Christopher Browning, 'Wehrmacht Reprisal Policy and the Murder of the Male Jews in Serbia', in idem, *Fateful Months*, as in note 9, pp. 39–56.
- 61 *Der Prozeß*, as in note 16, Vol. 26, pp. 266 ff.
- 62 'Besteht ein Synchronismus zwischen dem "Generalplan Ost" und der Endlösung der Judenfrage?', in *Der Zweite Weltkrieg. Analysen, Grundzüge, Forschungsbilanz*, 2nd edn, commissioned by the Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt ed. Wolfgang Michalka, Munich, Zurich, 1990, pp. 858–73.
- 63 *Der Prozeß*, as in note 16, vol. 32, pp. 20 ff.
- 64 Streim, *Behandlung*, as in note 12, p. 332.

*Savage War:  
German Warfare and Moral  
Choices in World War II*

OMER BARTOV

**The Realities of Warfare**

Between 1941 and 1945 the Third Reich conducted the most savage military campaign in modern history. The invasion of the Soviet Union, code-named “Operation Barbarossa,” cost the lives of some 24 million Soviet citizens,<sup>1</sup> well over half of whom were civilians, and devastated vast areas of western Russia from Leningrad in the north to Stalingrad in the south. Over three million Red Army prisoners of war, or 60 percent of the overall number of Soviet soldiers captured, died in German captivity. Although the Soviet Union emerged from the war as a military superpower, it took decades to recover from the human tragedy and economic disaster of the German occupation.<sup>2</sup>

The German war in Russia raises a number of important questions, relevant both to the history of the Third Reich as a whole and to the history of modern warfare. First, why was “Barbarossa” conducted in such a savage manner, and what ends was this policy expected to serve? Second, to what degree did the units fighting at the front participate in the murderous actions of the regime? Third, was the war in the East indeed a unique and unprecedented phenomenon in modern history by comparison to other instances of brutal warfare?

Omer Bartov, “Savage War: German Warfare and Moral Choices in World War II,” from Omer Bartov, *Germany’s War and the Holocaust: Disputed Histories*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003, pp. 3–14.

*Conception*

War played a central role in Nazi ideology. It was no coincidence that Hitler called his book *Mein Kampf*, that is, "my battle." According to the Nazi world-view, life consisted of a constant struggle for survival, in which the best would win, or rather, in which the very fact of victory and survival would show the inherent physical and spiritual superiority of the winner, on the one hand, and the inferiority and moral depravity of the vanquished, on the other. Traditional norms of behavior, ethical conventions, and legal restrictions had nothing to do with this eternal battle; all that mattered was survival through victory and total annihilation of the enemy. Conversely, battle did have a profound ennobling effect, for in it the best qualities of the individual were called forth and the nation was purged of all slackness and degeneration. Thus war was not merely an inevitable condition, but also a necessary and welcome one. War forged a community of battle, a *Kampfgemeinschaft*, which in turn would produce the community of the people, the *Volksgemeinschaft*, that Nazi ideal of a racially pure, militarized, fanatically determined society, where affinities of blood and endless conquest would compensate for class inequality and lack of political freedom.

The ideal war, according to Hitler, was one of conquest, subjugation, and extermination, and the ideal area in which to conduct such a war was in the East, where the German people would win for itself the living space, or *Lebensraum*, necessary for its moral and racial purity, as well as for its ultimate emergence as the master race (*Herrenvolk*) of Europe and Asia, if not indeed the whole world.<sup>3</sup> However, due to political and military constraints, this ideal could not be immediately realized. Before turning to the East, the Third Reich first had to make certain that its western flank was secure. Germany had experienced a two-front war between 1914 and 1918, and Hitler was determined to prevent a recurrence of such a hopeless strategic situation. Also, while the western powers were quite willing to let Germany fight it out with Bolshevik Russia, Stalin was unwilling to take the main brunt of Nazi military might and concluded a pact with Hitler which enabled the Third Reich first to smash Poland and divide its territory with the USSR, and then to turn against France.

The fighting in the West was inherently different from what was soon to be seen in the East. This had to do both with ideological determinants and with political calculation. Nazi racial theory placed the Jews at the very bottom of the biological ladder: they were to be simply done away with, whether by exclusion and expulsion (as was done in the early years of the regime) or by extermination, which began to be practiced on a mass scale simultaneously with the attack on the Soviet Union. Only

slightly higher were the Slavs, who were considered as subhumans (*Untermenschen*), to be murdered, worked, and starved to death, or used as slave labor for the German colonizers of their lands.<sup>4</sup> As for the French, and even more so the English, Nazi racial “experts” remained rather vague, whether because of what they perceived as racial affinities with the German “Aryans,” or because of the “higher” culture of Western Europe. Thus, while France was seen as a “degenerate” or “decadent” civilization, it was not marked for subjugation, but rather for a secondary role in the Nazi scheme of a German-dominated Europe. Politically, Hitler was always keen on reaching some settlement with the British, both because of his ambiguous view of the “Anglo-Saxon race,” and because of his fear of a two-front war. Consequently, the German army fighting in the West was given strict orders to conduct itself according to the rules of war. This was easier also because the average German soldier had far fewer prejudices about the French and the English than about the Russians, and because Western Europe seemed to him more similar to his homeland than the Russia he was soon to invade.<sup>5</sup>

Once France was defeated, and following Hitler’s realization that he would be able neither to persuade the British to reach an agreement with Germany nor to destroy British military strength whether from the air or by a landing from the sea, the German army was given orders to prepare for an invasion of the Soviet Union. Now at last Hitler could have the war of destruction (*Vernichtungskrieg*) and ideologies (*Weltanschauungskrieg*) he had always wanted to fight. In this he was far from alone, for his generals were in full agreement with the need to conduct a wholly different kind of war against what they called “Judeo-Bolshevism” and the “Asiatic hordes” of the East.

The “Barbarossa Decree” was composed of the operational orders for the attack on the Soviet Union, as well as of what have come to be called the “criminal orders,” a set of instructions regarding the manner in which the army was to conduct itself during the campaign. These included the infamous “commissar order,” calling for the immediate execution of all Red Army political officers captured by frontline units; the curtailment of military jurisdiction, which stipulated that soldiers could not be tried for offenses committed against enemy soldiers and civilians as long as they did not thereby impinge on combat discipline; regulations regarding the behavior of soldiers in the occupied territories, which called for ruthless punitive action against guerrillas and anyone assisting them, as well as against members of the Communist Party and Jews; and orders for the army closely to collaborate with, and furnish military and logistical assistance to, the *Einsatzgruppen* (death squads) of the SS, whose task was the mass murder of Jews and all other Soviet citizens belonging to “bio-

logical” and political categories deemed unworthy of life by the authorities of the Third Reich.<sup>6</sup>

To these orders the army added a series of logistical instructions, based on the assumption that in order to conduct a rapid campaign deep into Russia the units should not be hampered by a cumbersome supply apparatus, whose maintenance was expected to confront numerous difficulties because of the Soviet Union’s primitive transportation infrastructure and a serious shortage of vehicles in the Wehrmacht. The conclusion was that, as far as possible, the army should sustain itself from the resources of the (often wretchedly poor) occupied population, with scant regard for the obvious repercussions this policy would have on the civilians’ chances of survival. Moreover, the cold utilitarian calculation of operational efficiency was allied with the determination of the Nazi leadership not to allow any undue hardship among the German population in the rear as a result of the war, thereby preventing the outbreak of protests and demoralization of the kind that had swept Germany during the latter phases of World War I. Consequently, the army and the civilian administrative authorities that followed it into the Soviet Union, were ordered to exploit the agricultural, industrial, and demographic resources of the occupied territories to the benefit of Germany. It was estimated that this would cause the death by deprivation of tens of millions of Russians; this was greeted with satisfaction in view of the perceived need to “depopulate” the eastern *Lebensraum* so as to make it ripe for German colonization.<sup>7</sup>

Closely tied to the military aspects of the operation was the decision to use this opportunity to “eliminate” European Jewry once and for all, a policy given official sanction during the Wannsee Conference of January 20, 1942, during which the work of the various agencies involved in the “Final Solution” was brought under the overall control of the SS six months after the attack on Russia was launched.<sup>8</sup> The so-called “Final Solution of the Jewish Question” by mass, industrial murder of the Jewish population of Europe, could hardly have taken the form which characterized it between 1941 and 1945 had the Wehrmacht not created the necessary military, logistical, demographic, and psychological preconditions for its implementation by its invasion of the Soviet Union and the vicious war it conducted there.

Thus it is clear that “Barbarossa” was conceived as an ideological war of extermination and enslavement; its goal was to wipe out the Soviet state, to enslave the Russian people after debilitating them by famine and all other forms of deprivation, systematically to murder all “biological” and political enemies of Nazism, such as the Jews, the Gypsies, members of the Communist Party, intellectuals, and so forth, and finally to turn western Russia into a German paradise of “Aryan” colonizers served by hordes of Slav helots.

### Implementation

For many years after World War II it was commonly assumed that although the Nazi regime was obviously criminal and had made use of murderous organizations such as the SS to carry out its policies of extermination, the army was not involved in such actions and in many ways resisted them, or at least kept itself in a position of critical isolation from the more unsavory aspects of Nazi rule. More recent scholarship, however, has shown this to be an entirely erroneous view, based mainly on apologetic postwar literature by German veterans and its indiscriminate acceptance by Western military historians who remained quite ignorant of the realities of the Eastern Front and tried to apply their experience in the West to the totally different conditions that reigned in Russia between 1941 and 1945.

The fact of the matter is that once “Barbarossa” was launched on June 22, 1941, the German combat troops on the ground showed little reluctance, indeed often demonstrated much enthusiasm, in carrying out the “criminal orders” issued by the regime and the high command of the army. Nor did the field commanders do much to restrain the troops; quite to the contrary, in many cases formation commanders exhorted their soldiers to act with even greater ferocity and determination against the “racial” and political enemies of the Reich. Such generals as Walther von Reichenau, Erich von Manstein, and Hermann Hoth appealed to their troops in October and November 1941 to remember that the “Jewish-Bolshevik system must be eradicated once and for all,” that the German soldier is “a carrier of an inexorable racial conception and the avenger of all the bestialities which have been committed against the Germans and related races,” and that he must therefore have “*complete* understanding for the necessity of the harsh, but just atonement of Jewish subhumanity.”<sup>9</sup>

The enormous death toll among the Russian prisoners of war and civilian population was thus a direct result not merely of the heavy fighting but to a large extent of the implementation of Nazi policies in the occupied regions of the Soviet Union. Hitler had stated unambiguously before the campaign that German troops should not recognize their Soviet enemies as “comrades in arms”; there were to be, in his words, *keine Kameraden*. Consequently, in the first few months of fighting, the Wehrmacht shot out of hand thousands of commissars and handed over to the SD (the security service of the SS) for execution at least 140,000 Soviet political officers, and most likely a far larger number. By the end of the first winter in Russia some two million Soviet prisoners were already dead, mostly due to starvation and exposure. Unlike the Western campaign, the

Wehrmacht had made no provisions for the large number of prisoners it expected to capture thanks to its tactics of encirclement. Instead, captured Red Army troops were marched hundreds of miles to the rear or transported in open freight trains in midwinter. Those who survived were then herded into empty fields surrounded by barbed wire and armed guards and allowed to starve to death. The troops became so used to this treatment of Soviet soldiers as *Untermenschen* that even when the orders were changed due to the decision to conscript prisoners for forced labor in the Reich, they refused to relent and kept shooting them out of hand against the express orders of their direct superiors.<sup>10</sup>

As the logistical situation of the Wehrmacht deteriorated during autumn and winter 1941, the troops were ordered to resort to extensive requisitions, which stripped the population of its last reserves of food and caused widespread famine and death. Intensified guerrilla activity against the Wehrmacht, caused not least by desperation occasioned by the horrifying conditions in occupied Russia, brought brutal retaliatory measures which included not merely the hanging of anyone suspected of partisan activity, but also the destruction of thousands of villages and the murder of their inhabitants as part of a policy of collective punishment. Following the Red Army's counter-offensive of December 1941, and thereafter whenever the Wehrmacht was forced to retreat, German combat units resorted to a policy of "scorched earth" which devastated vast regions of abandoned territory and led to the death by deprivation of whoever was not killed right away by the withdrawing troops or sent back to the Reich as slave labor.<sup>11</sup>

### *Uniqueness*

This brings us to the question of comparability and uniqueness, a key element in what has come to be known as the process of "coming to terms with the past" (or as the Germans call it, *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, roughly translated as "overcoming the past").<sup>12</sup> This somewhat ambiguous term stands for the complex confrontation between personal and collective national memory (and its repression), on the one hand, and the memory (or amnesia) of individuals and groups belonging to other national entities, along with historical documentary evidence, on the other; it also refers to the use and abuse of the past by individuals and groups with the view of legitimizing either past actions or current opinions and aspirations. While the past is constantly interacting with the present (both forming it and being informed by it in return), some past events and periods are of greater impact and significance than others.

There is little doubt that the Nazi regime still plays a major role in the political consciousness and individual psychology of many Germans today.

This was witnessed in the 1980s in a number of public debates in the Federal Republic and, particularly, in the German historians' controversy, or the *Historikerstreit*. The controversy, which began in 1986, has remained in the background of much recent scholarship and public debates despite (or perhaps precisely because of) the upheaval of reunification, thereby reflecting the growing political relevance of the Nazi past to a Germany searching for a new definition of national identity.

The *Historikerstreit*, as the subtitle of one German publication on the issue had it, concerned "the controversy over the uniqueness of the National Socialist extermination of the Jews."<sup>13</sup> However, in an even wider sense, the debate was over the uniqueness of everything and anything that took place under the Third Reich, indeed over the meaning of uniqueness in history. From the purely scholarly point of view, the argument against uniqueness raised a valid point; namely, that if uniqueness implies incomparability, then it introduces an ahistorical terminology, that is, it decontextualizes the event by wrenching it out of the course of history and thereby rendering it inexplicable, even mythical. In other words, the historian cannot accept that any event in the past is wholly unique, since that would mean that this event would defy any rational historical analysis and understanding. More specifically, however, the argument regarding the uniqueness of the Holocaust does not necessarily mean that it is incomparable. Comparison does not aim to show that two things or events are the same, but rather to shed light on two or more objects or phenomena by demonstrating both their similarities and their differences.

Yet the "revisionists," that is, the German scholars who called for a revision of the history of the Third Reich by means of "contextualizing" it through comparison and "demystifying" it through "detached" analysis, had a different aim in mind when they objected to the presentation of Nazism as unique. As their opponents claimed, the "revisionists," or at least their more extreme representatives, were interested in "relativizing" the history of Nazism, that is, in demonstrating that although the Nazi regime was indeed evil and criminal, there were many others like it, and therefore the Germans had no reason to feel more guilty about their past than any other people, and could calmly go about re-establishing a proud national identity based on a history of great political and cultural achievements.

While these arguments met with fierce opposition in Germany and abroad in so far as they concerned the murder of the Jews, they were received with far more sympathy when applied to the German army's conduct of the war. When the "revisionist" Ernst Nolte claimed that the only difference between the Holocaust and the Soviet gulags was the use of gas for killing, and that in any case the gulags were the begetters of Auschwitz because Hitler behaved as he did out of fear of the Bolsheviks,



both the ethical import and the documentary evidence for his assertion were forcefully challenged by many of his colleagues.<sup>14</sup>

But when Andreas Hillgruber, another highly respected “revisionist,” argued for the need of the historian to identify with the German soldiers’ “heroic” defense of the Reich from the “orgy of revenge” with which the Red Army threatened the German civilian population, he touched on a sensitive point for the Germans.<sup>15</sup> The murder of the Jews could be ascribed to a relatively small circle of criminals, that is, it could be isolated from the main bulk of the German population (and, as some would have it, from the main current of German history). This was not so in the case of the Wehrmacht, based as it was on mass conscription and therefore highly representative of German society as a whole.

Moreover, the powerful sense of abhorrence of war in postwar Germany, following the destruction visited upon it during the closing phases of World War II, has made many Germans view war, any war, as hell. Paradoxically, this view has in turn legitimized the actions of German soldiers in the war as being in no way essentially different from those of all other soldiers. Thus, one finds a combination of antiwar sentiment, apologetics, and a sentimental admiration for the men who “saved” Germany, indeed the whole of Europe, from the “Bolshevik-Asiatic hordes,” along with a powerful rejection of the notion that the Wehrmacht had served as Hitler’s main instrument in implementing his policies of conquest and genocide.

The view of the Wehrmacht as an army like any other has long been shared by many non-German scholars, especially in the West, reflecting a wider trend in public opinion.<sup>16</sup> This was given expression in former President Reagan’s assertion that the soldiers of the Wehrmacht and the Waffen-SS buried in the military cemetery of Bitburg were also victims of the Nazi regime.<sup>17</sup> It is therefore of some importance to point out in what respects the German army’s conduct in the war was essentially different from that of any other army in modern history.

War is a highly brutal affair, and there is little doubt that individual soldiers can and do become brutalized in the course of fighting.<sup>18</sup> On the individual level, there is no difference between, for instance, the killing of civilians by a Wehrmacht soldier in Russia, by an American soldier in Vietnam, or by a Soviet soldier in Prussia. Once we shift a little from the individual level, however, we begin to see the differences. German soldiers fighting in Russia were allowed, indeed were ordered, to commit mass killings of people who were clearly of no direct military threat to them. This was not the case of American GIs in Vietnam, or of Red Army troops in occupied Germany, even if many such instances did occur. And because this was not the policy, but rather an unauthorized action, the scale of the killing was smaller.

The Red Army in Germany had no policy of decimating the German population and turning Germany into a wasteland fit for Russian colonization. Had this been the case, we would not have seen the recent reunification of Germany, for there would have been nothing to reunite with. The German army in Russia, on the other hand, followed a clear policy of subjugation and extermination. Had Germany won the war, Russia would have disappeared as a political entity, and millions more Russians would have been murdered, with the rest being enslaved by their German colonizers. Nor did the U.S. Army have a policy of genocide in Vietnam, even if it did cause the deaths of hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians. If the Soviet Union installed brutal dictatorships in the East European countries it conquered, these were nevertheless not genocidal regimes, just as an American victory in Vietnam would not have meant the destruction of the Vietnamese people (whose existence under the victorious communists has not been particularly cheerful either). The strategic bombing of Germany, another example often used by German apologists, had no intention of wiping out the German people, even if it was of questionable military value and morally dubious.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, one cannot forget that the English and the Americans, as well as the Russians, were fighting against Nazi aggression: it was the Third Reich that had striven to conquer Europe, not Great Britain, America, or even the Soviet Union.

The Wehrmacht did not behave in the same manner everywhere. As has been seen, it was on the Eastern Front that the German army conducted a uniquely savage war. This was possible because of the overall agreement between the regime and its soldiers regarding the need to wipe out the Soviet Union, its political system, and much of its population. Shared racist sentiments acted as a powerful motivation in the conduct of war in the East. Doubtless, many other armies have known the effects of racism: the US army, both in the Pacific War and in Vietnam, and the Japanese army in Asia, have acted brutally, not least due to a racially oriented perception of the enemy.<sup>20</sup> Yet racism was not the official policy of the US government, nor was the education of American youths as deeply grounded in racism as that of the Germans of the 1930s. When Japan was occupied by the US Army it was not enslaved, even if many American GIs had clearly developed strongly racist views of the Japanese.<sup>21</sup> The Japanese, for their part, carried out highly brutal policies of occupation motivated by a mixture of imperialist goals and a sense of racial superiority propagated by the regime. Indeed, the Japanese army's conduct in China comes close to that of the Wehrmacht in Russia, just as its treatment of prisoners of war was abominable. Yet even here one must make the qualification that the Japanese did not adopt a policy of genocide.<sup>22</sup> Hence, for instance, the rate of survival of prisoners of war in Japanese hands was twice as high as that of Soviet soldiers in German hands.<sup>23</sup>

It is, indeed, on the issue of genocide that the German military surely comes out worse than any other modern army. This is both because the army itself actively pursued a policy of mass killing of Russians, and because it was an essential instrument in the realization of the "Final Solution." The attempt to differentiate between the Wehrmacht and the SS, between the fighting at the front and the death camps in the rear, presents a wholly false picture of the historical reality. As a number of highly detailed and thorough works have shown, the army was involved in the implementation of the "Final Solution" on every conceivable level, beginning with the conquest of the areas which contained the highest concentrations of Jewish population, through rendering logistical and manpower support to the *Einsatzgruppen* and the death camp administrations, to the bitter determination with which it resisted the final and inevitable defeat of the Third Reich at a time when the rate of the industrial killing of millions of human beings reached its peak.<sup>24</sup> The Wehrmacht was thus a crucial factor in the most horrendous crime perpetrated by any nation in modern history.

## NOTES

- 1 R. Overy, *Russia's War* (New York, 1998), 287–89.
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- 3 E. Jäckel, *Hitler's World View: A Blueprint for Power* (Cambridge, Mass., 1981).
- 4 For a more complex analysis of Nazi attitudes to Slavs, see J. Connelly, "Nazis and Slavs: From Racial Theory to Racist Practice," *CEH* 32, no. 1 (1999): 1–33.
- 5 On Hitler's wartime policies see I. Kershaw, *Hitler*, 2 vols. (New York, 1999–2000). On discipline in the Wehrmacht, see Bartov, *Hitler's Army*, 59–105.
- 6 C. Streit, *Keine Kameraden*, 2d edn. (Bonn, 1991), 28–61.
- 7 R.-D. Müller, "From Economic Alliance to a War to Colonial Exploitation," in *The Attack on the Soviet Union*, vol. 4 of *Germany and the Second World War* (GSWW), ed. Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt (Oxford, 1998), 118–224. C. Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde: Die deutsche Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik in Weißrußland 1941 bis 1944* (Hamburg, 1999).
- 8 See now C. Gerlach, "The Wannsee Conference, the Fate of German Jews, and Hitler's Decision in Principle to Exterminate All European Jews," in *The Holocaust: Origins, Implementation, Aftermath*, ed. O. Bartov (London, 2000), 106–61; M. Roseman, *The Wannsee Conference and the Final Solution* (New York, 2002).
- 9 Bartov, *Hitler's Army*, 129–31.
- 10 Streit, *Keine Kameraden*, 105, 136; C. Streit, "Soviet Prisoners of War in the Hands of the Wehrmacht," in H. Heer and K. Naumann, eds., *War of Exter-*

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- 11 H. Heer, “The Logic of the War of Extermination: The Wehrmacht and the Anti-Partisan War,” in Heer and Naumann, eds., *War of Extermination*, 92–126; Bartov, *Eastern Front*, 129–40.
  - 12 Recent studies include N. Frei, *Vergangenheitspolitik: Die Anfänge der Bundesrepublik und die NS-Vergangenheit* (Munich, 1996), R. G. Moeller, *War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berkeley, 2001); J. Herf, *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys* (Cambridge, Mass., 1997).
  - 13 “Historikerstreit”: *Die Dokumentation der Kontroverse um die Einzigartigkeit der nationalsozialistischen Judenvernichtung* (Munich, 1987). English translation as *Forever in the Shadow of Hitler? Original Documents of the Historikerstreit, the Controversy Concerning the Singularity of the Holocaust* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ, 1993). Major studies include C. S. Maier, *The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust, and German National Identity* (Cambridge, Mass., 1988); R. J. Evans, *In Hitler’s Shadow: West German Historians and the Attempt to Escape from the Nazi Past* (London, 1989); P. Baldwin, ed., *Reworking the Past: Hitler, the Holocaust, and the Historians’ Debate* (Boston, 1990).
  - 14 E. Nolte, “Between Historical Legend and Revisionism? The Third Reich in the Perspective of 1980,” and “The Past That Will Not Pass: A Speech That Could Be Written but Not Delivered,” both in *Forever in the Shadow of Hitler?* (Atlantic Highlands, 1993) 13–14, 21–2, respectively.
  - 15 A. Hillgruber, *Zweierlei Untergang: Die Zerschlagung des Deutschen Reiches und das Ende des europäischen Judentums* (Berlin, 1986); O. Bartov, *Murder in Our Midst: The Holocaust, Industrial Killing, and Representation* (New York, 1996), 71–88.
  - 16 O. Bartov, “Germany’s Unforgettable War: The Twisted Road from Berlin to Moscow and Back,” *DH* 25, no. 3 (2001): 405–23. On the impact of the exhibition “Crimes of the Wehrmacht,” mentioned above, see O. Bartov, “The Wehrmacht Exhibition Controversy: The Politics of Evidence,” in *The Crimes of War: Guilt and Denial in the Twentieth Century*, ed. O. Bartov, A. Grossmann, and M. Nolan (New York, 2002), 41–60.
  - 17 For the debate, see G. Hartman, ed., *Bitburg in Moral and Political Perspective* (Bloomington, 1986).
  - 18 Compare the different views in S. Haynes, *The Soldiers’ Tale: Bearing Witness to Modern War* (New York, 1997); J. Bourke, *An Intimate History of Killing: Face-to-Face Killing in Twentieth-Century Warfare* (New York, 1999).
  - 19 Compare conflicting views in E. Markusen and D. Kopf, *The Holocaust and Strategic Bombing: Genocide and Total War in the Twentieth Century* (Boulder, 1995), and R. Overy, *Why the Allies Won* (New York, 1996), ch. 4. Noteworthy is J. Glover, *Humanity: A Moral History of the Twentieth Century* (New Haven, 1999).

- 20 J. W. Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York, 1986).
- 21 J. W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York, 1999).
- 22 K. Honda, *The Nanjing Massacre* (New York, 1999).
- 23 Bartov, *Eastern Front*, 153–6.
- 24 See essays by Herbert, Manoschek, Gerlach, and Dieckmann in *National Socialist Extermination Policies: Contemporary German Perspectives and Controversies*, ed. U. Herbert (New York, 2000).



PART IV

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Whose “Final Solution”?  
Revisiting Intentionalism  
and Functionalism





## *Whose “Final Solution”? Revisiting Intentionalism and Functionalism*

One of the most difficult issues in the study of the Holocaust is the problem of judging and assigning responsibility for that sequence of events. It is by now generally recognized that under the Nazi regime, between 5,200,000 and 6,000,000 Jews were killed by German forces or their collaborators, principally in the period between the invasion of Poland (September 1, 1939) and the Nazi surrender to the Allies (May 8, 1945) – and that these deaths were not random occurrences. But this recognition does not by itself answer the question of what intentions set the process in motion and sustained it or who was (or were) responsible for it. To be sure, certain instances of atrocity and their perpetrators are readily identifiable: Dr Josef Mengele and his Auschwitz “medical” experiments, Adolf Eichmann and the trainloads of deportees to the “Death Camps” of Poland. But proofs of the involvement of such individual, “mid-level” figures or of other less familiar members or collaborators of the SS and the *Wehrmacht* who participated in massacres and torture do not go very far toward determining responsibility for the Holocaust *as a whole*. Viewed in retrospect, the sequence of events that made it up seems connected and coherent, parts of an overall design. Looked at more closely, however, the evidence appears sufficiently complex to require analysis of that conclusion. And since the question of whether an act is intentional or not is closely tied, in legal and moral terms, to the question of who, if anyone, was responsible for the act, the consequences of this issue are both large and evident.

To be sure, it remains a matter of fact that in the political structure of Nazi Germany where a “Führer-Order” was absolute law and where little of importance could occur without Hitler’s approval, no explicit written record of his initiating the “Final Solution” has been found. Certain historians have drawn on this basis for a range of conclusions which extend from absolving Hitler himself of responsibility for the Holocaust to a more general claim that the Nazi genocide was not a single concerted act

or even sequence, but evolved in a series of decisions and actions by separate, often independent and sometimes competing agencies of the Nazi government and through the initiative of “lower-level” perpetrators. Thus, although those actions eventually converged in “the Holocaust,” they did not do so as the result of a prior or comprehensive design.

The moral and legal consequences of this “Functionalist” analysis imply that however one judges individual atrocities of the Holocaust (which have at times been defended on the grounds that their agents were “only following orders”), that event as a whole was not “intended” – thus, that the finding of responsibility for it, however well-intentioned itself, is misplaced. This conclusion is so radical historically that only thirty-five years after World War II’s end, in the 1980s, was it fully articulated, setting off the debate which became known as the “*Historikerstreit*” (the “Historians’ Conflict”), originally in Germany but then more widely. The exchange republished here between Saul Friedländer and Martin Broszat remains a significant formulation of the main issues at stake in this debate – Broszat arguing for a contextualization of the Holocaust within the framework of a world war and of Germany’s evolving and increasingly precarious national position; Friedländer calling attention to the dangers of such contextualization – because of the slippery slope leading from explanation to justification, and of the danger that the Holocaust’s enormity, which in itself implies an intentional character, may be obscured by the impersonal, morally neutral categories of cause and effect.

The “Intentionalist” side of this debate in its extreme version has claimed that the act of genocide against the Jews was a central element in Hitler’s and/or the Nazi Party’s design from the first days of their political activities – thus placing its origins in the early 1920s. Advocates of such Intentionalism cite as evidence various public accounts of early speeches, rallies, and statements of the party platform, as well as Hitler’s autobiography, *Mein Kampf* (published in 1925–6). But although tirades and even threats against the Jews as a menace to German society (and to the world) recur in these expressions, to infer a design for *genocide* from them seems an example of reading history backwards – not because such widespread annihilation would have been undesirable to those opposed to the Jews in these ways, but because the prospect would have seemed too unlikely to consider seriously (or to *intend*). Hitler in *Mein Kampf* speaks of giving “12,000 or 15,000 Jews” a whiff of the gas that he had encountered in World War I – a very far cry from what the Holocaust would later arrive at. A more pertinent statement appears in his Reichstag speech of January 30, 1939 (partly reprinted here), where Hitler spoke as a “prophet”: “If the international Jewish financiers in and outside Europe should succeed in plunging the nations once more into a world war, then the result will . . . be . . . the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe.”

Even at that relatively late date (1939), however, official Nazi policy in respect to the Jews was forced emigration; thus, once again, the claim of Nazi intentions as fully turned to genocide seems doubtful. That is clearly not the case, however, by the time of the Wannsee Conference (January 20, 1942) – the minutes of which follow here, for in that text, the design referred to as the “Final Solution of the Jewish Question” is as explicit as it is ominous – and indeed, the weight of current scholarly opinion holds that the decision initiating the “Final Solution” was made, “intentionally,” between the summer and fall of 1941. To be sure, even in the aftermath of Wannsee, implementation of that plan required substantial arranging and readjustment which continued until almost the last days of the war; the Functionalist view advanced by Broszat and others interpret such adjustments and sometimes conflicts within the Nazi hierarchy as evidence for their thesis (so, for example, the disagreement among Nazi leaders on whether to use Jewish slave labor in the increasingly precarious war effort or to continue the campaign of murdering them outright).

Certain aspects of the Intentionalist–Functionalist debate turn on the understanding of the concept of intention itself. Berel Lang argues (in the essay reprinted here) that on this issue at least, the two parties agree: that an intention presupposes an idea fully conceptualized and willed prior to the act in question. But an alternate view, especially pertinent to group intentions (and so also to those of the Nazis) is that intentions may emerge in or through the actions initiated. On this view, the Functionalist claim that the design of genocide was not fully shaped prior to its implementation might be admitted without yet denying that the genocide was indeed intentional.

Even this interpretation does not settle the questions of *whose* intention would thus be discovered or, correspondingly, of where responsibility is to be placed. It is evident, furthermore, that even for the Holocaust viewed as a whole, responses to these questions may find varying degrees of responsibility, from large to small: the alternative to this would be either to hold all Germans equally responsible or to hold that none of them was, with neither of these plausible on either historical or ethical grounds. These questions will undoubtedly continue to warrant discussion, not only because issues of causality in respect to the Holocaust are so complex, but also because certain evidence is still in the process of discovery. There seems now little doubt that the “road to genocide” did evolve in stages (that presumably at one time or other might have been blocked); but there also seems little doubt of the emergence in this process of a design or intention with the Holocaust at its conclusion. A plausible argument has been advanced in a popular essay that “No Hitler, No Holocaust”: Hitler, in other words, as a necessary, if not a sufficient condition of the Nazi genocide. Even without this personalized attribution, however, the element

of deliberation seems unavoidable. When Robert Jackson, the leading prosecutor for the United States at the first Nuremberg Trial in 1945, referred in the statement reprinted here to the “Nazi” master plan as a justification for the trial, that term may have been slightly exaggerated – but a premise of the trial and more generally of the Holocaust was that the violations committed by the Nazi regime were nothing if not intentional.

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## *Hitler's Reichstag Speech, January 30, 1939*

ADOLF HITLER

“The German nation has no feeling of hatred towards England, America, or France; all it wants is peace and quiet. But these other nations are continually being stirred up to hatred of Germany and the German people by Jewish and non-Jewish agitators. And so, should the warmongers achieve what they are aiming at, our own people would be landed in a situation for which they would be psychologically quite unprepared and which they would thus fail to grasp. I therefore consider it necessary that from now on our propaganda and our Press should always make a point of answering these attacks, and above all bring them to the notice of the German people. The German nation must know who the men are who want to bring about a war by hook or by crook. It is my conviction that these people are mistaken in their calculations, for when once National Socialist propaganda is devoted to the answering of the attacks, we shall succeed just as we succeeded inside Germany herself in overcoming, through the convincing power of our propaganda, the Jewish world-enemy. The nations will in a short time realize that National Socialist Germany wants no enmity with other nations; that all the assertions as to our intended attacks on other nations are lies – lies born of morbid hysteria, or of a mania for self-preservation on the part of certain politicians; but that in certain States these lies are being used by unscrupulous profiteers to salvage their own finances. That, above all, international Jewry may hope in this way to satisfy its thirst for revenge and gain, but that on the other hand this is the grossest defamation which can be brought to bear on a great and peace-loving nation. Never, for instance, have German soldiers fought on American soil, unless it was in the cause of American independence and freedom; but American soldiers were brought to Europe

“Hitler's Reichstag Speech, Jan. 30, 1939,” from *The Speeches of Adolf Hitler, April 1922–August 1939*, edited by Norman H. Baynes, New York: Howard Fertig, 1969, vol. 1, pp. 736–41.

to help strangle a great nation which was fighting for its freedom. Germany did not attack America, but America attacked Germany, and, as the Committee of Investigation of the American House of Representatives concluded: from purely capitalist motives, without any other cause. But there is one thing that everyone should realize: these attempts cannot influence Germany in the slightest as to the way in which she settles her Jewish problem. On the contrary, in connexion with the Jewish question I have this to say: it is a shameful spectacle to see how the whole democratic world is oozing sympathy for the poor tormented Jewish people, but remains hard-hearted and obdurate when it comes to helping them – which is surely, in view of its attitude, an obvious duty. The arguments that are brought up as an excuse for not helping them actually speak for us Germans and Italians.”

“For this is what they say:

“(1) ‘We’, that is the democracies, ‘are not in a position to take in the Jews.’ Yet in these empires there are not even 10 people to the square kilometre. While Germany, with her 135 inhabitants to the square kilometre, is supposed to have room for them!”

“(2) They assure us: We cannot take them unless Germany is prepared to allow them a certain amount of capital to bring with them as immigrants.”

“For hundreds of years Germany was good enough to receive these elements, although they possessed nothing except infectious political and physical diseases. What they possess to-day, they have to by far the largest extent gained at the cost of the less astute German nation by the most reprehensible manipulations.”

“To-day we are merely paying this people what it deserves. When the German nation was, thanks to the inflation instigated and carried through by Jews, deprived of the entire savings which it had accumulated in years of honest work, when the rest of the world took away the German nation’s foreign investments, when we were divested of the whole of our colonial possessions, these philanthropic considerations evidently carried little noticeable weight with democratic statesmen.”

“To-day I can only assure these gentlemen that, thanks to the brutal education with which the democracies favoured us for fifteen years, we are completely hardened to all attacks of sentiment. After more than eight hundred thousand children of the nation had died of hunger and undernourishment at the close of the War, we witnessed almost one million head of milking cows being driven away from us in accordance with the cruel paragraphs of a dictate which the humane democratic apostles of the world forced upon us as a peace treaty. We witnessed over one million German prisoners of war being retained in confinement for no reason at all for a whole year after the War was ended. We witnessed over one and

a half million Germans being torn away from all that they possessed in the territories lying on our frontiers, and being whipped out with practically only what they wore on their backs. We had to endure having millions of our fellow countrymen torn from us without their consent, and without their being afforded the slightest possibility of existence. I could supplement these examples with dozens of the most cruel kind. For this reason we ask to be spared all sentimental talk. The German nation does not wish its interests to be determined and controlled by any foreign nation. France to the French, England to the English, America to the Americans, and Germany to the Germans. We are resolved to prevent the settlement in our country of a strange people which was capable of snatching for itself all the leading positions in the land, and to oust it. For it is our will to educate our own nation for these leading positions. We have hundreds of thousands of very intelligent children of peasants and of the working classes. We shall have them educated – in fact we have already begun – and we wish that one day they, and not the representatives of an alien race, may hold the leading positions in the State together with our educated classes. Above all, German culture, as its name alone shows, is German and not Jewish, and therefore its management and care will be entrusted to members of our own nation. If the rest of the world cries out with a hypocritical mien against this barbaric expulsion from Germany of such an irreplaceable and culturally eminently valuable element, we can only be astonished at the conclusions they draw from this situation. For how thankful they must be that we are releasing these precious apostles of culture, and placing them at the disposal of the rest of the world. In accordance with their own declarations they cannot find a single reason to excuse themselves for refusing to receive this most valuable race in their own countries. Nor can I see a reason why the members of this race should be imposed upon the German nation, while in the States, which are so enthusiastic about these ‘splendid people’, their settlement should suddenly be refused with every imaginable excuse. I think that the sooner this problem is solved the better; for Europe cannot settle down until the Jewish question is cleared up. It may very well be possible that sooner or later an agreement on this problem may be reached in Europe, even between those nations which otherwise do not so easily come together.”

“The world has sufficient space for settlements, but we must once and for all get rid of the opinion that the Jewish race was only created by God for the purpose of being in a certain percentage a parasite living on the body and the productive work of other nations. The Jewish race will have to adapt itself to sound constructive activity as other nations do, or sooner or later it will succumb to a crisis of an inconceivable magnitude.”

“One thing I should like to say on this day which may be memorable for others as well as for us Germans: In the course of my life I have very

often been a prophet, and have usually been ridiculed for it. During the time of my struggle for power it was in the first instance the Jewish race which only received my prophecies with laughter when I said that I would one day take over the leadership of the State, and with it that of the whole nation, and that I would then among many other things settle the Jewish problem. Their laughter was uproarious, but I think that for some time now they have been laughing on the other side of their face. To-day I will once more be a prophet: If the international Jewish financiers in and outside Europe should succeed in plunging the nations once more into a world war, then the result will not be the bolshevization of the earth, and thus the victory of Jewry, but the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe!”

“For the time when the non-Jewish nations had no propaganda is at an end. National Socialist Germany and Fascist Italy have institutions which enable them when necessary to enlighten the world about the nature of a question of which many nations are instinctively conscious, but which they have not yet clearly thought out. At the moment the Jews in certain countries may be fomenting hatred under the protection of a press, of the film, of wireless propaganda, of the theatre, of literature, &c., all of which they control. If this nation should once more succeed in inciting the millions which compose the nations into a conflict which is utterly senseless and only serves Jewish interests, then there will be revealed the effectiveness of an enlightenment which has completely routed the Jews in Germany in the space of a few years. The nations are no longer willing to die on the battle-field so that this unstable international race may profiteer from a war or satisfy its Old Testament vengeance. The Jewish watchword ‘Workers of the world unite’ will be conquered by a higher realization, namely ‘Workers of all classes and of all nations, recognize your common enemy!’”



## *Minutes of the Wannsee Conference, January 20, 1942*

I. Participants in the conference on the final solution of the Jewish question in Berlin, Am Grossen Wannsee 56–58, on 20 January 1942:

<p>Gauleiter Dr Meyer and Reich Office Director Dr Leibbrandt Permanent Secretary Dr Stuckart Permanent Secretary Neumann</p>	<p>Reich Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories Reich Interior Ministry Representative of the Four Year Plan</p>
<p>Permanent Secretary Dr Freisler Permanent Secretary Dr Bühler Undersecretary Luther SS Oberführer Klopfer Ministry Director SS Gruppenführer Hofmann</p>	<p>Reich Ministry of Justice Office of the Governor General Ministry of Foreign Affairs Party Chancellery Reich Chancellery Race and Settlement Main Office Reich Security Main Office</p>
<p>SS Gruppenführer Müller SS Obersturmbannführer Eichmann SS Oberführer Dr Schöngarth, Commander of the Security Police and SD in the Generalgouvernement</p>	<p>Security Police and SD</p>
<p>SS Sturmbannführer Dr Lange, Commander of the Security Police and SD in the District of Latvia, as representative of the Commander of the Security Police and SD for the Reich Commissariat for the Eastern Territories</p>	<p>Security Police and SD</p>

“Minutes of the Wannsee Conference, January 20, 1942.” Document NG-2586, Nuremberg Trial Record, *Das Dritte Reich und die Juden*, edited by Leon Poliakov and Josef Wulf. 1955, reprint Munich: K.G. Saur, 1978, pp. 119–26.

II. At the beginning of the meeting the Chief of the Security Police and SD, SS Obergruppenführer Heydrich, announced his appointment as Plenipotentiary for the Preparation of the Final Solution of the European Jewish Question by the Reich Marshal and pointed out that this conference had been called to clear up fundamental questions. The Reich Marshal's request to have a draft sent to him on the organizational, substantive, and economic needs in regard to the final solution of the European Jewish question requires prior joint consideration by all central agencies directly concerned with these questions, with a view to keeping policy lines parallel.

Primary responsibility for the handling of the final solution of the Jewish question resides centrally, without consideration of geographic boundaries, with the Reichsführer SS and the Chief of the German Police (Chief of the Security Police and the SD).

The Chief of the Security Police and the SD then gave a brief review of the struggle up to now against this enemy. The most important aspects are

- (a) forcing the Jews out of each sphere of the life of the German people;
- (b) forcing the Jews out of the living space of the German people.

In carrying out these efforts, acceleration of the emigration of the Jews from Reich territory was undertaken in intensified and systematic fashion as the only feasible solution for the time being.

By decree of the Reich Marshal a Reich Central Office for Jewish Emigration was established in January 1939, and its direction was entrusted to the Chief of the Security Police and the SD. In particular, its tasks were

- (a) to take all measures for the *preparation* of accelerated emigration of the Jews;
- (b) to *direct* the flow of emigration;
- (c) to expedite emigration *in individual cases*.

The objective of these tasks was to cleanse the German living space of Jews in a legal way.

The disadvantages entailed by such a forced emigration were clear to all the authorities. But in the absence of other feasible solutions they had to be accepted for the time being.

In the ensuing period, the emigration efforts were not merely a German problem, but also a problem with which the authorities of the countries of

destination or immigration had to deal. Financial difficulties – such as increases on the part of various foreign governments in the funds which immigrants were required to have and in landing fees, lack of ship berths, and continually escalated restrictions or bans on immigration – made the emigration efforts much more difficult. Despite these difficulties, a total of approximately 537,000 Jews were induced to emigrate between the assumption of power and the date of 31 October 1941. Of these

since 30 January 1930 from Germany proper (*Altreich*)... approximately 360,000

since 15 March 1938 from Austria (*Ostmark*)... approximately 147,000

since 15 March 1939 from the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia... approximately 30,000

Financing of the emigration took place through the Jews or Jewish political organizations themselves. To avoid proletarianized Jews remaining behind, the principle was followed that well-to-do Jews had to finance the emigration of destitute Jews. To this end, a special assessment or emigration fee, assessed according to wealth, was levied, the proceeds being used to meet financial obligations in the course of the emigration of destitute Jews.

In addition to the funds raised in German marks, foreign exchange was needed for the funds which emigrants were required to have and for landing fees. To conserve the German supply of foreign exchange, Jewish financial institutions abroad were prompted by the Jewish organizations in this country to see to it that appropriate funds in foreign currencies were obtained. Through these foreign Jews a total of approximately \$9,500,000 was made available in the form of gifts up to 30 October 1941.

In the meantime, in view of the dangers of emigration during wartime and in view of the possibilities in the East, the Reichsführer SS and Chief of the German Police has prohibited the emigration of Jews.

III. Emigration has now been replaced by evacuation of the Jews to the East as a further possible solution, in accordance with previous authorization by the Führer.

However, these actions are to be regarded only as provisional options; yet the practical experience is already being gathered here that is of major significance in respect to the coming final solution of the Jewish question.

In the course of this final solution of the European Jewish question approximately 11 million Jews are envisaged. They are distributed among the individual countries as follows:

## A.

<i>Country</i>	<i>Number</i>
Altreich	131,800
Ostmark	43,700
Eastern Territories	420,000
Generalgouvernement	2,284,000
Bialystok	400,000
Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia	74,200
Estonia – free of Jews	
Latvia	3,500
Lithuania	34,000
Belgium	43,000
Denmark	5,600
France, Occupied Territory	165,000
Unoccupied Territory	700,000
Greece	69,600
The Netherlands	160,800
Norway	1,300

## B.

Bulgaria	48,000
England	330,000
Finland	2,300
Ireland	4,000
Italy, including Sardinia	58,000
Albania	200
Croatia	40,000
Portugal	3,000
Romania, including Bessarabia	342,000
Sweden	8,000
Switzerland	18,000
Serbia	10,000
Slovakia	88,000
Spain	6,000
Turkey (European part)	55,500
Hungary	742,800
USSR	5,000,000
Ukraine	2,994,684
White Russia, excluding Bialystok	446,484
Total:	over 11,000,000

However, the numbers of Jews given for the various foreign states reflect only those of Jewish faith, as definitions of Jews according to racial principles are still partly lacking there. The handling of the problem in the individual countries, especially in Hungary and Romania, will meet with certain difficulties because of prevailing attitudes and ideas. To this day, for example, a Jew in Romania can for payment obtain appropriate documents officially certifying him to be of foreign citizenship.

The influence of the Jews on all areas in the USSR is well known. About five million live in the European area, a scant half-million in the Asian territory.

The occupational breakdown of Jews residing in the European area of the USSR was about as follows:

in agriculture	...	9.1%
urban workers	...	14.8%
in commerce	...	20.0%
employed as government workers	...	23.4%
in the professions – medicine, press, theater, etc.	...	32.7%

Under appropriate supervision, in the course of the final solution, the Jews are to be suitably assigned to labor in the East. In big labor gangs, with the sexes separated, Jews capable of work will be brought to these areas, employed in roadbuilding, whereby a large part will undoubtedly disappear through natural diminution.

The remnant that may eventually remain, being undoubtedly the part most capable of resistance, will have to be appropriately dealt with, since it represents a natural selection and in the event it is set free is to be regarded as the nucleus of a new Jewish revival. (Note the experience of history.)

In the course of the practical implementation of the final solution, Europe is to be combed through from west to east. The Reich area, including the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, will have to be handled first, if only because of the housing problem and other socio-political necessities.

The evacuated Jews will first be brought, group by group, into so-called transit ghettos, to be transported from there farther to the East.

An important precondition for the implementation of the evacuation as a whole, SS Obergruppenführer Heydrich went on to explain, is the precise determination of the category of persons that may be affected.

The intent is not to evacuate Jews over 65 years of age, but to assign them to a ghetto for the aged. Theresienstadt is under consideration.

Along with these age groups (of the approximately 280,000 Jews who on 31 October 1941 were in the Altreich and the Ostmark, approximately 30 percent are over 65 years old), Jews with serious war injuries and Jews with war decorations (Iron Cross, First Class) will be admitted into the Jewish old-age ghettos. With this efficient solution, the many interventions [requests for exceptions] will be eliminated at one stroke.

The beginning of each of the large-scale evacuation operations will depend largely on military developments. As far as the handling of the final solution in the European areas occupied by us and under our influence is concerned, the proposal was made that the appropriate specialists in the Foreign Ministry confer with the competent official of the Security Police and the SD.

In Slovakia and Croatia the undertaking is no longer too difficult, as the most essential problems in this matter have already been resolved there. In Romania as well the government has by now appointed an official responsible for Jewish Affairs. To settle the problem in Hungary it will be necessary in the near future to impose upon the Hungarian government an adviser in Jewish problems.

With regard to launching preparations for the settling of the problem in Italy, SS Obergruppenführer Heydrich considers liaison with the Police Chief appropriate in these matters.

In occupied and unoccupied France the roundup of the Jews for evacuation can in all probability take place without great difficulties.

On this point, Undersecretary Luther stated that thorough resolution of this problem will occasion difficulties in a few countries, such as the Scandinavian states, and that it is therefore advisable to postpone these countries for the time being. In view of the small number of Jews presumably affected there, this postponement does not constitute an appreciable curtailment in any case. On the other hand, the Foreign Ministry sees no great difficulties in the south-east and the west of Europe.

SS Gruppenführer Hofmann intends to have a specialist of the Race and Settlement Main Office sent along to Hungary for general orientation when the matter is taken in hand there by the Chief of the Security Police and the SD. It was decided that this specialist of the Race and Settlement Main Office, who is not to be active, should temporarily be given the official designation of assistant to the Police Attaché.

IV. In the implementation of the final solution project the Nuremberg Laws are to form the basis, as it were; in this context a solution to the problems of mixed marriages and *Mischlinge* is a precondition for complete settlement of the problem.

In connection with a letter from the Chief of the Reich Chancellery the Chief of the Security Police and the SD discussed the following points – hypothetically, for the time being:

## 1 Treatment of First-degree *Mischlinge*

As far as the final solution of the Jewish question is concerned, first-degree *Mischlinge* are deemed equivalent to Jews.

The following will be exempt from this treatment:

- (a) First-degree *Mischlinge* married to persons of German blood from whose marriages children (second-degree *Mischlinge*) have been born. These second-degree *Mischlinge* are deemed essentially equivalent to Germans.
- (b) First-degree *Mischlinge* for whom special dispensations in any area of life have been granted by the highest authorities of the Party and the State. Each individual case must be re-examined, and the possibility is not ruled out that the decision may again be to the *Mischling's* disadvantage.

The basis for granting an exception must always be the fundamental merits of the particular *Mischling* himself (not the merits of the parents or spouse of German blood).

The first-degree *Mischling* to be exempted from evacuation is to be sterilized in order to prevent any offspring and to resolve the *Mischling* problem once and for all. Sterilization takes place on a voluntary basis. It is, however, the condition for remaining in the Reich. The sterilized *Mischling* is thereafter freed from all restrictive regulations to which he was previously subject.

## 2 Treatment of Second-degree *Mischlinge*

Second-degree *Mischlinge* are in principle classed with persons of German blood, with the exception of the following cases, in which second-degree *Mischlinge* are deemed equivalent to Jews:

- (a) Descent of the second-degree *Mischlinge* from a bastard marriage (both spouses being *Mischlinge*).
- (b) Especially unfavorable appearance of the second-degree *Mischling* in racial terms, to the degree that by virtue of his exterior alone he is counted as a Jew.
- (c) Especially adverse police and political evaluation of the second-degree *Mischling*, indicating that he feels and conducts himself like a Jew.

In these cases as well, however, exceptions are not to be made if the second-degree *Mischling* is married to a person of German blood.

### **3 Marriages between Full Jews and Persons of German Blood**

It must be decided from case to case whether the Jewish spouse is to be evacuated or whether, taking into consideration the effect of such a measure on the German relatives of the mixed couple, he or she is to be assigned to an old-age ghetto.

### **4 Marriages between First-degree *Mischlinge* and Persons of German Blood**

#### *(a) Without children*

If no children have been born of the marriage, the first-degree *Mischling* is to be evacuated or assigned to an old-age ghetto. (The same treatment as in the case of marriages between full Jews and persons of German blood, item 3.)

#### *(b) With children*

If children have been born of the marriage (second-degree *Mischlinge*), they are to be evacuated or assigned to a ghetto, together with the first-degree *Mischlinge*, provided they are deemed equivalent to Jews. Insofar as such children are deemed equivalent to Germans (normal cases), they are to be exempted from evacuation, and also therewith the first-degree *Mischling*.

### **5 Marriages between First-degree *Mischlinge* and First-degree *Mischlinge* or Jews**

In the case of such marriages (including children), all parties are to be treated like Jews and accordingly evacuated or assigned to an old-age ghetto.

### **6 Marriages between First-degree *Mischlinge* and Second-degree *Mischlinge***

Both spouses, regardless of whether there are children or not, are to be evacuated or assigned to an old-age ghetto, since any children of such marriages normally show a greater share of Jewish blood in their racial makeup than do second-degree Jewish *Mischlinge*.

SS Gruppenführer Hofmann takes the position that extensive use must be made of sterilization, especially since the *Mischling*, when confronted



with the choice of being evacuated or sterilized, would prefer to submit to sterilization.

Permanent Secretary Dr Stuckart stated that the practical implementation of the possible solutions just communicated for resolving the problems of mixed marriages and those of the *Mischlinge* would entail endless administrative work in their present form. Thus in order to take biological realities fully into consideration, Secretary Dr Stuckart proposed undertaking compulsory sterilization.

To simplify the mixed marriage problem, further possibilities must be considered with the goal that the law-maker says something to the effect: "These marriages are dissolved."

As to the question of the effect the evacuation of Jews may have on economic life, Permanent Secretary Neumann declared that the Jews employed in essential war industries could not be evacuated at present as long as no replacements were available.

SS Oberguppenführer Heydrich pointed out that these Jews would not be evacuated anyway according to the directives approved by him for the implementation of current evacuation operations.

Permanent Secretary Dr Bühler stated that the Generalgouvernement would welcome it if the final solution of this problem were begun in the Generalgouvernement, because here the transport problem plays no major role and considerations of labor supply would not hinder the course of this operation. Jews needed to be removed as quickly as possible from the territory of the Generalgouvernement, because here particularly the Jew constitutes a marked danger as a carrier of epidemics, and also because by his continuing black-market operations he throws the economic structure of the country into disorder. Furthermore, of the approximately two-and-one-half million Jews here in question the majority of cases were unfit for work.

Secretary Dr Bühler added that the solution of the Jewish question in the Generalgouvernement is primarily the responsibility of the Chief of the Security Police and the SD and that his work would be supported by the agencies of the Generalgouvernement. He had only the one request that the Jewish question in this territory be solved as quickly as possible.

In conclusion, the various kinds of possible solutions were discussed, and here both Gauleiter Dr Meyer and Secretary Dr Bühler took the position that certain preparatory tasks connected with the final solution should be performed right in the territories concerned, in the course of which, however, any alarm among the population would have to be avoided.

The conference was concluded with a request by the Chief of the Security Police and the SD to the conference participants that they afford him appropriate support in carrying out the tasks connected with the solution efforts.

## *Intentions and the “Final Solution”*

BEREL LANG

Although less attention has been paid recently to the dispute between the “Intentionalist” and “Functionalist” accounts of the nature of Nazi policy-making in respect to the “Final Solution,” this does not mean that the points of disagreement between those accounts have been resolved.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, it seems evident that the “Historians’ Conflict” that dramatized the earlier dispute in the public eye was itself no more than a postponement of the same issues that had first been raised there. When writers such as Nolte and Hillgruber proposed, for example, to broaden the framework of responsibility for Nazi policies – in effect to recast the roles of perpetrators and victims – the earlier disagreement about what the Nazis intended or whether they even *had* intentions in respect to the “Final Solution” only reappears, albeit with an enlarged and altered group of agents.<sup>2</sup> The claim, for example, that the Nazi genocide against the Jews was a response to the precedent – and thus to the subsequent threat – of Soviet policies of extermination is in this sense quite independent of analysis of the formal process by which Nazi policies were determined. It could be argued, admittedly, that the position advanced by Nolte and Hillgruber seems in fact to support the Functionalist view of Nazi history, by so attenuating the factors of historical causality (at least where the “Final Solution” is concerned) as to make the notion of individual or even of corporate intention implausible. But this inference would be contrary to *their* intention. For when these historians emphasize the Soviet threat as a dominant consideration in the background of Nazi policy, this implies that the Nazis realized and reacted against the Soviet threat – conditions that place that account within the Intentionalist school of explanation. What occurs here in fact is a not uncommon appeal to the notion of “mitigating circumstances” as a historical, as well as a legal or moral, category – one

Berel Lang, “Intentions and the Final Solution,” *Journal of Social Philosophy*, 22, 1992, pp. 105–13.

that is not only compatible with but also reinforces the intentional status of the action being considered. Yes, the Nazis adopted certain extreme policies, but they did so because of what they perceived as an extreme threat to their own existence. That perception, moreover (so the argument goes), had at least a plausible basis in fact and was thus a plausible basis for their intention – the decision to act on which becomes in turn, then, a “judgment call” that could reasonably have gone either way.

This argument has in its own terms been severely, and it seems to me cogently, criticized. But I am less immediately concerned here with the large, substantive issue of who intended what (and when) than with a number of seemingly rudimentary questions concerning the concept of intention – specifically as intentions are judged to have affected the sequence of causes and effects, which, in the end (whether intentionally or not) resulted in the large-scale extermination of Jews by the Nazis, a fact that in itself neither the Functionalists nor the Intentionalists have disputed. Viewed from this perspective, an odd consensus appears, not only between the historical “revisionists” and their critics, but also between the Intentionalists and the Functionalists. At least so far as the concept of intention is concerned, these two sets of historiographic opponents, whatever their disagreements, are at one. Both conceive of intentions in the same terms: as a state of mind prior to an action which the “intendor” first envisages and then “intends,” that is, aims (and so acts) to realize. Intentions, in other words, are mental acts that precede and refer to a subsequent act – as in the formulaic New Year’s Resolution: “I intend to turn over a new leaf.” The act intended is conceived as an idea before the intention: first the act is conceptualized, and then a decision is made to “intend” it. (This is why I can intend “to go to the beach tomorrow,” but even Columbus could not have *intended* to “discover” America, because if the “idea” of America had been clear enough to be intended, it would already have been “discovered.”)

I have made a point of emphasizing that both the Functionalist and Intentionalist conceptions of intention assume this common definition, although the former finds intention missing in the Nazi genocide and the latter finds it present. It may seem that agreement of this rudimentary sort is hardly worth mentioning, since it is common enough that historians who disagree in the conclusions they draw from a common body of data may nonetheless agree on many of their methodological premises (it would be surprising if the latter were not the case). But so far as concerns judging the “policy” of the “Final Solution,” the methodological concept of intention is arguably itself also a substantive part of this disagreement – substantive enough, in any event, so that the definition of intention itself turns out to be partly what is in dispute between the two accounts. This at least is the thesis posed here which contends, more positively, that on a

second and different view of the concept of intention from that held in consensus by the Intentionalists and Fundamentalists, the ostensive disagreement between the subsequent interpretations disappears: also the Functionalists turn out to be Intentionalists.

Two competing models of intention can be distinguished among the common applications of that concept. The first of these models, what I call the External Model, is the view of intention that has been shared by the Functionalists and Intentionalists. The second, alternative view, which undermines the apparent disagreement between them, has come into prominence in the last several decades under the influence of the linguistic and the phenomenological schools of philosophy – thus, by an odd confluence of such different figures as Wittgenstein and G. E. M. Anscombe, on one side, and Sartre, joining them from the other. It will be referred to here as the Contextual Model of Intention.<sup>3</sup>

The External Model of intention conceives of intentions as meeting two principal conditions: first, that an intention is explicitly (and thus consciously) related to a specific object or goal which is itself independent of the intention; secondly, that the intention chronologically precedes both the realization of that goal and the acts initiated toward that realization. Intentions are thus “external” to the end intended and to the means employed in the effort to realize it. My claim here, then, is that this External Model is assumed in both the Intentionalist and Fundamentalist accounts of the “Final Solution,” notwithstanding their disagreement on the presence or absence of intentions in the single historical event at the focus of their discussion. The two sides have also agreed, of course, on one documentary finding in particular, namely, the absence of any specific written order by Hitler himself that might be judged to have set in motion the policy of genocide against the Jews. It is indeed the absence of this palpable evidence that underlies even the apparent disagreement between Intentionalists and Functionalists: both would conclude that *if* convincing evidence of the existence of such an order should be found, this would significantly alter the disagreement between them.<sup>4</sup> The Functionalist interpretation would, by their own criteria, be refuted by that discovery, and this is openly conceded by them – if only by the prominence given in Functionalist accounts to the “fact” that no such order has been shown to exist or to have existed.

The disagreement between Intentionalists and Functionalists thus revolves around the question of what can legitimately be claimed about Nazi intentions in the absence of such explicit historical evidence. On their side, the Intentionalists contend that even if palpable evidence is never found of an explicit decree authorized or signed by Hitler ordering the “Final Solution” (they offer reasons why such evidence is unlikely to be found or have existed – principally, Hitler’s reluctance to “sign off”

formally on such momentous decisions), the elements of what has come to be known as the "Final Solution" were at once so cohesive and of such an order of importance that, given the structure and hierarchy of the Nazi state, some such command, whether written or oral, *must* have preceded the acts themselves. So, for example, Jäckel accepts as a decisive consideration in arguing the Intentionalist case, that "... Given the nature of the Nazi state and its ruler, it is difficult to imagine that an act of such scope [the genocide against the Jews] with such far-reaching consequences, one so compromising, moreover, to the conduct of the war and the chances for victory, should have been initiated by subordinate agencies."<sup>5</sup> The "Final Solution," in other words, could not have been set in motion by anyone other than Hitler himself, and it could not, because of the combination of its complexity and consistency, have "happened" accidentally as a result of the convergence of smaller-scale and to some extent independent solutions. Again, and quite apart from the merits of the argument, it is the External Model of intention that is being applied here: for an effect of the magnitude of the "Final Solution" to have occurred, a prior and independent "intention" *must* have stood at its source. It follows, then, conversely, that if it could be demonstrated that no such intention had existed, this would itself be sufficient proof that the acts constituting the Nazi genocide had not been intentional at all; if intentions are not "external" in this way, they are not intentions.

There is a legitimate sense in which the Functionalists could charge their opponents here with the fallacy of begging the question. For it is the Functionalists' contention that even large-scale policies can come into existence as the result of a series of smaller-scale steps taken by "local" agencies which thus are not envisioned – or intended – by any one person or any group as subordinate to a single or overarching goal. Such smaller-scale decisions might converge on a single point in such a way as to seem to reflect a common guiding intention; but this appearance does not itself suffice as proof: here, as elsewhere, appearances can be deceptive. What would be required in the instance of the "Final Solution" (as for intentions elsewhere) is a prior and independent statement – or at least prior and independent evidence – of intention: in this case, an edict or order issued by an authoritative source. That such an order has not been found or demonstrated to have existed is a sufficient reason on the Functionalist account for concluding that no such cause stands at the origin of the "Final Solution." The latter act, they then infer, occurred piecemeal and without overarching coordination, involving a number of individual and ad hoc decisions that resulted first in the incarceration and then the mass execution of Jews – decisions made in the context of other and often more urgent decisions and by various, often competing, bureaucratic agencies. Such decisions, Broszat argues, did not originate as part of a general

design, nor were they sustained by a concerted effort intended to realize that design. They only “evolved in the end into a comprehensive ‘programme.’ This interpretation cannot be verified with absolute certainty, but in the light of circumstances... it seems more plausible than the assumption that there was a general secret order for the extermination of the Jews in the Summer of 1941.”<sup>6</sup> (Hans Mommsen carries this thesis even farther; on his interpretation, even the Wannsee Protocol of January 20, 1942, does not constitute an overall plan of extermination.) What transpired on this account were a large number of independent decisions to persecute and in many cases to kill the Jews, but no single and overriding directive that would have been required and evident if those decisions had been part of a systematic policy.

Again: if one asks what common ground exists between these two accounts which differ so radically on the analysis of the causal background of the “Final Solution” (and thus on the related issue of the political and moral responsibility for it), at least one common element is evident – the concept of intention. The differences between the two accounts concern the question of whether the Nazi genocide *was* intentional – not what is to count *as* an intention. The Intentionalists claim that the evidence points to the existence of such an (external) intention; the Functionalists dispute this. But they agree on what the nature of that intention would have been *if* it existed: an antecedent commitment which then led to – caused – the subsequent series of acts constituting the Nazi genocide.

It is at this juncture that the possibility of an alternative to the External Model of intention becomes significant, since with such a possibility the disagreement between the two positions might also be shown to change. Admittedly, the differences between the two positions in their interpretations of the “Final Solution” might be no less extreme on the second model of intention than on the first; if this were the case, it would surely be additional, perhaps conclusive, evidence of the genuine differences between them. On the other hand, an alternative conception of intention might enable one of the positions to meet the other on its own ground, that is, on its own premises, and yet to come away with its original thesis intact. This is indeed the conclusion I propose. For quite apart from the claim made by both Intentionalists and Functionalists that the issue between them can be settled in terms of the External Model of intention alone (I do not mean here either to judge between the claims on these terms or to equate them), the Contextual Model in effect enables the Intentionalists to meet the Functionalists on their own ground: it could grant the Functionalists their description of events constituting the “Final Solution” and still conclude, against them, that the policies and actions at issue were indeed intentional.

At this point, it becomes useful to shift the focus of the discussion here from the specific interpretations of the Nazi genocide at issue between the Intentionalists and the Functionalists to a framework of conceptual analysis based not in historiography but in philosophical psychology. In the latter, the analysis of the nature of intention in relation to consciousness and human agency have been central concerns. From this perspective, fundamental objections have been raised against the External Model of intention; and the alternative model, cited here under the rubric of the Contextual Model, has been presented in its stead. It is important, then, to see both how the objections raised in this nonhistorical source of analysis pertain to the historical question at issue (as that is addressed by the External Model) and how the alternative posed by the second model circumvents those objections without opening itself to others.

The objections to the External Model of intention by proponents of the Contextual Model infer from a combination of empirical and conceptual evidence two principal sets of claims. The first of these involves the criticism that intentions – even individual intentions and *a fortiori* corporate intentions – are necessarily ascribed on the basis of the acts that the intentions are claimed to be the intentions “of.” Intentions, in other words, are “read off” from acts, and this means that they are read off backwards, from the present to the past, not the other way around. This assertion in part reflects the common difficulty of access to evidence. In many situations statements or other indications of prior intention on the part of an agent are meager or even nonexistent – but where it is still reasonable (and sometimes necessary) to assume, on the basis of the character of the acts in question, that they did not occur either unintentionally (involuntarily or gratuitously, that is, without *any* intention) or mistakenly (that is, where an intention to do one thing produces another and quite different result). In other words, intentions are often ascribed even when no prior, or “external,” evidence is available, on the basis of the act itself and/or of other present evidence. If, for example, a fire destroys a building and an inspection shows that the fire seems to have begun simultaneously at various parts of the building, this in itself – in the present – would be evidence (not indubitable, but probable) that the fire had been “intended,” even though no other external evidence existed; the process here is a matter of inference, based on the improbability of simultaneous “combustions.” Furthermore and even more important, intentions often (and on some accounts, always) evolve as functions of actions – as the actions evoke a consciousness of ends (or intentions) *on the part of the agents themselves* not previously envisioned. In this sense, intentions may take shape simultaneously with the actions intended, in response to the part of the act that has immediately preceded it. In this sense, an individual or corporate agent may “discover” even his (or its) own intention during the time when

the act of which it is the intention unfolds. (This seems, indeed, the most common manifestation of anything approximating corporate intentions.)

Second, even when explicit professions of prior or external intentions exist, it would be generally admitted that although such professions count as evidence of some sort, they do not conclusively settle the question of what the intentions are that characterize the action at issue. Individuals or groups sometimes lie in speaking about their intentions; they may also deceive themselves or be unaware in a number of other ways of what exactly they are doing. Even overt statements of intention are thus subject to corroboration; indeed they require it – and that corroboration comes from what is done, beyond what is said (although the saying itself is also, of course, a form of doing).

On these several grounds, then, statements of prior intention turn out to be neither necessary nor sufficient conditions for “knowledge” of intentions. Intentions are sometimes ascribed where there is no such evidence, and even when such evidence exists, it is subject to further confirmation or disconfirmation in terms of the actions that ensue, with which the statements of intention are associated. It is these acts, then, that speak the last word about intentions. This means that the basis on which intentions are ascribed is not prior to the “object” or goal of intention but contemporary with it, an aspect of its realization or failure, but in either of those events, part of the process of actualization. It is not, in any event, bound to occur prior (or as external) to that process.

This first consideration may seem to address only the question of how we determine what someone’s intentions are, not how one “has” or knows one’s own intentions – that is, how intentions occur in the first place. But here another objection against the External Model is raised by the Contextual Model, an objection based on certain principles in the general theory of mind. On the External Model, to “have” an intention is interpreted literally – that is, an intention is viewed as an “object” (an idea and/or feeling) located in a mind or will, which is also in some sense an object (or space that objects or impulses may then fill). To “have” something is to possess it, to be able to identify it spatially and/or temporally and to be able to distinguish it in those terms from whatever is not part of it. Thus, intentions on the External Model would be separable from both the goal “intended” and the actions taken to realize that goal (and the intention). They must then be located someplace else. But where, Anscombe asks, “is that [intention] to be found? ... Is it formulated in words? And, if so, what guarantees that I do form the words that I intend? For the formulation of the words is itself an intentional act. ...”<sup>7</sup> On the External Model, in other words, either intentions entail an infinite regress (in which case they would never get started) or they exist in a metaphysical and inaccessible limbo, a “place” that is not in any usual sense of the



term a place at all. If intentions disclose themselves as the physical embodiment of a prior act – in words or as a feeling or mental image – then there is a problem in providing assurance that what was intended is in fact what is embodied; we require an independent criterion to judge that the intention has been adequately expressed. But this would require assurance that the independent criterion has itself been adequately applied – and so on. On the other hand, if intentions are prior but require no palpable embodiment, what – and where – *are* they? They seem here to be mysterious entities, able to “act” but having no substance themselves.

What emerges from this second consideration thus reinforces the implications of the first one: intentions – including even my own – exist as an aspect of what is *done*. Intentions may emerge in the process of acting – and, in fact, it is in the context of acting that corroboration of the existence and character of intentions is possible. Intentions, in other words, are not only impossible to ascertain independently, they do not *exist* independently or apart from the actions with which they are “subsequently” associated. In themselves, as “external” to the actions, intentions have no claims; not only are they not “things in themselves,” they are not “things” at all.

It will be evident that at the basis of this Contextual Model is an attack on the Cartesian theory of mind according to which the mind is a substance or thing. Insofar as the mind is reified in this way, its acts – including intentions – also are reified and also become entities, since they then “originate in” or “belong to” a particular place. But, on the other hand, if this “ghost in the machine” conception of mind is rejected, then its consequences are also placed in question: intentions become aspects or functions of acts, unfolding as the acts themselves do. And this is indeed what the Contextual Model proposes.

It might be objected to these last comments that in order to settle the issue between the External and the Contextual models of intention, we are forced to choose between two competing theories of mind which underlie them – a much larger issue and one that moves far afield from the singular historical question from which the present discussion set out. Undoubtedly, at some point in following the implications of the two models of intention, such a choice might well be entailed (and it is important for the methodology of historiography to have this formal consideration made clear). But for the analysis here, it is sufficient to conceive of the two as nonexclusive alternatives – suggesting, in other words, that intentions occur or are ascribed at different times on each of these models, and thus that they each may have claims as explanatory means.

It seems evident, at any rate, that the concept of “corporate intentions” is more immediately (perhaps even only) intelligible on the Contextual Model than on the other, since unlike the External Model, the Context-

ual Model requires no assumption of an independent corporate “mind” or “will” but only the evidence of actions that converge on a goal, quite aside from any other, independent (external) evidence.

It is precisely the latter kind of evidence that is available and explicit in relation to the Nazi policy of genocide against the Jews and that would thus, on the thesis argued here, identify that policy as intentional even if no other “external” evidence existed or was yet to be forthcoming. (That some evidence of this type exists in respect to the Nazi genocide only adds to the force of the Contextual Model in that case.) In this sense, everything claimed by the Functionalist position in its premises could be granted (for the sake of the argument): Let it be agreed that no single determinant decree ordered the “Final Solution”; let it be granted that the idea of the “Final Solution,” of the genocide against the Jews, evolved in stages, so that even seven or eight years after the Nazis came to power, it was not yet “intended,” at least in the sense that that goal is not presupposed as an explicit motivating or ulterior cause in the various items of racial legislation imposed by the Nazis or even (up to that point) in the evidence of their brutal treatment of the Jews under their control – or even in their development of the network of concentration camps and ghettos in Germany, Western Europe and Poland, all of which occurred before the date (sometime in 1941) when, by general “intentional” agreement, the design of the “Final Solution” became clear.

With the invasion of Russia, and the Barbarossa and Commissar orders that accompany it, however, any denial of the Nazi genocide as intentional in the strict sense of that term becomes increasingly difficult to maintain; and with the establishment, beginning with Belzec in October 1941, of the six “death camps,” it becomes *prima facie* implausible insofar as the intention involved is judged by criteria at all close to the standard ones. The facts and numbers here are well-known: six camps; upwards of 2.5 million Jewish dead, who were transported to their execution from Germany itself, France, Greece, the Netherlands, Belgium, Slovakia, Croatia, Hungary, other parts of Poland, in a period extending from December 1941 to November 1944. Even without the evidence that exists of the centralized coordination of this process through Himmler’s offices in the RSHA, the facts themselves here disclose the design of intention.

Assume (contrary to the evidence) that no independent statements of intention defined and conjoined the purposes of these camps; assume (again contrary to the evidence) even that the Nazis responsible for carrying out the purpose of the individual camps were unaware of the full network of camps and other institutional means of murder that were being employed. Even with these assumptions, the very fact of what was being done is sufficient to have constituted an intention, since the alternative, namely, that these acts were either natural or accidental or even that

they were intentional but directed toward a different goal, become on the face of the matter impossible to credit; that is, if the concept of intention has any institutional or corporate meaning at all. The intention is *there*, in the "facts" themselves, attested to by a "Functionalist" description of small-scale or local events fully as much in evidence as would be required by Intentionalists who impose putatively stricter requirements.

The alternative account which would hold that, even at this point, what was going on was the convergence of a number of individual decisions that seemed to have been moved only by a common purpose or intention cannot be denied as a logical possibility – but even aside from the documentary evidence of coordination and design that this hypothesis contradicts, there remain the acts themselves and the implausibility of the suggestion that a pattern of this sort does not of itself represent an intention or could have ensued only as a function of intentions. Notice, for example, the formulation of Broszat: "It appears to me that there was no overall order concerning the extermination of the Jews and that the programme of extermination developed through individual actions and then *reached gradually its institutional and factual character in the spring of 1942 after the construction of the extermination camps in Poland.*"<sup>8</sup> Broszat's point here seems to be a causal argument: that because the "programme of extermination" developed gradually – not even preceding the construction of the extermination camps – even when the latter had been built and were in operation, the "Final Solution" was even then "institutional and factual": it was in some sense going on – but still without an overall intention (since that would properly have preceded the phenomenon, and it didn't). But this assumes that *in addition to* the facts and actions thus acknowledged, there would have to be an overarching consciousness, an explicit and cohesive articulation of policy; that is, an external intention. But on the Contextual Model, such an additional requirement is gratuitous and even if it were met would be insufficient. Since intentions reside in the acts themselves and since the ensemble of acts is not in question, neither is the intention that the acts represent.

On the Contextual Model, intentions, even when the evidence for them is overt and explicit (that is, external), are necessarily known by a form of inductive inference. From this fact, as it applies to the Nazi genocide, the Functionalists conclude that because induction does not produce the certainty of deduction, any ascription of intention can be doubted. On the Contextual Model, however, one can readily grant the validity of this general argument without crediting the conclusion as an objection, since the latter conclusion, on that model's view, would hold even if there were explicit (that is, noninferential or nonascriptive) evidence. There need not have been a central and prior decree ordering the "Final Solution," a single consciousness aware of each element of its practice or of its overall

goal – and yet still there could have been, there *was* an intention in the relation joining the individual parts of that policy. To insist on the requirements cited by the Functionalists for admitting the existence of intentions would in fact ensure that not only was the “Final Solution” not “intentional,” but also that virtually no corporate acts in settings as complex as those defined by relations among or within modern states in a technological age can be judged to be intentional: the very concept – and hence possibility – of corporate and even individual intention would be challenged. The latter implication indeed seems a constant feature of the Intentionalist position. The External Model of intention on which the Functionalist position depends presupposes for the existence of intentions a condition that is rarely met even when the presence of intentions is most flagrant and undisputable; even when the condition stipulated by them is met, furthermore, it leaves the presence of intentions in doubt.

To maintain the Functionalist account consistently then, as based on the External Model of intention, is in effect to forgo the possibility of historical explanation, at least so far as human agency and intention are at times understood to have a legitimate role in such explanation. The Functionalists might claim that the latter conclusion does not necessarily follow, that it holds only in respect to *certain* historical events or processes – of which the Nazi genocide against the Jews was one. They could claim this, however, only on the supposition that what is at issue in analyzing the history of the “Final Solution” is whether or not it occurred intentionally – when it is the question of what corporate intentions *are* that is a prior and decisive issue for the claims they make, one that they fail to address directly and thus, in the end, also mistake.

## NOTES

- 1 See on the “Intentionalist” side, e.g., Karl Dietrich Bracher, *The German Dictatorship* (London, 1979); Gerald Fleming, *Hitler and the Final Solution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982); Eberhard Jäckel, *Hitler in History* (Hanover, N. H.: University Press of New England, 1984). For “Functionalist” statements, see Martin Broszat, “Hitler and the Genesis of the Final Solution,” *Yad Vashem Studies* 13 (1979): 61–98, and Hans Mommsen, “National Socialism: Continuity and Change,” in Walter Laqueur, ed., *Fascism: A Reader’s Guide* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976). A collection of statements on the dispute and its emergence into the *Historikerstreit* appears in James Knowlton and Truett Cates, eds., *Forever in the Shadow of Hitler?* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1993). See also the exchange between Martin Broszat and Saul Friedländer, “A Controversy about the Historicization of National Socialism,” *New German Critique* 44 (1988): 81–126;

- and Saul Friedländer, *Memory, History, and the Extermination of the Jews of Europe* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), chs. 4 and 5.
- 2 Ernst Nolte, *Das Vergehen der Vergangenheit: Antwort an meinen Kritiken in sogenannten Historikerstreit* (Frankfurt: Ullstein, 1987); Andreas Hillgruber, *Zweierlei Untergang: Die Zerschlagung des Deutschen Reiches und das Ende des Europäischen Judentums* (Berlin: Siedler, 1986).
  - 3 See, e.g., Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), 159–72, and *Zettel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 43–58; G. E. M. Anscombe, *Intentions* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1957); Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel Barnes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), "Introduction: The Pursuit of Being."
  - 4 On the dispute over the existence of this written order. see the summary by Michael Marrus, *The Holocaust in History* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1987), ch. 3.
  - 5 Eberhard Jäckel, 58.
  - 6 Martin Broszat, 93.
  - 7 G. E. M. Anscombe, op. cit., 52.
  - 8 Martin Broszat, op. cit., 93 (emphasis added).

*A Controversy about  
the Historicization of  
National Socialism*

MARTIN BROSZAT AND SAUL FRIEDLÄNDER

I

September 28, 1987

Dear Mr Friedländer,

On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the end of Nazi rule in May 1985, I published an essay entitled "A Plea for a Historicization of National Socialism" ("Plädoyer für eine Historisierung des Nationalsozialismus") in the magazine *Merkur*. As far as I know, you have voiced reservations about the concept and fundamental idea of this historicization postulated a number of times in various lectures and articles, more than any other of my colleagues in the field of contemporary history in Germany and abroad. Moreover, your apprehensions were also affected by the backwash of the *Historikerstreit* that erupted in 1986 in the Federal Republic, though this particular debate has been characterized in part by a quite different set of motives, emphases and opposing camps. In my view, this dispute has certainly also led to some positive results. Yet the *Historikerstreit* was not particularly suited as a means toward furthering an objective discussion of the notions which I – for completely nonpolemical reasons – had put forward in my "Plea" a year earlier. Rather, a part of my arguments were extolled and applauded by the wrong camp, while in contrast, certain reservations and doubts surfaced where the basic ideas expressed therein (in my "Plea") had met open-minded interest and agreement before.

Due to such "distortions" of the objective discussion of the topic as a result of the *Historikerstreit*, I declined (as you are aware) – after giving

the matter considerable thought – to accept an invitation by the Fischer Verlag to contribute to a paperback collection of essays that might have afforded me an opportunity in the fall of 1987 to respond, albeit briefly, to your critical “Reflections on the Historicization of National Socialism” (“Überlegungen zur Historisierung des Nationalsozialismus”) contained in that volume. I decided against such a response and against a republication of my “Plea” in this paperback collection for one principal reason: because I did not wish to contribute a helping hand to yet another rather one-sided compilation of essays on the *Historikerstreit*, which had already generated a spate of publications.

You regretted that decision, but have fortunately agreed with my suggestion that we discuss the problem “among ourselves” – outside of such a context and within the more sedate forum of the *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte* – in the form of a dialogue consisting of three exchanges of letters. We trust the readers of this journal will take it upon themselves to read the two initial points of departure for this dialogue – my “Plea” in *Merkur* and your “Reflections” in the Fischer paperback volume<sup>1</sup> – since, in the course of the following exchange of letters, I am sure that it will be possible to recapitulate the arguments developed by us there only in part and not in their full entirety. Moreover, we will be embarking here upon an experiment whose outcome is quite uncertain. Our agreement in regard to the dialogue remains, for the time being, only a token of our mutual good intentions to engage in a discourse which will not be simply polemical, but rather, so we hope, a fruitful and enlightening undertaking. Yet whether – and how well – we have succeeded in this task will not emerge until we are finished, and the readers of the journal will have to be the final arbiters of that.

In opening our dialogue, I would like to dwell on three questions:

1. The concept of the historicization of National Socialism which I make use of is ambiguous and can easily be misunderstood – in this I agree with you completely. In your critique, you proceed basically from the premise of the pervertibility of this concept, the ease with which it can be abused and misused, and not from what I indicated quite expressly as its objective and motivation. In my “Plea” I did not furnish any basis or “handle” for your fear that the concept of the historicization of National Socialism had provided a dangerous catchword for a false normalization of historical consciousness in the Federal Republic, and that a step had thus been taken down the path leading toward a moral leveling of perspectives on the Nazi period.

Due to the fact that misunderstanding and distrust can nonetheless apparently remain extremely powerful factors, I would like, at the outset of our discussion, to underscore quite clearly the following point. My concept of historicization was – and remains – bound up with two

postulates which are mutually conditioning and thus indispensable: First, it is based on a recognition of the necessity that, in the final analysis, the Nazi period cannot be excluded from historical understanding – no matter how much the mass crimes and catastrophes which the regime perpetrated challenge one again and again to take a stance of resolute political and moral condemnation. Secondly, my concept of historicization is founded on a principle of critical, enlightening historical understanding (*Verstehen*) this understanding, shaped in essential terms precisely by the experience of National Socialism and the nature of man as revealed by the Nazis, should be clearly distinguished from the concept of *Verstehen* in the frame of German historicism of the 19th century, with its Romantic-idealistic basis and the one-sided pattern of identification bound up with this notion.

From my perspective, the concept of historical “insight” (*Einsicht*) appears more pertinent and to the point than that of “understanding” in regard to the ambivalence of post-National Socialist historicization. Insight in a double sense: seen, on the one hand, as a distancing explanation and an objectification to be achieved analytically; and, on the other, viewed as a comprehending, subjective appropriation and empathetic re-living (*Nachvollzug*) of past achievements, sensations, concerns and mistakes. Historical insight in this dual sense is quite generally – and not only in respect to the Nazi period in German history – charged with the task of preventing historical consciousness from degenerating once more into a deification and idealization of brute facts of power, as exemplified by the Prussian-German historical thought of a Heinrich von Treitschke. A historicization which remains aware of this double objective in gaining and transmitting historical insight is in no danger whatsoever of relativizing the atrocities of National Socialism. Correspondingly, I attempted to make clear in my 1985 “Plea” that in trying to deal with National Socialism, what remains crucial is precisely the ability to endure the acute tension between the two components of ‘insight’ – (a) the desire to understand and (b) critical distancing – and not to take refuge either in a *Pauschaldis-tanzierung*, a general and wholesale distancing, (which is morally likewise an all-too-simple option) or an amoral *Verstehen* predicated on “mere understanding.”

For reasons which remain a mystery to me, all this was not able to dispel your fears and suspicions that a departure on the train of historicization supposedly constituted the beginning of a journey whose final destination was a relativism of values: a relativism where everything can be “understood” and “excused.” To allay such apprehensions, I would like to cite a wise and historically knowledgeable journalist on the staff of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, Hermann Rudolph. In October 1986, Rudolph commented on the *Historikerstreit* in his paper in the following way: The



historicization of National Socialism, in his view, is not only unavoidable, but rather is absolutely necessary if one wishes to comprehend the ambivalent connections between civilization and aggressivity in the effective history (*Wirkungsgeschichte*) of the Third Reich. In dealing with such interconnections, “a sense of judgment that has only been sharpened in moral terms gets nowhere, or merely lacerates itself.” As Rudolph sees it, the danger that the singularity of National Socialism might be compromised by such a differentiation is “about the least likely eventuality.” National Socialism, Rudolph contends, itself provided a sufficient guarantee against such an eventuality by the unprecedented magnitude of its crimes and devastation – in historical terms, these remain unforgettable.<sup>2</sup>

2. My polemic stance against a more declamatory, morally impotent general and wholesale distancing from the Nazi period provoked particular concerns and critical objections on your part. I would like in the following to present a clarification regarding this – a clarification drawn from the very evolution which “mastering of the past” (*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*) has undergone in the Federal Republic.

Initially, right after 1945, the number-one item on the agenda was the creation of an anti-National Socialist political and social order and a return, on the level of the discussion about constitutional norms, to the humanitarian values of a constitutional state. This renewal of norms and the associated necessity for a sharp verbal renunciation of the Nazi period were all the more unavoidable since (and although) at that time, during the Adenauer era, people were not particularly willing or indeed able, to a sufficient degree, to assume a morally convincing position of uncompromising condemnation in respect to the concrete individual cases of manifold entanglements in the former regime of injustice – and to engage in a detailed confrontation with this past. In other words, the official general and wholesale distancing from the Nazi past, despite its importance for the reestablishment of norms, compensated for (and yet simultaneously served to mask) the insufficient investigation and subsequent punishment of concrete individual involvement with respect to guilt and responsibility. Such investigations and punishment frequently did not occur, or were too limited in scope. The Nazi past was rejected in general terms, in declamatory fashion, also due to the fact that it was very awkward to weigh and ponder that past more precisely and in detail. Correspondingly, historical inquiry about the recent past in the 1950s and 1960s was dominated by a demonological interpretation of National Socialism, concerned more with bringing about a distancing exorcism of the demons than arriving at a historical explanation.

In the immediate postwar period, there were many weighty political and psychological reasons for this approach of declamatory general distancing. Yet these reasons lost much of their importance as time passed and the democratic order of government in the Federal Republic took on

stability. Nowadays, when we have a situation where the field of history and historical studies is no longer represented by a generation whose members were contemporaries of National Socialism and became adults before 1945, but rather is represented, already in large measure, by the grandchildren of that generation, there is no longer a sufficient reason for the imposition of a general quarantine. Moreover, there is no longer any great need for the charging and prosecution of perpetrators, since at the present time there are very few left who might properly be accused of direct responsibility. In addition, the former distinctions of being differentially involved in and affected by National Socialism have, in the meantime, largely blurred and faded within the society of the Federal Republic. In contrast, the desire to understand this past has become all the more powerful, especially among younger people – a past with which they are repeatedly confronted as a special legacy and burden, a kind of “mortgage,” yet a past which for them can only be experienced intellectually and in historical terms.

By no means – and let me repeat this once again – does this mean that the moral evaluation and condemnation of the crimes and failures of the Nazi period are passing from the scene. It does mean though that such evaluation and condemnation must be mediated by conscientious historical inquiry, and that they must be able to stand the test of a rational comprehension of this period. If one proceeds from these needs and from the necessarily transformed perceptions of the younger generation of Germans, then, for quite some time, the crucial matter has indeed not been whether historicization should be seen as a desideratum. Rather, what remains crucial today is only the necessity of making people conscious and aware of the unavoidability of this historicization – a process which has been in progress now for some time.

3. Of course, such a German-centrist perspective alone is not enough. I attempted in my “Plea” to make clear, if nothing else, that the history of the Nazi period cannot be determined by German historians alone. Rather, one of the special features of this period is that, in the wake of the incalculable persecution of millions of individuals of non-German nationality, any exclusive German claim to historical interpretation in regard to this period has been forfeited. Every German historian is well advised to keep this fully in mind, with all the consequences such an awareness entails. To the extent that the history of National Socialism has become a central chapter in the historical experience of those persecuted by the Nazis from all countries and nations, it holds to a particular degree that this period is by no means a dead past in historical terms for these persons and the generation of the bereaved. It is both absurd and presumptuous for Germans to demand that memory be submerged in the slough of such dead historicity. Among the special features of the scholarly-scientific

investigation of this past is the knowledge that this period still remains bound up with many and diverse monuments of mournful and accusatory memory, imbued with the painful sentiments of many individuals, in particular of Jews, who remain adamant in their insistence on a mythical form of this remembrance.

German historians and students of history – and let me add this very expressly to my “Plea” – have the obligation to understand that victims of Nazi persecution and their bereaved relatives can even regard it as a forfeiture of the right to their form of memory if historical research on contemporary history, operating only in scientific terms, makes claims in its academic arrogance to a monopoly when it comes to questions and concepts pertaining to the Nazi period. Respect for the victims of Nazi crimes demands that this mythical memory be granted a place. Moreover, there is no prerogative here of one side or the other. Whether the juxtaposition of scientific insight and mythical memory presents a fruitful tension also depends, to be sure, on whether the former is able to provide productive images and insights, or whether it is based only on a coarsening – with the passage of time – of the data of history: on a process involving the forgetting of details still familiar to contemporaries and of the imponderable elements of genuine historical events. Among the problems faced by a younger generation of German historians more focused on rational understanding is certainly also the fact that they must deal with just such a contrary form of memory among those who were persecuted and harmed by the Nazi regime, and among their descendants – a form of memory which functions to coarsen historical recollection.

In your collection of essays entitled *Kitsch und Tod*, you dealt with various literary forms into which such mythical remembrance has been transposed. Perhaps you paid too little attention there to a fact which appears to me of great significance in this regard: namely that, in their nonscientific way, many such literary, mythical images of the Nazi experience furnish us with insights. Such insights are, in the best sense of the term, “intelligent,” and are thus quite compatible with the growing need for a better scientific understanding of this past.

## II

Dear Mr Broszat,

The present context is certainly a most adequate framework for a thoughtful clarification of the themes outlined in your “Plea” (as well as in some previous articles), and of some of the critical remarks expressed in my “Reflections.”<sup>3</sup> I am grateful to you for suggesting this possibility and to the editors of the *Vierteljahreshefte* for accepting the idea.

In the opening statement to our discussion, you may have given the impression that my criticism of your text was much sharper and less tentative than it was. But, we seem to agree on what explains part of the criticism, namely that the concept of historicization, as you formulated it in the “Plea,” was “ambiguous and easily misconstrued” and led thereby to some incomprehension and some misuse too, particularly within the context of the *Historikerstreit*. Some difficulties, however, seemed inherent in the concept itself. In any case, your statement put in focus some of the main issues and brought up at least one crucial new theme, possibly the most important of all.

1. The historical origins of the general and wholesale distancing from the Nazi era, within the postwar West German context, are clear to me. But our discussion is not about the general scene; it is about historiography. My impression was that *Weimarer* since the early 1960s at least – let us take K. D. Bracher’s *Die Auflösung der Weimarer Republik* as a symbolic starting point – West German historiography and the historiography of the Nazi era in general adopted, all in all, a reasonably detached, non-moralistic approach. As far as precise and detailed inquiry goes, this historiography was certainly as strictly scientific as that of any other period. You know the impact of your own work, as well as that of Hans Mommsen, for instance. Thousands of studies have dealt with all possible subjects, from all possible angles. Nowhere do I see “moralism” or, as a matter of fact, some kind of “overall blockade” which would have hampered the normal development of scientific inquiry. *Alltagsgeschichte* may have been criticized for conceptual reasons, but this did not stop it from becoming a flourishing field.

You were possibly right in pointing to the “monumental” presentation of the *Widerstand* and, in general, in stressing the existence of much more confusion and normalcy in many areas of life during the Nazi era, in emphasizing similarities more than clear-cut differences in attitudes of various groups (your examples in the literary field, for instance), etc. In short, you ask for a greater perception of complexity and ambiguity, but again, although this process of differentiation is still going on, and will by definition go on as long as historical inquiry itself, one cannot say that historians have been unaware of the complexities of the overall picture for the last 25 or 30 years. It so happens that, more than 20 years ago, I myself published a biography of Kurt Gerstein with the subtitle “Die Zwiespältigkeit des Guten” [Paris, 1967; Gütersloh, 1969], where the ambiguity of individual positions and roles, even within the SS, even within the annihilation machinery, was at the very core of my argument.

In short, all this being well known, one may wonder what blockade the “Plea” was trying to lift, what yet unopened door it wished to open. And, as your articles, those of 1983 and that of 1985, were somehow pleas for

a massive change in historiographical attitudes toward the Nazi era, one could wonder what the boundary was which you wished to cross. Sometimes, you express your aim in general formulas, but these general formulas leave uncertainty about what you have in mind. For instance, you conclude your 1983 article "Literatur und NS-Vergangenheit" with the following lines:

Our reflection on this period from the vantage of a lengthy span of 50 years should finally also help us to disengage ourselves to a greater extent from the false notion of the dominant negative centrality of National Socialism in German 20th-century history.<sup>4</sup>

You will understand that for those who are aware of the ongoing debates about the *Sonderweg*, who know that the place of the Nazi era within German history is the object of the most diverse and unhampered opinions, such a call, with the word *finally*, sounds puzzling. In short, how should one understand the "Plea" in relation to the historiographical work of the last decades? Why a "Plea?" Where is the "blockade?"

The discrepancy between the general state of the historiography of the Nazi epoch and the tone of urgency of your "Plea" can give the impression that you aim, in fact, at a very significant change of focus in considering the overall picture along some of the lines which I tried to define in my "Reflections": relativization of the political sphere; cancellation of distancing; historical evaluation of the Nazi epoch as if it were as removed from us as 16th-century France. . . .

2. Within the theoretical framework which you outline, you write that historical *Verstehen* cannot "come to a halt with the Nazi period." You suggest, as a possible approach, a critical understanding, that is, if I follow you correctly, a balanced "historical insight" based on the constant interaction of *Verstehen* and of "critical evaluation." The question is: What does it mean concretely?

The immediate problem is that of the limits. There is no reason to argue against your endeavor on any theoretical ground, but in practice you may indeed encounter the difficulty to which I pointed in my "Reflections." We both quote approvingly Hermann Rudolph's "Falsche Fronten?" and, indeed, it was one of the more original contributions to the *Historikerstreit*. But what is Rudolph's concrete point, the one relevant here? Historicization as you pursue it is necessary, he says, but one cannot praise it, as Jürgen Habermas did and, at the same time, heavily attack Andreas Hillgruber's position in *Zweierlei Untergang*: "One cannot actively accelerate this process of differentiation," writes Rudolph, "and simultaneously continue to look back in disgust." There, really, lies your dilemma: Where are the limits of the *Verstehen*? Where does the critical

distancing intervene? There is no difficulty as far as the overtly criminal domains are concerned, but what about the Wehrmacht units holding the Eastern front in 1944/45? I do not want to develop all the contradictions into which this, by now notorious, example could lead, in the light of your theoretical premises, but it would be extremely helpful if you agreed to comment on it, as it is almost a litmus test of the applicability of the widened historical insight you possibly have in mind.

3. I wonder, however, if one of the main reasons for your “Plea” and, therefore, part of the answer to my previous questions is not to be found in the third and last section of your statement. It is the perception of the NS-era held by “the victims” of the Nazi regime which could well be the main *locus* of the moralistic approach. Here is the problem that historiography – and you say “German historiography” – has to face. You express respect for what you consider as the specific memory of the victims, but you call it a “mythical” memory and you conclude:

Among the problems faced by a younger generation of German historians more focused on rational understanding is certainly also the fact that they must deal with just such a contrary form of memory among those who were persecuted and harmed by the Nazi regime, and among their descendants – a form of memory which acts to coarsen historical recollection.

I assume, first of all, that we do not speak here of popular *Geschichtsbilder*, but of the work of historians. In the “Plea” you mentioned that, after the war, the history of the Nazi era was essentially written by historians who had been forced to leave Germany for political or racial reasons, or had placed themselves at a strong critical distance from Nazism. This certainly influenced the image they had of this era. What you imply here is that the victims or their descendants continue, even after four decades, to hold to this kind of nonscientific, black-and-white “mythical” memory, creating in fact the problem you allude to.

This issue will, I think, be very central to our debate. It has not been openly dealt with up to now and it is important for all that it be brought to the surface and clarified. Let me therefore try to understand your point as well as possible and ask you, at the outset who, more precisely, would be the historians belonging to the category of carriers of a “mythical” memory.

I assume that the Jewish victims (and their descendants) are the essential category you have in mind. It would be useful to know, however, if non-Jewish French historians for instance, belonging, let us say, to families involved in the Resistance, or just French historians, considered among many others, would be included in your category. And, if you limit the category to the Jews, who is included? Those who were direct victims of Nazism and their descendants only, or all the Jews? You once expressed

your admiration for such pioneers of the analysis of Nazism, all of them Jewish émigrés, such as Ernst Fraenkel, Franz Neumann and Hannah Arendt. Are they, retrospectively, included in your analysis? And what about Jewish historians who, later on, opened vistas which correspond to your own interpretation of the history of the Third Reich?

A second preliminary aspect of the issue seems to me no less important than the preceding one. You oppose the rational discourse of German historiography to the mythical memory of the victims. You mention younger German historians as the natural bearers of this rational discourse. Some of these younger historians are, it so happens, among the most sensitive to the moral issues raised by the history of the Third Reich. But why refer to the younger historians? The recent debates have all been conducted among a great majority of historians belonging, on the German side, to the “generation of Hitler Youth,” at least, sometimes belonging to families considered as involved at the time, etc. Do not misunderstand me: I feel strong empathy with those bearing such difficult burdens, but wouldn’t you agree that this German context creates as many problems in the approach to the Nazi era as it does, differently, for the victims? This point, which you seem to have disregarded, was a decisive argument in the “Reflections.” Allow me to quote a few words from my text:

This part [the NS era] is still much too present for present-day historians, be they German or Jewish in particular, be they contemporaries of the Nazi era or members of the second and perhaps third generations, to enable an easy awareness of presuppositions and of *a priori* positions.

But, if we see things from your perspective, why, in your opinion, would historians belonging to the group of the perpetrators be able to distance themselves from their past, whereas those belonging to the group of the victims, would not?

These are really preliminary issues. As for the historical place of the “Final Solution” (as a paradigmatic illustration of the criminal dimensions of the Nazi era) within an overall representation of that era which should not be “dominantly negative” (*übermächtig negativ*), we should, it seems to me, come back to it in our next exchange.

### III

October 26, 1987

Dear Mr Friedländer,

Your objections provide abundant material for our continued exchange of ideas. Naturally, they also point up all the difficulties entailed in a

German-Jewish discussion on the presentation and remembrance of the Nazi period. Some time ago, you expressed the apprehension that a heightened move back to one's own historical experience and concerns among both Germans and Jews could serve to widen even further the gap in a contrastive and opposed presentation of this period. This danger certainly exists, and I would like later on to speak a bit about a few aspects in this regard which also disturb me. Yet perhaps one should view the situation with a certain sense of confidence. In view of the liveliness of the controversies – but also of the new kind of reflection being generated, as I see it, by the *Historikerstreit* – I wonder whether there might not indeed be new possibilities emerging here as well for German-Jewish dialogue, a dialogue which has to date been neglected.

One must ask: Did this dialogue – which Gershom Scholem even 25 years ago called a mere myth<sup>5</sup> – indeed ever take place as a public event? When it comes to this “dialogue,” is not the same thing basically true with respect to the German side which I have criticized regarding the official German “mastering of the past:” Namely, that despite all its merits in setting the fundamentally correct political and moral tone, it has remained floundering for some time now in declamatory statements, devoid of any strength or imagination for historical reflection that might also be morally innovative? In German-Jewish discussions on recent history which have taken place in increasing numbers in Israel, the Federal Republic and elsewhere for two decades, isn't it true that an open expression of a good many of the particularly sensitive, most opposed sentiments, feelings and memories have been avoided – either consciously or unconsciously – because otherwise it would have been impossible even to initiate contacts for such a discussion in the first place? Consequently, is it really so terribly surprising if now, after the need on both sides (for whatever reasons) has grown stronger to give expression to such elements of memory, that this is quite naturally taking place associated with every possible kind of awkwardness, mutual offense and counterreaction due to wounded feelings – because it is new and untried, and there is little fund of experience on which to draw? Yet I do not wish to see this simply as a reason for being discouraged. Please accept this thought, tentative as it is, also as my first response to the especially insistent and pressing questions you pose in the final section of your contribution. In the following, I do not intend to take up your important objections one by one. Rather, I wish once again to try to put forward my position in respect to several larger complexes.

It is a fundamental misunderstanding of the concept of historicization, as I have sketched it, to assume that it involves a *revision* – brought about consciously or by negligence – of the clear judgment on and condemnation of the dictatorial, criminal, inhumane aspects and measures of the Nazi regime, aspects and measures which have by now been researched and



documented in detail and at length. That judgment has been firmly established within the historical sciences in West Germany for some time, and with almost 100% unanimity. This likewise holds true in fundamental terms when it comes to Ernst Nolte. Rather, the making conscious of the process of historicization – a process which in factual terms has been going on now for some time – or the plea for greater historicization of the Nazi period, aims more at a meaningful *continuation*, at a *new stage* in dealing with the Nazi past (in the discipline of history as well as in public discussion), *on the basis* of this evaluation of the essential political-moral character of Nazi rule. This is an evaluation which is now indeed quite firmly established.

Such a call for greater historicization proceeds from the assumption that despite the colossal expansion of detailed historical research on the Nazi period which you allude to, the total image of the period as reflected in public consciousness and in comprehensive historiographic treatments has remained strangely shadowy and insubstantial, precisely because of the “obligatory” and preeminent underscoring of the philosophical-political basic features. It is more often a black-and-white construct viewed in retrospect rather than a genetically unfolding multidimensional history; it is a landscape inhabited less by plastic, psychologically convincing figures than by types and stereotypes drawn from the conceptual vocabulary of political science. It is framed more by moral-didactic commentary than by historical report. It is formulated in the more-or-less emotional or abstract-academic language of historians whose embarrassment, disconcertedness vis-à-vis the history of National Socialism also manifests itself in the fact that they refuse to grant that history the true and genuine means of communication employed by historical presentation – namely, narrative language.

What is basically meant by historicization is an attempt to break up and dissolve such stereotypes, embarrassment constraints and over-generalizations. It does not imply any softening of the political-moral judgment on the unjust character of the Nazi regime, even if it must work out the plurality of historical lines of action and historical subjects, not all of which can be categorized in terms of the political system and ideology of Nazism. In this sense, I spoke in 1983, within the framework of what was more some sort of ancillary observation on literature during the Nazi period, about the false conception, which ought “finally” to be overcome, “of a dominant and all-powerful negative, central position of National Socialism” in all areas of life during the Nazi period. Unfortunately, what you then did was to take this quote and place it in another context, thus giving it a misleading meaning.

Apparently, however, in the matter just alluded to we also have differing conceptions. In your “Reflections,” you contend that because

Nazism was fundamentally criminal, even those institutional and social spheres which were little contaminated by the Nazi ideology (industry, bureaucracy, the military, churches, etc.) should be viewed primarily from the perspective of whether – and how – they served to maintain Nazi rule. “Even nonparticipation and passivity” were “as such elements serving to stabilize the system.”<sup>6</sup> From the perspective of the victims of National Socialist persecution – and, in particular, Jewish experience – in view of the large number of “bystanders,” who *did not aid* the regime in its measures of persecution, this standpoint is certainly understandable. Formulated in absolute terms, however, it would serve to block important avenues of access to historical knowledge, and would also hardly satisfy the demands of historical justice.

I sense something similar when it comes to your strong reservations and doubts regarding almost all the newer perspectives of historical inquiry into the Nazi period, such as the study of *Alltagsgeschichte* (everyday history) or the social-historical approach, especially insofar as these approaches exceed the bounds of the political sphere and political period of 1933–1945. You view this – and quite narrow-mindedly in my opinion – merely, or primarily, as an attempt to deflect interest from the political-ideological core of events. In my opinion, in arguing this way you fail to give proper consideration to the fact that only by the inclusion of such other perspectives do many aspects of the question as to how Nazi rule was able to develop become comprehensible. Only by including such perspectives can numerous “shearing forces,” as it were, lying outside of ideology and politics be rendered visible for the first time. This in no way alters the judgment about the crimes of the Nazis; yet it helps make more comprehensible why such large segments of a civilized nation succumbed mistakenly – and to such a massive degree – to National Socialism and Hitler. Historicization in this sense also means, above all else, an attempt to remove some part of that barrier which would make this period in history appear to be a completely strange and alien phenomenon.

Christian Meier was correct in his recent reference to this point. For a long time, not only the Germans in the GDR but in the Federal Republic as well, which claims to be the successor state of the German Reich, were unwilling to accept this successor status, but rather had accustomed themselves to presenting German history prior to 1945 with distancing, like the history of a foreign people. We wrote about this history only in the third person, and not in the first person plural; we were no longer able to feel that this history was somehow dealing with ourselves, and was “our thing.”<sup>7</sup> Historicization, which wishes to contribute to lifting this barrier, is not an attempt to place the Nazi period in some compartment reserved for dead history. Rather, its intention is to create the prerequisite for rendering it at all possible for this utterly depraved chapter in German

history to become capable of being integrated once again as a portion of one's own national history.

What I comprehend least of all is your criticism regarding the intention and manner of "everyday history" of the Nazi period, as we have been endeavoring to develop the approach in the *Institut für Zeitgeschichte* in Munich since the mid-1970s within the framework of the long-term "Bavaria Project." What we have focused on here is the previously much-neglected task of rendering historical memories comprehensible and infusing them with life, an endeavor which quite specifically does not seek to exclude the political and moral elements, but tries rather to provide them with a new foundation by means of concretization.

One such example of concretization involved rendering the motives of erring small-time Nazi supporters more transparent via the detailed presentation of a specific local milieu during the emergency, thus divesting the concept "Nazi" of its character as a mere catchword. It was also achieved, when, through the plastic portrayal of individuals and cases of brave resistance on a small scale, the exaggerated concept of the basic resistance was once again imbued with fidelity to historical reality, thus opening up for the reader a new approach to the topic, both via the path of *Verstehen* and that of moral empathy (*Nachvollzug*). Or it was accomplished in still another manner, for example, when the Jews, the "objects" of this persecution, often degraded to mere abstractions in the description of Nazi persecution, took on palpable form in their concrete local and social milieu, and it became possible – through the presentation of concrete exemplary instances – to make visible the so heavily poisoned relationship between Germans and Jews under the conditions prevailing during Nazi rule.

Documentation and studies focusing on local and everyday history, like those of the "Bavaria Project," were able to unearth a profusion of previously unknown facts for the first time, specifically in regard to what remains the central question in moral terms – namely, what degree of involvement in the murderous persecution of Jews by the Nazi regime the majority of our people can be accused of, and what manner of guilt they incurred, also by failing to provide assistance and sympathy. It is not enough that the treatment of the Nazi period express the retrospectively correct moral view of its more-or-less smug and self-satisfied authors. As little as history can ill afford to get along "without distinguishing between good and evil" – as Dolf Sternberger recently pointed out in a thoughtful reflective commentary on the *Historikerstreit* – it likewise cannot do without "a sympathetic and involved interest."<sup>8</sup>

In conclusion, I would like to take up once again the problem of German and Jewish historical memory and – at your special suggestion – the role of Auschwitz within this historical memory. I believe I made clear that what I mean by "mythical memory" is precisely a form of remembrance located

outside the framework of (German and Jewish) historical science. However, such remembrance is by no means simply the negative opposite pole to scholarship and scientific method; it is not simply erroneous or coarsened historical memory. Precisely when confronted with the inexpressible events of the Holocaust, many Jews have indeed come to regard as indispensable a ritualized, almost historical-theological remembrance, interwoven with other elements of Jewish fundamental world-historical experience, alongside the mere dry historical reconstruction of facts – because the incomensurability of Auschwitz cannot be dealt with in any other way.

For this reason, there probably is no need to provide an answer to those additional and very artificial questions regarding my classification, as imputed by you, of various historians, Jewish and German. We certainly both agree that such great émigré German-Jewish scholars as Hannah Arendt, Franz Neumann and Ernst Fraenkel achieved pioneering insights into the nature of National Socialism, viewed in part precisely from the vantage of a longer-range historical perspective – insights whose importance was not recognized and utilized by German research on recent history sufficiently until at best fifteen to twenty years later.

What remains for us a difficult problem – one that may lie at the very center of our differing conceptions, though it need not necessarily be a line of demarcation separating the perspectives of Jewish and German historians – is that the magnitude and singularity of the horrifying events of the destruction of the Jews call not only for a mythical interpretation; rather, they also necessitate a retrospective construction of diabolical causation in historical presentation which is comparable in scale. Consequently, this need has repeatedly come into conflict with the political-scientific discovery of the “banality of evil” by Hannah Arendt or with other historical treatments which demonstrate that the full magnitude of this crime was made up of a multitude of often very small contributing elements, and of frequently negligible portions of guilt.

A point is reached in confronting the singular event of Auschwitz where scientific comprehensibility and explicability are doubtless far outstripped by the sheer epochal significance of the event. For that reason, Auschwitz has in retrospect rightfully been felt again and again indeed to be the central event of the Nazi period – and this not only by Jews. Consequently, Auschwitz also plays a central role in the West German historical treatment of the Nazi period – in school books, for example – as can be readily shown. And in the face of the especially intensive Jewish memory of the Holocaust, it may well be that such intensity causes other deeds and outrages perpetrated by the Third Reich to pale and fade away more and more in the memory of the world. Yet this potential of Holocaust memory also tends retrospectively toward the creation of a new hierarchy and ordering of the factors shaping history, i.e., an attempt to unfurl the entire

history of the Third Reich in reverse fashion backwards starting from Auschwitz, instead of unfolding its development in a forward direction, in keeping with historical methodology.

When viewed retrospectively, one historical fact must be juxtaposed to the centrality of Auschwitz: namely, that the liquidation of the Jews was only feasible during the period of time in which it actually was carried out specifically because that liquidation was not in the limelight of events, but rather could largely be concealed and kept quiet. Such concealment was possible because this destruction involved a minority which even many years before had been systematically removed from the field of vision of the surrounding non-Jewish world as a result of social ghettoization. The ease with which the centrality of the "Final Solution" was carried out became a possibility because the fate of the Jews constituted a little-noticed matter of secondary importance for the majority of Germans during the war; and because for the allied enemies of Germany, it was likewise only one among a multitude of problems they had to deal with during the war, and by no means the most important one.

It is evident that the role of Auschwitz in the original historical context of action is one that is significantly different from its subsequent importance in terms of later historical perspective. The German historian too will certainly accept that Auschwitz – due to its singular significance – functions in retrospection as the central event of the Nazi period. Yet qua scientist and scholar, he cannot readily accept that Auschwitz also be made, after the fact, into the cardinal point, the hinge on which the entire factual complex of historical events of the Nazi period turns. He cannot simply accept without further ado that this entire complex of history be moved into the shadow of Auschwitz – yes, that Auschwitz even be made into the decisive measuring-rod for the historical perception of this period. Such a perspective would not only serve, after the fact, to force totally under its usurped domination those non-National Socialist German traditions which extended on into the Nazi period and, due to their being "appropriated" by the regime, to a certain extent themselves fell prey to National Socialism. Above all else it would fail to do justice to the immense number of non-German and non-Jewish victims, who also have their own – and different – monuments of memory.

#### IV

Dear Mr Broszat,

Each exchange, indeed, opens many new vistas in our discussion. Let me, at the outset, try again to clarify the reasons for the possible

misinterpretation of your “Plea” as a demand for some kind of revision of the traditional historical representation of the Nazi epoch.

In our first exchange of letters, we agreed that the ambiguity of the historicization concept led, by itself, to many misunderstandings, and I added some remarks about the possibly problematic aspects of the concept as such, even when correctly understood. But there is more to it. It seems to me that the aspect of the “Plea” which raised most questions was the way in which the sequence of your arguments ended in a generalization about the moral evaluation of the Nazi epoch.

The sequence could be read as follows: after the war, a black-and-white picture of the Nazi era was imposed by an essentially émigré-dominated historiography, creating some kind of moralistic “counter-myth,” as Ernst Nolte would put it. This stereotypical, simplistic representation seemed to endure, notwithstanding the passage of time. Now after several decades, a change became imperative and you outlined the methodological aspects of that change, aspects which I myself analyzed in my “Reflections.” It is at this point that what seemed to be the logical outcome of your argumentation – and these were the concluding lines of your text – found its expression:

The general and wholesale distancing from the Nazi past is also another form of suppression and tabooing. . . . To eliminate this blockade in favor of an attempt to achieve a deepening of moral sensibility toward history in general, specifically based on the experience of National Socialism – that is the meaning of this plea for its historicization.<sup>9</sup>

This conclusion was meant, I am sure, to overcome the moral paralysis, the declamatory and ritual aspect which you impute to much that was written about Nazism over the last three decades. But widening the moral perception of the Nazi epoch to the whole of history as such, that is, making it boundless and, therefore, hard to define and to apply, except for general formulas about good and evil, could easily be understood as a thrust toward some kind of overall relativization of the moral problems *specifically raised by Nazism*: This may have created the feeling that your idea of historicization as expressed in the “Plea” was quite far-reaching.

You criticized what you considered to be my rejection of new historical approaches. Obviously, I am not opposed to social history of the Nazi era or to *Alltagsgeschichte* as such. In my “Reflections,” I stated several times that, for the historian, the widening and nuancing of the picture was of the essence. But the “historicization,” as you presented it and as was already discussed here, could mean not so much a widening of the picture, as a *shift of focus*. From *that* perspective, the insistence on *Alltag* or on long-range social trends could indeed strongly relativize what I still

consider as the decisive historiographical approach to that period, an approach which considers these twelve years as a definable historical unit dominated, first of all, by the “primacy of politics.” If we agree that this is the core, every additional differentiation is not only important, but necessary. My methodological “traditionalism” should be understood only in the context of my initial reading of the sense of the “Plea.” As far as *Alltagsgeschichte* is concerned, however, I am of two minds. Some of the criticisms expressed at the colloquium which you yourself organized around the Bavaria Project and which carried the pertinent title *Alltagsgeschichte: neue Perspektiven oder Trivialisierung?* do not seem unconvincing to me. But, as an example will show further on, many insights can obviously be drawn from the *Alltag*.

It would be helpful to clarify one more methodological point: your insistence on the *narrative approach* as the only possible historical approach for the *Gesamtdarstellung* you have in mind. In the “Plea,” you criticized the fact that up to now when the historian turns to the Nazi era, “the ability to feel one’s way emphatically into the web of historical interconnections comes to a halt, as does the pleasure in historical narration.” In your second letter, you insist on the narrative approach and have hard things to say about conceptual history of the Nazi era. This was not your position when you wrote your *The Hitler State*, and I assume that it is the constant awareness of the nuances of each specific situation, as brought to the fore in the Bavaria Project, which led you to change your theoretical approach.

One could argue about conceptual history versus traditional narrative until doomsday and come to no result. I am curious to see, however – and this is said without any irony – where, once we get the kind of total presentation you call for, the “pleasure in historical narration” will find its expression. It is not the “narrow” viewpoint of the victims I try to express, but something else. What created the distancing, what eliminated the normal historical empathy is not only the criminal dimension of the regime, but also the abhorrent vision of nationalist exaltation, of frenetic self-glorification which so rapidly penetrated practically all domains of public life and so much of private life, too.

Other regimes have demonstrated their capacity for criminality, but at their beginnings at least, in their official proclamations at least, they aimed at universal ideals, at changing the condition of man. We know what became of all this. Nonetheless, there can be a kind of ideologically free “pleasure in historical narration” when we think of “the ten days that shook the world,” possibly even when we recall the first years of the Soviet experience, notwithstanding one’s personal commitment to liberalism. The universalist dream is there in all its power. Nothing of that exists in Nazism. For other reasons, millions of people still feel historical

understanding and empathy when they think of the Red Army crossing the borders of the Reich. For Andreas Hillgruber, this could be the viewpoint of the victims of Nazism only, and his “pleasure in historical narration” was awakened by the desperate resistance of the Wehrmacht. But for you, where could that domain be? Don’t you think that, seen from the angle of narrative history and the “pleasure in historical narration,” my argument about the possible reappearance of some kind of historicism is not entirely unfounded?

Let me now respond, very scantily, to what, in fact, would require much longer considerations: your thoughts about the place of “Auschwitz” within the *Gesamtdarstellung* of the Nazi epoch. First of all, when I speak of “Auschwitz” in this context, I refer to Nazi annihilation policies toward various categories of victims. As I mentioned at the end of my first letter, I consider Auschwitz as a paradigmatic expression of Nazi criminality. In that sense, the implicit meaning of the last line of your second letter does not correspond to my thinking.

You state – and we obviously agree – that for any historian of the Nazi epoch, Auschwitz is the salient “event,” because of its specificity and incommensurability. It seems to me that Jürgen Habermas recently expressed this specificity and incommensurability in particularly strong terms:

Something took place here (in Auschwitz, S.F.) which up until that time no one had even thought might be possible. A deep stratum of solidarity between all that bears a human countenance was touched here. The integrity of this deep stratum had, up until that time, remained unchallenged, and this despite all the natural bestialities of world history... Auschwitz has altered the conditions for the continuity of historical life connections – not only in Germany.<sup>10</sup>

You write that this incommensurability of Auschwitz calls for a mythical creative memory to help in reaching any kind of understanding. Historiography, indeed, does not suffice. This being said, I agree with you that the historian, as historian, cannot consider the Nazi era from its catastrophic end only. According to the accepted historical method, we have to start at the beginning and follow the manifold paths as they present themselves, including numerous developments within German society which had little to do with Auschwitz, and this throughout the history of the era. But the historian *knows the end* and he shares this knowledge with his reader. This knowledge should not hamper the exploration of all the possible avenues and interpretations, but it compels the historian to choose the central elements around which his unfolding narrative is implicitly built. In short, we come back to the problem of the



dominant focus. Nobody would argue that a whole chapter on social security cannot be included in a *Gesamtdarstellung*, but even if you show the normalcy of everyday life, even if you stress the split consciousness, the main thrust of your narrative progresses toward an end that you know very well.

All this leads to the two arguments outlined toward the end of your second letter and which seem to me to be central to your entire demonstration. Their validity would allow, up to a point, the integration of Auschwitz within the general framework of the historicization of the Nazi epoch, as outlined in the "Plea."

First, you indicate that the very singularity and incommensurability of Auschwitz not only leads to a necessary search for some kind of mythical interpretation, but that, on the level of historiography, it also leads (only for some historians, obviously) to a reconstruction of the chain of events, as if these had been initiated by equally singular, almost demonic, causes. This creates, for scientific historiography, the kind of problem which you already mentioned in your first letter. In your opinion, the answer is to be found in Hannah Arendt's theory of "the banality of evil."

Secondly, you write that the centrality of Auschwitz, as we perceive it today, was not perceived during the events, as the Jews had been progressively isolated from the surrounding populations, the annihilation was kept totally secret, and even the allies did not consider it a central issue.

Both the "banality of evil" and the non-perception of the events by German society are clearly essential for the historicization of National Socialism. Let me try to relate to both points, albeit in inverse order, and, necessarily, in the most schematic terms.

Let us start with what people knew or did not know. As far as Germany is concerned, the most recent studies of this problem – the one by Ian Kershaw in his revised English edition of *The 'Hitler Myth': Image and Reality in the Third Reich*<sup>11</sup> and an excellent study in *Alltagsgeschichte*, H. and S. Obenaus's *Schreiben, wie es wirklich war!...*<sup>12</sup> – indicate that the general population was much more aware of what was happening to the Jews than we thought up to now. But why not quote your own texts, for instance your 1983 article, "Zur Struktur der NS-Massenbewegung," where you write, concerning what the population knew of the extermination policies against the Jews:

The Nazi leadership was thus itself plagued by the strongest doubts as to whether the full knowledge of the crimes it had initiated would find popular support. Yet these persecutions were not so completely and totally evident and visible. And especially the anti-human basic conception from which they were derived – in particular, the fanatical hatred of the Jews – was

repeatedly given expression by the leadership in public on almost every occasion. Thus, there was certainly a social basis of response for this.<sup>13</sup>

More telling even is the remark you make at the end of the same article concerning the possible reasons for the passivity of the German population, even as the end approached: "One factor involved here apparently was also the consciousness that one had a shared complicity in the excesses and crimes of the regime."<sup>14</sup>

In short, although the destruction of the Jews may have been a minor point in the perceptions and policies of the allies during the war, it seems, more and more, that it loomed as a hidden but perceived fact in many German minds during the war itself.

If my point is correct, it has considerable importance in relation to the core thesis of your "Plea." Indeed, normal life with the knowledge of ongoing massive crimes committed by one's own nation and one's own society is not so normal after all. . . .

In your opinion, Hannah Arendt's "banality of evil" offers the historiographical answer to the kind of unacceptable constructs which you mentioned. Immense evil can result from a multitude of tiny, almost unperceived and more or less banal individual initiatives. There need not be an overriding evil design to achieve a totally evil result. But even Hannah Arendt used other concepts when dealing with Nazism and the "Final Solution." You may recall that she spoke of "radical evil," too, and that, in a famous letter to Karl Jaspers, she considered the actions of the Nazis as not to be comprehended in normal categories of guilt and punishment.<sup>15</sup>

I do not know, by the way, who the historians are who seek demonic causes to explain Auschwitz. I know of some Germans and others who put emphasis on ideology and on centrally directed policies. This has little to do with demonology, and I cannot understand why you impute this strange position to historians belonging to the group of the victims. Nobody denies the "banality of evil" at many levels within this annihilation process, but it possibly is not the only explanation at all levels.

In my opinion, part of the leadership and part of the followers, too, had the feeling of accomplishing something truly, historically, metahistorically, exceptional. We both know Himmler's Posen speech of October 1943 in its details. This is not the banality of evil, this is not, as far as the Jewish question is concerned, a pep talk to tired SS dignitaries; it is the expression of a *Rausch*, the feeling of an almost superhuman enterprise. That is why I would tend to consider some important aspects of the Nazi movement in terms of "political religion," in the sense used by Eric Voegelin, Norman Cohn, Karl Dietrich Bracher, James Rhodes, Uriel Tal and many others. If we speak of a political religion, we come closer again to the traditional framework, but from an angle which leaves ample space

for new investigations. That is what I meant in the "Reflections" when I referred to the still nebulous relation between ideology and politics as far as, for instance, the "Final Solution" was concerned. And if we take this angle, then, indeed, we are somewhat at a distance from the *Alltag* in Schabbach, but not very far from the *Ordensburgen* or from the insistence of some of the commanders of the *Einsatzgruppen* to stay on duty, not very far either from that *Rausch* which penetrated so far and so deep and which was not just the result of a functionally useful "Hitler-Myth." All this, too, somehow has to be interpreted within the continuity of German history. Here, no doubt, we agree.

Finally, allow me some remarks about the German-Jewish dialogue, its difficulties and its possibilities. When Gershom Scholem, in the text you mention, spoke of this dialogue as a myth, he referred first of all to the pre-Nazi period, in which, possibly, the Jews in Germany carried on a "dialogue" with themselves. After what happened between 1933 and 1945, the idea of such a dialogue appeared to Scholem as a desecration of the memory of the dead. He may have changed his mind later on, and his stay in Berlin, shortly before his death, may have been an expression of this change of mind.

The fundamental difficulty of such a dialogue remains nonetheless, and is compounded by the layers of ritualized behavior and gross interests which cover it. You mentioned this difficulty in general terms, but you also referred to it in relation to the "pressing questions" which I asked you in the last part of my first letter. These were not "pressing questions:" it was an attempt to understand what you meant by opposing the rationally oriented German historiography to the more mythically oriented memory of the victims. In your answer, you give central importance to the mythical memory and, as for the difficulties of historiography in the face of unacceptable constructs, you present them with less emphasis, but present them nonetheless, as I have just tried to show.

In case the change of emphasis in your second letter was more the expression of a desire not to push too strongly a theme considered overly sensitive for our discussions, perhaps you would wish to reconsider. Some measure of openness belongs to our "experiment" and this openness, as you yourself noted, is the only possible basis for a true German-Jewish dialogue.

## V

December 4, 1987

Dear Mr. Friedländer,

I have given a great deal of thought to the question of the element of constraint or openness in our exchange of ideas in the wake of your final

remark in your last letter. The difficulty inherent in our dialogue – and this we both agree on – is probably also manifested in this respect. You yourself express it with a certain degree of reserve when you state that “some measure of openness” is necessary. In the concluding section of your first letter, as in your “Reflections,” you had already warned about the danger of overestimating the possibilities of objective scholarly-scientific treatment of the Nazi period, since this period was still “much too present” and it was by no means an easy task for present day historians to rid themselves of their prejudices or even to make themselves conscious to these prejudices. Of course, I wonder whether your skepticism necessarily has to burden our discourse with such a high degree of suspicion, which I repeatedly can sense behind your comments and remarks.

Thus, I find it very meaningful that in connection with the above-mentioned admonition you also conjecture that certain positions of the *Historikerstreit* in the Federal Republic may perhaps be indeed bound up with the fact that the German historians involved in that debate “belong to the generation of Hitler Youth.” In the context of our correspondence and what occasioned it, this remark should probably also categorize my plea for historicization as being a need of the generation of Hitler Youth. A few paragraphs before that, you challenge me in your first letter to apply the concept of “critical understanding” which I make use of to the example put forward by Andreas Hillgruber of the “German Wehrmacht units which held the Eastern front in 1944/45” (and thus also helped to maintain the concentration camps). You contend that that would constitute “almost a litmus test,” and it is your belief I should not be spared that test. In your second letter, you broached the matter of Hillgruber’s identification with the Eastern front and inquired as to whether my “delight in historical narration” might perhaps wish to seize upon this topic as well, or some other one.

Do you really believe, Mr Friedländer, that such questions are merely pensive and reflective, rather than “pressing” and constraining, that they serve to promote the openness of our dialogue – and do not engender embarrassing constraint? Haven’t you yourself staked out such definite positions in your suspicious distrust of possible tendencies toward trivialization and minimization in dealing with the Nazi period in the work of German historians, in particular those of the generation of Hitler Youth – as expressed in articles you have published and lectures you have given (specifically, for some time now, in the form of a critique of my “Plea”) – that you are no longer able to break free from and abandon these positions, even here in this exchange of letters? Wasn’t, for example, the dispute you had several years ago with Syberberg’s and others’ treatments of the Nazi period in films or imaginative literature<sup>16</sup> – in itself a quite fascinating confrontation – shaped and determined to an excessive degree

by such a pessimistic suspicious distrust? In so doing, haven't you also erected a fence around yourself, one which only permits you "some measure of openness?"

First I would like to say something about the topic of the generation of Hitler Youth, to which I belong (born 1926); these remarks are not only intended in reference to my own case, but are broader in implication. Initially, allow me a very personal comment: If I myself had not been a member of the generation of Hitler Youth, if I had not lived through its very specific experiences, then I probably would not have felt such a need after 1945 to confront the Nazi past so critically and, as we sensed back then, to do this at the same time with "solemn sobriety." As a member of that generation, one had the good fortune of not yet being drawn (or being drawn only marginally) into political responsibility for actions. Yet one was old enough to be affected emotionally and intellectually to a high degree by the suggestivity – so confounding to feeling and to one's sense of morality – which the Nazi regime was capable of, especially in the sphere of youth education, and this despite the counter-influence stemming from parents, teachers and acquaintances who were critical of the regime. An important portion of the potential for youthful dreams had been occupied, taken over by the world of Nazism; it was no longer possible to dream other, better dreams.

Only later on, in the period of retreat into the realm of private values during the final years of the war and the immediate postwar period, did we begin to make up avidly, greedily for what we had missed – with a growing feeling, and sense of anger, that we had been cheated out of important years of our youth. Affected, yet hardly burdened, the generation of Hitler Youth was both freer than those who were older, and more motivated than those who were younger, to devote itself totally to the learning process of these years. From the personal knowledge of many of my contemporaries – and this is, I believe, confirmed by the biographies of many others – I know that the majority of this generation of Hitler Youth after 1945 adopted with enthusiasm the values once denounced by the Nazis, and made them their own. An especially large number of committed democrats emerged from this generation, and that generation is indeed overrepresented in the ranks of those who are prominent in politics and culture in the Federal Republic today, as is shown by a report on contemporaries published on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the end of the World War II.<sup>17</sup>

I must try to maintain further openness, if only because, with the necessarily limited framework of our exchange of letters, this is, for the moment, the last opportunity I will have to come back to a few points in your argumentation which I do not wish to let pass without comment, lest the documentation of our exchange of ideas become defective by dint of omission.

First of all, I would like to deal with three clarifications regarding specific points. I then intend to return to several more complex issues that will lead back to the thematic substance of our discussion.

– In my first letter, I stated only that the *concept* of historicization as such was ambiguous and can easily be misused – not my presentation as contained in the “Plea.” You thus went too far and were mistaken in contending in your first letter that we were both in agreement that I had expressed myself in a misleading way in this “Plea.”

– Your version of the supposed motivation of my “Plea,” as put forward in the third paragraph of your second letter, has no basis in what I have written. You yourself call your version a possible reading (“could be read as . . .”). I would have preferred you to have made reference to what I had actually written. I am also surprised that you then go on to embellish the motivation imputed by you to underlie my “Plea” with an imputed concept drawn from Ernst Nolte. This is reminiscent of your already characterized attempt, also contained in your “Reflections,” to place my “Plea” in close proximity to Andreas Hillgruber’s identification with the Eastern front.

– At the end of the second letter, you give rise to the impression, as you did in your first letter, that I had made a distinction between a rational German memory of the Nazi period vs. an irrational Jewish memory of that time. In so doing, you completely reverse and misconstrue the train of thought which guided me and which I was trying to express. I already made clear reference in my first letter to two points, and did so with the expressed purpose of wishing to supplement my plea in this respect and to expand its initially German-centered perspective, as determined by the motivating occasion. My first point was that “any exclusive German claim to historical interpretation in respect to this period had been forfeited” as a result of the outrages of the Nazi regime; secondly, I pointed out that alongside the scientific-academic reconstruction of the Nazi period (by German and non-German historians), there was also a legitimate claim by the victims for other forms of historical memory (for example, mythical), and that there was “no prerogative of one side or the other.”

You can appreciate that it was important for me to point out what I alluded to above. Now though, I would like to get back to several of the broader complexes touched on in our exchange of ideas. First of all, let me return once more to the question of approaches in research and the focus in historical inquiry dealing with the Nazi period.

You concede that “everyday history” or looking at the Nazi period in terms of a longer-range social-historical perspective is a positive development – as long as there is some guarantee that the most important aspect of the period, i.e., the Nazi world view (“*Weltanschauung*”) and the criminal dimension of the political system, remains within the center and focus

of the approach. In contrast, I hold that the wish to prescribe what should or should not be done scientifically – and thus to juxtapose and contrast Broszat qua author of the study *Der Staat Hitlers* to Broszat qua author within the “Bavaria Project” – leads us astray, forcing us into a constrictive narrowing of the possibility to ask scientific questions.

In research such as the “Bavaria Project,” for example, what is crucial initially is to gain new experiences and impressions of the historical reality of the Nazi period as based on a specific new approach, in order to then be able to contrast these in fruitful and productive fashion with experiences garnered using other research approaches. Naturally, you are quite correct in stating that the focus of the “Bavaria Project” differs from the focus, for example, of my earlier studies over many years of German and National Socialist policy toward Poland, or work on the Nazi concentration camps. But a concentrated pursuit of a specific research perspective would be quite impossible if one constantly had to worry and fret nervously about whether the focus – which would naturally have to pay considerable attention to the political system and world view of National Socialism in the writing of any comprehensive treatment of the Nazi period – is also properly chosen within the framework of such a specialized study.

I also wish to contradict your view, expressed with such great eloquence, that a study of the *Ordensburgen* is a greater contribution to essential knowledge on the period than a study of the everyday history of Schabbach. If you take a good look at the findings of all six volumes of the series *Bayern in der NS-Zeit*, you will easily note that what has been documented there is by no means simply an unpolitical “normalcy” of everyday life under Nazism. Rather, one can see that the criminal dimension also extends to a considerable degree far out into the Bavarian province, and that it can even be illustrated in a very vivid and impressive manner instantiated in the local fates of individuals in this province. Take, for instance, the case documented in the sixth volume of this series: that of the Würzburg lawyer and wine dealer Obermayer, who was persecuted with especially rapacious vindictiveness by the Gestapo as a Jew and homosexual – for double ideological reasons, as it were; a man who nonetheless proved capable of resisting this persecution over many years, and with astounding bravery, until he finally met his death in Mauthausen. Yet, on the other hand, I see the function of a research endeavor such as the “Bavaria Project” precisely in its ability to render the side-by-side existence – to an extent without any linking connections – of (a) a relatively unpolitical “normal life” and (b) the dictatorial impositions and persecutions of the regime, a fruitful object for historical inquiry and further thought. In this regard, what can and should ultimately emerge is

what you have justifiably stressed using the example of the “half-knowledge” of the German people regarding the crimes perpetrated against the Jews: namely, that under such conditions, everyday life in the Nazi period was probably not as normal after all as it might appear to have been on the surface.

Yet it is not only these political-moral key questions which are of concern here. Historicization of the Nazi period also encompasses the possibility of looking at the events of this time from the point of view of functionality as well: for example, within the framework of a social-historical theory of modernization. This certainly entails a shift in focus. But it is unlikely any historian who still has his wits about him will, as a result, forget the political aspects, and especially the criminal nature of the regime, or exclude these in an overall treatment of the period.

A quite different aspect of historicization is the problem I raised – which you apparently misunderstood – of the expressive powers of historiography when confronted with the so “corrupt” historical segment of the Nazi period. I had originally written about the lost “delight” in historical narration in another context prior to my “Plea”<sup>18</sup> – this is an article you were probably not familiar with, and in that other context the word itself had an ironic meaning. Actually, it is not a question of “delight;” rather, what is important is the restoration of a plastic historical language even in dealing with the indeed often quite sinister or mediocre figures of the Nazi period – in order to raise these figures up from their shadowy existence as mere phantoms and make them once more the subjects of emphatic (and this can also mean angry) retrospective re-experiencing, and thus likewise subjects of a new moral encounter. Perhaps it is only the plasticity of language which can finally determine whether a figure or a pattern of action of the Nazi period can indeed be conceived of only in typological or symbolic terms, and can no longer be made a living concrete reality within historical language.

I consider it extremely hard – and, in the final analysis, unfair – to justify that you are willing to regard the erring Trotsky, if need be, as a worthy object for the language-based illustrative demonstration of history, but that, by the same token, you would completely withhold the consideration of language from the erring petit bourgeois (*Kleinbürger*) of the Nazi era – a petit bourgeois who voted for Hitler and followed him, but who otherwise profited very little from this and understood even less; and who nonetheless unintentionally made a significant contribution to the efficiency of the regime – indeed, a prototype who “made history” during the Nazi period. There will continue to be spheres within the Nazi period which elude the grasp of plastic historical language. But to deny this language to the Nazi period as a whole appears to me similar to a denial



of the historiographical method based on criticism of sources – because what is at the heart of the project of infusing history with life through the medium of language is an attempt to recover authenticity.

In closing, I would like once again to address myself to the topic of Auschwitz and several of the problems arising from this for history as a science and for historical memory. In your second letter, you stated that what you meant by “Auschwitz” was, quite generally, the “Nazi annihilation policies toward various categories of victims.” You say that you regard Auschwitz as a “paradigmatic expression of Nazi criminality” as such. In my view, such a far-reaching extension of the concept is problematic, also precisely because it is no longer possible then to readily give reasons for and defend the singularity of Auschwitz. If Auschwitz is employed only as a synonym for the “Final Solution,” the problem I have alluded to remains: namely, that in connection with the “centrality of Auschwitz,” which should be underscored for good reasons in any historical, retrospective view, one must also bear in mind just how many other, non-Jewish victims of Nazism there were.

I would like quite expressly to second your position when you emphasize that the “banality of evil” cannot by any means serve as a sole and exclusive explanation for the mass murder of the Jews. That was not what I meant, and I think what you say on this point is impressive; for example, as seen from the perspective of a negative “political religion,” which I likewise regard as a possible way of trying to comprehend the fanatical hatred of the Jews based on the Nazi world view. However, let me also point out that the older generation of German historians (Meinecke, Ritter, Rothfels and others), a generation that initially played a dominant role in German historiography after 1945, very often resorted to writing about a “demonic” or “diabolical” Hitler and the like as a consequence of their inability to offer historical explanations. In contrast with this, there has long been a need for more rational explanation, and such metaphors tend in this connection to impede further questioning rather than furnish answers. When I myself stated that I considered it important, for example, to make clear that even the existence of such a murderous, racist ideology as that of the Nazis nonetheless did not necessarily have to lead automatically to genocide as a consequence – and that the historian therefore was charged with the task of investigating very carefully what the operative real conditions were, in the context of what structures of influence and power, etc. it became possible to translate such an ideology into practice – I saw this likewise as a contribution to historicization: namely, in the sense that the normal historical methods of inquiry and research should also be applied to the study of National Socialism. It should, however, be borne in mind that this is a plea for normalization of the method, not of the evaluation.

Let me come now to the final point that I regard as important in our discussion. My conception of historicization – and this certainly must be quite evident – is antithetically opposed to any presentation of the Nazi period in the form of frozen “statuary,” and meant primarily for didactic purposes. As I see it, the danger of suppressing this period consists not only in the customary practice of forgetting, but rather, in this instance – almost in paradoxical fashion – likewise in the fact that one is too overly “concerned,” for didactic reasons, about this chapter in history. As a result, what happens is that an arsenal of lessons and frozen “statuary” are pieced together from the original, authentic continuum of this era; these increasingly take on an independent existence. Particularly in the second and third generation, they then intrude to place themselves in front of the original history – and are finally, in naive fashion, understood and misunderstood as being the actual history of the time.

That danger is all the greater when historians themselves believe that they no longer need to make any special effort to present an authentic picture of this time – since that period has, in any case, been so totally corrupted by the Nazis; and when historians are accommodatingly inclined to hand over and relinquish this period of history, without any regrets, to be utilized for purposes other than that of historical understanding.

I am firmly convinced that it is precisely the credibility of the didactic transmission of the Nazi period which would suffer immense damage over the longer term if it is not left sufficiently open to repeated feedback from the process of differentiated historical knowledge about this segment of history.

I can well imagine that, seen in this perspective, the centrality of Auschwitz – which lies so very much in the foreground of consciousness and which presses so compellingly for a paradigmatic view – can also pose a problem for the Jewish historical memory of the Nazi period and the transmission of this authentic memory to the following generation. The gigantic dictatorial and criminal dimension of the Nazi period also harbors within it the danger that the authenticity of this segment of history may end up being buried beneath monumental memorial sites for the Resistance – and indeed perhaps also beneath memorials for the Holocaust. In contrast with this, I would like, in closing this final letter, to quote a sentence of the great Israeli historian Uriel Tal, which he formulated in such impressive manner some years ago in Jerusalem at a German-Jewish discussion on the proper form which the historical presentation and treatment of the Holocaust should take. As I best recall, his exact words were: “We have not only or primarily to tell what had been done to the Jews, but what had been lost.”

## VI

December 31, 1987

Dear Mr Broszat,

The inner tension, which, to various degrees, accompanied our exchange of letters, may have been, among other things, the expression of a fundamental commitment to the values which have prompted both of us to devote our entire professional lives to the study of the Nazi period. This tension does not stem from a divergence in basic values, but from differences in perspectives which, nevertheless, appear to us to be of major importance.

In this concluding letter, I shall attempt to clarify, first of all, an issue which you emphasized in your last response – the problem of generations. I shall then touch upon some of your more polemical remarks and finally attempt to sum up where, in my eyes, our differences in interpretation may lie, as well as where I feel our positions have come closer together as a result of this exchange.

Allow me, just incidentally, to correct a purely semantic misunderstanding, as you attached some importance to this question. My basic language is French and my English is often influenced by gallicisms: when I wrote “some measure of openness,” I had automatically translated from the French “*une certaine mesure de franchise*” which, notwithstanding the apparent meaning, has no restrictive connotation. It simply means, openness. We have, I think, succeeded in large part in expressing ourselves in this spirit.

Let me now deal with the first issue, that of generations and, more particularly, the problem of the “Hitler Youth generation.” As a matter of fact, these age-group distinctions and their impact on the memory of the Nazi epoch were clearly made by all the participants in a seminar organized at the *Wissenschaftskolleg* in Berlin on German historical memory of the Nazi period, which you, unfortunately, were unable to attend. In that context, all the German participants pointed to the crucial importance of the “Hitler Youth generation” and its diverse implications.<sup>19</sup>

My own thinking on this issue, however, led me to a comparative perspective, whereby this German age group has a significant counterpart among the victims. What is *common to both* is the fact that they are the *last* groups active on the public scene whose members carry a personal, clear memory of the Nazi period. Therefore, the members of these groups – be they Germans, Jews or others directly involved – have to confront this personal memory with what they may perceive as a kind of shift of collective representations of that past in surrounding society in general. Furthermore, they have to face a possible growing dissonance between

their own memories and what their counterpart group constructs in terms of collective memory (this is also true of the groups of Jews and Poles, for instance). The dissonance between personal memory and socially constructed memories, within one's own society as well as within the counterpart groups, is, I think, one of the reasons which give the present debates their peculiar intensity, aside from the various familiar political-ideological elements. This also holds true when it comes to the *Historikerstreit*, as the great majority of those involved are part of the age group just mentioned (although I am six years your junior, I am, nonetheless, part of the group's outer limit). Within this group, there may be attempts, quite differing and even antithetical, to fix the experience in some kind of final form.

The point of my argument has been and still is that we are all inextricably caught in a web composed of personal recollections, general social conditioning, acquired professional knowledge, and attempts at critical distancing. In point of fact, it is axiomatic that each and every historian, by definition, is confronted with such contextual problems, and yet is able to master these problems and resolve them to a considerable extent, mainly within the sphere of limited, small-scale research. However, if a total interpretation is what is aimed at, like in an extreme case such as ours, I do not believe, be it from experience, observation or from a theoretical point of view, that our generation can "jump out" of this context, much as it may wish to do so.

In relation to the historicization issue, this indeed means that for us a kind of purely scientific distancing from that past, that is, a passage from the realm of knowledge strongly influenced by personal memory to that of some kind of "detached" history, remains, in my opinion, a psychological and epistemological illusion.

The decisive question is that of the attitude toward the same epoch of age groups that come after ours. Is their existential involvement with this epoch lesser or possibly nonexistent, or will it be so in the future? Are the historians among them crossing the line between an existentially determined perspective and a detached scientific point of view? I do not believe that this, for the time being, is the case for many of them. Christian Meier expresses this well when he writes:

It is precisely this path leading beyond the threshold to the "merely historical and nothing more" which the twelve years from 1933 to 1945 apparently do not wish to tread. Instead of becoming shadowy, this past seems to be growing ever larger and more global, and it reaches in undiminished vitality into our own lives.<sup>20</sup>

The same impact of that past weighs, obviously, on parts of the younger generation belonging to the group of the victims. All this makes the

correlation between the passage of time and the possibility of a detached historical view of the Nazi epoch, that is, its historicization, still problematic. As expressed by a younger historian, Wolfgang Benz:

Thus, an open and candid approach to National Socialism, and its treatment – solely for purposes of scholarly interest – as but one era of German history among others, does not as yet appear to be such an easy and ready option. An interval of only 40 or 50 years is still not enough to make the Nazi period something historical.<sup>21</sup>

When it comes to the future development of perception and memory, though, I am not quite so confident about this prediction. Maybe things could turn out quite differently. . . .

Let me come to my second point and some polemical aspects of your last letter: in my “Reflections,” as well as in my letters, I have constantly kept in mind that no basic values cause opposition between us, and that we are discussing matters of perspective, although historiographically of major significance I had not forgotten the strong lines, so encouraging during the *Historikerstreit*, that you wrote in your “Wo sich die Geister scheiden.”<sup>22</sup> If there remain some misunderstandings in our exchange, they can easily be clarified.

The opposition, raised at the end of your first letter, between the mythological memory of the victims and the more rational approach of German historiography, seemed quite clearly stated to me. In your last letter, you indicate that you had differentiated between the historians of both sides on the one hand (“German and non-German historians”), and the mythical memory of the victims, understood in a general sense, on the other. I am glad you have now put it this way.

I mentioned Ernst Nolte’s “counter-myth” in my last letter because, notwithstanding the total difference between the two of you in positions and argumentation – a difference I made crystal-clear at the beginning of my “Reflections” – the postulate that a black-and-white, postwar-determined, moralistic history of the Nazi period had now to be approached without any forbidden questions and without any pedagogical aims, was indeed some kind of common starting point for both conservative as well as more progressively oriented historians. Hans Mommsen stated this unmistakably in his *Merkur* article “Suche nach der ‘verlorenen Geschichte?’” and he made special mention here of Ernst Nolte.<sup>23</sup> In that sense, my remark was a purely factual one and, in any event, I agree with that view myself.

You reproach me for juxtaposing your position with that of Andreas Hillgruber’s representation of events on the Eastern front in 1944–45. In my “Reflections” and my first letter, I referred to Hermann Rudolf’s article

“Falsche Fronten,” an article we both praised, to point out the difficulty that he had underscored: One could not, on the one hand, be in favor of historicization and, on the other, distance oneself from Hillgruber’s mode of representing the situation on the Eastern front, for moralistic reasons. *There* lies part of the difficulty of historicization, as far as the abolition of distance and moral judgments are concerned: It is within those “intermediate” situations that some major obstacles become, I think, evident. This is the only reason why I mentioned that text and indeed wrote that it was a kind of litmus test of the whole problem of distancing and moral positions. When I referred to Hillgruber for the second time, in relation to the “*Lust am geschichtlichen Erzählen*,” I did not write that *you* found the “pleasure in historical narration” in the same area as Hillgruber, but, precisely, I asked *where* in that epoch one could find an expression for it.

Finally, you state that the *concept* of historicization was unclear, but not its application in the “Plea.” The trouble is that the “Plea” could not be clearly understood if its basic concept was in itself unclear and open to misunderstanding. Much clarification, however, has been achieved by this exchange.

This having been said, there remain between us some differences concerning the historical representation of the epoch, though one should also bear in mind what we could regard as the product of our now improved understanding. Let me avoid repeating here the problem of the primacy of politics versus longitudinal social trends, etc. Let me skip the issue of periodization, and concentrate on distancing, narration and different evaluations determined by different group contexts. I shall approach each issue from an angle thus far not strongly emphasized, to avoid mere repetition.

First, the issue of distance. There is, it seems to me, a fundamental difference between normality defined as long-term social processes, as the outward aspects of daily life, etc., and the *perception of normality*. If, within the context of objectively definable normal processes, wide strata of the population perceived the criminal aspects of the system, even in the non-massive criminality of the early years and certainly in their massive criminality later on, and did not distance themselves outrightly from the system itself – whatever the expression of this distancing could have been – the non-distancing for the postwar historian remains something of an intractable problem. I can well appreciate your desire for differentiation and, thanks to our exchange, also the point you made in your last letter about the need to bring contemporary Germans to a recognition of their past by dissolving the traditionally determined, automatic reaction of general and wholesale distancing. Nonetheless, the difficulties entailed by such an undertaking are obvious, because this endeavor is Janus-faced, both on the level of reception and interpretation.

In my opinion, the possibility of a historical narrative reaching a high degree of plastic representation, in the sense of the “historical narration” as you explained it in a very interesting way in your third letter, is relatively easy to achieve within the realms of normality, but becomes a growing problem when you move to the other side of the spectrum. By the way, even within the realm of normality, the image of the common “fellow-traveler” (*Mitläufer*) has become something of a stereotype, possibly the most widely used one in the representation of the Nazi era. In fact, stereotypization is very difficult to avoid when we approach this epoch, possibly because behind each specific case one tends to establish, implicitly or explicitly, the category of political-moral behavior to which the specific case may be linked, this in itself being imposed by the existence of an outer limit of criminality within this system. In any event, when one abandons the field of normality and semi-normality and enters the manifold criminal dimensions of the regime, the plasticity of description becomes practically impossible. One may wish merely to produce the documentation: More would be untenable or obscene.

I recently read Günther Schwarberg's *Der SS-Arzt und die Kinder: Bericht über den Mord vom Bullenhuser Damm*, which describes how some 20 Jewish children, aged five to twelve, from all over Europe were brought together for the purposes of medical experiments which I will not specify here. After the experiments were completed, the children were hanged in the basement of the Bullenhuser Damm school near Hamburg. At this stage of horror, no descriptions are, to my mind, possible, and if you take this as one example among hundreds of thousands and work your way back toward normality, you immediately see the problem which a “total presentation” encounters.

At some stage, a new style has to be introduced for the purpose of historical description, something we have not yet encountered very much in historiographical work. One could say, in fact, that for the historian who chooses narration regarding the immense majority of topics covered by historical inquiry, the duty is, in a sense, to try to visualize as well as possible the events described in order to be able to render them with all the necessary plasticity: When we approach the immense domain of Nazi criminality, the duty of the historian may well be to forgo the attempt to visualize, precisely so that he can fulfill his task in terms of documentary precision and rendition of the events. This paradox may reveal from an unexpected angle what may well be one of the difficulties of historicization as we understand it in our exchange.

Finally, the issue of the differing agendas. By stressing the normality of daily life, the continuity of social processes, etc., you are possibly not only following a purely theoretical historiographical path, but also – and this is quite natural – restoring for the readers, i.e., for German society, a

continuity in historical self-perception, not at the level of political institutions, but at that of the permanence of social reality. Although that is quite understandable, this type of perspective necessarily will differ considerably from that belonging to another group – and above all from the perspective of the victims. Almost by definition, we have differing emphases, differing foci in the general description of that epoch. What might be viewed as a kind of “fusion of horizons” is not in sight.

Moreover, we have not as yet given proper consideration to what is a very new problem, namely that of the historical “boundary event.” As I see it, Auschwitz constitutes just such a “boundary event” – a phenomenon that is not necessarily singular, but which remains unprecedented. To return to Habermas, whom I quoted in my last letter: “A deep layer of solidarity between all that bears a human countenance was touched here.” For this reason, the problem of “focus,” as we would term it, remains for me an unresolved theoretical aspect in regard to a total description of the era, an aspect extending far beyond what could be viewed as a differing group perspective.

Dear Mr Broszat, we are coming to the end of our discussion on historicization as such. Let me repeat here that, obviously, I am all in favor of trying to understand the Nazi epoch in all its historical dimensions, as well as we can, with all the methods at our disposal and without any forbidden questions. Our difference of perspectives relates, I think, to diverging approaches after all this has been admitted as an obvious postulate. What the result of the historians’ endeavors concerning this period will be in a few decades, neither of us knows. I mentioned previously the paradoxical effect of the passage of time as far as this period was concerned. Like you, I am also saddened by the enormous simplifications in the presentation of the Holocaust. Little can be done to counter this except to hold up one’s own scientific-scholarly standards in contrast.

However, entirely opposite thoughts often cross my mind, as I mentioned above, and then I foresee that within a very short span of time, the erosion of that past will increase rapidly within collective consciousness. It occurs to me that under the detached gaze of the future historian, the normal aspects of the picture of the Nazi epoch will, of necessity, grow in dimension and importance. The *intermediate categories* of representation which contain just enough elements of the nature of the regime to make them plausible will become the dominant mode of perception, not because of any conscious desire to eliminate the horrors of the past, but because the human mind, by a natural tendency which has nothing to do with national circumstances, prefers to dwell on the normal rather than on the abnormal, on the understandable rather than on the opaque, on the comparable rather than on the incomparable, on the bearable rather than on the unbearable.



## NOTES

- 1 Dan Diner, ed., *Ist der Nationalsozialismus Geschichte? Zu Historisierung und Historikerstreit* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1987).
- 2 Cf. *Süddeutsche Zeitung* 4–5 October 1986.
- 3 Originally published in English as “Some Reflections on the Historicization of National Socialism,” *Tel Aviv Jahrbuch für Deutsche Geschichte* 16 (1987).
- 4 Hermann Graml and Klaus-Dietmar Henke, ed., *Nach Hitler. Der schwierige Umgang mit unserer Geschichte. Beiträge von Martin Broszat* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1986) 130.
- 5 Gershom Scholem, “Wider den Mythos vom deutsch-jüdischen Gespräch,” *Judaica II* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970) 7ff.
- 6 Christian Meier, *40 Jahre nach Auschwitz. Deutsche Geschichtserinnerung heute* (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1987) 42ff.
- 7 Saul Friedländer, “Überlegungen zur Historisierung des Nationalsozialismus.” Dan Diner, ed., *Ist der Nationalsozialismus Geschichte? 42*.
- 8 Dolf Sternberger, “Unzusammenhängende Notizen über Geschichte” *Merkur* 9 (1987): 748.
- 9 Graml and Henke, ed., *Nach Hitler* 172–173.
- 10 Jürgen Habermas, *Eine Art Schadensabwicklung* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1987) 163.
- 11 Ian Kershaw, *The ‘Hitler Myth’: Image and Reality in the Third Reich* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987); see particularly ch. 9: “Hitler’s Popular Image and the ‘Jewish Question’” 229ff.
- 12 H. and S. Obenaus, “Schreiben, wie es wirklich war!” *Aufzeichnungen Karl Duerkefaeldens aus den Jahren 1933–1945* (Hannover, 1985) 107ff.
- 13 Martin Broszat, “Zur Struktur der NS-Massenbewegung,” *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 31 [1983] 74.
- 14 Broszat, “Zur Struktur” 76. (I am grateful to Professor Otto Dov Kulka for drawing my attention to this article by Martin Broszat.)
- 15 Letter of 17 August 1946, *Hannah Arendt – Karl Jaspers, Briefwechsel*, ed. Lotte Köhler and Hans Saner (Munich: Piper, 1985) 88–93.
- 16 Saul Friedländer, *Reflets du Nazisme* (Paris: Seuil, 1982). The English translation is *Reflections of Nazism: An Essay on Kitsch and Death*, trans. Thomas Weyr (New York: Harper & Row, 1984).
- 17 Werner Filmer and Heribert Schwan, eds., *Mensch der Krieg ist aus! Zeitzeugen erinnern sich* (Düsseldorf/Vienna: Econ, 1985).
- 18 Cf. Martin Broszat, “Der Despot von München. Gauleiter Adolf Wagner – eine Zentralfigur der bayerischen Geschichte,” *Süddeutsche Zeitung* 30–31 March 1985, weekend supplement. In this article, I attempted quite consciously to portray in a fairly plastic manner, and true to reality, the figure of this once so powerful *Gauleiter*, a man who in the standard works on Bavarian history is presented only in very phantom-like fashion by historians specializing in Bavaria.

- 19 The proceedings of the discussions can be found in the library of the *Wissenschaftskolleg* in Berlin.
- 20 Christian Meier, *40 Jahre nach Auschwitz. Deutsche Geschichtserinnerung heute* (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1987) 21.
- 21 Wolfgang Benz, "Die Abwehr der Vergangenheit," in Dan Diner, ed., *Ist der Nationalsozialismus Geschichte?* 33 (English trans., *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* [Summer 1988]).
- 22 Martin Broszat, "Wo sich die Geister scheiden. Die Beschwörung der Geschichte taugt nicht als nationaler Religionsersatz," *Die Zeit*, 3 October 1986.
- 23 Hans Mommsen, "Suche nach der 'verlorenen Geschichte'? Bemerkungen zum historischen Selbstverständnis der Bundesrepublik," *Merkur* (September/October 1986): 864–74.

*Justice Jackson's Report  
to the President on Atrocities  
and War Crimes, June 7, 1945*

ROBERT H. JACKSON

1. The American case is being prepared on the assumption that an inescapable responsibility rests upon this country to conduct an inquiry, preferably in association with others, but alone if necessary, into the culpability of those whom there is probable cause to accuse of atrocities and other crimes. We have many such men in our possession. What shall we do with them? We could, of course, set them at large without a hearing. But it has cost unmeasured thousands of American lives to beat and bind these men. To free them without a trial would mock the dead and make cynics of the living. On the other hand, we could execute or otherwise punish them without a hearing. But indiscriminating executions or punishments without definite findings of guilt, fairly arrived at, would violate pledges repeatedly given, and would not set easily on the American conscience or be remembered by our children with pride. The only other course is to determine the innocence or guilt of the accused after a hearing as dispassionate as the times and the horrors we deal with will permit, and upon a record that will leave our reasons and motives clear.

2. These hearings, however, must not be regarded in the same light as a trial under our system, where defense is a matter of constitutional right. Fair hearings for the accused are, of course, required to make sure that we punish only the right men and for the right reasons. But the procedure of these hearings may properly bar obstructive and dilatory tactics resorted to by defendants in our ordinary criminal trials.

Nor should such a defense be recognized as the obsolete doctrine that a head of state is immune from legal liability. There is more than a suspicion that this idea is a relic of the doctrine of the divine right of kings. It is, in any event, inconsistent with the position we take toward our own officials, who are frequently brought to court at the suit of citizens who allege their rights to have been invaded. We do not accept the paradox that legal responsibility should be the least where power is the greatest. We stand on the principle of responsible government declared some three centuries ago to King James by Lord Chief Justice Coke, who proclaimed that even a King is still "under God and the law."

With the doctrine of immunity of a head of state usually is coupled another, that orders from an official superior protect one who obeys them. It will be noticed that the combination of these two doctrines means that nobody is responsible. Society as modernly organized cannot tolerate so broad an area of official irresponsibility. There is doubtless a sphere in which the defense of obedience to superior orders should prevail. If a conscripted or enlisted soldier is put on a firing squad, he should not be held responsible for the validity of the sentence he carries out. But the case may be greatly altered where one has discretion because of rank or the latitude of his orders. And of course, the defense of superior orders cannot apply in the case of voluntary participation in a criminal or conspiratorial organization, such as the Gestapo or the SS. An accused should be allowed to show the facts about superior orders. The Tribunal can then determine whether they constitute a defense or merely extenuating circumstances, or perhaps carry no weight at all.

3. Whom will we accuse and put to their defense? We will accuse a large number of individuals and officials who were in authority in the government, in the military establishment, including the General Staff, and in the financial, industrial, and economic life of Germany who by all civilized standards are provable to be common criminals. We also propose to establish the criminal character of several voluntary organizations which have played a cruel and controlling part in subjugating first the German people and then their neighbors. It is not, of course, suggested that a person should be judged a criminal merely because he voted for certain candidates or maintained political affiliations in the sense that we in America support political parties. The organizations which we will accuse have no resemblance to our political parties. Organizations such as the Gestapo and the SS were direct action units, and were recruited from volunteers accepted only because of aptitude for, and fanatical devotion to, their violent purposes.

In examining the accused organizations in the trial, it is our proposal to demonstrate their declared and covert objectives, methods of recruitment, structure, lines of responsibility, and methods of effectuating their

programs. In this trial, important representative members will be allowed to defend their organizations as well as themselves. The best practicable notice will be given, that named organizations stand accused and that any member is privileged to appear and join in their defense. If in the main trial an organization is found to be criminal, the second stage will be to identify and try before regular military tribunals individual members not already personally convicted in the principal case. Findings in the main trial that an organization is criminal in nature will be conclusive in any subsequent proceedings against individual members. The individual member will thereafter be allowed to plead only personal defenses or extenuating circumstances, such as that he joined under duress, and as to those defenses he should have the burden of proof. There is nothing novel in the idea that one may lose a part of or all his defense if he fails to assert it in an appointed forum at an earlier time. In United States wartime legislation, this principle has been utilized and sustained as consistent with our concept of due process of law.

4. Our case against the major defendants is concerned with the Nazi master plan, not with individual barbarities and perversions which occurred independently of any central plan. The groundwork of our case must be factually authentic and constitute a well-documented history of what we are convinced was a grand, concerted pattern to incite and commit the aggressions and barbarities which have shocked the world. We must not forget that when the Nazi plans were boldly proclaimed they were so extravagant that the world refused to take them seriously. Unless we write the record of this movement with clarity and precision, we cannot blame the future if in days of peace it finds incredible the accusatory generalities uttered during the war. We must establish incredible events by credible evidence.

5. What specifically are the crimes with which these individuals and organizations should be charged, and what marks their conduct as criminal?

There is, of course, real danger that trials of this character will become enmeshed in voluminous particulars of wrongs committed by individual Germans throughout the course of the war, and in the multitude of doctrinal disputes which are part of a lawyer's paraphernalia. We can save ourselves from those pitfalls if our test of what legally is crime gives recognition to those things which fundamentally outraged the conscience of the American people and brought them finally to the conviction that their own liberty and civilization could not persist in the same world with the Nazi power.

Those acts which offended the conscience of our people were criminal by standards generally accepted in all civilized countries, and I believe that we may proceed to punish those responsible in full accord with both our

own traditions of fairness and with standards of just conduct which have been internationally accepted. I think also that through these trials we should be able to establish that a process of retribution by law awaits those who in the future similarly attack civilization. Before stating these offenses in legal terms and concepts, let me recall what it was that affronted the sense of justice of our people.

Early in the Nazi regime, people of this country came to look upon the Nazi Government as not constituting a legitimate state pursuing the legitimate objective of a member of the international community. They came to view the Nazis as a band of brigands, set on subverting within Germany every vestige of a rule of law which would entitle an aggregation of people to be looked upon collectively as a member of the family of nations. Our people were outraged by the oppressions, the cruelest forms of torture, the large-scale murder, and the wholesale confiscation of property which initiated the Nazi regime within Germany. They witnessed persecution of the greatest enormity on religious, political and racial grounds, the breakdown of trade unions, and the liquidation of all religious and moral influences. This was not the legitimate activity of a state within its own boundaries, but was preparatory to the launching of an international course of aggression and was with the evil intention, openly expressed by the Nazis, of capturing the form of the German state as an instrumentality for spreading their rule to other countries. Our people felt that these were the deepest offenses against that International Law described in the Fourth Hague Convention of 1907 as including the "laws of humanity and the dictates of the public conscience."

Once these international brigands, the top leaders of the Nazi party, the SS and the Gestapo, had firmly established themselves within Germany by terrorism and crime, they immediately set out on a course of international pillage. They bribed, debased, and incited to treason the citizens and subjects of other nations for the purpose of establishing their fifth columns of corruption and sabotage within those nations. They ignored the commonest obligations of one state respecting the internal affairs of another. They lightly made and promptly broke international engagements as a part of their settled policy to deceive, corrupt, and overwhelm. They made, and made only to violate, pledges respecting the demilitarized Rhineland, and Czechoslovakia, and Poland, and Russia. They did not hesitate to instigate the Japanese to treacherous attack on the United States. Our people saw in this succession of events the destruction of the minimum elements of trust which can hold the community of nations together in peace and progress. Then, in consummation of their plan, the Nazis swooped down upon the nations they had deceived and ruthlessly conquered them. They flagrantly violated the obligations which states, including their own, have undertaken by convention or tradition as a part of the rules of land

warfare, and of the law of the sea. They wantonly destroyed cities like Rotterdam for no military purpose. They wiped out whole populations, as at Lidice, where no military purposes were to be served. They confiscated property of the Poles and gave it to party members. They transported in labor battalions great sectors of the civilian populations of the conquered countries. They refused the ordinary protections of law to the populations which they enslaved. The feeling of outrage grew in this country, and it became more and more felt that these were crimes committed against us and against the whole society of civilized nations by a band of brigands who had seized the instrumentality of a state.

I believe that those instincts of our people were right and that they should guide us as the fundamental tests of criminality. We propose to punish acts which have been regarded as criminal since the time of Cain and have been so written in every civilized code.

In arranging these trials we must also bear in mind the aspirations with which our people have faced the sacrifices of war. After we entered the war, and as we expended our men and our wealth to stamp out these wrongs, it was the universal feeling of our people that out of this war should come unmistakable rules and workable machinery from which any who might contemplate another era of brigandage would know that they would be held personally responsible and would be personally punished. Our people have been waiting for these trials in the spirit of Woodrow Wilson, who hoped to "give to international law the kind of vitality which it can only have if it is a real expression of our moral judgment."





PART V

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Response and Testimony:  
At the Center of the Whirlwind



## *Response and Testimony: At the Center of the Whirlwind*

Testimonies of ghetto and camp inmates are a fundamental source for interpreting responses to Nazi persecution. The following selections offer a critical departure from the previous parts that have engaged with historiographical debates and utilized both primary and secondary sources. Emmanuel Ringelblum's "Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto," Oskar Rosenfeld's "In the Beginning was the Ghetto: 890 Days in Lodz," Herman Kruk's "The Last Days of the Jerusalem of Lithuania," and Etty Hillesum's "Letters from Westerbork" illuminate the geographical ambition and coverage of Nazi control. They also highlight the variety of dissonant, defiant and resigned responses to that control at the communal and individual levels. Individually, each of the writers presented here takes the reader to a period of wartime Europe, to the ethnically rich and culturally suffused ghettos of Warsaw, Łódź, Vilna, and the transit camp of Westerbork. Collectively, they present scenes of ghetto and camp life that question the reader's conditioning to atrocity narratives. Readers of these testimonies become post-Holocaust eyewitnesses to what was intended to be a concealed project of ethnic and cultural destruction, and trespassers on intimate and pithily narrated moments of shame, humiliation and conflicts of the human condition.

Testimonies confirm that on the question of how the Jews responded to ghetto conditions, to mass psychological deception, to enforced nutritional deprivation and to a life lived between willful uncertainty and cautious but failing optimism, it is impossible to generalize. Essential as it is to provide an understanding of the historical causation of events, ideologies and actions that led to the "Final Solution," its full magnitude cannot be grasped without a sustained acquaintance with its victims' voices. The accounts collected here demonstrate how the announcement of an impending deportation list could instill fear and terror in the community, how people would consequently search in desperation to prove their value as workers, how organized illegal activity in the ghetto threatened

Gestapo control, and how people with identities and histories became nameless victims at the will of the Nazi machine.

The biographies of the authors are relevant to understand the accounts they wrote. Emmanuel Ringelblum's contribution rests in his and his group's collection of archival material and writings, known as the *Oneg Shabbes* (OS), from which the present selection "Inside the Ghetto" is extracted. Apart from being a prominent historian of Warsaw Jewry before the ghetto was established in October 1940, he became involved in other activities in the Warsaw ghetto, such as a social self-help organization which provided aid and welfare to refugees, old and sick inmates. He also assisted in the formation of an alternative leadership to the *Judenrat* comprised of civic and political leaders. Ringelblum wrote with an empathic, documentary and defiant tone, capturing the terror felt in the ghetto, the randomness of violence, the productivity impulse of ghetto inmates who wanted to survive, and inequities in the selective distribution of food, punishment and violence by the Jewish council, and their agents. The psychology of the Warsaw ghetto community is visited with admiration and despair, and with special regard for the fearlessness of the Jewish women, Chajke and Frumke, who, as couriers, travelled on false papers to smuggle goods and clandestine information between ghettos.

Ringelblum's documentary tone is continued, albeit in more complex form, in Oskar Rosenfeld's "In the Beginning was the Ghetto: 890 Days in Łódź." Rosenfeld served in the statistics department of the Łódź ghetto from February 1942 to July 1944, and was also a playwright and journalist, keeping his own notes on life and conditions in the ghetto for a fictionalized account that remained unwritten at the time of his death in Auschwitz. Rosenfeld's entries from late March to June 1943 are filled with dramatic scenes. Certain motifs recur, as if narrating a fiction that compels disbelief, although climate and time give these entries their grounding. Weather changes are sources of renewal – and anniversaries are reminders of loss. Identity becomes important through naming, and the oscillation between documentary narration of ghetto activities and its personal effect is evident when he talks about the appearance of death: "Have you ever seen a human being shortly before dying of hunger?" The personal and administrative corruption of the Jewish council leader, Chaim Rumkowski, and his tours in the ghetto, are also recalled through "The Eldest."

Vilna, which had been the scholarly and cultural center of Jewish life and Yiddish culture in Europe, is the focus of Herman Kruk's "The Last Days of the Jerusalem of Lithuania." Kruk was an active member of the Jewish Labor Bund, and his diary chronicled resistance and leadership in the ghetto from 1941 to 1944. Kruk also participated actively in the

ghetto's social and welfare life, organizing and supervising its library, for example. His entries from October 1942 through January 1943, like Ringelblum's, convey a comprehensive impression of ghetto community and the labor of a population under siege from outside and within, from the combination of lack of food, the continuing threats of killing, reprisals for smuggling, and constant physical surveillance. The imminent deaths of ghetto inhabitants are juxtaposed with scenes of theater productions, youth clubs and an active press – intensifying his reference to the “last days” of this vibrant community.

Testimonies of transit carry readers in the direction of a final destination. While other excerpts focus on the fixed spaces of ghetto communities in Eastern Europe, Etty Hillesum's “Letters from Westerbork” move in the direction of Westerbork, an assembly camp in the Netherlands for Dutch Jews en route to the extermination camps of Auschwitz-Birkenau and Sobibor between July 1942 and September 1944. Hillesum, a highly educated and assimilated young woman, worked as a typist in a division of the Amsterdam Jewish Council. She was transported to Westerbork in June 1943, where she remained until her deportation to Auschwitz with her parents in early September 1943. The letters reprinted here capture just one week of her experience in Westerbork, but they magnify a theme common to the other testimonies: the writer as captive, and the response to this condition by the attempt to break out of the enforced entrapment. Whereas ghetto writers narrate from a “fixed” mobility, Hillesum has “passed through” that space to the verge of an anticipated travel experience – since transit camps imply temporary residence and ongoing movement. Letters themselves represent a form of transit with self and others; they suggest an active and symbolic dimension of correspondence and return journeys, much like the train that travels with empty carriages into Hillesum's space and then departs with camp inmates and their luggage. “Ten thousand have passed through this place, the clothed and the naked, the old and young, the sick and the healthy – and I am left to live and work and stay cheerful” (10 July, 1943).

Taken together, these excerpts of diaries and letters show the importance of such accounts for understanding Nazi structures of incarceration, their psychology of terror, of ghetto surveillance, and of the inter-related experiences of perpetrators, persecutors, collaborators, and accomplices. They also provide evidence that although the Nazis marked the Jews as victims, the Jews did not receive that label willingly, or without opposition, despite the horrendous conditions inflicted upon them in the multitude of ghettos and camps across Europe. As a form of testimony of community action and individuals' responses on the “edge of destruction,” diaries, notes and letters carry the reader to a torturous wartime landscape, replete with scenes of unrelenting human distress.

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*Inside the Ghetto*

EMMANUEL RINGELBLUM

May 8

The Ghetto has calmed down somewhat since the massacre of April 18 (when fifty-two people were shot down in the street). People have become a little more optimistic. They've begun to believe again that the war will be over in a few months and life will return to normal. This good mood has been aided by false communiqués that have become widespread with the cessation of true accounts after Friday's massacre. What is in these communiqués? Well, first we learn that Smolensk has been retaken through an airdrop of 60,000 soldiers who joined forces with the Russian Army camped west of Smolensk. The same communiqué has taken Khar-kov. Another communiqué disembarked a whole army in Murmansk, borne by 160 ships, not one of which was sunk en route. Of course, when Hitler heard this news (this was *after* his May 1 speech), he collapsed. Then, the Allies won a great victory on Lake Ilmen, where the communiqué killed 43,000 Germans and took more than 80,000 captive. This was the Nineteenth Army; the captives included two German generals. As though this were not enough, a communiqué has deposed Mussolini and made a revolution in Italy. Add to all this an ultimatum from Roosevelt to the German people giving them until May 15 to surrender. In a word, the Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto aren't content merely to recite Psalms and leave the rest in God's hands; they labor day and night to lay their enemy low and bring an early peace. . . . When will the war really end?

The Ghetto Jews can't bear it any longer, that's why we try our utmost to see the war's end as imminent. There are people who seriously believe that the situation in Germany at this time parallels that of the year 1918. They cite statements by well-known Germans and reports from German

Jews who have been driven into Warsaw to the effect that Germany has been recently flooded with illegal leaflets, so-called "circulars," inciting soldiers, workers, and intellectuals to rebel against the regime. Other evidence cited for the imminent downfall of Hitler is the four or five illegal radio stations and the very bad food situation. Letters from Germany (in code, of course) describe vast popular dissatisfaction. The final, conclusive argument for an early conclusion to the war has come from a Jew whose last name is Czerwicz [June], and from the fortuneteller, Madame M.

Czerwicz is the Jew from Nalewki Street who predicted the German attack on Russia in June. When asked what was to happen afterwards, he prophesied that the Germans would be halted in November and unable to advance a foot. So he was nicknamed Listopad [November]. Later they called him Luty [February] because he predicted that the Germans would be in dire straits in February. Now they call him Czerwicz again, because he predicts the war will be over the middle of *this* June.

Madame M. was a law student who lost her husband (a Warsaw lawyer) during the war. She knew about it eleven months in advance, but one can't avoid his fate – says she. A few months before the war began she dictated to one of her followers (another lawyer's wife) a detailed account of how the war would break out (with exact dates), and a description of the bombardment of Warsaw, the razing of the power-house, the failure of gas, water, and electricity. She is said to have foreseen later developments, as well. I know that two or three months before November, 1941, she prophesied that the German Army would be defeated in Russia in the second half of November and be unable to make any further advances. Later she predicted terrible times coming for the Jews. Now she says that in June there will be no walls left standing in Warsaw, but the Jews will be here. We will not be deported. Still, she expects very bad times. The Germans will incite the Poles against the Jews. There will be a three-day pogrom. But those who survive will be saved.

A slaughter like that of Friday, the 18th of April [1942], took place in a number of towns in the Government General. There is news of slaughters of this kind in Cracow, Tarnow, Czestochowa, Radom, Kielce, Ostrowiec, etc. In each place there were about fifty dead. The killings took place in the street at night there too. Those killed were a varied lot. In some cities it was the returnees from Russia, who were considered Communists; everywhere the local [Jewish] authorities declared they didn't know anything about it, they hadn't prepared any lists for the Others, and so on. In some cities, at the same time as the killings took place, there were arrests of persons who were sent nobody knows whither to this day. Those arrested included Diamond, the president of the Radom Jewish Council,



and his representative, Merin. It was part of a general operation. During his last visit, Himmler must have issued an order for massacres to be perpetrated everywhere in the Government General of Poland in order to terrorize the Jewish populace. Probably this is in connection with the spring campaigns. They want their rear to be secure. They threw a little fright into the Jews, so the Jews would keep their heads down.

The end of April and beginning of May we lived in terror of deportation. Where this rumor emanated from no one knows. One opinion has it that the Polish merchants spread the rumor in order to persuade the Jewish populace to sell their possessions. There was even some talk of the number of deportees being from 150,000 to 200,000, the country of destination Rumania. There were rumors emanating from the Kitchen Department of the Jewish Council that “non-productive” elements would be deported, and only workers would be able to enjoy the benefits of the kitchen. This was regarded as a grave omen. However, Council circles have assured us that the danger of deportation that has been hanging over our heads has been avoided, thanks to the presence of factories in the Ghetto that are supplying the needs of the German Army. This is a tragic paradox. Only those Jews have the right to live who work to supply the German Army. The same was true in Vilna, Rovno, and dozens of other cities where there were mass slaughters of Jews. The only Jews left alive were those who directly or indirectly worked for the Germans. Never in history has there been a national tragedy of these dimensions. A people that hates the Germans with every fiber of its being can purchase its life only at the price of helping its foe to victory – the very victory that means the complete annihilation of Jewry from the face of Europe, if not of the whole world.

The Warsaw Ghetto is hard at work for the Germans. They’re repairing clothing stripped from soldiers killed in battle, and are beginning to prepare such winter items as quilted trousers, vests, and overcoats. Also straw shoes, furniture, etc. The center of all this activity is the firm of Toebbens at 12 Prosta Street, where more than 1,000 workers are busy. It’s typical that in the waiting room outside the office of Bauch, the man in charge of work, a number of pointed rods of various size and thickness hang. These, it would seem, are implements that no German can get along without. They’re the symbols of bloodthirsty Hitlerism that one finds everywhere – in concentration camps, in work camps, in prison, and even at places of work.

The following is typical of the present attitude of Polish Jewry to philanthropy. Two years ago the Chassidic rabbi of Ruzyn wrote his disciples in Lublin to sell their furniture and give the proceeds to charity. It was his understanding that they were not doing any business and had no ready cash. His disciples disobeyed him and did not sell their furniture. Then the

Germans confiscated almost all the furniture in every Jewish home in Lublin. Later, the rabbi wrote his disciples to sell their furs and give the proceeds to charity. Again, his Chassidim disobeyed him. And again the Germans came, this time to confiscate the furs. Finally, the rabbi wrote his disciples to sell their Sabbath clothes and give the proceeds to charity. His disciples disobeyed him once more, and the Jews were deported from Lublin.

Two days ago (May 5–6) a characteristic smuggling incident took place. The corner house at 21 Franciszkanska Street that is next to the Wall is a hotbed of smuggling. A ladder is thrown over the Wall and smuggling goes on all night. But this night the smugglers quarrel among themselves, and one of them informs where it will do the most good. The police come at once and catch a whole crowd in the middle of operations. Machine guns begin shooting, one smuggler is shot dead on the spot, one or two others wounded. Then they search every apartment in the building, take away a great deal of goods, and arrest forty smugglers. For 40,000 zlotys, they return the goods and set the smugglers free. That is the sum that the police claim to have lost because the smugglers used the Wall to bring goods in, rather than taking them through the watch at the Ghetto gate, where the police get a cut. Most of the smuggling goes through the watch. It costs 100 zlotys per wagon. The driver has to know the password, or else he can't get through.

There are policemen who make 2,000 zlotys in an hour or two. The smuggling of goods past the Wall continues, resulting every day in the sacrifice of a large number of wounded and dead. Often minors and children are among the victims. There is one policeman who is renowned as a model German. Nicknamed "the gentleman," he is the soul of honesty. He permits wagons through the gates of the Wall, refusing to take a bribe. He also permits Jewish children to pass to the Other Side by the dozen to buy food, for the most part potatoes and other vegetables. Examples of his wondrous decency and honesty are recounted daily. He plays all sorts of games with the smuggler children. He lines them up, commands them to sing, and marches them through the gates.

The inspection guards can be bought, too. A short time ago, a whole wagon of contraband was "burned" (i.e., confiscated). But 200 zlotys were sufficient to persuade the inspection guards to let the wagon into the Ghetto. There is good reason for the proverb that three things are indomitable: the German Army, the British Isles, and Jewish smuggling.

They tell this story: Churchill invited the Chassidic rabbi of Ger to come to see and advise him how to bring about Germany's downfall. The rabbi gave the following reply: "There are two possible ways, one involving natural means, the other supernatural. The natural means would be if a

million angels with flaming swords were to descend on Germany and destroy it. The supernatural would be if a million Englishmen parachuted down on Germany and destroyed it.”

They are now filming the Ghetto. They spent two days shooting the Jewish prison and the Council. They drove a crowd of Jews together on Smocza Street, then ordered the Jewish policemen to disperse them. At another place They shot a scene showing a Jewish policeman about to beat a Jew when a German comes along and saves the fallen Jew.

There is a big sign in German in the cemetery ordering Germans not to visit the Jewish graveyard. Supposedly, the grounds for this ban are sanitation, but in actual fact, the reason is quite different. Crowds of Germans used to visit the cemetery to stare at the famous shed where daily the skeletons of the corpses of poor people who had starved to death in the street were heaped – candidates for mass graves. Standing there, the Germans used to discuss the “Jewish question” among themselves. Some of the Germans enjoyed the sight of the victims of Hitler’s extermination policy; others, however, expressed their revulsion at the consequences of what they named “German culture.” Apparently, these graveyard excursions left a strong imprint on the excursionists; consequently, they were halted.

Tonight, the night of May 12, 1942, there occurred an event similar to that which took place on Friday, April 18. During the course of the night four Jews were shot: Sklar,<sup>1</sup> Feist, Zaks (a sportsman), and Tenenbaum. Apparently these men were associated with the liberation movement. At night they were taken out of the Pawia Street prison and shot outdoors, each in a different street. This shooting of people in the streets has become a deliberate tactic since April. The aim: to terrify the populace, to terrorize them.

Two hundred thousand uniforms stripped from the bodies of dead German soldiers were brought into the Warsaw Ghetto. The uniforms were horribly lousy and blood drenched. From the number of them, one can imagine how many hundreds of thousands and millions of men fell on the Eastern front during the winter. Many of the blouse pockets contained surrender appeals dropped from Soviet airplanes that constituted a kind of safe-transit pass, identifying the bearer as a Soviet friend. Although the concealment of such appeals was subject to heavy punishment, they were discovered in a great many officers’ pockets. The pockets contained, in addition, letters from friends and family that give a glimpse into the moods of both the soldiers and those they had left behind in the hinterland. The general impression was of a terrible depression among the soldiers.

The Praga cemetery, which is more than 150 years old, is being leveled. The devils won’t even let the dead rest. They’ve done the same sort of thing elsewhere in Poland and Germany. So unimportant a thing as the

antiquity of a cemetery, its cultural and historical significance, is of no importance whatsoever to them.

The South American citizens living in the Ghetto were called to the Pawia Street prison. There they were informed that they would have to leave Warsaw by the 18th inst. for Switzerland, where they will be exchanged for German citizens. But there is still a question as to whether the newly created citizens, i.e., those who bought their citizenship for a price during the war, will be allowed to benefit from this exchange.

Here's a mystery for you: Surov, a Soviet citizen who once shared a Pawia Street prison cell with all the other Russian citizens, now moves about as free as a lark, lives on the Other Side without a special permit, is in business. How has he managed all this? What price has he paid – does he pay – for his hard-won freedom?

Often the Ghetto serves as an intermediary between two Christian merchants. This sounds paradoxical, but it is a fact. Christian merchants are fearful of dealing directly with one another, because the office of price inspection can shut down their stores. But if they buy and sell in the Ghetto, where there is no office of price inspection, they can charge whatever they want. A short time ago, I heard a story about a firm that bought 1,000 carbide lamps. These lamps were smuggled into the Ghetto and then smuggled out again to another Christian firm. Have heard the same thing about other firms. Recently, the value of hard currency [dollars] rose from 150 to 186 zlotys. The reason is said to be that since merchandise is being confiscated, the Polish merchants have decided to exchange all their money for foreign currency, which is then sent to the Other Side.

The demoralization of the Polish police and Polish secret agents is indescribable. They do nothing in the Ghetto but move about detaining wagons full of merchandise and extorting protection money. The populace shivers at the sight of them and gives them whatever they ask. They get monthly payments from each of the merchants – the secret agents from the crowd that hangs around Franciszkanska Street get 200 zlotys from every leather merchant. One of the merchants collects the protection money and brings each of the eight agents in the district his share. Anyone who wants to open up a secret grain mill has first to report to the agents and pay them off. If he doesn't, they threaten to nab him at work and fine him 2,000 zlotys. The number of grain mills is very large. There is one in almost every house where there is electricity.

They are still filming the Ghetto. Every scene is directed. E.g., yesterday they ordered a child to run outside the Ghetto Wall at the corner of Leszno and Zelazna Streets, and to buy potatoes there. A Polish policeman catches the boy and raises his arm to beat him. At that moment who

should come along but a German policeman: He grabs the Pole's arm – children are not to be beaten!

The period ending that fateful Friday, April 18, may be termed “the period of legal conspiracy.” All the political parties in the Ghetto conducted activities that were practically semilegal. Political publications sprouted like mushrooms after rain. If *you* publish your paper once a month, *I'll* publish mine twice a month; if *you* print twice a month, *I'll* print weekly; it finally reached the point where the bulletin of one of the parties was appearing twice a week. These publications were distributed openly, “in full view of the people and the congregation.” The political leaflets and communiqués used to be read in offices, factories, and similar public places.

The various parties used to hold their meetings practically in the open in public halls. They even had big public celebrations. At one such meeting, a speaker addressing an audience of 150 preached active resistance. I was myself present at a celebration along with 500 young people who all belonged to the same party. The names of the authors of the anonymous articles that appeared in the party newspapers were common knowledge.

We had even begun to debate and insult one another, as in the good old prewar days. We imagined that anything went. Even such illegal Polish publications as *Barykada Wolnosci* [Barricade of Freedom] used to be printed and distributed in the Ghetto. (I haven't checked this fact.) Everybody imagined that the Germans were indifferent to what the Jews were thinking and doing in their Ghetto. We thought that all that the Germans were concerned about was ferreting out Jewish merchandise, money, currency – that they were uninterested in intellectual matters. We turned out to be sadly mistaken. That bloody Friday, when the publishers and distributors of illegal publications were executed, proved that our political constellation is not a subject of indifference to Them, particularly when it has some connection with what is happening in the Polish, non-Jewish part of Warsaw.

The Jewish Council people have tried to exploit the bloody Friday for their own purposes: to repress completely the social and political life of the Ghetto. First they spread the rumor that Friday's massacre was attributable to the illegal publications. And then they warned the people of the Ghetto that if these [illegal publications] were to be repeated, the fate of Lublin would be visited on Warsaw – i.e., the deportation of the Jewish population. The only question that rises in one's mind is: Why were there similar massacres (courtyard executions by gunfire) in Radom and other places where there were no illegal publications? One body of opinion would have it that Friday's massacre has “rehabilitated” the Ghetto

[morally]. This is the first time that Jewish blood has been spilled for reasons of political – not purely personal – activity.

Bloody Friday has had strong repercussions. The illegal press has stopped publishing. There has been a significant weakening of political activity. The interest in social undertakings has slackened. It was a hard blow to people's spirits; half the city spends the night away from home these days. Anyone who had anything at all to do with any kind of community work is terrified. Since the slaughter was the result of tattling by Jewish informers (apparently, from the Kohn and Heller firm), people tremble to speak a word. The English communiqués, which used to be so widely disseminated (some people actually made a living out of them!), have ceased appearing. However, since people are hungry for every tidbit of news, lies are fabricated out of whole cloth. Every day we have another batch of lies. After Friday's slaughter, a crew of swindlers turned up who persuaded people to part with money for the privilege of having their names removed from new lists of those doomed to slaughter. The example of Blajman, who during the weeks before the slaughter was blackmailed for 5,000 zlotys ransom money, has made people mortally fearful of blackmailers. But gradually, little by little, people are beginning to straighten up again. The only thing is that what used to be a kind of "legitimate" conspiracy is now being transformed into the real thing and is going deep underground.

The Pawia Street prison has become a center of persecution, outside as well as in. Inside, the prisoners are tortured ceaselessly – a new prison guard has taken over recently. But whether the guard be old or new, prisoners are tortured. The Pawia Street prison has become the point of departure for Oswiecim. Also, a number of people have been taken from the prison and shot outside, right in the street. Lately, the prison has also become a source of misery for those on the outside – for its neighbors and those who pass by on either side of Pawia Street. The neighbors have had to cover their windows with thick black paper or black wooden slats. Night and day, windows have to be closed.

The Jewish Gestapoists are now busy looking for an alibi. They are desperately trying to look good, so as to prove that they, at any rate, are real Jews, true Jews, Jews with a sense of public interest. Gancwajch, e.g., is turning into a regular Maecenas, supporting Jewish literature, art, theater. He arranges "receptions" for Jewish writers and artists, where there is plenty of food – nowadays the important thing. A short time ago he threw an all-night party at the El Dorado night spot... The party was opened with the dedication of an ambulance, named Miriam (after Gancwajch's wife at home). Gancwajch's business interests are flourishing. He has the administration of 100 buildings, which brings him in a pretty penny. Beside, he issues thirty certificates a month, at the rate of several

thousand zlotys per certificate; he's also a partner in various businesses. In a word, he's thriving. Gancwajch's function in the Gestapo is not completely clear. But one thing is certain: He gets nothing for nothing. He has to pay for every favor. To help them meet their Passover needs, Gancwajch sent the Jewish writers 6,000 zlotys.

One can judge the depths of poverty in the Ghetto from the fact that there are houses where everything has been sold – even pillow cases and sheets, so that people are sleeping right on the feathers of their pillows and beds. You come across beggars who are covered all over with feathers. These have sunk below the threshold of hope.

Death lurks in every chink, every little crack. There have been cases of everyone living in an apartment being fearfully tortured because someone opened a shutter. One of the tortures is to have the culprit strip naked and then roll down a pile of coke. The pain is excruciating, and every part of the body bleeds. Besides, every now and then, Jews who just happen to be passing by the Pawia Street prison are seized, tortured, and beaten. The Germans driving prisoners in trucks to the Pawia Street prison beat the passers-by on the street mercilessly. The Gestapo agent sitting in the back of the car leans out the window, reaches along the narrow Karmelicka Street, and slashes at passers-by with a long, lead-tipped stick. He overturns rickshas, and beats the ricksha drivers. At sight of the truck, people run into the nearest courtyard to hide. Often the Gestapo agents shoot. Many a man has been killed or wounded by one of these wild street shootings, which have become the thing since the 18th of April, bloody Friday.

The heroic girls, Chajke and Frumke – they are a theme that calls for the pen of a great writer. Boldly they travel back and forth through the cities and towns of Poland. They carry “Aryan” papers identifying them as Poles or Ukrainians. One of them even wears a cross, which she never parts with except when in the Ghetto. They are in mortal danger every day. They rely entirely on their “Aryan” faces and on the peasant kerchiefs that cover their heads. Without a murmur, without a second's hesitation, they accept and carry out the most dangerous missions. Is someone needed to travel to Vilna, Bialystok, Lemberg, Kowel, Lublin, Czestochowa, or Radom to smuggle in contraband such as illegal publications, goods, money? The girls volunteer as though it were the most natural thing in the world. Are there comrades who have to be rescued from Vilna, Lublin, or some other city? – They undertake the mission. Nothing stands in their way, nothing deters them. Is it necessary to become friendly with engineers of German trains, so as to be able to travel beyond the frontiers of the Government General of Poland, where people can move about with special papers? They are the ones to do it, simply, without fuss, as though

it was their profession. They have traveled from city to city, to places no delegate or Jewish institution had ever reached, such as Wolhynia, Lithuania. They were the first to bring back the tidings about the tragedy of Vilna.<sup>2</sup> They were the first to offer words of encouragement and moral support to the surviving remnant of that city. How many times have they looked death in the eyes? How many times have they been arrested and searched? Fortune has smiled on them. They are, in the classic idiom, “emissaries of the community to whom no harm can come.” With what simplicity and modesty have they reported what they accomplished on their journeys, on the trains bearing Polish Christians who have been pressed to work in Germany! The story of the Jewish woman will be a glorious page in the history of Jewry during the present war. And the Chajkes and Frumkes will be the leading figures in this story. For these girls are indefatigable. Just back from Czestochowa, where they imported contraband, in a few hours they’ll be on the move again. And they’re off without a moment’s hesitation, without a minute of rest.

### *May 22*

Friday, the whole police force was called out. There was a big disturbance in the street. Some people were talking loudly about an imminent resettlement of the old, the sick, the unemployed. Others said that people were being impressed for the camps. It turned out that what was happening was that people with specialties were being impressed for the work camps. Specialists such as locksmiths, rugweavers, and the like were picked up at their addresses. If the person in question was not at home, his father was taken, or the nearest of kin at home at the time. Those picked up were sent to Zembrow. The misfortune is that many of those who declared themselves to be specialists during the registration are not such in reality; they purported to be craftsmen rather than figure as unemployed. Friday’s pick-up is said to be the beginning of a big operation, the aim being to pull the Jewish populace into the factories where Poles have been working until now. If this turns out to be true, the Warsaw Ghetto can be saved for the time being.

“Jews won’t work.” That’s what the German newspapers say. As an illustration of the contrary, I offer the following scene: 103 Plaza Zelazna is the place where those who work for the Germans outside the Ghetto change shifts. A truck arrives, and Jews throw themselves at it from all sides. They climb all over it. The soldiers can’t handle the mob. They beat at those nearest with their rifles, but it does no good; the mob won’t retreat. They want to get up into the truck at any cost, and there are many more than the outside work can use. The soldiers shoot in the air – but



that does no good, either; the mob won't leave. Finally, the driver backs up, the mob disperses, but not before one person is badly injured. That, finally, restores order. But why do they mob the truck? The answer is simple. People working outside the Ghetto are given two good soups and half a kilo of bread a day. That's the reason for the mob.

### May 23

The Gestapo men in the Pawia Street prison have to have their daily victims. Just the way a pious Jew feels bad if he misses prayers one day, the Gestapo men have to pick up a few Jews every day and break a few arms and legs. Since the street in front of the prison empties out when the Gestapo auto drives up, and since passers-by avoid the streets around the prison, yesterday They stopped the streetcar that runs through Smocza Street near the prison, and dragged a few Jews out of the car.

The OS has passed from "poor" work (October, 1939, to May, 1940) to "good" work; since Friday, April 18th, we're back to poor work. It is necessary to save the information we have. The method: Sit down with the informant over a glass of tea, and write up the information afterward. Our luck that the OS work has been kept dark.

The Gesia Street jail now contains more than 1,300 prisoners, over 500 of them being children. Some are to be tried in the Special Court (*Sondergericht*), the rest in the Auerswald Court. The Special Court has already pronounced more than 200 death sentences, not yet executed. The posts where the condemned will be bound before execution are located in the same yard where they take their daily exercise. The conditions in the jail are indescribably crowded; the jail can accommodate 300 to 500 prisoners, and there are something like four times that number there now. The cells are terribly filthy. The professionals are confined under better conditions. The mortality in jail is very high. Nevertheless, the prisoners have succeeded in doing wonderful things for the children, who run about half-naked and tanned in the fresh air all day. The children perform calisthenics, sing Yiddish and Polish songs. Mothers come begging to have their children, who have been freed, put back in jail [!]. By the way, I saw a nine-year-old child who had been arrested. Among those imprisoned were some Gypsies, whom Auerswald terms "Gypsy-Jews." Some of the Rumanian citizens were set free. The Gypsy women are confined in a special cell of their own. The Gypsy men are in cells with Jews. We were met with hysterical weeping in the cell of the condemned. They begged us to secure better food for them, so that their nerves would be able to hold out. Shops, tailor shops, brush factories are being set up to give work to several hundred persons – this may be able to save the condemned.

A delegation from abroad that visited the jail was unable to comprehend how people could receive death sentences merely for crossing over to the Aryan side of Warsaw. This, they declared, is inconceivable. These people must have committed some crime on the Other Side. The jail was ideally clean (for the delegation!). [They were shown] a special bathroom where the prisoners were bathed and disinfected twice weekly. Most of those who were arrested were beggar children who had sneaked out to the Other Side; a number were smugglers. These were the chief criminals. The plaza that used to be covered with tile has been transformed into a flourishing garden whose fruits will bring in more than 200,000 zlotys. The garden is tended by prisoner gardeners.

### *May 25*

This is a night that will remain in the memory of the Jews of Warsaw. Tonight the wild grass of the Ghetto was cleaned out. The biggest wheels of "the Thirteen," Levin, Mandel, Szymo[nowicz] (Gancwajch's relative) and Hurwic; they couldn't find Gancwajch at home. Szternfeld also managed to escape. It is said that the other lepers met the same fate. There are a number of reasons why "the Thirteen" was liquidated. A section of the Gestapo that used to work with Gancwajch is passing out of the picture, and it doesn't want to leave behind any of its former Jewish partners. Another surmise is that the clean-up affected the German partners of the gang, and the Germans dragged their Jewish colleagues down with them. Still a third account has it that one of the gang was imprisoned, and now he's tattling. He's telling everything, including how they blackmailed people with radios, and the like. And still other rumors would have it that they were offered the opportunity to do political espionage and refused. Naturally, that's just foolish talk. This is really just a continuation of the general program of getting rid of the undesirable Gestapo agents. – It's a program that's been carried out for several months, beginning with Anders, Milek, and others. One of the stories they tell is that, a few weeks ago, Szymonowicz threw a party for Gestapo officers that cost more than 25,000 zlotys. This is supposed to have been the last straw.

The Jewish gangster police exploit every situation to make money. Recently they invented a new swindle. The Germans are making a motion picture these days, so the police go to restaurant owners and demand food for a ball that's being filmed much bigger than necessary. A short time ago the police went to an apartment at 37 Leszno Street and stated that, since the place was going to be filmed, everyone had to leave the apartment at once. However, for 50 gold pieces they would take care of the matter.

While they were at it, one of them picked up a gold watch that happened to be lying on the table.

They steal everything in the Ghetto, even telephones. The telephone men, for a consideration, will install a telephone whose number has been stolen from someone else who already has a phone. This happened, for example, in a house at 18 Leszno Street. Dr Mesz's phone stopped ringing; it turned out that a shopkeeper on the same street had paid the telephone men to install a phone for him with the same number.

The Gestapo men today discovered a new game. They drag the Jewish musicians out of all the café houses, gardens, etc., and pull them over to the Pawia Street prison, where they are forced to entertain the company all night. They did that last night, and they're doing the same thing tonight. There is a theory that the reason why [some of] "the Thirteen" were shot was because they smuggled products worth large sums of money into the Ghetto.

Agents from the Transfer Station dressed in civilian clothing have been added to the police [stationed at the Ghetto gates]; their assignment is to watch the police. But nothing helps. They too are taken care of. They're bribed. As a result, a smuggler has to buy off four parties: Polish, Jewish, and German policemen, and now civilian agents as well. Even Napoleon wasn't able to handle smuggling, nor will the modern dictator be any more successful. The profits in smuggling are enormous. I heard about a partnership of four smugglers that made 35,000 zlotys in one week, but had to spend 19,000. The rest was profit. But the smugglers have all sorts of unforeseeable expenses. For example, if a wagon is "burned" [confiscated] and the driver is sent to prison, the smugglers maintain his family, sending it packages; they have to buy the prisoner's freedom, pay the lawyer, and so on. Besides, the smugglers support the families of smugglers who have been killed. As a rule, the smugglers are free and easy with their money. It's easy come, easy go. The smugglers' parties are famous in the Ghetto for the huge amount of food served. Smugglers love a good time, since they are never sure how tomorrow will end (with a bullet, an informer, arrest) – so it's eat, drink, and be merry. Anyway, profiteers are always free with money and food – sometimes handing them out to poor relatives, too. Smugglers come from the lowest classes – fences, thieves, porters, pimps, and the underworld in general. There are often Polish and German guests at their parties – they're the ones the smugglers work with.

Interestingly enough, the wagons that are smuggled into the Ghetto are insured. There's a special Jewish company that insures wagons against being "burned" "as of 70 Nalewki Street" – i.e., there's a base price for insurance against the merchandise being "burned" by the guards up to that point – additional insurance costs more. Keep in mind, that the

so-called *Yunakes* – i.e., the uniformed ethnic Germans in the service of the Commissar – have a free hand in the Ghetto itself. They pursue the wagons of contraband and confiscate the contents if they can catch them. Furst, from the Jewish Council (a “big operator,” the chief of the Council’s economic department) got the contraband for the Council cooperative.

A large crowd daily assembles around the loud-speakers located in the Ghetto (at the corners of Mila and Zamenhofa Streets, Gesia and Zamenhofa Streets, and Nalewki and Nowolipki Streets). The loud-speakers have been given several nicknames: Purim Noisemaker [Grager], Bonnet [Kapelush – after the shape].

The Gestapo beast devours its own progeny. There are beasts that devour their young. Why they do so is not the subject under discussion here. But the fact is that it is a natural phenomenon. The Gestapo is destroying its Jewish agents one after another. The consequence is that the chief Jewish agents, men like Gancwajch, Kohn and Heller, and Ehrlich live in constant dread, in anticipation of the mortal blow. The reasons for this [liquidation of Jewish agents] is probably the following: First of all, the Jewish agents know too much, many “businesses” being partnerships [between the Gestapo and Jews]; the Gestapo are fearful lest the Jewish partner blab to another German, and the Gestapo lose out in a profitable undertaking. Secondly, there are rival Gestapo apparatuses. Every chief, every Gestapo department, has its own Jewish agents. When the Gestapo chiefs quarrel, each kills the other’s agents. Each of the three big Jewish operators mentioned above represents a rival Gestapo apparatus. Incidentally, Kohn and Heller refer to Gancwajch as Azef.<sup>3</sup>

Currently Kohn and Heller are the most influential, which is why Gancwajch and Ehrlich, the agents of the rival Gestapo apparatus, were caught on that calamitous Friday. Ehrlich’s partner Gurman (nicknamed “Young”) was shot, as well as Gancwajch’s close friends, shot the same night in the notorious night club Arizona, at 18 Mila Street. Before that, the well-known Gestapo agent Milek Tine was shot (there was a legend on the wall near his body that read: *Psu, psia smierc, zdech Milek Tine* [Milek Tine was a dog, and a dog’s death he died]. The same thing happened to Anders. Now in prison are the Gestapo agents Swieca and Esterowicz, who were the first to inform the Gestapo about the illegal Jewish organizations and publications. It is reported that they were shot in the Pawia Street prison ten days ago, i.e., about May 8.

At this point, it may be in order to take up the question as to whether we have more Gestapo agents than other groups [under the Nazi heel]. There are said to be about four hundred informers. But my private opinion is that the activity in the Ghetto of hundreds of illegal operations – dairies,

flour warehouses, bakeries, factories, transactions in leather and anything that's illegal – all this illegal activity could not be possible if there were that many informers. Consequently, we probably do not have more informers than any other group. For those who have been sent into the Ghetto from Eastern Europe are less fearful of every house porter [generally, in the employ of the police], of every stranger, than are those on the Other Side. My feeling is that the claim that we are more demoralized than other groups is an exaggeration, particularly when you consider the straits we are in, and that we face to a considerable degree the choice between evasion of unjust laws or death from hunger. So let us not make the picture darker than it is – particularly as it is dark enough.

The informer problem, so common in Jewish history, is with us again. Unfortunately, we are afraid to resort to terrorism, lest the Occupying Forces take a bloody revenge. Perhaps the most tragic thing is that a man like Josek Ehrlich (nicknamed "Frockcoat") goes around scot free. He gets special favors from the Food Bureau, intervenes in various Jewish Council offices on behalf of his men, and everybody does whatever he wants – all out of fear that he might inform, or take revenge in some other fashion. Or take a person like Judtowa. Her claim to fame rests on the fact that during World War I she lived with a German officer who is now the commandant of Warsaw. This whore exploited her former friendship to obtain all kinds of concessions and special favors. She had the concession of the Jewish theater and was the co-owner of a couple of theaters. She was given a concession for a bakery, and, beside everything else, received several hundred zlotys from the Social Welfare Department associated with the Council. Then, she was a big shot in various Jewish Council offices, where everybody was afraid of her, apparently because of her work [for the Nazis]. But it turned out that she went too far, and one fine morning Czerniakow sent a memorandum around to all the departments of the Council notifying them that Judtowa's representations were no longer to be accepted. Now she is trying to live off blackmail – e.g., she'll assert that the person she is trying to blackmail is on one police death list or another, and if he won't pay her, she'll call the police.

The beggars crowding the streets nowadays are different from last year's crop. Most of the beggars from the provinces have died out. The newcomers are a better class of people, their breeding being obvious in their faces and manner. They speak a good, sometimes even an excellent Polish: "*Droozy panstwo, jeszcze dzis nic nie jadlem*" ["Ladies and gentlemen, I haven't had a bite to eat today"]. Sometimes one comes across former students from the Institute of Judaic Studies, who ask for help in Hebrew. Some of the beggars are well dressed. If they didn't silently put out their hands, or ask for alms in a low voice, you would never imagine that they

were beggars. On Karmelicka Street, near the Evangelical Hospital, stands a beggar whose clothes are impeccable; he has a pretty child with him who is clean and spotless; he begs not with outstretched hand but with his eyes alone. The children constitute the majority of the beggars, despite all the institutions maintained by CENTOS. Whole choirs of children sing in the street to large audiences. In general, groups of musicians giving real concerts in the street to large, appreciative crowds are a common sight.

The thing we were so afraid of during the winter, that it would be impossible to walk through the streets because of the filth, has been luckily avoided. We – the House Committees – got after the janitors, and the pavements were cleaned up, the courtyards, the stairs, and even the apartments themselves. The only trouble is that people have no handkerchiefs, or maybe it's become dearer to wash them, because you see more and more people, even so-called "cultured people," blowing their snot into the street, and then wiping their noses with a handkerchief. Wherever you go, on the steps of houses, in courtyards, and in the streets, you come across traces of snot.

### *May 30*

Last week was a bloody one. Almost every day saw smugglers shot. Particularly around the Small Ghetto, where a policeman who has been dubbed "Frankenstein" is on service. He was given this nickname because he looks and acts like the monster in the film of that name. He's a blood-thirsty dog who kills one or two smugglers every day. He just can't eat his breakfast until he has spilled the blood of a Jew.

Friday night, some eight or nine people were killed, *a la* Friday, the 18th of April. One of them was a man called Wilner (from 11 Mylna Street) who lay sick in bed. He could barely crawl out of bed at the command of the hangmen; he sat down on a chair, unable to move any further. So they threw him out of the second-floor window, together with the chair, shooting after him as he fell. In the same apartment three other men were shot (a brother-in-law of his called Rudnicki, his son, and another person). Reason unknown. Besides, three people from "the Thirteen's" Special Service were shot to death. This is all supposed to be a continuation of the clean-up of "the Thirteen." A few days ago, all Jews were informed via the House Committees that Gancwajch, Szternfeld, and both brothers Zachariajch were sought by the security police. Anyone found guilty of concealing them would be held fully responsible – together with all the residents of the house where he lived. Those shot to death yesterday (29th of May) include the notorious Judtowa.

Yesterday also saw a big raid in the streets. People were picked up to work, ostensibly in labor camps, but actually in the German Todt<sup>4</sup> organization at Bobruisk. The wagons were set aside for workers from there. Of course, it was the poor people, who didn't have the money to bribe the police, who went. The price was 5–10 zlotys, if you paid when you were picked up on the street. By the time you reached the district assembly point, the price had gone up to 100 zlotys. At the central assembly point, it was 500 zlotys. It was terrible in the street. Thousands of people stood about at the central assembly point on 19 Zamenhofa Street with packages for those who had been pressed for service. A medical commission examined those who had been picked up and on the spot decided who was to go to work.

Relief doesn't solve the problem; it only keeps people going a little longer. But they have to die in the end anyway. Relief only lengthens the period of suffering, but is no solution; for in order really to accomplish anything, the relief organization would have to have millions of zlotys a month at its disposal – and it has no such sums. The well-established fact is that the people who are fed in the public kitchens are all dying out, subsisting as they do only on soup and dry rationed bread. So the question arises whether it might not be more rational to set aside the money that is available for the sole use of certain select individuals, those who are socially productive, the intellectual élite, and the like. However, the situation is that, in the first place, the élite themselves constitute a considerable group and there wouldn't be enough to go around even for them; and, in the second place, why should laborers and artisans, perfectly deserving people, who were productive in their home towns, and whom only the war and the Ghetto existence have deprived of their productive capacity – why should they be judged worthless, the dregs of society, candidates for mass graves? One is left with the tragic dilemma: What are we to do? Are we to dole out spoonfuls to everyone, the result being that no one will survive? Or are we to give full measure to a few – with only a handful having enough to survive?

Another factor contributes to the failure of relief to solve the situation. Auerswald, the commissar in charge of the Ghetto of Warsaw, has recently taken to mixing in the internal affairs of the Ghetto. He regards the refugees as nothing more than sere leaves, bound to fall from the tree sooner or later; he maintains that such people must not be supported by public funds. His general position is that only those who work should receive community help. He keeps diminishing the number of items of produce available for relief and is responsible for the fact that soups have recently been limited to three times a week; at the same time, the price of lunch had to be raised from 70 to 90 groschen.

Still another element in the Ghetto is opposed to relief for adults – Abraham Gepner, the president of the former Merchants’ Association. Now he’s responsible for food supply, and in this role can dispose of significant sums of money. Gepner is a fine man, but a capricious one. His is a dictatorial nature, one which can suffer no opposition toward either his person or his opinions. The policies of Gepner’s Food Supply Agency are scandalous and deserve special treatment. But Gepner, who is now childless (his children have left the country), pours out all his fatherly feelings on other children. He has become the great patron of children in the Ghetto – not of all children, however, but only of those who are lucky enough to be sheltered in the home whose patronage he has taken over. These children live, literally, in luxury – all the others may perish. His children are provided with the best of clothing, shoes, entertainment – on the other hand, the children in the refugee centers haven’t the barest necessities. They die from hunger under squalid conditions. “Our children must live” is Gepner’s slogan; but “our children” means only the children of his homes. Gepner is one-sided; he places every means of the FSA at the disposal of the children – though their parents may die. It does not matter if there isn’t enough money for soup for the grownups – so long as everything goes to the children. He forgets that, in the best interest of the children themselves, we must see to it first and foremost that the parents live, for the worst parents are better than the best home. Certainly the children should be given priority when it comes to relief. But this can’t mean the kind of travesty that’s common in the Ghetto nowadays, when Gepner’s satellites, who make fortunes at the expense of the common man through the FSA, curry favor with Gepner by contributing a couple of thousand zlotys to *his* homes. It’s self-evident that when everything is run according to the caprice of an old gentleman, there can’t be any normal relief. Let me mention still another illustration of Gepner’s one-sidedness and capriciousness. Gepner, that fine and noble gentleman, who impresses many people with his civic-mindedness, his proud bearing, is typically upper middle class when it comes to taxes. He maintains that everybody must be taxed equally, so he levies taxes on ration cards for bread, sugar, and honey. However, he is categorically opposed to forcing those manufacturers and merchants who are doing wonderful business now, even better than before the war, to pay larger taxes than the rest. To apply sanctions to such people, to take them out of their beds at night and drag them off to work in the refugee centers – he regards this as an unwarranted limitation of personal freedom. Those who apply such sanctions are modern-day Robespierres, terrorists. Gepner’s is a typical attitude of the Jewish Councilmen.

The children’s Lag b’Omer celebrations were very impressive this year. A large children’s program was presented in the big Femina Theater hall.



Children from all the schools performed. They were rewarded with sweets. Procession after procession of school children marched through the streets toward the Femina.

The Toporol<sup>5</sup> has introduced a good practice. All the available free space has been distributed, each individual getting a ticket entitling him to use of a certain area.

The 12th of May, there was a big raid on the Poles at Kercelak Street [on the Other Side] and the surrounding market places. A large amount of manufactured goods was confiscated, [especially] leather, and thousands of Poles were seized for forced labor. The Jews lost a substantial sum through the raid, because most of the merchandise confiscated consisted of things that the Jews had given Christians on commission to sell on the Other Side.

The German Jews, deported here from Hanover, Berlin, etc., have brought a number of jokes with them. One of them is that they explain the emblem *Jude* [Jew] that they have to wear on their chest as being the initials of the words: *Italiens Und Deutschlands Ende* [The end of Italy and Germany]. Despite all they went through in Germany, they still talk about “*unser Fuehrer*” [“our leader Hitler”] and still believe in German victory. They are certain, despite everything, that they will return to Germany. Although it has been some time since they came to Warsaw (more than a month), they are still kept separate from the rest of the Jews. They live outside the Ghetto in special quarantine quarters. Some three hundred of them work in various outside work details. They have to wear the *Jude* emblem even when they secure permission to live in the Ghetto. The first thing they touched upon was the question of work. They were all working in Germany. The old folks can't get used to the new situation. The result is they're dying in large numbers. They're treated much better than the other refugees. There simply is no comparison between the way the Jewish Council treats the Polish refugees and its attitude to the German Jews. The latter get a quarter of a kilo of bread, soup, coffee [daily]. True, that's much worse than what they got in Germany, but compared with the usual conditions in the Ghetto, it's paradise. Demoralization is spreading rapidly through the Ghetto. While the poor become ever poorer and dress in rags, the girls are dressing up as though the war were nonexistent. There have been many cases of girls stealing from their parents, taking things from home to sell or barter for ornaments, or a hair wave – in a word, for luxury items.

In April or March Jews were forbidden to use German marks that bore the likeness of H. [Hitler]. Apparently they're afraid Jews might give him the Evil Eye!

Jonas Turkow acted this season in a Polish repertoire. The reason: There are no good plays in Yiddish. Besides, this is evidence of the marked assimilation so discernible in the Ghetto. The Jews love to speak Polish. There is very little Yiddish heard in the streets. We have had some heated discussions on this question. One explanation advanced is that speaking Polish is a psychological protest against the Ghetto – *you* have thrown us into a Jewish Ghetto, but *we'll* show you that it really is a Polish street. To spite you, we'll hold on to the very thing you are trying to separate us from – the Polish language and the culture it represents. But my personal opinion is that what we see in the Ghetto today is only a continuation of the powerful linguistic assimilation that was marked even before the war and has become more noticeable in the Ghetto. So long as Warsaw was mixed, with Jews and Poles living side by side, one did not notice it so acutely; but now that the streets are completely Jewish, the extent of this calamity forces itself upon one's attention.

#### NOTES

- 1 Sklar was an important Bundist, head of the Bundist kitchen located at 2 Orla Street. No exact information is available about the other three men.
- 2 There were more than 60,000 Jews in the Vilna Ghetto when Germany invaded the Soviet Union in June, 1941. Most of them were massacred at that time.
- 3 Azef achieved notoriety in Russia at the beginning of the twentieth century for being simultaneously the leader of the terrorist Social Revolutionary Party and a police spy.
- 4 The Todt was a German military organization that did heavy construction work, such as laying railroad tracks, using conscripted native labor.
- 5 Voluntary Ghetto institution that planted vegetables, gardens, trees, and made small parks in an attempt to improve the health conditions in the crowded Ghetto.

## Notebook H

OSKAR ROSENFELD

**March 31.** Rain. Cold. Shower. Yesterday one thousand people taken away, only a few of them unable to work – mood of despair in the ghetto.<sup>1</sup>

**April 1.** Stormy rain, cold showers – outsetlement of yesterday forgotten in the ghetto. –

**April 4.** Oppressive mood, following the one thousand people – outsetlement is over. Aftershock only among those who lost family members.

*Reading in the ghetto: Poetry and Truth* [Goethe]; Heine; *Conversations with Eckermann* and *Tasso* [both Goethe]; Shakespeare.

People are singing. An old man, old material, sings Schubert's "Unvollendete" like a drinking song.

*Diseases in the ghetto. Meyers Encyclopedia*, vol. 10, p. 328 H, 1907 edition, sixth printing: "Greater ability to survive corresponds with a lower tendency toward illness... This is especially true of infectious diseases like tuberculosis, pneumonia, typhoid fever... all these diseases are less common among Jews or occur in milder forms. Particularly striking is the difference when it comes to tuberculosis though the majority of Jews are housed in filthy, unhygienic lodgings, that is, were at one time (ghettos)... The cause for the relatively low receptivity of certain diseases is attributed to the strict dietary laws, the inwardly directed and pure family life, and the moderation in eating and especially in drinking (alcoholic beverages), and on the other side by contrast, the cause for a heightened disposition for other afflictions can be seen in oppressive poverty, filth and misery of the ghetto as well as the competitive struggle for existence. Even if all these factors for either greater immunity or disposition are true, they

Oskar Rosenfeld, *In the Beginning Was the Ghetto: 890 Days in Lodz*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2002, pp. 181–93.

are not sufficient to explain this strange phenomenon; it is, therefore, hard not to take into account the factor of race, that is, a biological race characteristic.”

**April 5.** [...] *Ashkenes talkie*. Kripo comes to the house, visitation: one flight up to mother who is holding a child: “Where do you want me to aim, at the stomach or the forehead?” (Threatens with revolver.)

*Names:* Alphabet, Cincinnatus, Eternity, Stooljuice.

**April 8.** Cold, snow showers... Question whether there will be matzot for Pesach or rather additional rations. There’s talk about potatoes! – Today burial of Cersky-Cukier<sup>2</sup> (tuberculosis).

**April 9.** Excitement in the ghetto, German authorities (twenty-nine people) inspected several ressorts, streets blocked off – talk of new orders, all this in stormy rain-hail weather.

Hunger continues. Question: What will today’s ration bring? Supposedly neither potatoes nor anything sweet!

*Religious tradition.* Mrs. Elka Schapiro (ressort worker) received canned meat. Since it isn’t kosher, she doesn’t want to eat it even though she is weak and her feet are swollen. Doesn’t want to sell it either since she couldn’t sell *treife* [Yidd./Hebr., nonkosher] meat to Jews. The canned meat is still at the ressort. So still clinging to tradition. Thousands of people are sick therefore an equivalence should be set up since the sick are exempt and not bound by kashrut [dietary and hygiene laws of Judaism]. [...]

**April 12.** *Talkie*. During the night: Schupo [German police] talks with Jewish policemen. Two Jewish policemen are leading a man. “Whereto?” asks the Schupo. “To jail!” “So? You have a jail? What for? You are all here in a jail.”

*Extermination.* A woman came from Zduńska Wola, had eight children. Now her mind on only one thing, to tell her story.

*Humor.* “One doesn’t steal, one takes.” Meaning due to corruption some people get from their protector and thus don’t have to steal.

*Religious life.* Houses of prayer closed down in summer 1942, already in 1941 order to shave beards. All, or almost all, eat *treifene* soup. Kashrut does not exist. Pesach 1942, matzot for the first time made of rye flour.

*Crematorium.* Ozorkow near Łódź. Place where the thousand human beings are said to have been taken, see entries of March 29–30. Crematorium.

**April 12.** [...] *Struggle for power*. Stories about Dawid Gertler<sup>3</sup> and Marek Kliegier<sup>4</sup> – against Praeses. Revue of the “Special,”<sup>5</sup> “*Dawid is*

*inser Vuter, Gibt uns Brojt*” [Yidd., “David is our father, he gives us bread”]. Just as in ancient Rome when the plebeians selected some man and made him *popular*, that’s the way it is here with Gertler and Kliegier. Praetorian guards surround both: “They were privileged among the troops through higher pay, shorter service, and special insignia. In (Special Division) the course of time they gained political influence, permitting them to enthrone and dethrone a series of emperors.” Gertler and Kliegier like two consuls (*duumvirat*).

*The Eldest*. He wants to play the role of the one who created Noah’s ark. Ghetto ark. He goes about his own way of preserving it, and if it should cost thousands of victims, he tears down everything that gets in the way, gets violent, lashes out... He has become *eved hagermanim* [Hebr., slave of the Germans]. He listens to nobody even if something good is proposed. When somebody has a plan concerning the children, he declares: “Don’t play the big savior of the children, that’s my role...” He wants to go down in history as the savior, *shomer* [Hebr., guardian], of Israel... This creates conflicts.

**April 15.** A few days before Pesach and still no decision about matzot or other allocations. (*Not yet decision concerning* [original English].) A bright sunshine, outright hunger.

**April 16.** Sun! Cold on the inside! Cooking without fat, without potatoes, without flakes... All are waiting for *deliverance*: 3 kg potatoes, 15 dkg preserves (turnips + saccharine), and 4 dkg margarine. [...]

**April 17.** Drafting *tnoyim* [Yidd./Hebr., marriage contract] (engagement). E. Hirschberg, scientific department,<sup>6</sup> young Echezkiel Spiegel becomes engaged to Simrata Hirschberg. Set table. Shabbat. Havdalah [end of Shabbat ceremony]. Later signing of *tnoyim* as symbolic *mechuten* [Yidd., in-law], the father of the groom is not in the ghetto. Present are brother of the bride’s father, son of Dr. Lemberg (he is Eldest of the Jews in Zduńska Wola, a town near Litzmannstadt), Lipschuetz (teacher at Hebrew high school in Łódź), and the artist H. Szylis.<sup>7</sup> – Brother reads *tnoyim*, makes speech, finally the father of the bride speaks, *mazel tov*, kisses, congratulations, evening meal with schnaps, meat, vegetables, babka [Pol., cake; in the ghetto made of potato peels and ersatz coffee), coffee. Going back home at midnight.

*Loneliness*. We live in house by house. Don’t see each other as in a big city. Part of the daily routine. As one group leaves the house at seven o’clock and comes back at five, the other leaves at seven-thirty and comes back at five-thirty; their paths never cross but run parallel to each other. Thus it happens that one doesn’t recognize a friend whom one has rarely

seen for months, that one doesn't recognize the other. When somebody says; This one? Dead! This one? Died. This one? Outsettled... No news, of course. Mail ban for sixteen months.

*Matzes* [unleavened bread]. In front of a grocery distribution center on Friday, April 16, people queue up who want to take matze instead of bread. All in all supposedly only 10,000 kg matzes for eighty-five thousand people. Praeses drives by. Jumps out. Chases people away. Hits. Thrashes. It was his wish that only Chassidim get matze. Immediately orders cessation of matze distribution. Matzes: a symbol of Pesach. Two kilograms bread =  $\frac{1}{15}$  matzes. But people are yearning for a little piece of *yontiff* [Yidd., holiday]. A crumb of matze has the magic of evoking Pesach. Great is the longing for a bit of festiveness. For a little spark of hope. For preserving tradition. Matzes: in the *ghetto*. A little piece of freedom, a little piece of being a Jew!...

**Today, Sunday, [April] 18**, melancholy mood, dreary day. Everybody is going to get the extra ration and bread. Twenty decagrams brown sugar, 15 dkg preserves (turnips with saccharine), 15 dkg sago, 5 fruit teas, 50 cans red beets, one piece of soap, 5 dkg powder milk, 6 dkg cheese, 3 kg vegetables... But no potatoes. The ghetto is going hungry.

*Talkie, 1940.* Ashkenes at the wire. Is bored, shoots at passersby. Thump, thump. On some days up to ten people... Ashkenes looks into a yard from his post. A forty-five-year-old man is sitting on the ground reading. Ashkenes aims, shoots, hits him below the ear, the man screams, blood splatters. – Ashkenes picks up stones, tosses them against an opposite window to alert people. People are coming out, hear the man screaming, bring a stretcher to take him to the hospital, the man could be saved if the blood flow was stopped. “Bring the piece of dirt over here!” Ashkenes calls out. Then it happens. Ashkenes shoots his rifle from close range, twice; dead...

Nobody dares to go into the street. The seriously sick would like a doctor. The doctor doesn't dare to come. People dig holes into the wall of the yard so that they can get next door without having to pass near the wire.

*Torn-down houses.* One wooden house after another is collapsing. Streets are changing. Back in 1940: “Whoever doesn't leave the Jewish district will be treated as a Jew.” Still, many Poles remained. Ashkenes commission searched the houses. Many a Pole has tears in his eyes as he is leaving: “Take care of my house, my garden, etc.” Leaving the place where they and their family had been living for decades like the Jews.

*Talkie.* A small town. Five hundred to six hundred Jews are coming from the provinces. Clothes taken off in a big building. SS says: “Nothing

will happen to you. Just getting a bath. Cleansing. Delousing, etc.” They leave. Tilted, slippery floor. Starting to slide into a sort of basin. Steam. Suffocating. *Terrible screams*. Dead.

Jews ask those who do these things: “We can’t go on. Shoot us.” Was no use. Have to. Or others are brought in and the resisters themselves are shot. And so it was done. – Clothes often sent to the ghetto for cleaning and the more inferior pieces left in the ghetto with permission of the ghetto administration.

**April 19.** *Toffi* children. Children are still calling out their candies, no longer 6 per marek but 2 per marek. They no longer sing *toffi* with the sharp double F but sing it strained, like “*tovi*,” which is easier, less wearing on the speech muscles.

**April 20.** Yesterday Seder at Boruch Praszkiel’s with all the trimmings as usual, even eggs, which I have neither seen nor eaten in one and a half years. Brief, quiet evening from nine to ten o’clock. The night before something like festive mood in the ghetto. However without matzot, without wine. Dreary, rainy, without hope.

**April 21.** *Sky bright and fair. Pleasant sunshine. Little hope of better time. Around me dark faces. Meanwhile great suppers at the borders of the Getto, entertainments, performances in the culturhouse – and the people hungers. One kg turnip costs 20 “Chaimki” and I myself am not able to help.* [This and following two paragraphs in original English.]

**April 22.** *Passover-sensibility on the whole town. Private prays to Lord. Nevertheless no one without care for the next day. A few sidurim {Hebr., prayer books} at the Zionist societies, first by the youth, the past chaluzim [Hebr., pioneers] on the hachscharah [Hebr., training for immigration to Palestine] Marysin.*<sup>8</sup>

Hebrew songs, among these “Techzakanah” [“Make Strong”], by Bialik.

*Talkie and realities.* After the company was gone, got undressed, in bed, light turned off. Knocking on the door. What’s going on?

The black hand is storming the Jewish quarter of Varsovie [Fr., Warsaw], seeking to drive them out. They resist. Hands against weapons, rifles, and tanks – exchange of fire, siege. Will help arrive? All call out: Save our souls . . . The city is in flames! – How will it all end?<sup>9</sup> (Image of Czarist Russia.) People hide in cellars, attics, toilets, cemeteries, etc. From above, firebombs. Wild screaming and whimpering – *Shma Israel!* Does the world not want to hear? It doesn’t hear. Shakespeare and Poe are silent.

**April 23.** One hundred twenty kilometers away anniversaries are being celebrated with revues and trite couplets, however, in Erez Israel with *tillum* [Yidd., psalms] and *tallis* [Yidd., prayer shawl] . . .

All waiting with dread: When will it be our turn? Does it make sense to be concerned about everyday things? The question “Where get the instruments of the hoplites [Greek foot soldiers], weapons?” preoccupies the young and the bold, *all must be prepared for the moment of the danger and the enemy’s attacks against us. Therefore it is necessary to cal the public opinion and not allow that the people further visite amusment and performances, on the contrary: that the whole population of the Ghetto may be prepared for the defense of life and honor* [original English].

**April 25.** Surprise: 5 kg potatoes, ration for two weeks. Worst kind of hunger overcome for short period. Black-market prices didn’t go down.

Another surprise: huge queue at the potato distribution, but goods did not arrive.

**April 26.** Today, the potatoes are to be distributed, and in the kitchen “thick” soups.

*Amnesty.* Praeses pardoned light crimes and offenses on the occasion of Pesach!

**April 27.** *Hunger.* A beautiful religious service at Luzer Najman’s – minyan men in the midst of a thunderstorm. See entry “Remembrances . . .”<sup>10</sup> Thousands of people are standing in line for hours for potatoes – desperate . . . Hunger on the last day of Pesach! Despair, nervous breakdowns, general weakness . . . No vegetables in the ghetto.

*Marysin.* On the way a yellow butterfly – stork – in the meadow three goats and six sheep . . . grazing . . . Otherwise no animals in the ghetto – no dogs, no cats, no rabbits . . . , etc.

**April 28.** *Work for Ashkenes.* A cool day, lucky is he who garnered his potato ration. Half a million straw shoes ready for the Russian winter campaign.

**April 29.** *Face of the Ghetto.* Again, as in the year before, all around barracks, wooden houses, latrines, people at the roadside, even children, with spades and shovels (*djalka*) working the ground, nearby already a bit of greenery, even cherry-tree blossoms and almond bushes directly behind the fence . . . some in shirtsleeves, some wrapped in goatskins, some in loafers or wooden shoes [*treпки*] . . . The Jews are planting, their own vegetables expected by mid-May. Nearby wooden houses and even solid buildings are being torn down on order of Ashkenes . . . Mortar is flying, the



thin-leafed trees rustle, mostly birch trees... The Jews are lugging heavy beams and planks on their shoulders like beasts of burden... Small carts with their meager possessions. Discolored bedding, broken chairs, broken dishes, a soup pot tied around the waist. Where are they moving to? Maybe back to where all is being leveled or separated from the ghetto? The sun is breaking through, bright blue between gray and white. [...]

**April 30.** *Henuschi*. Magnificent, cool morning after a terrible night, trouble breathing, thinking of Henuschi. I'm deeply concerned since I am without news, not through Red Cross either. What is she doing, the poor darling?

*The leader of the Ghetto promises us that we will have enough of nourishment, victuals, and greens. The landmen here are working in all parts of the Ghetto. One sees women and girls and children with fieldtools – the best manner of defeating the bad time and the hunger. No one can live without the for a good future [original English].*

*Murder in the ghetto.* The murdered thirteen-year-old girl *Ella Sznal*. The murderer, the twenty-five-year-old Chaim Israel *Brysz*. He confesses. Sold the foodstuff in three private shops.

**May 1.** Visiting Marysin, over meadows, sandpits. After two years, saw cows again; belonged to the Eldest. Milk cows. – Ghetto has been sealed three years ago.

**May 2.** Trial of Rathner and wife – card division because of fraud with food cards. Praeses demands the death penalty. The court sentences Rathner to three years' imprisonment. Fasting every two weeks, fifty lashes every month – corporal punishment. Court: strange sentence a la ghetto, under influence of Ashkenes, since in Polish law corporal punishment does not exist. On May 2, 1940, the ghetto was established (sealed).

*Tidbit.* The defense lawyer in court in favor of a defendant who embezzled food cards: "In the ghetto there are four kinds of human beings:

- 1 Those who have everything in excess, the best of the best.
- 2 Those who have connections with the first and who benefit as well.
- 3 Those who don't want to bite the dust and are looking around for rations, and who, if there's no other way, will organize them for themselves.
- 4 The vast majority who die of hunger.

"My client belongs to the third class, he wants to live..."

*Tidbit.* Spring 1941. Ashkenes demand that the Jewish court in the ghetto impose and carry out the death penalty for certain crimes (murder,

listening to radio, smuggling). Ten judges resigned thereupon, four of them remained firm even though the Eldest had granted special protection to the judges. – Since then murder is a matter for Kripo and the German court, see entry April 30, Brysz.

**May 3.** Praeses demanded the death penalty for Rathner (see entry May 2) but didn't insist on it in order to avoid creating precedents. Ashkenes would insist on death penalty in similar cases in the future.

Praeses spoke on May 2 in Villa Marysin about postwar problems. He shouldn't rack his brain too much, the Zionist group is already planning for that time. – Afterward reception with bean coffee (!).

**May 5.** *Henuschi*. Again troubled nights – coughing, asthma, thinking of Henuschi's care in Vienna when she went to the pharmacy at night to get medicine. *Where she night hurried to the Svog-store and brought means against caught* [original English].

**May 6.** *Wilma's birthday. Ghetto at once confidently: because of 8 kg Potatoes... Weather wet and cold like an autumn-day. When comes the happy end?* [Original English.] [...]

*The Eldest.* While he was living in Hospital I. Lagewnicka 34/36, orgies: looked out the window, called girls inside. At one time, the wife of a doctor. She refused. Whereupon her name was found out and the Jewish police were sent to her apartment and demolished the furnishings, floor planks ripped up, made a mess. The old man was also beaten... heckled by children who ran after the car... Ashkenes (Kripo) too gave him a few punches.

He himself has raised informers, declares: It is the sacred duty to inform the police of those who own jewelry, since the valuables pass into our hands and we will exchange them for food. Meanwhile it happened mostly that informing continued – up to Ashkenes, who then was using force and shedding blood. That didn't bother him: He has thousands of starving people and all of Marysin on his conscience. He says to himself: "We earn our income from our work and the requisitions, that is, confiscation of jewelry, furs, rugs, postage stamps, etc., shoes, featherbeds, iron, electric cooking appliances..."

**May 12.** Big gathering in my apartment: mood. Excited faces, but full of hope.

The Eldest wants to play an historical role for the future. Talks about leading the people out of the ghetto and marching in front of them. Has already intention of creating some kind of organization that will carry out the necessary preparations.

*The Eldest.* A primitive underling suddenly come into power, has only one wish: to keep himself in power. If he possessed any understanding of politics and had known the kind of partner he was up against, had he possessed the slightest diplomatic talent, had he negotiated, threatened, extorted, flattered, resisted – much would not have happened.

The others too, Dawid and Marek [Gertler and Kliegier], are totally deficient in this respect. Only in the exercise of power, without any foresight, without the slightest sense of dimensions, positions, possibilities, appraisal of the power relationships. [...]

**May 21.** *Talkie.* A train of inmates from Czarnickiego taken by the Jewish police to the Kripo, an abject sight as in novels by Dostoevski after Siberia... Professor Hart (with a pack on his back – laundry), “I buried my daughter yesterday...” How is it going? Better in the sun? Anything else new? Anything hope-inspiring?

*Talkie.*

- 1 A Polish Christian woman climbs over the wire into the ghetto. Schupo sees her. Doesn't shoot... the girl disappears. –
- 2 On the same day, three Polish smugglers with butter, eggs, etc., at the wire. Schupo lets them be.
- 3 On the same day Gestapo from the town: On the basis of denunciation, the commandant goes to Bess-Oilom, grave is opened, jewelry found with the dead.

*Talkie.* The ghetto has gone insane: The war will last another forty days! It's interesting to note how a rumor makes its way through the ghetto. Doubts, despair, belief, faith, unconditional trust: People start using their good soap and shoe polish, start eating potatoes.

*Tidbit.* Vegetable center. A woman lugs a sack with  $2 \times 15$  kg potatoes. The director asks her: “Why in such a hurry? Don't you have potatoes left at home?”

She looks at him: “Because I ate the previous potatoes, I have the strength to carry *these*.” General laughter. [...]

**May 23.** During the celebration of the third anniversary, a toothless Jew in *trepki* [Pol., wooden shoes] says: “What can he do? Even if he slaughters us all, us here, somewhere will be Jews who will live to see his *mapule* [Yidd., downfall]... if not we, then in the United States... He won't destroy the Jewish people completely... What nobody has accomplished, he too won't succeed at, we shall live on... somewhere... we'll know what to do...”

Again *moire* [Yidd., fear] in the ghetto. A commission from over there is said to be coming. Warmer Sunday. [...]

**May 25.** Wearing summer suit for the first time so that winter is behind me. It would be terrible having to read up May 1942... that is, outsettlement from the home in Marysin: Dr Ferler and wife, Ehrenhaft and wife, Singer and wife, Engel and wife, and to let the figures pass before me: Mmes Stein, Biedl, Rosenberg, Adler, Markus... Farkas, Baer, Barihiuch, Arent, Bellak, et al. [...]

**May 26.** A cool day without any special character. Supposed to ask in Czarnickiego about the execution of Brysz... Don't feel like it... strange indifference... Otherwise sensation, in the ghetto concern about food always pushes all else aside.

People are adopting children since they get rations for them, which they withhold from them. For example, five rations for a five-member family, bread, two for the couple, in addition heating material per head, this means a fivefold ration for one stove. Part of the surplus (!) is sold under the table: bread and wood coal.

**May 27.** [...] *Ashkenes*. Execution Brysz in Czarnickiego. Tliah set up so nobody in the neighborhood could see it. Three Jewish policemen as executioners (henchman, two assistants), then examination of body by doctor. Discretion striking in, comparison to earlier (see Herz – Cologne, February 1942). Is this a change in atmosphere? Isn't the food distribution a pure miracle? [...]

**May 28.** Didn't sleep all night and trouble breathing! Slept in the early morning with open window.

*Henuschi*. Again despair. Dreams of Henuschi, Vilma, Erich... How much longer?

Reviewing in my mind: Besides Henuschi, Vilma, Erich, Ernst: Linda, Emil Gerta, Otto, Hans, Feli, Franz, Gallia, Heini, Hans Bondy, Hans Klein, Evi, Georg, Wikinger and wife and daughter, Aunt Fanny, all the Jellineks, people in Bratislava, friends in Palestine... Lizzi Pisk, sculptor Weiss, Herta Ehrlich, Fritz Gross, Fritz Manyi Eri, Fanny Rust... Viennese friends from Astoria Beeth, de France... Prague friends: Rafael et al., people around the Hrad, Otto Schön, Herta Havr... Isi Kohn and wife, the Woihch family, Rand, Richter from Hotel Fischer, Lukanec, Dr Frankl and Noemi, Gustav Boehm, Uncle Moritz, the Stadlers, Gruenfeld-Braun, Dr Spiegler, the Geller family, Stricker, Friedmann, Ella, Kolb... Dr Wiesen, people associated with advertisement (Goldf. et al.), Café Klein,

Harry Prager, Grubner, film director Halery, Agadati, Bukspan, Uri Zwi Haller, Schlonski, Kanner, Bondy, Gelber.

*Talkie.* Have you ever seen a human being shortly before dying of hunger? His legs hardly support him, stomach caved in, sunken temples right and left, yellowish white coloring. Dizziness: collapses on the stairs despite cane. He's quickly administered some ressort soup. Another ten hours! Too late. Dies, slowly fading away... with a sigh on his lips. Every day a dozen. To be seen in the street, through open windows. They are completely wrapped in clothing because they are freezing cold.

**May 30.** Cold day. Potatoes are still rolling. Excitement in the ghetto: Waiting again for half a can of canned meat. – *From abroad fair records. What will be? No one knows any sure...* [Original English.]

*For the story "The Secret of the Ghetto."* Not in the basement but in the yard wooden hut. Human queue into the yard... A small foyer: door, leading into Beth Midrash, half open: three long, narrow tables along the long side, flanked by benches, on the short side opposite the window high up a shelf with leather *sforim* [Hebr., Torah scrolls]... Candles... Terrible haze... sticky... moldy smell from old, rotten garments... And in all that, ecstasy. [...]

**June 7.** Zionist circle (Meilach Schipper) stimulates me to write memoirs. Maybe I'll start with a sketch in the next few days.

*Humor.* A black-and-white-spotted cow through Dworska to Baluter Ring. Everybody laughs; why? A young fellow says: "It's the first cow who made it to the Baluter Ring without protection."

**June 8.** [...] Something is in the air, says the ghetto... Cool day. We're waiting again. –

*Humor.* The Eldest as well as Gertler agree on everything except the agrarian question. The Eldest wants Gertler to lie in the ground, and Gertler wants the Eldest to lie in the ground...

**June 9.** [...] Ritual: A group of Jews illegally obtained food with cards from people who were deported. Didn't go out for months and had a female relative get everything for them. Meanwhile their beards began to grow – Chassidic Jews. When they were caught and taken to Czarnickiego, their beards had to be removed according to regulation. Beards in the ghetto are prohibited by German authorities for hygienic reasons. – "Shoot me, hang me, but leave me my beard."... When he saw that his plea had no effect, since the Jewish police was dragging him to the barber standing ready, he begged him to leave him at least a little bit of

hair on both sides so that a trace of his Chassidic soul remains in his countenance. [...]

**June 12.** Sabbath: You shall hallow the Sabbath day. Three tliahs at the central prison. Execution ten o'clock in the morning carried out by the Jewish police. Two candidates went from a work camp to a village, begging Polish peasants for bread. Caught. The third one tried to escape from the ghetto. Scenes. The delinquents were screaming. No use. Order from the Gestapo. The hearse was waiting in front of the prison for Marysin. All police chiefs including Commandant Rosenblatt as well as Gertler had to be present... Pathetic Shabbath after Shavuot... Work and laughter in the vegetable patches. And then the evening to the cultural center. Revue of OS with jesting and coarse humor... (Tliahs ordered on Friday evening!...) The executed are: Abraham Tondowski, thirty-one years old, Zduńska Wola; Herz Faygeles, twenty-three years old, Tomaszów; Mordka Standarowicz, twenty-nine years old. [...]

## NOTES

- 1 The destination of the March 1943 deportation is unknown. Since the transport consisted mostly of sick and old people and those broken by murderous forced labor, it must be assumed that they were taken to an extermination camp.
- 2 Julian Cukier (pseudonym, Stanislaw Cerksi), born 1900 in Łódź. Son of Ludwik Cukier, a Łódź industrialist and prominent representative of the Jewish community. Julian Cukier was a journalist and worked, among other places, for *Republika*, a prominent liberal daily newspaper. In the ghetto he worked for the archive. He initiated and directed the writing of the *Daily Chronicle*. He died in the ghetto on April 7, 1943, of tuberculosis.
- 3 See note 10 for Notebook E.
- 4 Marek Kliegier, deputy and later successor of Dawid Gertler, the head of the Special Division of the Jewish Order Service.
- 5 After the dissolution of the cultural center and its orchestras in September 1942, and the assignment of its artists to the various work resorts, cultural activities developed on the level of the various departments and workplaces. Revue performances were especially frequent. Such revues were also performed by the Special Division (short, "Special") of the Jewish Order Service.
- 6 Rabbi Professor Emanuel Hirschberg, director of the "scientific department." The establishment of a "scientific department" in May 1942 coincided with a plan of the German ghetto administration for the establishment of a museum in Łódź as well as the branch of the Frankfurt "Institute for the Study of the Jewish Question," which was temporarily located in Łódź. The Łódź branch, for which Hirschberg apparently had to work at first, was headed by Professor Adolf Wendel, an Old Testament scholar at the University of Breslau. Little is

known so far about the work of the Łódź branch. Concerning the work of the institute in Frankfurt am Main, see Dieter Schiefelbein, *Das Institut zur Erforschung der Judenfrage, Frankfurt am Main. Vorgeschichte und Gründung 1935 bis 1939*. Materials of the Fritz Bauer Institute, no. 9, Frankfurt am Main, 1993.

Plans by the German ghetto administration in Łódź for a museum of the “Customs and Practices of the Eastern Jews” were apparently made as early as winter 1941–2. The museum was to present, besides cult objects, paintings, and photographs, a summary of the successes of the ghetto administration and the results of ghetto production. The “scientific department” in the ghetto was set up on order of the German ghetto administration, without consultation with the Eldest of the Jews and his archive, in June 1942 and was to report to Biebow directly. Meanwhile ensued a protracted controversy between the ghetto administration and Reich ministry of propaganda. The ministry rejected all plans for a “cultural exhibit.” “People should be glad that the Jews have disappeared from their lives. It was hardly desirable to arouse any interest in them.” In a reply dated August 27, 1942, to a decline of June 24, 1942, the ghetto administration tried to take the teeth out of the objections:

This exhibit is merely to be comprised of a few Torah scrolls, caftans, prayer-books, a few pictures of Jewish types, as well as images of the Jewish communal life, such as the primitive manner of excrement disposal, the dilapidated housing, and so on. Such an exhibit is in no way meant to make an interesting impression on the viewer, rather, a repelling one. With regard to exhibiting cult objects I will, of course, abide by any regulations that you will issue to me. Otherwise, the ghetto administration and its director will guarantee that those who come into contact with [the exhibit] will see the Jews and current Jewish life represented in a form that will arouse in anybody a feeling of revulsion. [Gettoverwaltung an Reichspropagandaamt beim Reichsstatthalter in Posen am 27.8. 1942 (Ghetto administration to the Reich propaganda bureau at the Reich governor in Poznań on August 27, 1942), Polish State Archive.]

The “scientific department,” meanwhile, was working on the creation of a folkloristic group of figures with themes like “Chassidic Wedding in Poland” and “Candle Lighting on Shabbat,” or scenes in the synagogue as well as paintings and graphic prints (excrement transport, Jewish police, etc.).

Oskar Rosenfeld describes in Notebook 12, in carefully chosen words, the work of the “scientific department.” He writes, among other things:

The figures, or scenes, are mounted in glass cases that were made in the ghetto by trained experts, artisans. The cases are about 2m wide, 80 cm high, 70 cm deep. The figures are the size of figures in a puppet theater. In part they have a caricature effect, in part they appear symbolic – depending on the kind of person they are supposed to represent and symbolize. The reasons for this are manifold:

- 1 Through the smaller scale, individual traits, like details in posture, are eliminated. Certain characteristics have to be left out, and others again, so that they still have some effect on the small scale, so that they are emphasized and made more coarse.

- 2 The massing of figures is due to the fact that one picture, one scene, has to exhaustively express the set theme. For example, the actors in an Chassidic wedding and their actions are represented in a small space.
- 3 The costumes – which in a normal figure are infused with life through the movements of the one wearing them, bending as the person walks, struts, sits, etc. – remain rigid in their miniature representation. They appear doll-like, mummylike, annoying, comical, like caricatures.
- 4 The figures are crowded together. They form a collective that in this form is not found in real life, especially since they all have to be made to fit into a cramped space.
- 5 Figures that don't belong together, which are even socially totally different, are forced to touch each other, play with each other. Figures of opposite types are put together shoulder to shoulder, which, of course, can have a grotesque effect.
- 6 Even in real life, individual figures in and of themselves have a tendency to appear comical. Exaggerated accessories, penetrating colors, pathos of gestures – motions without words – bring unconsciously to mind puppet plays and their often sappy and childish-dumb texts and plots.
- 7 The person responsible for these figure groups took into account, through overemphasis on objectivity, the taste and intention of those who are using this exhibit for their particular purposes.

In the end, the museum never materialized. Instead, a series of exhibits, with the participation of the statistics department of the Eldest of the Jews, were mounted for those particularly interested in ghetto production, customers such as businesspeople and army representatives as well as commissioners and political functionaries.

The “scientific department” was dissolved on June 24, 1943. It is possible that some of the figure groups that were in production were completed. What happened to them is unknown. A few of the figures were photographed. Contact prints are in the Polish State Archive of Łódź.

- 7 Hersz Szylis, a painter, worked in the ghetto with Israel Lejzerowicz, for the “scientific department among other places.”
- 8 During the first two years of the ghetto's existence, numerous youth groups and kibbutzim, agricultural cooperatives preparing for emigration to Palestine, still existed in Marysin. Since opposition to Rumkowski was rife within these groups, they were dissolved in the spring of 1941; they continued to work as youth groups, in part tolerated, in part secretly.
- 9 On April 19, 1943, on the eve of Passover, the SS began the final destruction of the Warsaw ghetto. They met with unexpected strong resistance. Although the second deportation wave of January 18–22, 1943, had already been met with resistance by ghetto fighters, the SS had not been able to prevent the Nazis from deporting five to six thousand people. Now ensued a protracted, step-by-step annihilation action in the ghetto itself. At the start of the Warsaw ghetto uprising, the population in various areas of the ghetto was still fifty to sixty thousand. On May 16, 1943, the SS and Police General Jürgen Stroop announced: “Warsaw no longer has a Jewish residential district!”



## 10 Notebook 15 contains the following entry:

**Tuesday, April 27.** Last day of Pesach. Minyan at Luzer Najman's, Dworska. From the window wood and coal center. Jews work there. Rain, storm. Gradually the room begins to fill.

*Chazen* [Yidd., cantor], Praszkie, Schipper, Reingold, Schenschlini, Lublinksi, Wolkowicz, Caro, Überbaum, Freund, Rembelinski, Kleinmann, Kaufmann, Dr. Singer, and I. – *Shachris* [Yidd., morning prayer; Hebr., *shacharit*] and *mussaf* [additional prayer on Shabbat and festivals]. All in tallith, small Sefer Torah, an old treasure with *klej-kojdes* [Yidd., sacred objects], belongs to Boruch, who takes understandable pleasure in such things. Cantor Tafel sings beautifully [Moses Tafel was arrested on June 7, 1944, for illegally listening to the radio]. *Yizkor*. (Maskir [Hebr., memorial service]...) [Hebr., memory of the dead] Wonderful atmosphere when Caro gives introduction to *Yizkor* and declares that they all passed away for Kiddush HaShem.

Especially noteworthy: "Died, slain, starved,...etc." At the end together, "*Secher l'tzias Mizrajim...*" Only the Eastern Jews in Jewish life, magnificent how they celebrate such an improvised minyan.

*The Second Winter:*  
*October 29, 1942–March 18, 1943*

HERMAN KRUK

October 29 [1942]

*The second winter*

Here in the ghetto, people are preparing for the second winter. Some say the last, really the last, because soon they will finish us off. . . . But in the meantime, we live and prepare: the ghetto is excited about winter aid. Everyone is preparing for winter. Once again people put up the iron stoves, little ones with small panes instead of big and light windows.

Everywhere, people pull out old rags. The better clothes have already been sold. From the old things, they intend to alter clothing. They patch, darn, re-knit. They make soles out of an old belt; from two pairs of torn underwear, they patch together one. Poverty now creeps into the street. The clothes, the rags – every thing shows clearly the distance from a year ago to now. All statistics show this: the lines for social aid, the distribution of free lunches – everything says that the ghetto is growing poorer. But Jews do not lose their courage. And everyone is satisfied: we are getting a winter, “they”, a disaster. And a comrade helps me:

“A nastoyashtsher brokh! . . .”<sup>1</sup>

*Winter aid campaign*

As reported in the last issue of *Geto-yedies*, a new commission was appointed to run the entire winter aid campaign. It says there that to coordinate the winter aid better, the ghetto representative appointed a special

Herman Kruk, *The Last Days of the Jerusalem of Lithuania: Chronicles from the Vilna Ghetto and the Camps, 1939–44*, edited and introduced by Benjamin Harshav and translated by Barbara Harshav. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002, pp. 391–403 and 439–51.

commission: Chairman – Engineer A. Fried, and members – chairman of the former Aid Society, Mr Milkanowicki; director of the Department for Social Welfare, Mr Srolowicz; senior police inspector, Mr Muszkat, Mrs Dessler, and Mrs Raf.

More news about the successful and active progress of the campaign.

The center of the winter aid campaign is seething with work. Diligent women, girls, young men are numbering, assembling, and arranging the collected clothing.

The campaign is well under way. You have to figure that they will finish visiting all ghetto residents in the next four or five days. We must say that the campaign was well understood by everyone and the collectors encountered great friendliness everywhere. Aside from the ghetto districts, they will work on the Kailis blocks, where everything is not yet prepared in advance.

Now everything will be set in order and checked. Because most of the clothing must be repaired, it is given to the tailor shop and the shoe shop.

### *Great demand for skilled workers*

Because the demand for skilled workers is so great and there are almost no unemployed male skilled workers, the demand for skilled workers is now answered by women.

In this regard, it is noted that unemployed people will not be tolerated at all in the ghetto, not only able-bodied males but also able-bodied women capable of working.

### *The geto-yedies warns of pass permits*

Those who walk alone in the city with pass permits must join a bigger column that comes along at the first opportunity. It is even advisable to wait until a bigger column arrives.

Contrary behavior can easily lead to very great unpleasantness. At the least, it can end by confiscation of the pass permit.

### *Work on the isolating walls outside the ghetto*

In the new ghetto, [they] are already completed. In the next days, they start building the walled ghetto gate. These works take up a lot of material, especially lime, clay, and sand. Not only that, but most of the bricks

from the ruined buildings that were demolished (almost 59,000 pieces) were used up.

To make it less complicated to take refuse out of the new district, a passage will soon be opened from the courtyard of Rudnicka 7 to Niemiecka 31 and from Jatkowa Street to Niemiecka 27.

### *Workshops*

*A New Stitching Workshop.* A stitching workshop is being set up at Niemiecka 27 (entrance on Jatkowa into the new ghetto district). The workshop will be opened any day.

*Ink* is already produced in the technical-chemical laboratory. The ghetto's own ink will soon be on the market.

*Chalk for the Ghetto Schools.* The school unit appealed to the technical-chemical laboratory for chalk, which is necessary for normal teaching. The technical-chemical laboratory accepted the task.

*In the Ghetto Barber Shops,* 7,112 customers were served during September. Women will be employed in the new barber shop.

*The Production of Washing Liquid* in the technical-chemical laboratory looks good. Permission to import ashes from the municipal and government factories has already been obtained, and they will certainly be able to satisfy all orders. They predict a production of 1,100 liters a month.

### *Obligatory visits to the bath even for residents of apartments with bathtubs*

Until now, residents of apartments with bathtubs have been exempt from visits to the bath and were given bread cards even without bath notes.

Now, according to a specially published announcement, the ghetto representative also orders all residents of apartments with bathtubs to bring bath notes in order to get bread cards.

Not only must a person go to the bath, but it is important that his clothes also be disinfected.

### *Walk to the right in the street*

The police calls to the attention of the general ghetto population that, regardless of all previous warnings, people in the ghetto are not very careful about keeping to the right when walking in the street. Because

ghetto sidewalks are very narrow, the order to stay strictly on the right is more than justified – it is a necessity of ghetto life.

In the future, they will be stricter and will punish people for not walking on the right side.

### *Alfred Rosenberg speaks*

All around us is blood and bloodthirstiness. Warsaw, Kielce, Radom, recently Oszmiana, and in the midst of it all, a speech by the head of the Alfred Rosenberg Institute.

A day of art was held in Düsseldorf, and the main speech of the celebration was by none other than... my boss Alfred Rosenberg. What he said there is not important. But what interests us here are his remarks on the Jewish Question:

The Jewish Question is now being brought to its last stage. We must remove Jews from all European countries so they will no longer interfere in their affairs.

Jews blink, ask, terrified, what that means – does it mean they will finish with the Jews forever?...

After Warsaw, Kielce, Radom, Częstochowa, Oszmiana, etc., it is no wonder Jews are scared....

### *Święciany's turn has come*

After Oszmiana, it is now Staroświęciany's turn. Most likely, this will also be carried out by Jewish hands – the hands of the Vilna Jewish police.

This evening, the older policemen, Bernstein, Levas, and Averbukh, left for this purpose.

### *More about Oszmiana*

This evening, eight [automobiles] with things from Oszmiana came to the district commissar of the Vilna district. According to the account of the Jewish police, 410 persons were shot in Oszmiana – old people, sick people, and cripples. But children's objects and clothing, which certainly did not come from any old people, were brought to the commissar of the Vilna district. Altogether, the clothing is estimated to be much more than they told us.

The German drivers say 800 Jews were murdered there.

A typical case: the automobiles with clothing were unloaded by Jewish workers. A barefoot girl spotted a pretty pair of women's shoes and asked a German if she could take them. He told her that if she knew where the shoes came from, she would surely not want to use them, even if they were made of gold.

So the German explained. "Now," the German added, "if you want, take them."

Of course, the woman took the shoes.

### *Settling the new districts*

The settling of some of the new districts a week ago Sunday is 80 percent completed, according to the calculation of the Housing Department. The occupation of the apartments was done in orderly fashion. All arriving residents found their names marked on the rooms assigned to them.

A week ago Sunday, about 500 residents moved into the new district. This Sunday, the second 500. Meanwhile, the courtyard of Niemiecka 21 remains completely unoccupied because the repairs have not yet been completed.

### *The president of the lower court of the ghetto court has died*

Last Monday, the president of the lower court of the ghetto court, Attorney Yisroel Kaplan, died in the hospital at the age of 62.

Born in Leningrad, the deceased had been a well known and distinguished attorney in Vilna for many years. He had long been legal adviser of the Vilna City Council and a member of the Vilna Attorneys' Council.<sup>2</sup>

### *Day care center is expanded*

The day care center has filled almost all 100 places, but there are many applications by those entitled to use it. Therefore, the day care center is to be expanded to 150 places, and the place will be enlarged.

According to reliable sources, 300 families were taken out of the Kovno Ghetto and sent to Riga this week...for work, they say. The families include as many as 1,100 persons.

*After all, something is happening . . .*

Amid all the dreadful and painful events, a sunbeam sometimes comes, too: In Africa, a big campaign is developing against the Germans. Almost all big Italian cities are bombed every single day.

Ciano<sup>3</sup> has flown to Berlin. Berlin again justifies itself to the world [by saying] that England is telling lies, boasting that Germany allegedly proposed a truce.

Something is happening after all. . . .

**October 30 [1942]**

*It is like autumn*

From outside, people bring into the ghetto what looks like “good” news – information that “something is nevertheless happening.” Eyes shine with joy and grief at the same time. The good news brings joy; Oszmiana, Michaliszki, Staroświęciany don’t let us rest. . . .

Over my head Messerschmitts roar and search. In the ghetto, nobody knows what – rejoice? So, what is this hunting? Something isn’t calm, they say. I know that, unfortunately, this has nothing to do with us, nevertheless the roar is upsetting.

Outside, it is late autumn. I am not allowed to buy a flower in the street, although I am among the happy ones, who have the right to “pass.” So I gather beautiful golden oak leaves. Instead of a flower, a leaf, a dried, yellow autumn leaf.

It is autumn and sad in my soul. . . .

*A new means of terror*

Near Podbrodzie, a new kind of forced-labor camp has recently been created. Those who have not registered “voluntarily” for work in Germany are sent there.

*No one wants to be minister*

Reliable sources tell that it was again suggested to the Lithuanians to create a Lithuanian government. But there is one obstacle: no one wants to accept a ministerial portfolio. . . .

People say that such persons might be found, but they are afraid of a bullet in the head....

*A mass murder of Warsaw Jews*

The underground [Polish newspaper] *Niepodległość*, which appears in Vilna, tells in issue 6 of a mass murder in Warsaw.

It says that in August, 300,000 Jews were murdered in Warsaw. The murderers were Lithuanians, Latvians, and Ukrainians, who did this on the spot, in the ghetto. Some [Jews] were taken on trains to Treblinka near Malkinia, many were conveyed as far as Belz (in the Lwów district),<sup>4</sup> where they were poisoned en masse with gas or killed with electrical currents in the former soap factory there.

*From the "third" front*

The same newspaper tells of Soviet paratroop landings: around Mir a battle occurred which lasted a few days. The "contest" was between a Soviet landing force, Germans, Byelorussians, and police... in which the Germans are said to have suffered heavy losses. The groups moved into the forest. The Germans didn't enter the forest.

In Głębokie, Szumsk, Szczuczyn, and Lida, there is unrest caused by groups of [Soviet] paratroopers. Near Varmunt [?], a train was blown up by a mine. Five train cars exploded.

**October 31 [1942]**

*He will not say a blessing*

According to the radio, the Pope has sharply condemned the slaughter of the Jews in a radio broadcast. He also said that until it stopped, he would refuse any blessing. It was supposedly a fact that a unit of Italian soldiers asked for a blessing and "His Highness" refused. Jews relate this and are satisfied. They think the conscience of the papal world is rising. Naive people – the terror of the last bombings in Italy is rising. When you're whipped from behind, it creeps into your head!... For Jews, this is also a consolation.



### *Just a Rumor*

We reported that an Aktion presumably took place in Staroświeciany and that our Jewish police had already been sent there for that purpose. Now I learn that it is only an empty rumor.

### *Guests in our panopticon*

The ghetto is like a panopticon. If District Commissioner Hingst wants to show off with his Jews, he brings [visitors] into the ghetto. If guests from Berlin come to Vilna, they are taken to the ghetto. Ever since yesterday, the ghetto has been seething with a commission from Berlin.

Whose commission? What commission? Nobody even asks. Everybody repeats “commission,” and that is enough to drive people off the streets and to scrub and clean them.

Thus things were seething here yesterday from 12 to 3, and today from 9 in the morning to 1. Finally, a group of guests came. It turns out they are journalists. They strolled around here, observed, photographed the dead streets, and left.

Typically, the Jewish police paraded for the past few days, as we know, in their new uniform hats and without patches. Now, because of the Berlin guests, there was an order to doff the hats and don the patches. . . .

Apropos hats: one of the four who rule the Ghetto, Mr Fried, apparently could not bear not getting a uniform hat, and he ordered himself a navy blue hat, similar to the uniform of the Jewish police commissars, of course without the gold insignia of rank. The ghetto laughs at him. . . .

As the group of journalists left the ghetto, the police went home immediately to change clothes. Now they parade once again as the sole rulers in full uniform.

### *How does it look for the winter aid in the ghetto?*

Nothing is yet to be seen. They write, classify, and calculate. The distribution of things doesn't begin until the beginning of November. Meanwhile, I have learned that there are already 10,000 collected items, mostly underwear, shoes, most of them in bad condition. There is some warm underwear. The items are now being cleaned, patched, and straightened up.

The women on the committee say that aside from that, there are already 8,000 RM [Reichmarks] in the treasury, which means 80,000 rubles.

*A reflection of what is going on in Germany*

The Rosenberg Task Force, which has taken over the YIVO building, has recently shifted its “activity” from cultural to practical affairs. The cellar of the library storehouse and the safe have been emptied, and they bring potatoes, wood, and such. The shelves from the library have been taken apart, carefully packed, and 700 meters of shelves have recently been sent to Germany. Similarly, 30 balls of paper left over from the YIVO publishing house have gone, along with 12 cases of periodicals, 2 cases of Bolshevik literature, and other items. Shelves from Vilna to Germany! It is truly a reflection of what need Germany is in.

*More about today's visit of the German journalists*

Those who know about it are satisfied and consider it a good sign: during the visit of the journalists to the workshops of the Technical Department, Murer explained that the workshops are being greatly enlarged and that he already has big orders for them.

Jews think: if the workshops are enlarged, if big orders come, this means that we are safe here. More than this, a Vilna Ghetto inhabitant doesn't demand.

*Ten women out of the ghetto*

A week ago Saturday, when a group of Jewish and Polish workers returned from Nowa Wilejka, 10 Jewish women were detained at the railroad station. The Christians, on whom smuggled food had been found, had been detained on the spot. From the Jews, the food had been taken and they had been released. On Thursday, the Gestapo came with a list of the 10 released women. For two days, negotiations went on between the ghetto leadership and the Gestapo about whether the ghetto itself should punish the 10 women. Nothing helped, and the ghetto had to turn over all 10 [women].

*The literary-artistic meetings are continued*

The meetings the Association of Writers and Artists began a year ago this winter are now being continued. An evening devoted to Judah Halevi<sup>5</sup> will take place tonight.

November 1 [1942]

*Glazman arrest*

This day is marked by a great sensation. The chief of the ghetto, Mr Gens, decided to arrest his friend Glazman, the current head of the ghetto Housing Department. Gens thus rebelled against his ideological colleague, the Revisionist leader Glazman.

What is going on here?

All active society has recently been against Gens. Mainly for his actions during the Aktion of old people, and recently for the Aktion of Oszmiana. For this reason, Gens called a meeting of his officers this week and then a meeting of social activists and even later a meeting of brigadiers. Everywhere he publicly raised the issue of his calculations, because in this way he saves Jewish lives.

At the assembly of brigadiers, he tried to talk about the “stinking ghetto intelligentsia” who were against him. He even said he didn’t give a damn about them. Now apparently he is setting out on a new path – to force the “stinking intelligentsia” to participate in those activities so that they too will be responsible along with him.

Yesterday Mr Gens ordered his comrade Glazman to go with him to Staroświęciany and organize the Housing Department there. Glazman argued that that was national treason, and refused. At night, the police searched and arrested him. He was taken to the prison on Lidzki, the prison he himself had set up.

The sensation preoccupied the whole ghetto and, naturally, was commented on in various ways.

*Staroświęciany*

Early this morning Gens left the ghetto, along with Brojdo and a few others, for Staroświęciany. So Gens is riding around to take over several places, which are to be placed under his control. So we are becoming an . . . empire.

*Archive of court protocols in the ghetto*

Attorney Milkanowicki, chairman of the high court of justice; Attorney Povirsker, the chairman of the lower court of justice; Attorney Rubinow, leader of the civil court; Attorney Nussbaum, prosecutor; and Mr Kruk

have been appointed to examine the archive of court protocols and set aside for the ghetto archive only those that are socially useful.

For me, the issue is especially interesting, because here, too, is a chance to save many historically significant court protocols. I personally can observe here a new aspect of ghetto life.

### *Gitterman – Soloveichik*

With the sad news from Warsaw, I now learn that [Yitskhok] Gitterman took his own life.<sup>6</sup> The Soloveichik family is alive.

They say the Warsaw Ghetto is open; it has been turned into an open neighborhood.

### *20 people to Virbalis*

Yesterday 20 workers came from Virbalis. Today people are snatched up in the street to replace the 20 who came – [they are being taken] to Virbalis.

### **November 2 [1942]**

#### *The Glazman case*

The ghetto cannot calm down. Everything is full of the latest ghetto sensation: Glazman. Glazman is in jail, and everyone who talks about it is dissatisfied. Everyone thinks Gens is now pulling the strings and that everything is done under the pressure of his servants.

But few know the truth of these events. We who know understand that what is at stake is not the freedom of one man. Gens wants to start a campaign against the “stinking intelligentsia” who are not with him. He wants to show them what power is.

May Gens not miscalculate. May he come to his senses and shake off his advisers. . . .

#### *Who are the fellow executioners of the Oszmiana purge*

Only now received a list of names of Vilna policemen who were the closest assistants in the Aktion.

Those who led those condemned to the square of the execution included Brauze, Lak, Gurvich, Shapiro, and – the most horrible – Zubak, who even beat those condemned on the way to the execution.

As for who took part in the execution itself, I shall know more precisely later.

**November 4 [1942]**

*Glazman goes into . . . exile*

Yesterday morning Glazman was released and, at the same time, was dismissed as director of the Housing Department. He was also ordered to be sent for work to Sorok Tatory.<sup>7</sup> Thus [ . . . ]

[Pages 505–506 of the diary are missing.]

*Glazman's Substitute*

*Shots at a Jewish Policeman*

*Daily Obituaries*

*About Jewish Properties*

*Ghetto Life in Staroświęciany Is Getting Organized*

*In Oszmiana, Too, a Ghetto Life Is Organized*

*The Chief of Police in Oszmiana*

*About the Shot Aimed at Schlossberg*

*What Belongs for the Time Being to Our Empire*

*A Council of Brigadiers*

*Also a Statute for Brigadiers*

*Brigadiers Are Punished, Too*

*A Plastic Map of the City of Vilna*

By order of the district commissar, the Technical Department began working out a plastic map of the city of Vilna. For this purpose, the hall at Rudnicka 6 was divided so that the order could be filled without disturbance in the fenced-off part.

The map will be made to a scale of 1:2,500 cm and will be about 4 by 5 meters in scope.

*Vocational improvement courses for locksmithing and carpentry*

[The courses] are already organized and will begin soon. There are many candidates for the courses.

*Second graduation of glaziers*

The vocational improvement courses of glaziers held their second graduation last Tuesday. Forty-three persons graduated. Those who remain are held over for the new course that has been organized.

*A new workshop for leather products*

A workshop for making gloves, briefcases, handbags, purses, wallets, etc., is organized.

*Police will collect library books*

There are subscribers to the library in the ghetto who do not return their borrowed books. Now such "frozen" readers are put on a special list to be given to the police. The books of such subscribers are recalled by force.

In especially malevolent cases, people will be punished for keeping library books.

*Ghetto administration resets the time*

By order of the chief of the ghetto administration, the clock will be set back one hour, as of Tuesday, November 3, just as in the whole city, by order of the proper authorities.

So far, all work and office hours will remain unchanged.

*A new play*

*Man Under the Bridge* is now being prepared by the theater. The rehearsals are already in progress. This is a play of the European genre.

**November 5 [1942]**

*Sad anniversaries*

Since the beginning of September, we have entered a series of anniversaries, one sadder than the other: September 6, going into the ghetto; the 7th,

the already famous story of Lidzki Street, which cost 3,000 victims. Then a series of Aktions. October 1, Yom Kippur, in Ghetto 2, two Aktions, 800 and 900 people at night, people being driven to the gate with a loss of 2,200 people. Then a year ago today, October 3 and 4, Aktions in Ghetto 2 with 200 victims; after a small sigh of relief, more Aktions on the 16th, 21st, and 24th, which cost more than 10,000 heads.

A year ago today, we were at the high tide of the river of blood. But today, a year later, it doesn't feel as if we shall ever get out of the bloody sea. We splash and splash. We drown and drown. The wave has receded from Vilna for the time being, but it will inundate Byelorussia and now floods Crown Poland.<sup>8</sup>

Warsaw, Kielce, Lublin, Częstochowa, and others. We drown incessantly in a sea of blood and bury one another.

May this be mentioned on one of those bloody anniversaries.

*In the work units – “booty-collection-camp of the  
Luftw[affe] 7” (Benzynówka)*

This is one of the most popular labor workshops in the ghetto, but also one of the units where the work is tense and hard. Two hundred and ten Jews work there, 100 of them as transport workers and 110 as specialists, such as: locksmiths, auto mechanics, carpenters, etc. The special work departments are also run by Jewish specialists.

Up to now, they have worked 10 hours a day. But as of the 1st of the month, they work 8 hours a day.

*Free bath tickets*

[These] must now be distributed in larger quantities because, since there is obligatory attendance of the bath, there have been several requests to receive free bath tickets.

During the past month, a thousand free bath tickets were distributed.

*Glazman goes into exile...*

Glazman is released from jail, released from... his office as director of the Housing Department, and is now again released from “ghetto freedom.” The chief of the ghetto is sending him off in a provincial unit for forest work.

For not subordinating himself to an order, Glazman, his closest friend and ideological colleague, receives – exile.

In conversation with a representative of a social group in the ghetto that advised the chief not to exile social activists for refusing to carry out social missions against their conscience, Gens again elaborated his “theory” that he calculates mathematically. That he wants to save Jewish heads. That [in] Oszmiana, only 18 people under 40 were killed, etc., etc.

*“Aktion” in Grodno and environs*

Rumors reach us that in Grodno and environs, Aktions are taking place. Ghetto in Grodno is presumably already liquidated.

All around blood, blood, and more blood. Mostly Jewish blood.

**December 29 [1942]**

*“God, look down from Heaven!”*

The vocabulary has become impoverished. Concepts lose their clarity. Everything that was dreadful and terrible is pale and put to shame. Words stop affecting and influencing. It reminds me of another expression of helplessness in a similar period, at the time of the persecutions in Spain:

At the time of the attacks of the Almohades on the Spanish Jewish communities [in the twelfth century], Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra wrote about his experiences:

The nation weeps, persecuted and oppressed by the slaves,  
and trembles and prays “God look down from heaven!”

I remembered that poem after the events of yesterday at the gate guard. God, look down from heaven and behold our helplessness, dejection, and humiliation.

*What occurred yesterday at the gate guard*

As I wrote before, the major issue yesterday was whether the commissar of the gate guard, Levas, would have to go to Łukiszki or not. His arrest was not only an individual matter but concerned the entire ghetto. Levas had to appear for arrest at 6 yesterday evening.



At about 3:30, Murer showed up at the gate, entered, and gave an order to search a few Jews who were within reach. In fact, what he always does in such cases. But by chance, during the search, one of the Jews lost 290 Marks. Murer noticed that and ordered all of them searched for money. Everything down to the last bit was taken.

“Jews may not and must not have any money on them. . . .”

Three search rooms were set up (gate guard, workshop at Rudnicka 16, and office of sanitation at Rudnicka 16). Everywhere, 20–30 people were allowed in, men along with women, and told to take out all their money. Later, individuals were taken out and searched thoroughly. The ones they found money on were . . . whipped.

This was done in those three places. Those who were searched were forced to strip as naked as the day they were born. Men and women were forced to undress in the very same room.

All that took place under Murer’s supervision. When an ashamed woman turned her face to the wall, he ordered her to turn around because, in sadistic language, you must not be ashamed in front of Jewish police.

All those on whom they found money, who had dared not to give it away, were whipped: one girl was whipped because she had dared to bring in not money but . . . 30 decagrams of bread. On another woman, they found . . . 15 pfennig. One woman who was whipped left all her clothes and ran away in her overcoat. . . . They found 50 Marks in the shoe of an old Jew. Murer, already tired, ordered . . . one lash. When the police sergeant, Mr Witkowski, had done his job, he suggested to the whipped man that he thank the representative of the district commissar. Of course the whipped man thanked him. These and similar scenes occurred in those places.

Meanwhile, on the street stood a line that stretched from the gate to the Jewish hospital on Zawalna. Jewish police meanwhile enlightened the people to [give] the money to them.

[Pages 563–569 of the diary are missing.]

*The Levas Affair Is Liquidated  
Children Play in “Gate Guard”*

### **December 31**

*Today is Sylvester [New Year’s Eve]*

[We have one page, torn up and without a number, which is certainly from the missing pages. We present that page, with additions by the editor of the Yiddish edition.]

[And what] the world will make of this is hard to say. We and the [world] are two separate conceptions. What is [Worldly] in the world is Hitlerian in our circumstances. [But] Worldly and Hitlerian are two poles.

So we here, under the bloody Hitlerian atmosphere in the Vilna Ghetto, in the central cemetery of Lithuanian Jewry, will take leave of the past year and greet the new.

Why write about the past year? If I get out of here, I will leaf through the press, and with time, will become familiar with it. But if I do [not] survive, others will leaf through my notes and will be able to empathize with what we have gone through and experienced here.

Today my loved ones will remember, and I, how can I forget them.

In New York, my brother, my sister-in-law, and Henry – a lump of terrible longing.

In Warsaw – if she and her two children are still alive – but I am sure my only sister and her two children are not alive, victims of the bloodbath of Warsaw. And my wife, where will she remember me today, if in Siberia? Who knows how she is? If in central Russia, where will she remember!

Where is Felicja,<sup>9</sup> where is our old friend Ber Y. Rosen, where are my dozens, hundreds, thousands of comrades and friends, with whom I spent years of friendship?

Today I will look at Sylvester in the ghetto. Here in the ghetto, New Year's Eve is noisier than outside the ghetto. Today, at 10:15, a special "New Year's Review" will be performed in three places in the ghetto. In the ghetto restaurant, at Rudnicka 13, and in the club of a unit, Rudnicka 7. At 11 in the evening, the same review will be repeated formally in the Ghetto Theater.

We members of the B[und] meet today in a small group and will make an accounting of the past year.

[To] all that we have already written about the events in the ["Ga]te Guard," for the sake of truth, we must add:

The [gen]eral opinion in the ghetto is that the whole story with Murer [...] was staged. People met Murer's [...] instincts, the Levas incident was played out, and... the ghetto [administra]tion did not lose anything, and nor did the ghe[tto pol]ice.

[The sheep is whole] and the wolf is full.

[In connection w]ith that sad entry, I learn that Murer [...]

*They drink to Levas's "bachelorhood"*

*Today Levas's Wedding*

*Drugi 1918 rok [A second 1918]<sup>10</sup>*

*Partisans*

*Murer Exercises*

**January 1, 1943**

*New Year 1943*

*Drunkards Invite Jews*

*Theater in the Ghetto*  
*Illegal Polish Schools*  
*Levas's Wedding*  
*A German Asks a Favor from a Jew...*

**January 2, 1943**

*They Fraternize...*  
*A German from the Rosenberg Task Force Describes the Ghetto*  
*The Ghetto Starts Collecting Folklore*  
*They Collect Exhibits for a Planned Ghetto Museum*

**January 3, 1943**

*Smiling Faces*  
*Second Students' Concert of the Children's Music School in the Ghetto*  
*Attempts to Gather Potato Peels*<sup>11</sup>

It has been calm for a few days, even pleasantly calm. Nothing special has happened. Better and better news comes from the front. It grows clearer by the day that a big breakthrough is coming. The Germans are running away from the Caucasus. The Stalingrad-Rostov and Rzhev-Rostov fronts have bigger successes from one day to the next. Today, as I write these lines, the Reds are 120 kilometers from Kharkov and a few dozen from Rostov. Leningrad is liberated [from the siege], and the Germans are driven out of Kronstadt. Today Leningrad celebrates the liberation of the city. In short, it is calm in the ghetto, even pleasantly calm.

*100 from Świąciany*

On Monday, 100 Jewish workers were expected from Świąciany, to join the new unit of Smorgonie and Soly Jewish workers in depot work on the Vilna railroad station of the so-called Giessler Building Group.

*In the jury committee for the newly  
announced artistic competition*

The following composition is decided:

- 1 FOR THE LITERARY COMPETITION: Dr Ts. Feldstein (Chairman), B. Lubocki, and H. Kruk.
- 2 FOR THE MUSIC COMPETITION: A. Slep (Chairman), T. Hirszowicz, and Sh. Khaykin.

- 3 FOR THE PAINTING COMPETITION: Engineer Smorgonski (Chairman), Mrs Romm, and Engineer Rabinowicz.

*The ghetto library*

[It] takes pains to enlarge its number of books in all languages.

As we have written, the library has now been reorganized in two sections: (1) for children and (2) for adults. This was done to remove the great pressure at the circulation desk.

Both sections work in the same place, Strashun 6, every day (except Saturday and holidays) from 11 to 17:30.

*All who have books to sell*

[All] can sell books to the ghetto library. You have to present a list of the books and their prices in the library office to director H. Kruk.

*In the reading room*

Because of the great demand, no children under the age of 10 will be admitted. Children over 10 can enter the reading room without books, with only a notebook and pencil. [Page 570 of the diary is missing.]

**January 4 [1943]**

*Collective Living Quarters*

*Tragically Perished*

*A Second Joke about Levas*

*Another Joke – NKVD*

*How Far Does Our Empire Reach*

[...]

To govern all the places and to have complete control of them, the Vilna administration has delegated its police staff.

*Workers from the Vilna district*<sup>12</sup>

[They] will work here, as we have said, in “ОТЕ,”<sup>13</sup> on the railroad station. For that work, people have been brought together from the entire surrounding area. Now they are housed in collective quarters. Such resi-

dences have been prepared on Oszmiańska 4, Niemiecka 29, and Strashun 3, 8, and 15. The Technical Department is preparing 500 wooden bunks for them.

*A counseling center against pregnancy*

As we said earlier, a counseling center against pregnancy was set up in the ghetto. In short, they are carrying out the order that “you must not give birth in the ghetto. . . .”

*You may not carry money*

Out of the ghetto, it is forbidden to carry money. Every sum that is found is taken away.

*A home for girls*

Following the model of child welfare (Strashun 4), a home for wayward girls is now organized. The Department of Social Welfare is busy with the selection. In the home, they will study tailoring, sewing, knitting, etc.

*Outside the ghetto – a Jewish office to accept orders*

With the increase of the number of workshops in the ghetto and the number of orders from the city, the district commissar ordered a Jewish office set up outside the ghetto to take orders to be filled in the ghetto. The reason for this: customers should not “stroll around” in the ghetto. The office will soon be opened right in front of the entrance to the ghetto, at Rudnicka 29.

**January 6 [1943]**

*May it increase*

Today’s radio news brings a new breath of hope along with a shudder of terror. The Bolsheviks are advancing. Victories on the Caucasian front. On the middle front, the “Reds” are advancing. The Russians are 150 km from the Latvian border. In Latvia, there are already arrests as the

Bolshevik front approaches. All this is indeed good news, and Jews wish each other: May it increase.

But a shudder quietly passes: Will they leave us?

### *We are numbered*

Today I learn of an order that every ghetto resident will have to wear a number around his neck. I already know of such cases from the provinces. I am trying to wait for more precise information about the justification for that order.

### *How big is the administration of the ghetto*

From statistics prepared for the authorities, I learn that the ghetto administration employs:

Men	950
Women	821
Children below the age of 14	20
Total	1,791
Police	244
Total	2,035

As we see, a staff has been put together in the ghetto which could serve all Vilna, including its Poles, Lithuanians, and others.

### *Opening of a youth club in the ghetto*

For several months, a Youth Club has existed in the Vilna Ghetto, but only today did its opening take place. For months, the building was repaired, changed from a ruin into splendid quarters, which, even if it weren't in the ghetto, would certainly remain a splendid club. Like all such institutions in the good old days, the club was built in bits and pieces with great difficulty and drudgery.

The opening consists of several performances, including "Puppets" by [M.] Gilinski and [Yankev] Trupiański, Sholem Aleichem's "Enchanted Tailor," and others. The hall is beautifully decorated with pictures of Jewish writers, a beautiful stage with wings, and – as it later turned out – splendid sets.

[*The upper part of the original page is badly torn. According to what remains, this is evidently the end of the report of the opening of the Youth Club. We present the rest of the legible parts of the page, with additions by the editor of the Yiddish edition.*]

January 8 [1943]

*Like new winds*

Recently there have been [several signs indicating] that new winds are blowing in the ghetto. [You see it in the situation at the] gate and the gate guard. The incident with the 19, which the Gestapo [...] taken them; the issue of Levas; the gym[nastics in the] workshops; the entrance into the ghetto and the search for money; [the whipping of men] and women together; recently, the order about [wearing numbers; and] finally the events of today:

Today Murer came into the ghetto, stopped a group [of workers, and] ordered them to do exercises on the ground in the snow. The reason: [they] didn't greet him properly. Then he came into the workshop at [Rudnicka] 16 and ordered the women to go under the tables [...] he slept.

As we know, outside the ghetto, not far from the ghetto gate, a so-called order place is to be opened, an office to take orders to be filled in the ghetto. Now Murer has ordered the wage lists of all the units also to go through the order place, so they can control them. Now, fresh news: the office will have control of importing into the ghetto. A German woman official already sits in that office, one of those loyal to Murer.

All this portends a change in the relationship to the ghetto. A new era seems to be coming.

*They want to take our money*

I learn from a reliable source that there is a plan to take from the residents of the ghetto the right to use mon[ey]. Instead of money, workers in the units will get scrip for food, the ghetto administration will pay... in food, etc. Meanwhile, this is a plan presented to the ghetto chief.

This information is part of that series we fear.

*Arrested 6*

The 19 have recently been increased by 6. Six workers of the so-called "Nachschu [...]" were arrested and sent to Łukiszki [...]. Expensive

drinks were found on the 6: wine, liquor, etc. In the [ghetto], their fate is considered serious.

### *Passports*

There is a plan for the ghetto reside[nts] to get passports, possibly soon. Simple, normal passports with “Jude” on them. The [plan] exists; it is still in the early stage.

### **January 10 [1943]**

#### *[Naftole] Weinig is alive*

Yesterday, lying in bed, I learn the good [news that] friend Naftole Weinig, the Vilna Yiddish writer, is alive [ . . . ]

*[The remaining part of the page is badly damaged. From what remains, we can infer that information came from an employee of the Ghetto Theater that Naftole Weinig was living near the Constantine Estate, not far from Vilna. The employee went to get wood and met him there. Weinig asked him to give a message to Kalmanowicz and Kruk. From other damaged entries on the page, we find the following information.*

*On January 9, Kruk was supposed to deliver a lecture in the workers' auditorium of Kaplan-Kaplanski's units. The subject was to have been “From the Library Center in Poland to the Ghetto Library.” Unfortunately, he could not do this because of illness.*

*For the same reason, he could not participate in the meeting “For People's Health.” There, he was to have read the article “Hygiene of Reading.” His article was read by the co-editor of People's Health, Dr Kalmen Shapiro.*

*A mobile library for the Zatrocze labor camp was set up.*

*[Pages 575–579, for January 10–15, are missing. On those days, the ghetto population was upset by events at the gate. A few times, Jews were detained with smuggled luxury items. Murer, who led that activity, also arrested two persons, including the famous singer Lyuba Lewicka,<sup>14</sup> with some peas.]*

### **January 10 [1943]**

*Because of My Illness*

*A Mobile Library for the Zatrocze Work Camp*

*Weiskopf Restored; His Grandson Does Not Appear*

*A Second Café Is Opened*

*An Assault in Kailis*



**January 12 [1943]**

*Depression*

*Five of the Six Released*

*1 of the 19*

**January 13 [1943]**

*106 Furs Valued at More Than 4 Million Rubles*

*82 Persons Arrested*

*I Order Two Scale Models*

*The Ghetto Industry*

*Quarantine in the Ghetto*

*The School Program*

*A “Reserve” Communist Party*

*In the Work Units – НКР*

**January 14 [1943]**

*The Situation Becomes More Acute*

*The Ghetto Police Are Also Nervous*

*The Ghetto Archive Intervenes*

*Zalmen Reisen Is Alive, Too*

**January 15 [1943]**

*One Year of Ghetto Theater*

*Visitors in the Ghetto*

*Gens Complains*

[Page 580 begins at the end of Gens’s complaining to Kruk.]

[...] “Kailis has become a base for butter for Vilna. If you wanted it, you went to Kailis and got whatever you liked. Who suffered from it? Me. My prestige declined. My prestige means the respect of the ghetto, of the ghetto Jews. For example, take the fact with the six people five of whom are already free. Do they sit in prison for wanting to save themselves and bring in a kilo of bread for wife and child? No. They must be treated as disturbers and saboteurs. On the six Jews, they found no more and no less than 23 bottles of liquor and . . . 20,000 cigarettes. What does this mean? This means that the ghetto drinks liquor and smokes the most expensive cigarettes.

Isn’t it undermining the ghetto? Isn’t this a slap in the face for me, the representative of the ghetto, who constantly and incessantly complains about the bad situation of the residents of the ghetto?

Who suffers from this? First of all the masses, the 19 Jews [who] had 75 kg of flour altogether, the two poor souls [arrested] yesterday, [Lyuba] Lewicka and [Monye] Stupel.”<sup>15</sup>

Thus the ghetto chief laments to me.  
 Isn't there some truth in it?  
 [*The rest of the page is destroyed.*]

### *The 25th gathering of workers*

We have written of the gathering at Kapłan-Kapłański's [to] talk and lecture to the workers of his unit. [Now, I learn] that back in December, that institution cele[brated an important] anniversary – 25 meetings.

Now, since the Brigadier Council has become a whole “[...]” in the ghetto and Kapłan-Kapłański its nominated chair[man,] the institution has turned into an everyday [...] the workers from all units. Of course, with [...] Kapłan-Kapłański [is occupied].

### January 16

#### *A year of ghetto theater*

Last night's celebration of the “year of the ghetto theater” looked as we had foreseen. It [was] first of all a happy occasion not for the artists, but an evening in honor of the “operators” of [the ghetto]. All those who *gave* demanded orations, and the orations contented [them].

Two of the speeches were interesting. The first by the actor Blacher (I attach the speech), the second by the speaker of the Association of Writers and Artists. The rest of the speeches, by Yashunski, Gens, Fried, Kapłan-Kapłański, and Dr Feldstein, were pale and said nothing.<sup>16</sup>  
 [*The speech by Blacher is missing.*]

The artistic part was an abridgment of the first performance of a year ago and part of the last, current program. The same with the symphony orchestra – parts of the first and the last programs.

In general, the artistic part of the celebration was done without exaggerated solemnity and with a measure of intelligence. After the evening, the actors and theater activists went to a café on Rudnicka for a cup of coffee.

#### *Why exactly the two scale models*

Because of the impending construction of the two scale models mentioned above, at 7 this evening in the building of the PPV,<sup>17</sup> an assembly was held of all engineers of the Technical Department, the whole staff of the PPV, in

the presence of Commandants Gens and Muszkat, the painters Olkienicka and Sutzkever. The lecturer, H. Kruk, spoke about “why scale models and why exactly these scale models.”

I attach the lecture from the minutes of the meeting.

[*The lecture is missing.*]

After an exchange of opinions, everyone assures us that both scale models will come out much nicer than the first – the map of Vilna.

### January 17 [1943]

#### *People snatched for work*

Today, Sunday, they were again snatching for work outside the city. More than 100 workers were sent out of the ghetto like this.

Even on Sunday, they don't let you rest!

#### *Gloves are confiscated*

Because many women were snatched for work cleaning snow today, by order of the ghetto chief, a few hundred gloves were confiscated.

The confiscation took place by house searches. Often gloves were taken off people in the street.

#### *A tragic event*

A tragic event occurred yesterday to a Jewish worker of the НКР unit, Mr Salomon. On Saturday, he went with a German and a few Christians in a truck for wood. Four km from Širvintos, the automobile went down a steep incline. A few died in the catastrophe, including Mr Salomon, who was brought to the ghetto.

It made a depressing impression here.

#### *Sentenced to death and . . . released*

Such things also happen. In the unit *Feldbekleid an der Luftwaffe* [Field clothing of the air force], two Jewish workers left work half an hour early. Somebody informed on them. The SD<sup>18</sup> arrested them and sentenced them to death.

This happened on December 9. On the 14th, a death sentence was issued.

Police Chief Dessler intervened several times, and both shoemakers were saved from death and . . . released.

*A woman convert makes a pilgrimage to the ghetto*

For many years, the Lithuanian shoemaker Frieškaila lived in Vilna with his Jewish convert wife. The couple had seven children – five sons and two daughters. About half a year ago, the shoemaker died, and the family began to quarrel. A sister of a daughter-in-law of the shoemaker denounced the old woman as a converted Jew. She was arrested and sentenced to death for not being in the ghetto.

After several interventions, she was spared the death sentence and was sent to the Vilna Ghetto in December.

On the day before the holiday, December 23, the convert ran away from the ghetto and once again was “denounced.” On January 14, they brought her back to the ghetto and asked that she be treated well. Social Aid in the ghetto is now taking care of her.

## NOTES

- 1 Half-Russian, half-Yiddish: “An honest-to-goodness disaster!”
- 2 The funeral notice issued by the ghetto leadership concerning his death is in the YIVO Archives (Kaczerginski-Sutzkever Collection).
- 3 Count Galeazzo Ciano, Mussolini’s foreign minister.
- 4 I.e., to the Belzec death camp.
- 5 Judah Halevi (ca. 1075–1141) was a Hebrew poet and philosopher, an exemplar of the so-called Golden Age of Spanish Jewry.
- 6 False information was probably circulating in the ghetto. According to other information, Yitskhok Gitterman was shot by the Nazis.
- 7 A labor camp, 15 kilometers from Vilna, where a group of 100 Jews worked in the forest, preparing heating material for the Vilna Ghetto.
- 8 Ethnic Polish territories that until 1918 were part of tsarist Russia and were ostensibly autonomous under the Polish crown.
- 9 Wife of the Yiddish writer Dovid Kasel of Warsaw. She came to Vilna as a refugee, then left Vilna with a “Japanese Visa.” She survived the war and lived in Washington, DC.
- 10 This heading signals the independence of Poland after almost a century and a half of foreign occupation.
- 11 The following paragraph is not listed in Kruk’s table of contents; it may belong in another place. The section that appears next in the Yiddish edition,

- “They Whip and . . . They Threaten to Whip,” has been transferred to January 27, according to Kruk’s table of contents.
- 12 From here until January 6, the entries are not listed in Kruk’s table of contents.
  - 13 The same as Todt.
  - 14 Also known as Zublewicka. She performed in operas and was popularly known as the songbird of the ghetto.
  - 15 Brother of Khaye-Sore Stupel, the wife of the popular Vilna Bundist leader Borekh Wirgili-Kahan. Monye Stupel, born in 1904, studied at the Sophia Gurevich Gymnasium in Vilna and the university in Liège, Belgium. He was active in VILBIG, the Vilna Educational Society. Before the war, he was an employee in Bunimowicz’s Bank in Vilna.
  - 16 The speeches by Gens and Grisha Yashunski were published in Reyzl (Ruzhka) Korczak, *Lehavot ba-efer* (H) [Flames in Ashes]. Merhavia, Israel: Ha-Shomer ha-Tzair, 1946: 264–5.
  - 17 The collective where the plan of Vilna was produced was called the Plastic Plan of Vilna (PPV).
  - 18 I.e., Sicherheitsdienst, the Nazi Security Police.
  - 19 *Generalgouvernement*, an administrative unit including the territories of occupied central provinces of Poland, governed by Dr Hans Frank.

## *Letters from Westerbork*

ETTY HILLESUM

*Westerbork, 3 July 1943*

Jopie, Klaas, my dear friends,<sup>1</sup>

Here I am on the third tier of this bunk hurrying to unleash a veritable riot of writing, for in a few days' time it'll be the end of the line for my scribblings. I'll have become a "camp inmate," allowed to write just one letter a fortnight, and unsealed at that. And there are still a couple of little things I must talk to you about. Did I really send a letter that made it look as if all my courage had gone? I can hardly believe it. There are moments, it's true, when I feel things can't go on. But they do go on, you gradually learn that as well. Though the landscape around you may appear different: there is a lowering black sky overhead and a great shift in your outlook on life, and your heart feels gray and a thousand years old. But it is not always like that. A human being is a remarkable thing. The misery here is really indescribable. People live in those big barracks like so many rats in a sewer. There are many dying children. But there are many healthy ones, too.

One night last week a transport of prisoners passed through here. Thin, waxen faces. I have never seen so much exhaustion and fatigue as I did that night. They were being "processed": registration, more registration, frisking by half-grown NSB men, quarantine, a foretaste of martyrdom lasting hours and hours.<sup>2</sup> Early in the morning they were crammed into empty freight cars. Then another long wait while the train was boarded up. And then three days' travel eastward. Paper "mattresses" on the floor for the sick. For the rest, bare boards with a bucket in the middle and roughly seventy people to a sealed car. A rucksack each was all they were

Etty Hillesum, *Etty Hillesum: An Interrupted Life and Letters from Westerbork*, translated by Arno Pomerans, New York: Random House, 1986, pp. 293–6, 297–300, 301–2, 308–10, and 314–15 and 374–5.

allowed to take. How many, I wondered, would reach their destination alive? And my parents are preparing themselves for just such a journey unless something comes of Barneveld after all.

Last time I saw my father, we went for a walk in the dusty, sandy wasteland. He is so sweet, and wonderfully resigned. Very pleasantly, calmly, and quite casually, he said, "You know, I would like to get to Poland as quickly as possible. Then it will all be over and done with and I won't have to continue with this undignified existence. After all, why should I be spared from what has happened to thousands of others?" Later we joked about our surroundings. Westerbork really is nothing but desert, despite a few lupins and campions and decorative birds that look like seagulls. "Jews in a desert, we know that sort of landscape from before." It really gets you down, having such a nice little father, you sometimes feel there is no hope at all.

But these are passing moods. There are other sorts, too, when a few of us laugh together and marvel at all sorts of things. And then we keep meeting lots of relatives whom we haven't seen for years – lawyers, a librarian, and so on – pushing wheelbarrows full of sand, in untidy, ill-fitting overalls, and we just look at each other and don't say much. A young, sad Dutch police officer told me one transport night, "I lose two kilos during a night like this, and all I have to do is to listen, look, and keep my mouth shut." And that's why I don't like to write about it, either. But I am digressing. All I wanted to say is this: The misery here is quite terrible; and yet, late at night when the day has slunk away into the depths behind me, I often walk with a spring in my step along the barbed wire. And then time and again, it soars straight from my heart – I can't help it, that's just the way it is, like some elementary force – the feeling that life is glorious and magnificent, and that one day we shall be building a whole new world. Against every new outrage and every fresh horror, we shall put up one more piece of love and goodness, drawing strength from within ourselves. We may suffer, but we must not succumb. And if we should survive unhurt in body and soul, but above all in soul, without bitterness and without hatred, then we shall have a right to a say after the war. Maybe I am an ambitious woman: I would like to have just a tiny little bit of a say.

You speak about suicide, and about mothers and children. Yes, I know what you mean, but I find it a morbid subject. There is a limit to suffering; perhaps no human being is given more to bear than he can shoulder; beyond a certain point we just die. People are dying here even now of a broken spirit, because they can no longer find any meaning in life, young people. The old ones are rooted in firmer soil and accept their fate with dignity and calm. You see so many different sorts of people here, and so many different attitudes to the hardest, the ultimate questions . . .

I shall try to convey to you how I feel, but am not sure if my metaphor is right. When a spider spins its web, does it not cast the main threads ahead of itself, and then follow along them from behind? The main path of my life stretches like a long journey before me and already reaches into another world. It is just as if everything that happens here and that is still to happen were somehow discounted inside me. As if I had been through it already, and was now helping to build a new and different society. Life here hardly touches my deepest resources – physically, perhaps, you do decline a little, and sometimes you are infinitely sad – but fundamentally you keep growing stronger. I just hope that it can be the same for you and all my friends. We need it, for we still have so much to experience together and so much work to do. And so I call upon you: stay at your inner post, and please do not feel sorry or sad for me, there is no reason to. The Levies<sup>3</sup> are having a hard time, but they have enough inner reserves to pull them through despite their poor physical state. Many of the children here are very dirty. That is one of our biggest problems – hygiene. I'll write again and tell you more about them. I enclose a scribbled note I began to write to Father and Mother, but didn't have to send; you might find some of it interesting.

I have one request, if you don't think it too immodest: a pillow or some old cushion; the straw gets a little hard in the end. But you are not allowed to send parcels weighing more than two kilos from the provinces, and a pillow probably weighs more than that. So if you happen to be in Amsterdam and should call at Pa Han's (please don't abandon him, and do show him this letter), you might perhaps send it from some post office there. Otherwise, my only wish is that you are all well and in good spirits, and send me a few kind words from time to time.

Lots and lots of love, *Etty*

[To Father Han and others]

*Westerbork, [Monday], 5 July [1943]*

I must try to conjure up a letter in haste, for if tomorrow or the day after I am not allowed to write anymore, I shall regret not doing it now. It's a difficult day. A transport leaves tomorrow morning, and last night I heard that my parents were on the list.<sup>4</sup> Herman B. whispered it in my ear as I sat on the edge of Father's bed having a cozy chat – Father all unsuspecting. I didn't say anything and immediately went to see the various authorities. I was told that my parents are still safe, but you can't be certain until the last minute. I shall keep as close a watch as I can until tomorrow morning. Tonight another transport is coming in from Amsterdam, so I'll



be up then in any case. Mechanicus, with whom I have struck up a firm friendship in a short time, is also on the list; we are still trying everything we can. Weinreb was taken away some time ago – by car to The Hague in the care of a couple of VIPs. You mustn't become too attached to people here.

This morning I worked in the punishment barracks, where people are in special custody, and took news back from the detainees to their relatives in the camp. I have just been to see Father again. He was lying down, reasonably content, reading a French novel and unaware that his name still has to be taken off the list. The hardest labor camp is better than this suspense every week. It didn't bother me so much before, because I had accepted the fact that I would be going to Poland. But living in fear for your loved ones, knowing that an infinitely long martyrdom is in store for them while your own life here stays relatively idyllic, is something few can bear. I sometimes feel like quietly packing my rucksack and getting onto the next transport to the east. But enough; it's not right for a human being to take the easy way out.

### *Tuesday morning*

It is ten o'clock. I am sitting in our empty workroom; it is wonderfully peaceful; most of my colleagues are asleep in their barracks. A couple of boys are leaning on the windowsill gazing gloomily at the locomotive, which is belching clouds of smoke again. The rest of the train is hidden from view behind a low barracks. People have been busy loading the freight cars since six o'clock this morning; the train is ready to pull out. I feel as if I've just gone through labor on my parents' behalf; this time we managed once again to keep them off the train. Otherwise I find it difficult to say honestly how I feel.

Yesterday was a day like no other. Never before have I taken a hand in "fixing" it to keep someone off the transport. I lack all talent for diplomacy, but yesterday I did my bit for Mechanicus. What exactly it was that I did, I'm not sure. I went to all sorts of officials. Suddenly I found myself walking around with a mysterious gentleman I've never seen before who looked like a white slave trafficker in a French film. With this gentleman I went to all sorts of camp VIPs who are usually not available, especially before a transport. But this time invisible doors opened: one moment I had an interview with the Registrar, and the next I was appearing before a senile little man who presumably holds a mysterious position of power and can get people off the transport even when all seems lost. There is a sort of "underworld" here in Westerbork; yesterday I sensed something of it, I don't know how it all fits together, I don't

think it's a savory story – Anyway, I trudged around the whole day, while my parents were entrusted to Kormann's watchful eye and to the staff of the Jewish Council, who assured me that everything would be all right this time.

As far as Mechanicus was concerned, things were in doubt until the very last moment. I helped him pack his bags, sewed a few buttons on his suit. He said, "I've grown softer here in this camp, everyone has become the same for me, they are all like blades of grass, bending to the storm, lying flat under the hurricane." He also said, "If I survive this time, I shall emerge a more mature and deeper person, and if I die, then I shall die a more mature and deeper one." Later my father said as I patted the top of his head, now almost white, "If I get my call-up tonight, truly I won't be upset, I'll leave quite peacefully." (People usually get their call-up in the night, a few hours before the transport leaves.)

At eight o'clock I walked about with Mother, said good-bye to various friends who had to go, then went for a walk with Liesl and Werner. At about ten o'clock I sat down with Jopie, who looks gray with fatigue. And after that I really couldn't stand up any longer. I excused myself from night work and let things take their course. This morning at eight o'clock Jopie came by and told me through the window that my parents were still here, that Jaap didn't arrive last night (we were expecting people from the NIZ), and that Mechanicus is *not* on transport.<sup>5</sup> And now it is eleven o'clock and I am going to the hospital, where I shall find a lot of empty beds. A day like yesterday is a killer, and next week the same thing starts all over again.

### *Late afternoon*

Well, children, here I am again on the top bunk, three tiers up. This afternoon, for a change, I fainted in the middle of a large, stuffy barracks. It serves as a reminder that there are limits to one's physical strength. In addition to the hospital barracks, I have now been assigned the punishment barracks as well. Since half our colleagues have gone back to Amsterdam, there are many jobs to cover. Then Kormann told me that my parents must still expect to be put on transport next week. It will become more and more difficult to keep people back – but you never know in advance, and that is precisely what saps you, the uncertainty until the last minute. Then I went to see Mother, who was feeling dizzy and sick herself; and then I felt I had reached the end of my tether and fainted. Tomorrow, things will be better. I suddenly remember that it's the "summer holidays" in the outside world. Do you have any plans? You will tell me everything, won't you? Maria, thank you for your letter! It was

exactly what a letter from you ought to be. If I am allowed to write tomorrow, I'll send you another scrawl; otherwise I shall keep quiet for the time being –

We learn everything from the doctors here. What a desperate state of affairs. We have a surfeit of doctors, who are unable to do anything useful. Jan Zeeman's father is here, too!

Good-bye! Be strong! *Etty*

*Westerbork, 6 July [1943]*

Milli darling,

Just a brief cry of distress. I did start a letter to you and Mien, but a letter gets out of date here even as you write it. Today my strength failed me for the first time, and I fainted right in the middle of a big barracks. This morning yet another transport of 2,500 left. I managed with difficulty to keep my parents off it, but things are getting quite desperate. Good friends of mine here, who have what is called influence, told me in confidence this morning that my parents must make ready for next week's transport. Slowly but steadily the camp is being sucked dry. Without some miracle from outside, it will all be over in a week or two. What we really want is to get Mischa, who is determined to stick with his parents and face certain doom, away from here. Is it really true that he could have gone to Barneveld by himself? And wouldn't it still be possible, even if our parents don't go to B., for him to get an order telling him that he *must* go? Even though, to be honest, I know quite well that nothing will make him go without his parents. "If they are sent on transport, that'll be the end of me, too," he keeps saying. Between ourselves, it's all a long tale of woe. And the worst part is that you are able to do so much less for your people than they expect. Six months ago it would probably still have been fairly simple to keep them back here and make them feel quite at home, but I am becoming more helpless all the time. You yourselves know very well what sort of feeling that is. I won't write more now, for I can see this is not going to be a sunny letter.

You are such dears; all the trouble and effort and worry we are causing you weigh heavily on my conscience. I have just read Cor's letter to Mischa. A Kuyper-Glassner parcel has arrived, but no Kuyper-Ortmann parcel. It's sad when parcels you have prepared with so much care and love don't get through, but I think that everything else has arrived. It's all so welcome, and I often wonder how you manage to bring it off, since things can't be that easy with you either. We have also received a large box of tomatoes and cucumbers without the sender's name. So I don't know who it was, but report arrival in any case.

I must cut this short, dearest friend. I am feeling a bit down-hearted, but things are bound to be better tomorrow. Regards to Grete and Cor.

Love, *Etty*

Sooner or later I won't be allowed to write more than once every two weeks, so if you suddenly stop getting any signs of life from me, you'll know there was nothing I could do about it.

[...]

*Westerbork, Thursday night, 8 July [1943]*

Dearest Christine,

I am on night duty now, so if no great panic occurs at my little table, I can scribble one or two words between business. In any case I want to send off a letter this evening so that your sister gets it in time. Do forgive me if this is all somewhat incoherent.

Christine, that Groningen cake! It was princely. Altogether it was such a magnificent parcel. I immediately gave Father a few small slices and half a bar of chocolate. It's marvelous, I just run over to him, five minutes from my barracks, pass him something through the window, and run back again. By holding on to one's people here, you can look after them and keep them going – with the help of the outside world. Mischa was there when I unpacked the parcel; he beamed. You had prepared it with such care and love, it sustains us – not just the contents, but also the thought that there are people who so much want to help us. Meanwhile another parcel has arrived from the Jewish Council in Deventer with glorious rye bread from Gantvoort. I always give half to Mother, who shares it with Mischa, and keep the other half for Father.

Tense and stirring days behind us. Father was on the transport list. We were able to get him off once again. I must explain that the call-ups for the transport come in the middle of the night, a few hours before the train leaves. If people are still needed at the last minute to fill the quotas, then Jews are seized here and there at random from the barracks. And that's why the days before the transport are so nerve-racking. The day afterward I fainted twice, but I'm fine again now – until the next transport. Sunday evening while I was sitting talking on the edge of Father's bed, an acquaintance suddenly whispered in my ear: "Your father is on the list." People are afraid on such occasions to tell you the truth. And all Monday that long row of unpainted freight cars stood there, about seventy people – men, women, invalids, babies – squashed into each one, the doors slammed shut, a little air coming through the air holes and the broken planks, paper mattresses on the floor for the sick; for the rest only a hard

floor, a bucket in the middle, and a three-day journey ahead. Can you imagine what that means? I have got used to the idea that I'll have to go myself one day. Above all else in the world I wish I could spare my parents and my brothers. But you can't play the ostrich here; a transport leaves every week, and the quota must be filled. Just a little while longer, and all our turns will come. My father takes it very quietly. "What all those thousands before us have borne, we can also bear," he says. I am grateful to have him here still, but on Monday the misery starts all over again. However – according to a report I received today from a good friend who is working on our behalf – it seems that something is being done for us from The Hague after all.

Father and Mother give me a great deal of pleasure, for they are coping in their own ways; I admire them tremendously. Father now has two pupils in his hospital barracks, one boy who is not too ill and one who is very sick. Both want to learn a little Greek and Latin as a distraction, and he takes pleasure in giving them lessons for two hours a day, going through Homer, Ovid, and Sallust. For the rest, he reads a great deal, philosophizes with ancient rabbis and old student friends, and now and then strolls with his daughter through the dusty sand of the hospital grounds. Oh Christine, if only they could stay here in case nothing comes of Barneveld. There might be a chance of getting through here with the help of the outside world, however difficult everything may be. But once they're on the train, then I expect nothing but an endless martyrdom – We shall just have to wait and see –

### *A little later*

Oh yes, the soap powder – I'd love it. Something like that is almost more important than food, the crowding has compelled such a poor state of hygiene. We wash our clothes often enough, in a variety of buckets obtained with difficulty. The clothes don't get much cleaner, it's true, but the idea that you have done a wash makes you feel a bit better –

I don't answer your letters as regularly as you answer mine because it's almost impossible here. Mischa's barracks is number 62.

The end of my duty; I shall rush over to my barracks. I have a fever and something poetically termed the runs; half the camp has got it at the moment, but I never like staying in bed, I prefer making myself useful.

What did I tell you? A messy, incoherent letter. Writing will really be coming to an end soon. I've heard that we're no longer allowed to acknowledge private parcels from the provinces with a postcard. If I write "Parcel received" to Simon, then I mean a parcel from the Jewish

Council, but if I write “Little parcel,” then I mean it’s from you – although it would be more appropriate the other way around, as far as the size is concerned.

Much, much love from us all. We got a nice letter from van Kuyk.  
Have a good holiday.

’Bye! Etty

[...]

10 July 1943

Maria, hello,

Ten thousand have passed through this place, the clothed and the naked, the old and the young, the sick and the healthy – and I am left to live and work and stay cheerful. It will be my parents’ turn to leave soon, if by some miracle not this week, then certainly one of the next. And I must learn to accept this as well. Mischa insists on going along with them, and it seems to me that he probably should; if he has to watch our parents leave this place, it will totally unhinge him. I shan’t go, I just can’t. It is easier to pray for someone from a distance than to see him suffer by your side. It is not fear of Poland that keeps me from going along with my parents, but fear of seeing them suffer. And that, too, is cowardice.

This is something people refuse to admit to themselves: at a given point you can no longer *do*, but can only *be* and accept. And although that is something I learned a long time ago, I also know that one can only accept for oneself and not for others. And that’s what is so desperately difficult for me here. Mother and Mischa still want to “do,” to turn the whole world upside down, but I know we can’t do anything about it. I have never been able to “do” anything; I can only let things take their course and if need be, suffer. This is where my strength lies, and it is great strength indeed. But for myself, not for others.

Mother and Father have definitely been turned down for Barneveld; we heard the news yesterday. They were also told to be ready to leave here on next Tuesday’s transport. Mischa wanted to rush straight to the commandant and call him a murderer. We’ll have to watch him carefully. Outwardly, Father appears very calm. But he would have gone to pieces in a matter of days in these vast barracks if I hadn’t been able to have him taken to the hospital – which he is gradually coming to find just as intolerable. He is really at his wits’ end, though he tries not to show it. My prayers, too, aren’t going quite right. I know: you can pray God to give people the strength to bear whatever comes. But I keep repeating the same prayer: “Lord, make it as short as possible.” And as a result I am paralyzed. I would like to pack their cases with the best things I can lay my

hands on, but I know perfectly well that they will be stripped of everything; about that we have been left in no doubt. So why bother?

I have a good friend here.<sup>6</sup> Last week he was told to keep himself in readiness for transport. When I went to see him, he stood straight as an arrow, face calm, rucksack packed beside his bed. We didn't mention his leaving, but he did read me various things he had written, and we talked a little philosophy. We didn't make things hard for each other with grief about having to say good-bye. We laughed and said we would see each other soon. We were both able to bear our lot. And that's what is so desperate about this place: most people are not able to bear their lot, and they load it onto the shoulders of others. And that burden is more likely to break one than one's own.

Yes, I feel perfectly able to bear my lot, but not that of my parents. This is the last letter I'll be allowed to write for a while. This afternoon our identity cards were taken away, and we became official camp inmates. So you'll have to have a little patience waiting for news of me.

Perhaps I will be able to smuggle a letter out now and then.

Have received your two letters.

'Bye, Maria – dear friend, *Etty*

## NOTES

- 1 Klaas and Johanna Smelik. Klaas Smelik, Sr. (1897–1986), a Communist and an author, first met Etty in Deventer in 1934. They remained friends, and he and his daughter Johanna (“Jopie”) Smelik repeatedly tried to persuade Etty to go into hiding and offered her various places to stay. She always refused.
- 2 NSB: the initials of the Dutch Nazi party, which apparently provided supplementary manpower for a number of German police actions.
- 3 The Levies, Etty's close friends, had arrived in Westerbork on 20 June 1943 and were transferred to Bergen-Belsen in 1944. Werner died of typhus in the last days of the war; Liesl and her children survived and emigrated to Israel.
- 4 This list was usually assembled in the forty-eight hours preceding the departure of each transport and could be modified up to the very last moment.
- 5 Philip Mechanicus (1889–1944), one of the most renowned Dutch journalists of the time, arrived in Westerbork in November 1942 and managed to stay there until March 1944, when he was deported to Bergen-Belsen. In October 1944 he was sent to Auschwitz, where he died. His diary of the events in Westerbork, the most complete portrait of life in the camp, was published after the war as *In Depôt*. He was very close to the Hillesum family, particularly to Etty. Although Mechanicus's departure was delayed, he was eventually sent to his death in Auschwitz.
- 6 Philip Mechanicus.





PART VI

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Genocide and the Holocaust



## *Genocide and the Holocaust*

In 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the “Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide” – a statement which, brief as it was, marked a dramatic advance in both the history of ethics and international law. That statement came in direct response to the events of World War II and principally to the Holocaust, which remains a distinctive instance of what the UN Convention defined as genocide. Indeed, the term “genocide” itself was coined only a short time before (in 1944) by a Polish–Jewish jurist and émigré to the United States, Raphael Lemkin (the sole survivor of a large family murdered in the Holocaust). Even before the outbreak of World War II, Lemkin had been concerned with what he saw as a lack in both national and international law – their common failure to protect the rights of groups as groups (and so also of their members). Genocide, in his view (by the term, he combined the Greek root *genos* (group) with the Latin root *cide* (murder), represented a distinctive crime in which individual persons were attacked not because of anything they possessed or an act they had committed but solely because of their identification as members of the particular group. The groups subject to genocide, as cited in the UN Convention, were “national, ethnical, racial or religious” groups, and although there was disagreement before and since the Convention’s adoption on other groups that should be listed together with these, the essential features of genocide come clear in these examples: the systematic attempt to make a group and its members “disappear,” irrespective of their individual features (age, gender, actions, character) – thus only on the basis of their group identity. The difference between genocide and other forms of killing, even of mass murder, which may at times claim more victims, points to genocide as a distinctive crime unspecified in previous international agreements about the conduct of war.

Although there is widespread agreement that genocide was a central feature of the Holocaust, there has been considerable disagreement on certain historical and conceptual issues bearing on the relation between

the two; the most important of these are addressed in Part VI's essays by Helen Fein, Mark Levene, and Dirk Moses. The principal *historical* issue revolves around the question of the historical status of the Holocaust in relation to other apparent instances of genocide. The claim has often been made or implied, as Levene and Moses emphasize (and dispute), that the Holocaust is "unique," suggesting either that the Holocaust was something more than genocide, or that it alone, among other similar events, truly qualifies as genocide. Levene argues that both bad and good reasons have stood behind such reasoning. One serious liability that he finds in this characterization is, first, its virtual removal of the Holocaust from historical causality – the mystification of using "unique" as a historical category – and, second, the effect it has of diminishing or denying other instances of genocide. To be sure, the question of whether there were genocides before or after the Holocaust is a legitimate historical one – which some scholars have answered negatively. All three authors in Part VI (and majority opinion more generally) agree, however, that, recent as the history of the *term* "genocide" is, instances of its *occurrence* both preceded the Holocaust and have appeared subsequently as well. (Raphael Lemkin himself found classical and even biblical examples of genocide.)

But the view of genocide as having a history apart from the Holocaust does not deny that there are differences among the occurrences of genocide or that the Holocaust may not be distinctive among them. Levene refers, for example, to Zygmunt Bauman's claim of the historical relation between "modernity" and genocide: the latter's manifestation in the modern context of rising nationalism, capitalism, and industrialization. The latter thesis, however, would imply a sharp, perhaps qualitative difference between "modern" genocide and its earlier occurrences – and would still leave untouched the claim, on which Fein elaborates, that there are significant differences among even modern instances of genocide (as, for example, between the Nazis' "Final Solution" and the Turkish attacks on Turkey's Armenian populace in 1915–17). Both Levene and Moses emphasize the danger (and offensiveness) of what has come to be called "competitive victimization": disputes about the comparative degrees of suffering inflicted by different occurrences of genocide. But to recognize this danger is not to deny that there are, may be, and indeed have been, significant differences among such occurrences – not necessarily in the numbers of victims claimed or the proportion of a populace murdered or in the technological means employed, but in the systemic intention and mechanism that initiated and sustained the occurrence.<sup>1</sup> In *this* regard, the objections by Levene and Moses to "privileging" the Holocaust as somehow outside or beyond historical explanation can be readily granted without denying a view of the Holocaust as an extreme – in Levene's term, up to this time, "ultimate" – exemplification of genocide.

The conceptual issues related to the identification or classification of genocide are, if anything, more complex and difficult than the historical issues; these are Fein's principal concerns in her essay – noted also if less centrally by Levene and Moses – and, as she points out, originating in the UN Convention on Genocide, perhaps in the concept of genocide itself. The problem of defining what counts as a relevant *group* for the act of genocide has already been mentioned as an issue. The four group-types referred to in the Convention are themselves open to dispute (for example, the category of “race”), and the claims for including others – political or economic groups, for example – have to be taken seriously. Furthermore, as Fein points out, the question of what types of actions count as genocidal remains even after the UN Convention's specification. Physical murder is the most obvious means of genocide, but even this charge (as in instances of mass starvation initiated by coercive social or economic change) may not be readily determined. The Convention also calls genocidal the prevention of births within a group (as in forced abortion or sterilization), and, with still larger potential complications, the forcible transfer of children “to another group” – that is, the forcible assimilation of one group into another, which, in the cases of ethnic or religious groups, opens the way to charges of genocide even where the transmission of cultural traditions or language is prevented.

Such problems of classification or definition, however, are common features of most moral and legal discourse. One thing that stands out in the discussion of genocide, however – in the attempts to identify, to prevent, and, in the event, to punish its occurrence – is the history of that discussion itself. The concept of genocide itself, and the ensuing attempts at definition and legislation in relation to it, originated with the events of the Holocaust; the irony of moral recognition as following from moral enormity in this relation was not unique, and it has opened the way, as in the essays which follow here, for a new perspective on older as well as on current historical occurrences.

#### NOTE

- 1 Fein argues for replacing the criterion of intention with that of ‘purposeful action’ – but it seems not altogether clear that the difficulties she finds in the former are more fully resolved in the latter. The discussion above in part IV suggests alternate ways in which the concept of intention itself can be construed.

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*United Nations Convention  
on the Prevention and  
Punishment of the Crime of  
Genocide, December 9, 1948*

**The Contracting Parties,**

Having considered the declaration made by the General Assembly of the United Nations in its resolution 96 (I) dated 11 December 1946 that genocide is a crime under international law, contrary to the spirit and aims of the United Nations and condemned by the civilized world,

Recognizing that at all periods of history genocide has inflicted great losses on humanity, and

Being convinced that, in order to liberate mankind from such an odious scourge, international co-operation is required,

Hereby agree as hereinafter provided:

*Article 1*

The Contracting Parties confirm that genocide, whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law which they undertake to prevent and to punish.

*Article 2*

In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

### *Article 3*

The following acts shall be punishable:

- (a) Genocide;
- (b) Conspiracy to commit genocide;
- (c) Direct and public incitement to commit genocide;
- (d) Attempt to commit genocide;
- (e) Complicity in genocide.

### *Article 4*

Persons committing genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in article III shall be punished, whether they are constitutionally responsible rulers, public officials or private individuals.

### *Article 5*

The Contracting Parties undertake to enact, in accordance with their respective Constitutions, the necessary legislation to give effect to the provisions of the present Convention, and, in particular, to provide effective penalties for persons guilty of genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in article III.

### *Article 6*

Persons charged with genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in article III shall be tried by a competent tribunal of the State in the territory of which the act was committed, or by such international penal tribunal as may have jurisdiction with respect to those Contracting Parties which shall have accepted its jurisdiction.



*Article 7*

Genocide and the other acts enumerated in article III shall not be considered as political crimes for the purpose of extradition.

The Contracting Parties pledge themselves in such cases to grant extradition in accordance with their laws and treaties in force.

*Article 8*

Any Contracting Party may call upon the competent organs of the United Nations to take such action under the Charter of the United Nations as they consider appropriate for the prevention and suppression of acts of genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in article III.

*Article 9*

Disputes between the Contracting Parties relating to the interpretation, application or fulfilment of the present Convention, including those relating to the responsibility of a State for genocide or for any of the other acts enumerated in article III, shall be submitted to the International Court of Justice at the request of any of the parties to the dispute.

*Article 10*

The present Convention, of which the Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish texts are equally authentic, shall bear the date of 9 December 1948.

*Article 11*

The present Convention shall be open until 31 December 1949 for signature on behalf of any Member of the United Nations and of any non-member State to which an invitation to sign has been addressed by the General Assembly.

The present Convention shall be ratified, and the instruments of ratification shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

After 1 January 1950, the present Convention may be acceded to on behalf of any Member of the United Nations and of any non-member State

which has received an invitation as aforesaid. Instruments of accession shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

#### *Article 12*

Any Contracting Party may at any time, by notification addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, extend the application of the present Convention to all or any of the territories for the conduct of whose foreign relations that Contracting Party is responsible.

#### *Article 13*

On the day when the first twenty instruments of ratification or accession have been deposited, the Secretary-General shall draw up a proces-verbal and transmit a copy thereof to each Member of the United Nations and to each of the non-member States contemplated in article 11.

The present Convention shall come into force on the ninetieth day following the date of deposit of the twentieth instrument of ratification or accession.

Any ratification or accession effected, subsequent to the latter date shall become effective on the ninetieth day following the deposit of the instrument of ratification or accession.

#### *Article 14*

The present Convention shall remain in effect for a period of ten years as from the date of its coming into force.

It shall thereafter remain in force for successive periods of five years for such Contracting Parties as have not denounced it at least six months before the expiration of the current period.

Denunciation shall be effected by a written notification addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

#### *Article 15*

If, as a result of denunciations, the number of Parties to the present Convention should become less than sixteen, the Convention shall cease to be in force as from the date on which the last of these denunciations shall become effective.

*Article 16*

A request for the revision of the present Convention may be made at any time by any Contracting Party by means of a notification in writing addressed to the Secretary-General.

The General Assembly shall decide upon the steps, if any, to be taken in respect of such request.

*Article 17*

The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall notify all Members of the United Nations and the non-member States contemplated in article XI of the following:

- (a) Signatures, ratifications and accessions received in accordance with article 11;
- (b) Notifications received in accordance with article 12;
- (c) The date upon which the present Convention comes into force in accordance with article 13;
- (d) Denunciations received in accordance with article 14;
- (e) The abrogation of the Convention in accordance with article 15;
- (f) Notifications received in accordance with article 16.

*Article 18*

The original of the present Convention shall be deposited in the archives of the United Nations.

A certified copy of the Convention shall be transmitted to each Member of the United Nations and to each of the non-member States contemplated in article XI.

*Article 19*

The present Convention shall be registered by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the date of its coming into force.

## *Defining Genocide as a Sociological Concept*

HELEN FEIN

For the last decade, social scientists considering genocide have devised varying definitions and typologies, often reflecting consensus on evaluation of specific cases but dissensus on the borderlines of genocide. Controversy continues not only because genocide is hard to differentiate categorically but because most definers have normative or prescriptive agendas; we are activated by what we feel genocide should encompass – often not wishing to exclude any victims.

Debates recur about the identity of the target group, the scope of acts deemed genocidal, the identity of the perpetrator, the distinction among types of genocide, and whether or how to distinguish intent. This problem has been complicated lately by the convergence of interests linking researchers of genocide and state terror; the latter concentrate more on explanations of state behavior than of the choice of the victim group. Although this may prove to be a much-needed intellectual opening, it can also confound explanations when diverse objectives and behaviors are aggregated.

Because genocide itself occurs in the context of diverse social relations, it is useful to clarify how the term evolved in order to return to the underlying assumptions behind the concept; then I shall suggest a more generic concept, appropriate for sociological usage, paralleling the terms of the UNGC.

### **Lemkin's Conception and the UNGC Definition**

Lemkin's conception (1944, 79) emerged from an attempt to explain and indict German population policy. Later study has shown that Lemkin

Helen Fein, "Defining Genocide as a Sociological Concept," from *Genocide: A Sociological Perspective*, London: Sage Publications, 1990, pp. 8–31.

overidentified commonalities and implied a coherent and common objective in different countries. In fact, Hitler's objectives varied and were not always premeditated (Rich 1973/4). However, Lemkin recognized that Hitler had different population policies and aims in the occupied east and the west: 'Germanization' or coerced denationalization and assimilation was not the same as 'genocide.' According to Lemkin (1944),

genocide does not necessarily mean the immediate destruction of a nation, except when accomplished by mass killings of all members of a nation. It is intended rather to signify a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves. (79)...

Hitler's conception of genocide is based not upon cultural but only biological patterns. . . . Some groups – such as the Jews – are to be destroyed completely. A distinction is made between peoples considered to be related by blood to the German people (such as Dutchmen, Norwegians, Flemings, Luxembourgers), and peoples not thus related by blood (such as the Poles, Slovenes, Serbs). The populations of the first group are deemed worthy of being Germanized. With respect to the Poles particularly, Hitler expressed the view that it is their soil alone which *can and should be profitably Germanized* (81–2)...

In the occupied countries of 'people of non-related blood,' a policy of depopulation is pursued. Foremost among the methods employed for the purpose is the adoption of measures calculated to decrease the birthrate of the national groups of non-related blood, while at the same time steps are taken to encourage the birthrate of the *Volksdeutsche* living in these countries (86). The physical debilitation and even annihilation of national groups in occupied countries is carried out mainly in the following ways:

- 1 *Racial discrimination in Feeding...*
- 2 *Endangering of Health...*
- 3 *Mass Killings...* (87–8)

First, we note, the object of genocide was always the defeated national group except for the Jews, conceived by the Nazis as a race or anti-race – non-human, superhuman and menacing. Political groups and classes within the nation who were killed and incarcerated by the German occupiers were conceived as members of a national group. Second, Lemkin conceived of genocide as a set of coordinated tactics or means. *Cultural genocide* was not a term used by Lemkin: cultural discrimination may be a tactic to assimilate or to destroy a group. The objective of genocide was both the social disintegration and the biological destruction of the group. Third, Lemkin recognized grades of genocide: some groups were to be immediately and wholly annihilated (the Jews); others (especially the Poles) were to be slowly destroyed by other means to decimate their numbers and decapitate their leadership. The victims might be observed

by contemporaries as destroyed in whole or in part. Members of other occupied nations would be allowed to survive as individuals but their national institutions, culture and group organization would be destroyed and they would become Germanized. Such coerced assimilation without killing or the interruption of procreation and parenting was not cited by Lemkin as genocide. The deliberate destruction of the culture of a distinct group without physical annihilation of its members is most often termed *ethnocide* now.

The United Nations committees that framed the UNGC both further specified the protected groups and delimited the connotations of genocide to 1) biological destruction and serious injury (see Art. II, a, b, and c) and 2) indirect sociobiological destruction by restricting the biological reproduction of group members and breaking the linkage between reproduction and socialization (d and e).

Article II: 'In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group as such: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.'

Three problems are repeatedly noted by critics of the Convention: 1) the gaps in groups covered; 2) the ambiguity of *intent to destroy a group 'as such'* and 3) the inability of non-state parties to invoke the Convention and the failure to set up an independent enforcement body. Since the first two problems bear on the definition (an essential for research), I will concentrate on this criticism. Furthermore, I will argue that the second problem – the question of intent – can be resolved by discriminating intent from motive; intent is purposeful action.

The Convention has been repeatedly criticized for omission of political groups and social classes as target groups; a recent report commissioned by the UN Human Rights Commission recommended its extension to political and sexual groups (Whitaker 1985, 16–19). Drost, an early critic, made these incisive objections:

Man lives not alone but in groups. He belongs to a group either by birth or from choice. . . . By leaving political and other groups beyond the purported protection the authors of the Convention also left a wide and dangerous loophole for any government to escape the human duties under the Convention by putting genocide into practice under the cover of executive measures against political or other groups for reasons of security, public order or any

other reason of state... A convention on genocide cannot effectively contribute to the protection of certain, described minorities when it is limited to particular defined groups... It serves no purpose to restrict international legal protection to some groups firstly because the protected members always belong at the same time to other, unprotected groups... (1951, vol. 2, 122–3).

Le Blanc, on the other hand, believes the exclusion of political groups was wise because of the ‘difficulty inherent in selecting criteria for determining what constitutes a political group,’ their instability over time, the right of the state to protect itself, and the potential misuses of genocide – labelling of antagonists in war and political conflict (1988, 292–4). He refers to a proposal by Jordan Paust for a new draft convention criminalizing the ‘Crime of Politicide.’

The first draft of the UNGC in the UN Ad Hoc Committee on Genocide extended protection to political groups, groups which were never considered by Lemkin as subjects of genocide. Such inclusion was opposed not only by Soviet bloc states but by other states, an often-overlooked point (Le Blanc 1988, 273–6). That draft also criminalized ‘cultural genocide’ (intentional acts destroying language, religion and culture) – a proviso opposed by western states – although Lemkin had never distinguished cultural genocide.

This instigated vigorous debate on the roots and rationale of genocides. Some states expressed fears that the inclusion of political groups would impede the ratification of the Convention because states might anticipate that suppression of subversive elements and disorders could instigate external intervention – states might be called to account. Finally, committee members arrived at an accommodation, deleting both cultural genocide and political groups (Kuper 1981, 24–9). The US accepted the deletion of political groups in exchange for a clause allowing the establishment of an international criminal tribunal (LeBlanc 1988, 277–8). The exclusion of political groups was one of the charges against the UNGC which critics used to prevent its ratification by the US Senate for forty years.

The unpublished work of Lemkin shows that he was fully cognizant that the nature of groups which might be targets changed as forms of social organization and historical situations changed. His examples of genocide or genocidal situations include: Albigensians, American Indians, Assyrians in Iraq, Belgian Congo, Christians in Japan, French in Sicily (c. 1282), Hereros, Huguenots, Incas, Mongols, the Soviet Union/Ukraine, Tasmania. Apparently, Lemkin did not consider political groups as targets. In a description of an abstract for a book he intended to write, ‘Introduction to the Study of Genocide,’ he observed: ‘The philosophy of the Genocide Convention is based on the formula of the human cosmos. This

cosmos consists of four basic groups: national, racial, religious and ethnic. The groups are protected not only by reasons of human compassion but also to prevent draining the spiritual resources of mankind.'

### Some Sociological Definitions and Issues

Many social scientists have accepted the UNGC definition of genocide explicitly or implicitly (Fein 1979; Kuper 1981; Porter 1982, 12; Harff and Gurr 1987) or a broadened version thereof, including political and social groups (Horowitz 1976, 18, 42; Chalk and Jonassohn 1990; Tal 1979). Charny proposes 'what he calls a *humanistic* definition...: the *wanton* murder of human beings on the basis of any identity whatsoever that they share' (1988, 4). Legters, who says he generally favors a strict construction of genocide excluding political groups, argues for the inclusion of social classes as class is the unit of social organization in socialist societies (1984, 65).

Those who accept the UNGC definition usually acknowledge that mass killings of political groups show similarities in their causes, organization and motives: some authors refer to these as 'genocidal massacres' (Kuper 1981), 'ideological massacres' (Fein 1984) or 'politicides' (Harff and Gurr 1987).

Virtually everyone acknowledges that genocide is primarily a crime of state. Chalk and Jonassohn refer to the 'state or other authority' as perpetrators, encompassing settlers acting in the name of the nation-state (1990, 23). Although there is little disagreement over this, heuristically it seems preferable to me to omit variable terms as criteria in a definition: marginal situations in which genocide or genocidal massacres not authorized by the state occur include colonization, civil wars, and the transfer of powers during decolonization. Actors who may have committed genocide without state authorization include soldiers, settlers, and missionaries.

Dadrian (1975), attempting to offer a general explanation encompassing the Armenian genocide, was the first sociologist known to propose a definition – actually an explanation sketch – of genocide. He states:

Genocide is the successful attempt by a dominant group, vested with formal authority and with preponderant access to the overall resources of power, to reduce by coercion or lethal violence the number of a minority group whose ultimate extermination is held desirable and useful and whose respective vulnerability is a major factor contributing to the decision for genocide (1974, 123).



Here explanation has usurped definition; furthermore, it is not clear what is to be observed and classed as genocide except that the perpetrator is a representative of the dominant group and the victims are a minority group. This elementary distinction was later outmoded by the Khmer Rouge genocide in Kampuchea (discussed in Part 4). I shall later return to Dadrian's contributions.

Chalk and Jonassohn, beginning to teach a course on the history and sociology of genocide in the 1980s – some may have seen earlier editions of their (1990) book – advanced a singular and straight-forward definition which is essentially similar to one they have employed since 1984:

*Genocide* is a form of one-sided mass killing in which a state or other authority intends to destroy a group, as that group and membership in it are defined by the perpetrators (1990, 23).

There are several problems with this definition:

1) The limitation of the perpetrator to 'a state or other authority.' Chalk argues that if settler murders go unpunished, it is because states do not try to stop them or prosecute them; hence the state is responsible for condoning them (1988, 7). It seems to me this confuses the question of who is the perpetrator (in definition) with who – what organization or persons – is responsible for prevention and prosecution.

2) The specification of 'one-sided mass killing' implies a numeric threshold or ratio of victims which may obscure recognition of the earlier stages of genocide. Their emphasis on mass killing also omits other forms of intentional biological destruction (see earlier discussion of Lemkin). 'One-sided' killing is also problematic; it is unclear whether or when this includes mass killings of groups which may have an armed party or sub-group either defending themselves or attacking a party or elite of the dominant group.

3) The definition of the group is open-ended, implying that an endless number of groups can be constructed, including groups constructed from the paranoid imagination of despots – 'wreckers' in Stalin's time. This is in accord with the assumptions of labelling theory (although the authors do not explicitly draw on this) which posits that the construction (and destruction) of enemies depends on their labelling by the powerful. Chalk and Jonassohn explain that their definition follows 'W. I. Thomas' famous dictum that if people define a situation as real it is real in its consequences' (1990, 25). But, like all dicta, this has to be examined to determine how, when, and why it applies.

The definition of Chalk and Jonassohn has served their goal of casting a wide net, exploring a range of situations in which people are victimized by definition or at random – 'witches' (the witch-hunt is considered a

precursor of genocide), the Knights Templar, the victims of Shaka's and Stalin's terror. It points the way toward an emerging theory of terror – murder, torture and intimidation – and genocide. But to get there, we need to distinguish both processes. Indeed, Chalk and Jonassohn reflected in an earlier paper on the different functions served by torture and genocide: torture is a means to control people whom state agents expect to remain as members of the state; genocide is a means to eliminate a group or people from the state (1983, 13–14). The study of terror should include the explanation of victims created by definition – conspiracies of witches and wreckers. When and why do states manufacture victims by labelling them with fictive identities and accusing them of nonexistent crimes? The labelling perspective is most suggestive for studies of manufactured deviance for social control.

However, the victims of genocide are generally members of real groups, whether conceived of as collectivities, races or classes, who acknowledge their existence, although there may be administrative designation of their membership as German authorities designated Jews for 'the Final Solution,' including some people of Jewish lineage who no longer considered themselves Jews (and did not register voluntarily with the Jewish community) or were members of other religious communities (converts and their children). Had there not been an actual Jewish community with its own institutions, German authorities could not have defined and enumerated Jews, for there was no objective indicator of their alleged criteria of Jewishness – race – which divided 'Jews' and 'Aryans' categorically.

Harff and Gurr (1987) distinguish genocides (using an abbreviated version of the UNGC) from 'politicides' – massacres of political groups in opposition, including groups in rebellion. Thus, Harff and Gurr's universe of politicide includes many cases Chalk and Jonassohn label as genocide; however, other cases included in the Harff and Gurr universe of politicides are excluded from Chalk and Jonassohn's universe of genocide because they include bilateral killing.

### *Intent and Extent – Recalling Some Frontiers*

A major issue in the study of genocide is that of *intent*. This is most often problematic when killings occur during war and colonization.

At times, the charge of genocide has been raised by scholars studying the decimation of indigenous populations whose numbers have gravely declined during colonial occupations through direct and indirect causes related to the occupier's political economy: disease, usurpation of land rights and destruction of the indigenes' economy, starvation, warfare, mas-

sacre, and malign neglect. Nietschmann (1987), studying contemporary cases, asserts the prevalence of genocide in contemporary wars and occupations by which the 'Third World' states subjugate the unrepresented 'Fourth World' nations. Barta (1987, 239–40) argues that genocide was a systemic function of the settlement of Australia (and by implication of other white settler-societies). Chalk and Jonassohn observe that ethnocide, the failure to protect indigenous peoples in the Americas from famine, and genocide were usually not unforeseeable or unintended (1990, 195–203).

Wallimann and Dobkowski challenge the adequacy of restricting the concept of genocide to intentional or planned mass destruction, given the pervasiveness of structural violence and the bureaucratization and anonymity of modern political and economic organization (1987, xvi–xviii). Yet they do not propose an alternate definition or propose to exonerate individual perpetrators, indicating some ambivalence about the implications of their position.

To avoid the whole question of inference of intent, both Barta (1987), Huttenbach (1988) and Thompson and Quets (1987, 1990) propose that we simply eliminate intent as a criterion. Churchill proposes a new legal definition of genocide, similar to that of homicide, discriminating grades of intent: genocide in the first degree, second degree (intent unclear), third degree ('intent is probably lacking'), fourth degree (corresponding to manslaughter) (1986, 416–17). Since this is avowedly a legal resolution – and one not likely to be taken up although it is a creative one – I will focus on the social-scientific definitions that purport to have more general uses.

Huttenbach proposes the criteria be whether the action threatens the continued existence of the group but does not distinguish between premeditated and accidental deaths (e.g. Bhopal 1984, Chernobyl 1986) or deaths resulting from poor industrial or national planning. Thus, genocide becomes a rubric for all bad things that can endanger peoples, a concept lacking all but rhetorical use for scholars or social activists: it does not indicate either common causes or similar solutions.

Barta argues for 'a conception of genocide which embraces *relations* of destruction and removes from the word the emphasis on policy and intention which brought it into being' (1987, 238) but seems to overlook the authorization and effects of the most rationalized genocide of the century, disagreeing with Irving Louis Horowitz who,

misleadingly in my view calls Germany 'a genocidal society' because during one terrible period of *political* aberration the 'state bureaucratic apparatus' was used for 'a structural and systematic destruction of innocent people.' My conception of a genocidal *society* – as distinct from a genocidal state – is one in which the whole bureaucratic apparatus might officially be directed

to protect innocent people but in which a whole race is nevertheless subject to remorseless pressures of destruction (239–40).

This opposition and segregation of state from society appears very arbitrary in the 20th century and excludes, rather than uncovers, clues to their relationship. Substantively, Barta does not clarify the process of destruction of indigenous peoples and ignores major genocides. As Chalk puts it,

In Barta's configuration, Australian society is genocidal for taking the lives of over 20,000 aborigines, but German society, whose victims number in the millions, is not. Barta makes no attempt to explain the significance for his analysis of Germany's devastation of the Herero people of South West Africa in the years from 1904 to 1907 (1988, 11).

... Thompson and Quets suggest eliminating the question of intent and the objectives of the perpetrators, proposing

A sociological definition of genocide as a continuous multidimensional variable... Genocide is the extent of destruction of a social collectivity by purposive action, and has a theoretical range from none to total... *Genocide is the extent of destruction of a social collectivity by whatever agents, with whatever intentions, by purposive actions which fall outside the recognized conventions of legitimate warfare* (1987, 1, 11).

This definition is severely flawed by 1) the omission (in the first) of a perpetrator and 2) the lack of boundaries due to their omission of intent, allowing the inclusion of accidents, ecological and environmental damage; it is unclear why Thompson and Quets exempt war and war crimes given the boundlessness of their definition. Further, they confuse the definition of genocide and the scale of measurement; whether genocide has occurred is a different question from its effects – e.g. the percentage of the targeted population killed. Moreover, they extend the connotations of genocide to cover all kinds of acts undermining collectivities as a result of social policy – ‘sociocide,’ ‘linguicide,’ ‘cultural genocide’ – so that genocide becomes not only unbounded but banal, an everyday occurrence. If both the US and France (states which do uniformly promote or tolerate bilingual education) are in the same class (of perpetrators) as Nazi Germany and the USSR, we have a construct good for nothing.

In practice, Thompson and Quets have conceptually aggregated cases of genocide and collective violence – pogroms, lynchings, certain kinds of race riots – collective terrorism and homicides which are intended to destroy members of ‘a national, ethnical, racial or religious group as such.’ Certainly collective violence could be defined and measured on a con-

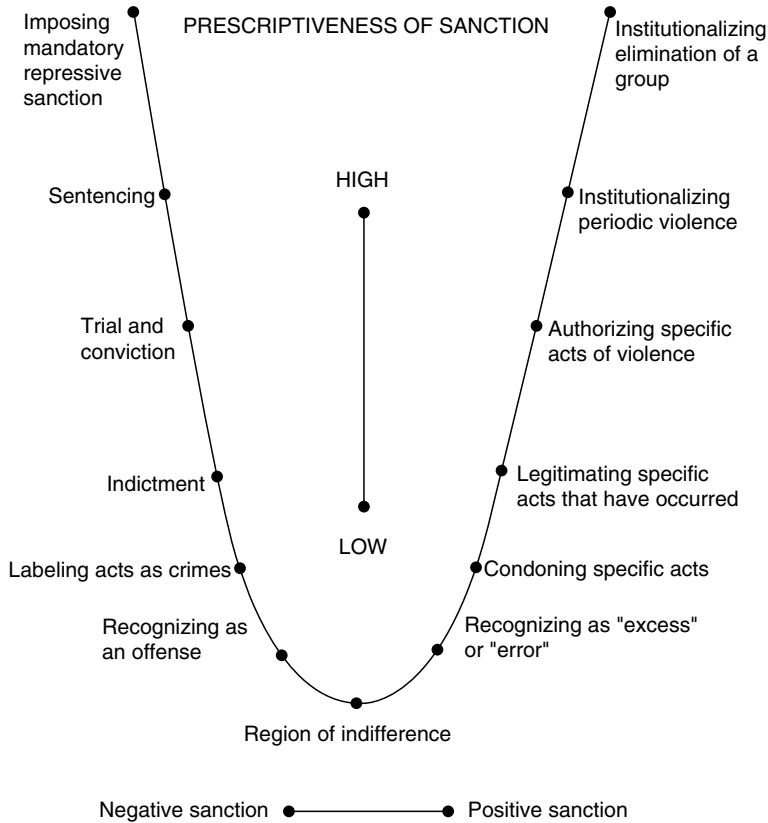


Figure 24.1 Stages in the sanctioning of collective violence  
 Source: Fein (1977: 186)

tinuum of state authorization and continuity as I suggested (Fein 1977, 186) – see figure 24.1<sup>1</sup>

Modern collective terrorism, organized acts in which the victims are picked by their membership in a collectivity in conflict with that of the victimizer – perpetrated recently in the Punjab, Sri Lanka, Turkey, Northern Ireland – could fit under the definition of genocide of the UNGC: ‘... acts [killing members of the group] committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group as such.’ The definition does not prescribe a minimal threshold. Some may assume that terrorists who strike group members episodically aim not to kill them but kill for an instrumental political purpose. But, in most cases, the acts speak for themselves: the victims are picked because of who they are – Hindu and Buddhist bus riders, Jews praying in an Istanbul synagogue,

Irish Protestants and Catholics drinking in a pub or shopping. The perpetrators do not ask anything of the victims or the bystanders as the price to spare them; the victims are seldom used as hostages for bargaining.

We are not inhibited from labelling such acts as genocide by the definition of genocide but by an unexplicated assumption of scale and continuous action: we assume that the victimizers do not have the capacity to kill a significant part of the group and that such acts are likely to be episodic rather than continuous.

One solution to this problem of scale is to label such events as *genocidal massacres*, giving recognition to the intent inherent in the selection of victims, as many have labelled large-scale and semi-organized communal massacres (e.g. India before and during partition) as genocidal massacres. Genocidal massacres – pogroms, collective terrorism, some race riots – may be clues or predecessors of future genocide. But the universe of genocidal massacres is much wider than that of genocides, indicating the operation of control and authorization by the state and other authorities.

### *Intent Re-examined*

One contribution of Thompson and Quets has been to substitute purposive action for intent in definition, a term many of us confuse but is clear in law. As sociologists, immersed in the distinctions between ‘manifest’ and ‘latent’ function as a paradigm of intended and unintended action (Merton 1957, 31), we have needlessly confused the meaning of intent. Intent or purposeful action – or inaction – is not the same in law or every-day language as either motive or function. An actor performs an act, we say, with intent if there are foreseeable ends or consequences: for what purpose is different from why or for what motive is the act designed.

Two teams of scholars/lawyers/activists discuss this issue in arguing for the finding of genocide in Cambodia and Afghanistan. The key concept of Art. 2 of the UNGC – ‘[specified] acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious *group as such* [my italics]’ is illuminated by referring back to the UN debate.

a Venezuelan amendment eventually adopted substituted the phrase ‘as such’ for this specific listing of motives. . . . Mr Perez Perozo (Venezuela) recalled that he had already stated . . . that *an enumeration of motives* was useless and even dangerous, as such a restrictive enumeration *would be a powerful weapon in the hands of the guilty parties and would help them to avoid being charged with genocide. . . . The aim of the amendment was to give*

*wider powers of discretion to the judges who would be called upon to deal with cases of genocide....*

As some attempt to make a case under the Convention (not, so far, instigating the UN to act) we can see that the Convention has greater flexibility than understood by some.

The 'intent' required by the Convention as a necessary constituent element of the crime of genocide cannot be confused with, or interpreted to mean, 'motive.'... The 'intent' clause of article II of the Genocide Convention requires only that the various destructive acts – killings, causing mental and physical harm, deliberately inflicted conditions of life, etc. – have a purposeful or deliberate character as opposed to an accidental or unintentional character (Hannum and Hawk 1986, 140–6).

Hannum and Hawk documented mass killings in Kampuchea – as well as the deliberate targetting of minority ethnic groups and Buddhist priests – authorized by the Khmer Rouge, arguing that such mass killing – often called 'autogenocide' – is proscribed under the Convention because the Khmer Rouge aimed to destroy a significant part of the majority Khmer people (Hannum and Hawk, 1986). This was (despite the fact that their brief had no legal effect) a remarkable innovation because it made the case that genocide could be committed by perpetrators of the same ethnicity who justified their murders by an ideology which reclassified and labelled the victims, discriminating their collaborators and those to be saved as a new kind of people.

Reisman and Norchi (1988) argued that the Soviet destruction of the Afghan people through depopulation, massacre, mass bombardment and bombing of refugees (which led to the killing of about 10 percent of them in eight years) and the forced removal of children demonstrated Soviet and Afghan government intent to destroy the Afghan people as a people – an intent which could be masked or explained by political and social motives. However, intent, they argue, should be simply construed as deliberate or repeated acts with foreseeable results rather than motive. Thus, the sociological concept of purposeful action is the bridge paralleling the legal concept of intent in the Genocide Convention; this lies between legal guilt (an external judgment) and the perpetrator's construction of an account or motive (a psychological variable).

### *War and Genocide*

Since much killing of unarmed civilians is a foreseeable consequence of war – conventional or nuclear – and several cases have been presented of

genocides during wars, one may ask whether wars – or certain wars – are inherently genocidal. Should nuclear or massive aerial bombardment of civilians in war be construed as intrinsically genocidal? Both Chalk and Jonassohn (1990) and Thompson and Quets (1987) exclude such killings. Kuper, in contrast, repeatedly refers to nuclear and conventional bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Dresden, and Vietnam as genocidal massacres (1981, 14, 17, 34–5, 45–6, 50, 55, 91–2, 102, 139, 174). Dadrian (1975) labelled deaths from such causes as ‘latent genocide.’

Markusen (1987), surveying the definitions and attributes of ‘total war’ and of genocide, concludes that these state-sanctioned mass killings have several significant similarities: dehumanization of the enemy, mass killing of civilians, bureaucratic organization and the use of technology distancing the perpetrators from the victims. But Markusen fails to note that both distancing and bureaucracy are very variable attributes of modern genocide. Nor does Markusen note the dissimilarities: the selection of victims for genocide is not based on where they are but who they are; were the victims during war to surrender, their killing should cease (assuming adherence to the war convention) but the surrender of victims in genocidal situations does not avoid their mass murder but expedites it.

Changes in the norms and technology of war are evident over time but they are contradictory; some expanded and others diminished the scope of killing of innocent civilians. Chalk and Jonassohn concluded that the first genocides in history arose from attempts in antiquity of imperial powers to destroy their recurrent enemies; best known of these is the destruction of Carthage (1990, 32–5).

Surveying such wars in antiquity, Lerner infers slavery arose from the successful separation of conquered peoples, slaughtering the males and incorporating the females into the nation of the conqueror (1986, 9, 78–81). Changes in sex roles and the patriarchal organization of society now make women more vulnerable to genocide than ever before, Smith observes (1989). In premodern times, women belonging to enemies defeated in war were enslaved and raped as they were valued for their reproductive power and could be incorporated in a new society, isolated from social participation and power. But women in the twentieth century have been both perpetrators and victims of genocide.

The social relationships between antagonists and types of war also seem to condition the likelihood of observing the war convention. Wright has recorded the rise of conventions of war in many different civilizations and also observed how states are much less likely to adhere to these in civil wars and in colonial wars involving antagonists of different races and civilizations (1942, 2: 810–12). Walzer, considering how the war convention – based on the premise that fighters must respect the immunity of civilians – has evolved, observes how war crimes and the use of terror



emerge in different situations – anti-guerrilla warfare, total war – and the moral questions posed by the escalating technology of warfare (1977).

We can not yet conclude there is any simple or linear relation between genocide and historical trends in destructiveness in the conduct of wars; both may be curvilinear, diminishing as European states regulated warfare, confining fighting to a specialized force, and enlarging as modern war becomes more total, involving mobilization of whole populations.

Taylor observes that a

very basic characteristic of the laws of war and war crimes is that, as these names indicate, they concern only conduct which is directly related to *war* – to hostilities in progress between organized belligerent forces. When the Nazis killed or assaulted German Jews in Germany, that may have been a crime, but it was not a war crime. . . . today [such atrocities] would no doubt be covered by the international treaty defining and condemning genocide . . . (1971, 30–1).

The question of whether killings of civilians in war are war crimes, consequences of acts of war admissible under the war convention, or instances of genocide has been clouded by the fact that genocide-labelling of wars today is often a rhetorical stratagem for political delegitimation of specific wars which the labeller opposes.

Genocide was charged by several influential critics of the US war in Vietnam, principally Sartre (1968) and Falk; but Daniel Ellsberg dissented from this, saying: ‘I have misgivings about the use of the word “genocide” in the context of the Vietnam war. . . . An escalation of rhetoric can blind us to the fact that Vietnam is . . . no more brutal than other wars in the past’ (in Knoll and McFadden 1970, 81–2). Bedau concluded, after careful conceptual and legal analysis, that the charge was ‘Not proven, not quite’ (Bedau 1974, 46). Similarly, Bassiouni concluded the three essential elements of genocide were absent: 1) the opposing parties were not separate national or ethnic groups; 2) US actions ‘could [not] be classified as part of a coordinated plan to destroy in whole or in part any particular national, ethnical, racial or religious group’ and 3) ‘American activities in Vietnam were not conducted with sufficient intent to support a charge of ‘genocide’ (1979, 174–6). But Hannum and Hawk’s brief on the Khmer Rouge genocide (1986) implicitly rejects Bassiouni’s first criteria.

Both Reisman and Norchi (1988), in their (previously discussed) analysis of Soviet (and Afghan) government actions in Afghanistan and Goodwin (1988) assert there has been genocide in Afghanistan. Yet there has been almost no serious discussion of their charges. No antiwar movement developed in the Soviet Union or in the west on the scale of the anti-Vietnam War movement. Even the opponents of the Soviet Union’s

intervention have often overlooked the character of the war. This again illustrates the highly variable concern with genocide: the likelihood a case will be recognized and labelled as genocide arises both from the biases and organization of protesters.

Journalists and scholars examining how little response there was to the initial news of the Khmer Rouge genocide have made the same point; it was generally not recognized by the media or opinion-leaders because it challenged our biases, confirming the communist blood-bath theory (Shawcross 1984; DeMarco 1988; Adams 1980). Similarly, Mace has shown how prominent western journalists denied the existence of the famine that Stalin created in the Ukraine in 1932–3 – a famine estimated to have killed five to seven million Ukrainians – from ideological and opportunistic motives (1988).

### A Sociological Definition Proposed

I believe that the UNGC definition of genocide can be reconciled with an expanded – but bounded – sociological definition if we focus on how the core concepts are related. From the root of *genus* we may infer that the protected groups were conceived (by Lemkin and the UN framers) as basic kinds, classes, or subfamilies of humanity, persisting units of society. What is distinctive sociologically is that such groups are usually ascriptive – based on birth rather than by choice – and often inspire enduring particularistic loyalties. They are sources of identity and value; they are the seed-bed of social movements, voluntary associations, congregations and families; in brief, they are *collectivities*.

Further, these collectivities endure as their members tend to reproduce their own kind (to the extent in-group marriage is the norm). But collectivities need not be self-reproducing to be cohesive over a given span in time.

The UNGC implies a universalistic norm: each group has a right to exist and develop its own culture, assuming neither their aim or methods are criminal; all collectivities should be protected from such crimes against humanity. One can also argue that political, sexual, and class-denominated status groups or collectivities, just like ethnic and religious collectivities, are basic continuing elements of the community. (Whitaker (1985) made a similar argument for extension of the UNGC.)

There is no categorical line, in fact, between the enduring character of ascribed (heritable) identities and elected or achieved identities: both may be constructed or passed on generationally. Being an Italian working-class Communist Party member may be just as heritable a characteristic as being an Italian church-going Roman Catholic. Indeed, church and party

could be regarded as counter-congregations or counter-cultures. Both affiliations may be outcomes of election or ascription, conscience or inheritance.

A new sociological definition should include the following elements: a) it should clearly denote the object and processes under study and discriminate the latter from related processes; b) it should stipulate constructs which can be transformed operationally to indicate real-world observable events; and c) the specification of groups covered should be consistent with our sociological knowledge of both the persistence and construction of group identities in society, the variations in class, ethnic/racial, gender, class/political consciousness and the multiplicity and interaction of peoples' identities and statuses in daily life. Further, d) it should conform to the implicit universalistic norm and a sense of justice, embracing the right of all non-violent groups to co-exist.

Briefly put,

**Genocide is sustained purposeful action by a perpetrator to physically destroy a collectivity directly or indirectly, through interdiction of the biological and social reproduction of group members, sustained regardless of the surrender or lack of threat offered by the victim.**

To expand on this sociological definition, one can also show how it encompasses the legal definition {terms of the UNGC are noted in these brackets):

**Genocide is sustained purposeful action** [thus excluding single massacres, pogroms, accidental deaths] **by a perpetrator** (assuming an actor organized over a period) **to physically destroy a collectivity** {'acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part a national/ethnic/racial or religious group:' Art. 2]} **directly** (through mass or selective murders and calculable physical destruction – e.g. imposed starvation and poisoning of food, water, and air – {see Art. 2, a–c}) **or through interdiction of the biological and social reproduction of group members** (preventing births {Art. 2, d} and {'forcibly transferring children of the group to another group' Art. 2, e), systematically breaking the linkage between reproduction and socialization of children in the family or group of origin.

This definition would cover the sustained destruction of nonviolent political groups and social classes as parts of a national (or ethnic/religious/racial) group but does not cover the killing of members of military and paramilitary organizations – the SA, the Aryan Nations, and armed guerrillas.

Documenting *genocide* or **genocide** demands (at the very least) identifying a perpetrator(s), the target group attacked as a collectivity, assessing its numbers and victims, and recognizing a pattern of repeated actions

from which we infer the intent of purposeful action to eliminate them. Such inference is easiest to draw when we can cite both preexistent plans or statements of intent and the military or bureaucratic organization of a death machine; seldom do we have both kinds of evidence.

Despite the increased level of violence of modern warfare, we can still distinguish war crimes from genocide and crimes against humanity if we specify the criteria further: the following paradigm aims to clarify this and other questions.

### A Paradigm for Detecting and Tracing Genocide

I have culled the elements of a paradigm to detect genocide and to document its course from my own studies and others. Propositions 1–5 state necessary and sufficient conditions for a finding of genocide; these are followed by questions noting the variable characteristics of the criterion specified. Questions 6–14 examine variable reinforcing conditions, contexts, responses and effects.

1) *There was a sustained attack or continuity of attacks by the perpetrator to physically destroy group members:* a) Did a series of actions or a single action of the perpetrator leading to the death of members of group X occur? b) What tactics were used to maximize the number of victims? Tactics include preceding round-ups, isolation, and concentration of victims and orders to report. c) What means, besides direct killing were used to destroy the victims or to interdict the biological and social reproduction of the group? Actions may include poisoning air or water, imposed starvation, or disease; forcible prevention of birth; involuntary transfer of children. d) What was the duration, sequence of actions, and number of victims? Trace the time span, repetition of similar or related actions, and the number of victims.

2) *The perpetrator was a collective or organized actor or commander of organized actors.* Genocide is distinguished from homicide empirically by the fact it is never an act of a single individual – thus we want to know: a) Were the perpetrators joined as an armed force, paramilitary force or informal band? b) Was there a continuity of leadership or membership of perpetrators or similar bases of recruitment for such forces? c) Were these forces authorized or organized by the state to exist? d) To whom were those forces responsible – an agency of the state, army, or party? e) Were they organized and garbed to display or to deny government responsibility?

3) *Victims were selected because they were members of a collectivity:* a) Were victims selected irrespective of any charge against them individually? b) Were they chosen on the basis of a state administrative

designation of their group identity, their own criteria of identity, or by physical, linguistic, or other signs or stigmata of identity? c) Were they chosen on the basis of status within the collectivity?: e.g. priests, religious leaders, or educated class. d) What was the basis of the collectivity? E.g. religion, race, ethnicity, tribal or linguistic status. e) Were they pre-selected before killing? Evidence of pre-selection includes their prior legal definition; stripping of citizenship, civil rights, state posts, licenses and benefits and legal group recognition; segregation and marking; rounding-up and ghettoization or concentration.

4) *The victims were defenseless or were killed regardless of whether they surrendered or resisted.* a) Is part of the victims' group armed and organized to physically resist the perpetrators' group? b) Is their level of armament sufficient and is their stated intent to wage war against the perpetrators? Or is it to defend themselves from being seized? c) Is there evidence (if the victims were armed) that they were purposefully killed after surrender and that unarmed members of the group were systematically killed?

5) *The destruction of group members was undertaken with intent to kill and murder was sanctioned by the perpetrator.* a) Can deaths of group members be explained as accidental outcomes? b) Is there evidence of repetition of destruction by design or as a foreseeable outcome? c) Is there direct evidence of orders or authorization for the destruction of the victims? d) At what level did the authorization occur? e) Is there prima facie evidence that the pattern of acts and personnel involved show that authorities had to plan, organize, or overlook a pattern of destruction? f) Is there any negative evidence of sanctions against agents responsible for such acts?

6) *Consistency of sanctions for killing group members:* a) Are there any rules promulgated by the perpetrator to punish or to exonerate individual murder, torture and rape of members of the victim group? b) Are there institutional mechanisms to implement such rules? c) Are there examples of sanctions enforced against murder of members of the victim group or for failure to protect them from attacks by members of the perpetrator group? Are there sanctions for refusing to participate in killing the victims or for reporting commission of killings?

7) *Ideologies and beliefs legitimating genocide:* a) Is there evidence of an ideology, myth, or an articulated social goal which enjoins or justifies the destruction of the victim? Besides the above, observe religious traditions of contempt and collective defamation, stereotypes, and derogatory metaphor indicating the victim is inferior, sub-human (animals, insects, germs, viruses) or super-human (Satanic, omnipotent), or other signs that the victims were pre-defined as alien, outside the universe of obligation of the perpetrator, subhuman or dehumanized, or the enemy – i.e., the victim needs to be eliminated in order that we may live (Them or Us). b) If

destructive acts were acknowledged by the perpetrator, how were they labelled and justified? c) Did the acknowledgment, labelling, and justification change before different audiences?

8) *Contexts of genocide*: Contexts include specific perpetrator–victim interactions and critical conditions of state and society. In the former case, one asks what kinds of relations characterized the perpetrator and victim before genocide. In the latter, one asks in what historical and political context did these acts occur? Contexts include post-revolutionary states, diminishing states losing control or territory after defeat, expanding states and empires colonizing other continents or an undeveloped interior, war between and within states, and eras of consolidation of centralized state power. Social-psychological contexts include social and personal disorganization and cultural crises of identity and meaning.

9) *Bystanders' responses*: What kinds of responses did bystanders, other states, regional and international organizations, make to the perpetrators and victims?

10) *Victims' responses*: How did the victims understand and respond to the situation?

11) *Interactions*: What effect did the bystanders' responses have on the victims and the perpetrators?

12) *Effects on victims*: What was the impact of the genocide on the victims at the time and later? Specify destruction of individuals and the community, personal and social disorganization, post-traumatic stress, and enduring personal and trans-generational consequences.

13) *Effects on the perpetrators*: a) What was the impact of the genocide on the perpetrators? b) Could these effects be foreseen or calculated? c) Were they? d) Did they acknowledge or deny the genocide? e) Did they offer restitution or agree to such to the victims later? f) What effect did their acknowledgment or denial have on their state and society?

14) *Effects on the world system*: How did the recognition or lack of recognition and sanctions against genocide affect the actions of other states and peoples?

## NOTE

- 1 By collective violence, I refer to all violation of victims chosen by one collectivity because of membership in another racial, religious, tribal, or ethnic collectivity; this includes group punishment, random punishment and exemplary punishments. It is similar to Janowitz's use (1969) of communal violence and to Tilly's early use of primitive violence (1969) but both Janowitz and Tilly use collective violence to refer to what others call mass or political violence.

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## *Is the Holocaust Simply Another Example of Genocide?*

MARK LEVENE

What is genocide?<sup>1</sup>

The term 'genocide' was coined by the distinguished international jurist, Raphael Lemkin, in 1944 with particular reference to the Nazi extermination of European Jewry.<sup>2</sup> Lemkin defined genocide as a co-ordinated plan, composed of various actions, aimed ultimately at the annihilation of a national or ethnic group. The full extent of the Holocaust was at that time still not known or understood in the wider world although the immediate prelude to it – namely the systematic persecution of the Jews – was. Genocide for Lemkin, therefore, consisted of two major elements: persecution of a group, meaning an attack on its 'political and social institutions, culture, language, national feelings, religion, and . . . economic existence',<sup>3</sup> with a view to undermining its viability, constituted genocide, just as did complete physical extermination.

Lemkin's subsequent efforts to have both his terminology accepted and such acts of persecution and destruction internationally outlawed led to a United Nations resolution in 1946 which called genocide 'a denial of the right of existence of entire human groups', going on to note 'many instances of such crimes . . . when racial, religious, political and other groups have been destroyed entirely or in part'.<sup>4</sup> This statement implied a potential broadening of scope to include victim groups who did not come within the boundaries of a *genos* (the Greek word for 'race' or 'tribe'). Nevertheless, the 1948 United Nations Convention on Genocide, *for entirely political reasons*, reverted to Lemkin's more narrow definition of genocide as acts 'committed with intent to destroy, in whole, or in part, a national, racial, religious or ethnic group'.<sup>5</sup>

The origins of the term and its ultimate deployment in international convention is important on two counts. First, as a key contemporary

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work on the subject has noted: 'The lack of rigour in the UN definition ... is responsible for much of the confusion that plagues scholarly work in the field.'<sup>6</sup> Certainly, there have been some notable studies of genocide since Lemkin's and these almost unanimously confirm that it is a *particular* category of mass killing, distinct from others. There is now almost universal agreement too that the perpetrators of genocides are states, or state-sanctioned bodies, an issue which Lemkin did not properly address. There is, however, much less agreement on the issue of intentionality, on the question of whether or not genocide has to involve the physical destruction of the individuals constituting the victim group or only their collective attributes, and, most important of all, on what constitutes a victim group.<sup>7</sup> Many (including myself) consider the *genos* in 'genocide' both unfortunate and unsatisfactory;<sup>8</sup> not only is it exclusive but, more critically, it confuses the issue as to what actually constitutes 'genocide'.

Having said that, the UN yardstick would still embrace the destruction of the Nuba in the Sudan, the Yanomani in Brazilian Amazonia, the peoples collectively referred to as Jummas in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh, the islanders of Indonesian-occupied East Timor, the Marsh Arabs in southern Iraq and, most recently and dramatically, the slaughter of Tutsis in the Central African state of Rwanda.<sup>9</sup> These are examples of genocide which are happening in our contemporary world. In terms of numbers involved, they are not the only or even necessarily the most serious examples of current mass killing,<sup>10</sup> a fact that in itself raises further questions about inclusive or exclusive definitions of genocide.<sup>11</sup> On the human level – the level at which the victim as well as the perpetrator *experiences* events – none of this is very helpful or meaningful. The title of this essay, in this significant respect, is flawed: the Holocaust cannot simply be *another* example of genocide since no example of genocide or mass killing can be; each, in its own terms, is utterly without precedent and quite unique.

Nonetheless I begin with the premise that genocide, *as a specific category of mass killing*, embraces separate examples through the characteristics, features and patterns which they hold in common. Though the *particular* circumstances and events leading to each genocide will always be different, the features and patterns are, nevertheless, accessible to comparison.<sup>12</sup>

### The Case of the Holocaust

Lemkin's starting point for his categorization was an examination of the persecution and destruction of the Jews. But his broader intention was to create general rules about the nature and classification of genocide which would prevent what had happened to them happening to other groups.

On this second count, relating to the origins of the term, however, there is a major paradox. Any attempt to read the Holocaust in a comparative sense has, since Lemkin, been consistently challenged by a body of opinion which argues that the very idea is inapplicable. This alternative position on the Holocaust embraces a large spread of views, ranging from the rational to the mystical. It is coherent as a body only inasmuch as it agrees that the Holocaust should be treated as a separate and unique category standing on its own.<sup>13</sup> Most of its adherents are Jewish, but then so was Lemkin and most of the scholars who have argued for a comparative model. The 'singularist' position is doubly paradoxical given that many of its most distinguished exponents are associated with Yad Vashem in Israel and, more recently, the Holocaust museums in the United States, institutions which generally hammer home a universalizing message about the Holocaust and the potential for recurrence in the future – when the victims will not necessarily be Jews – if we fail to comprehend the warning signals.<sup>14</sup>

If there are contradictions involved here, they are not so easy to debate. Indeed, because the Holocaust, largely retrospectively, has been deployed as a legitimation for the existence of the State of Israel, any attempt to challenge the former's unique quality is also liable to be treated, by a broad Jewish constituency, as an attack upon the latter's right to exist.<sup>15</sup> Vigilantly guarded, and treated like a shrine, the Holocaust has become a subject which, despite the huge scholastic industry which has grown up around it, seems often closed to examination and evaluation except within previously agreed and authorized parameters.

*The critical question is whether the Holocaust should be treated within a category of genocide or be placed in a category of its own.*

The global reach of the western media enables a mass public audience to be informed of a range (though not necessarily all instances) of mass killings in the contemporary world which, at least notionally, could be referred to as genocides. Public awareness may be confused but it is nevertheless cumulative and very often, *pace* Bosnia, responsive. The task of political scientists is to move beyond cataloguing to determining not only how and why genocides happen but also, if they are attempting to understand them in comparative terms, to establish whether their geographical and societal diversity precludes common characteristics and patterns. The comparative historian's role must be to deepen this study, particularly by providing an explanation of causative factors which might determine whether such events can be placed within some larger, longer-term process of state or societal development.

This not only begs the general question about whether comparison between genocides is valid or useful; it also throws up specific problems in relation to the Holocaust which, after all, is one genocide which, in terms

of academic study, is so totally oversubscribed that the sheer weight of scholarly material produced completely dwarfs studies of other genocides. Having established itself, in this way, as *the* genocide, one might be inclined to approach the broader comparative field by ignoring the Holocaust altogether. This would at least have the advantage of allowing an investigation that was unencumbered by constant reference back to it. Yet such an approach (which this historian originally considered) is patently self-defeating. First, it confirms the Holocaust 'singularity' thesis; second, it assumes that the Holocaust has nothing to teach us about other genocides or, more significantly, the context within which genocides continue to take place.

### Genocide and Modernity

Something of this problem is addressed in a recent groundbreaking study by the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman. In his *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Bauman throws a spanner into a widely-held orthodoxy concerning the essentially humanistic, Enlightenment-grounded nature of modernity by arguing that the Holocaust, far from being in some sense counter to this development, is rather one of its definitive products. To focus on the barbarism of the Nazis is, for Bauman, to miss the point; the Holocaust can only be fully comprehended within the framework of the processes and mechanisms which have made modern 'civilized' society as a whole.<sup>16</sup>

Bauman did not seek to make a comparative study out of this thesis, nor to offer any real consideration of what relationship might exist between the *modernization process* and genocide. Yet such an analysis had already been presented by Ronald Aronson, in an extremely compelling, if much less widely read, precursor to Bauman. In *The Dialectics of Disaster*,<sup>17</sup> Aronson suggests a linkage between the Holocaust, the series of genocides in Stalin's Russia and the destruction by the United States of Vietnam in the 1960s and early 1970s, connected by comparable disjunctures between modern technologically-based projects for rapid social transformation and an ultimate impotence to achieve them. In each case, despite the obvious dissimilarities between, for instance, an 'underdeveloped' Soviet Union of the 1930s and an 'overdeveloped' United States of the 1960s, the assumption of the ability to implement social transformations is based, according to Aronson, on deluded notions concerning both the rationality of the projects and the enabling power of an unfettered, seemingly all-powerful state and its apparatus. This produces in each case 'a rupture with reality' or, in other words, a 'madness', the consequence of which is genocide. The argument that the United States perpetrated a 'genocide' in Vietnam (as opposed to some other category of

mass killing) is, though persuasive, not entirely convincing. Nevertheless, Aronson's critique – more than simply an examination of the relationship between genocide and modernity – provides important signposts for locating actual instances of genocide, or genocidal behaviour, in a dynamic involving state power, technology and an 'unreasoned' state-led thrust towards rapid development.

One criticism that might be levelled against this approach concerns its implication, or perhaps assumption, that genocide is a modern phenomenon. Examples of mass killing of a genocidal nature can be traced back through the millennia of human history. Some scholars, notably Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn, while noting distinctions between Genghis Khan and Hitler, do categorize their respective mass killings as 'genocides'.<sup>18</sup> With reference to Bauman and, more particularly, Aronson, my own position is that there *is* a distinctly modern version of the phenomenon. This version, however, has nothing to do with a technological ability to kill more people *per se* or even necessarily the introduction of more efficient or streamlined means. The Holocaust unfolded both as primitive mass slaughter and 'state of the art' industrial cleansing. What makes modern genocide different from earlier wars of extermination is not the *form* it takes but the *framework* within which it occurs; its study thereby requires contextualization within those broader processes of change and development associated with the creation of the modern world.

This in itself does not explain the actual phenomenon. However, a critical factor, again with reference to Aronson, may be the degree of state-led, *forced* acceleration of social change in the direction of modernity.<sup>19</sup> Rapid social transformation is thereby indissolubly linked to accelerated state-building, whether of the 'pure' nation-state variety or some other homogenizing equivalent, such as in the Soviet Union. The key challenge to this hypothesis is the question why some states geared towards this radical transformation commit genocide and others do not.

### Genocide and the Crisis of Development

Significantly most key European or western societies in upheavals associated with rapid social transformation or nation-state building, *have* exhibited genocidal tendencies. Many of these 'modern' upheavals considerably predate the twentieth century. The 'new' Spain of 1492 in its Jewish and later Morisco expulsions provides an early signpost.<sup>20</sup> The catalogue might continue with Cromwellian 'Britain' and its Irish policy in the late 1640s and early 1650s,<sup>21</sup> revolutionary Jacobin France and its attempts to bring resistant western zones, notably the Vendée, firmly within the fold of the newly organized nation-state in the early 1790s,<sup>22</sup>

colonial Britain, again, and its rapid settlement and development of Tasmania in the late 1820s and 1830s,<sup>23</sup> the United States, at the culmination of its trans-continental nation-building, particularly in the late 1860s and 1870s,<sup>24</sup> and Imperial Germany and its consolidation of South West Africa in the early 1900s.<sup>25</sup>

In all these cases what is actually at stake is the developmental agenda of each state at some crisis point in the process of its implementation. This is a moment or phase when the fate of the agenda becomes clear, revealing either its successful fulfilment or, alternatively, its collapse with potentially catastrophic consequences for both itself and possibly the integrity of the state as a whole. The actual causation in each case will vary though the actions and thought-processes of the policy-makers will always be critical to the outcome. A sense of external threat, or the perceived need to catch up with other states more rapidly consolidating than one's own, might be significant. These perceptions might then feed into and conflate other perceived needs, such as, for instance, the inclusion or integration of some 'remote' region or area on the frontier or margin of the state or its territories for its resources or geo-strategic value. Clearly where implementation is carried forward without obvious hindrance, no issue arises. If, however, the attempt at implementation leads instead to a crisis both of state and agenda, perceived 'people-obstacles' may, at this juncture, become the central focus of the state's attention. These people-obstacles would almost certainly have been perceived as a danger to the agenda at a much earlier moment. What the crisis situation provides is a heightened sense that the only way to its fulfilment is through their physical eradication. The crisis, in other words, acts as catalyst, translating an already existing potential for genocide – implicit in the state's agenda – into actuality.

Thus, in relation to its modern manifestation, I would argue that genocide occurs where a state, perceiving the integrity of its agenda for change to be threatened by an aggregate population – defined by the state in collective or communal terms – seeks to remedy the situation by the systematic, *en masse*, physical elimination of that aggregate, *in toto*, or until such time as it is no longer perceived to represent a threat.

Certainly, this proposition is bald. (Additional commentary, for which there is not space here, would be needed to fully explore the causes, nature and typologies of modern genocide.<sup>26</sup>) But can it be applied to the Holocaust? One way of answering the question might be to note other events near it in time, namely the previous decade, to which the proposition might equally be applied, including:

- in Kemalist Turkey, the sequence of systematic massacres and large-scale deportations perpetrated on Kurds from Eastern Anatolia,

persisting, with interregnums, from the 1920s through to the outbreak of the Second World War;<sup>27</sup>

- in neighbouring Iraq, in 1933, what became known as ‘the Assyrian affair’, involving army units in an organized attempt to exterminate the minority Assyrian community, called off after British diplomatic intervention;<sup>28</sup>
- in Italian-occupied Cyrenaica, the mass deportation leading to extirpation, in 1930–1, of the hill tribes by Mussolini’s army, as part of its efforts to destroy the Senussi resistance to Italian rule;<sup>29</sup>
- most dramatically, in Soviet Russia – particularly the Ukraine, North Caucasus, Ukrainian Kuban and Kazakhstan – in the period 1930–2, the deportation and/or extirpation of large numbers of peasants and nomads, under the catch-all charge of being ‘kulaks’, that is ‘class enemies’, including, in addition, the elimination of a wide spectrum of occupational groups, including party members and Soviet state functionaries, especially in 1937–8, and large sections of the population, particularly the élite groups from formerly Polish and Baltic state territories incorporated into the USSR following the 1939 Non-Aggression Pact with Nazi Germany.<sup>30</sup>

To argue that these far-flung events have common characteristics which define them as examples of genocide is itself to question some basic, traditionally-held assumptions. In particular, while neither Kurds nor kulaks, for instance, are that easy to define in group terms, the former – as an ethnic, even proto-national agglomeration – could be embraced within the definition of the UN Convention while the latter, as a class, or more accurately a crypto-class label of convenience applied by those responsible for the genocide,<sup>31</sup> clearly could not. My proposition, however, intentionally avoids the issue of the *actual* composition of the victim group. Indeed, whether Kurds or kulaks define themselves as such or whether there is actually such a thing as a ‘kulak’ is immaterial to the argument. All that is needed is that the perpetrators of the act perceive them as a group and that, as such, they are *perceived* as representing a threat to the state’s agenda. The proposition thus shifts the cause of genocide away from national, racial or ethnic prejudices and hatreds *per se* – though these elements may play a crucial role<sup>32</sup> – and towards the power relationships existing between the state and particular populations within its territories.

Here, however, we encounter a further problem. If it could be argued that a population – whether self-defining or defined by the state – poses a genuine political threat to the state authorities and their agendas, might this not exonerate the latter’s acts as justifiable self-defence? Theda Skocpol, in her comparative study of states and social revolutions, has noted that the Soviet peasantry in the 1920s did have ‘the aggregate



capacity, so to speak, to make or break the national economy'.<sup>33</sup> Could it not therefore be argued that Stalin was simply 'getting in his retaliation first'? A passage from Patrick Brogan's recent book, *World Conflicts*, referring to events in Eastern Anatolia in 1915, takes this inference a stage further: 'Though countless Armenians were massacred by Turkish troops,' he notes, 'Turkey's object was its own security, not genocide. There were no gas chambers.'<sup>34</sup> From this perspective, the victim group, in this case the Armenians, were involved in some sort of dynamic relationship with the perpetrators and, by allegedly undermining, sabotaging or wrecking the latter's agenda, were, at the very least, co-responsible for the outcome. In short, the state's action is not genocide but *retribution* for something the victim group has done, and not only pardonable but entirely 'rational'. The victims, of course, are simply getting their just deserts.<sup>35</sup>

Here is the paradox at the heart of genocide. A genuine dynamic *does* exist between victim and perpetrator involving, on occasion, a tangible, objective challenge by the former to the latter's agenda or state control. Yet the dynamic may as easily be fed by distorted, inflated or indeed entirely illusory notions about the victim group in the minds of the perpetrators, amounting to Aronson's 'rupture with reality'. It is, above all, the mind-set of the Young Turks which is thus crucial to understanding the Armenian genocide of 1915, and similarly the mind-sets of the Stalinist or Kemalist states which explain their respective onslaughts on kulaks and Turkish Kurds.<sup>36</sup>

### The Holocaust: A Genocide Like No Other?

A superficial cross-reference between the key criteria of genocide as outlined above and salient facts of the Holocaust might seem to confirm the latter's 'singularity':

- There is clearly no dynamic involving Jews *qua* Jews, who presented no political or economic threat to the German state either from within or without. The Holocaust, thus, was an end in itself.
- Jews could not be perceived as an aggregate or collective power bloc. Their ubiquitous geographical distribution and lack of territorial, religious or any other power base made this impossible.
- Far from being geographically or socially marginal or 'backward', as might be argued in the case of the Kurds, kulaks or Vendean or Irish peasants, Jews, albeit with wide regional variations, were settled, often highly integrated or integrating elements in the respective countries of which they were citizens. They, for the most part, were in the van of societal transformation, not its antagonists.<sup>37</sup>

- The Nazis killed the Jews for no other reason than that they were Jews.<sup>38</sup> To quote Michael Marrus: 'Unlike the case with any other group, and unlike the massacres before or since, *every single one* of the millions of targeted Jews was to be murdered. Eradication was to be total.'<sup>39</sup>

A historian such as Saul Friedlander, then, seems to be on secure ground when he states that 'the absolute character of the anti-Jewish drive of the Nazis makes it impossible to integrate the extermination of the Jews, not only within the general framework of Nazi persecutions, but even within the wider aspects of contemporary ideological-political behaviour such as fascism, totalitarianism, economic exploitation and so on'. Perhaps unsurprisingly, he concludes that 'the Holocaust does not fall within the framework of explanatory categories of a generalising kind'.<sup>40</sup> This does not place Friedlander within that body of opinion which refutes *any* framework within which it can be comprehended.<sup>41</sup> On the contrary, he argues it to be 'the result of cumulative historical trends that can, in part at least, be identified and explained'.<sup>42</sup> But the strong implication is that these trends are always Holocaust-specific.

Nor is Friedlander alone amongst historians. His position has been buttressed by two scholars, Steven Katz and Yehuda Bauer, who have more directly addressed the issue of comparison. Katz has his own simple if ingenious proposition: the Holocaust is the *only* known genocide. Going to considerable lengths to examine other potential examples, his conclusion is that these other cases of mass killing are different because their perpetrators have not 'set out' to wholly exterminate the victims. For Katz not only is the issue of motivation crucial to genocide but the Jewish case is the only one in which he can discern it.<sup>43</sup>

Unlike Katz, Yehuda Bauer, the doyen of Holocaust studies – by accepting Lemkin's definition which includes persecution as well as systematic destruction – is prepared to concede that there have been other examples, notably the Armenian massacres of 1915.<sup>44</sup> Bauer's position, however, while more nuanced than that of Katz, is also more contradictory, with the Armenian genocide being viewed both as occupying the same continuum as the Holocaust (albeit with the latter at its most extreme end) yet also with differences which outweigh their similarities. Ultimately his position is not so very dissimilar to that of Katz, in which cases 'of what is loosely termed genocide' are seen to lack the essential ideological motivation which drove the Holocaust.<sup>45</sup>

While not wishing to cast aspersions on the motives of these three distinguished scholars, it may be that what is at stake here is something other than a historian's reading of history.<sup>46</sup> Friedlander has stated as much when, responding to the call of his German colleague, Martin

Broszat, for the study of Nazism to be historicized (i.e. subjected to the same methods of scholarly enquiry as other periods),<sup>47</sup> he argued that it would lead 'to the elimination from human memory of its criminality'.<sup>48</sup> One can certainly sympathize with this position. The 'normalization' of the Nazi period, which Broszat has sought, could easily slide down the slippery slope towards trivialization and devaluation. Worse, historicization, as Friedlander predicted,<sup>49</sup> seems to have provided an opportunity for right-wing German historians who have sought to relativize the Holocaust by arguing, in the case of Ernst Nolte, a causal linkage between the killing of kulaks and Jews, between gulag and gas chambers, in which the latter were somehow a defensive – and thereby rational and legitimate – reaction to the former. Though Nolte's tenuous argument, which triggered the still-simmering German *Historikerstreit*,<sup>50</sup> was staunchly resisted by Broszat,<sup>51</sup> the issue, in the highly-charged climate of post-Communist, reunified Germany, has already moved beyond a debate among historians. The idea of a sort of 'moral equivalence' between the Nazis and Communists (with the implication of the latter's connectedness *with* if not direction *by* Jews) is no longer simply the reserve of a small coterie of neo-Nazis and ultra-nationalists but has rapidly infiltrated mainstream German popular discourse.<sup>52</sup>

The question is, while Friedlander and others might well be justified in arguing that historians bear a particular social responsibility *vis-à-vis* the Holocaust, does it therefore follow that their only means of acquitting themselves is by hermetically sealing the Holocaust off from comparison? Granted, if no grounds for comparison, say, with the chronologically-close mass killings of kulaks or Turkish Kurds exist, then the special status of the Holocaust must be reaffirmed. Bauer and Katz are certainly right to note the *degree* of ideological motivation involved in the Nazi onslaught on the Jews, particularly in its visionary, Manichaeic qualities.<sup>53</sup> But the elimination in the 1930s of 'kulaks' and other Soviet 'enemies of the people' as well as the partial destruction of the Turkish Kurds were also ideologically motivated, at least inasmuch as they were indissolubly bound to Stalinist and Kemalist agendas for creating new physically transformed, yet homogeneous, societies 'cleansed' of extraneous or harmful elements.<sup>54</sup> Certainly, the social engineering involved followed entirely different trajectories to that of the Nazis. Certainly, too, the 'rupture with reality' inherent in the projection of Jews as 'enemy' was altogether more intense and absolute.<sup>55</sup>

Yet it is precisely within the intense pathology of the Holocaust that we can trace some of the attributes which, earlier, we noted were lacking for its necessary qualification as a genocide. Though there are certainly no grounds for asserting an objective Jewish–Nazi dynamic in which the former represents a threat to the latter, such a dynamic is provided and

then fully played out entirely within the Nazis' own conspiracy-laden *Weltanschauung*. In this classic example of projection, 'the Jews' are not just any obstacle to the Nazi new order, they are *the* obstacle: a monolithic, utterly ruthless, staggeringly powerful, international enemy who will stop at nothing to destroy completely the Nazi quest for racial utopia.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, this helps explain how utterly and relentlessly intent Hitler was on exacting a collective retribution on *real* Jews, beginning in the late summer of 1941 when his timetable for the military and political annihilation of the allegedly Judeo-Bolshevik-led USSR starts going drastically wrong.<sup>57</sup> What we have, therefore, is the most complete and perversely 'perfect' model of a genocide: one based entirely on a mental fixation so intense that it demanded a systematic, continent-wide *modus operandi* not attempted before or since.

Moreover, this cannot be divorced from the developmental framework so central to modern genocide. The Nazi 'revolution' was founded on a vision of a racial 'national community' which in practical terms demanded both selection and 'improvement' of elements considered racially valuable and the complete elimination of those considered impure, weak or unworthy. As Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wipperman have recently spelt out in *The Racial State*, Nazi racial-hygienic 'rationalizations' provided for the 'removal' not simply of Jews but also of Gypsies, those deemed 'criminal' or 'asocial' and a whole range of physically and mentally ill children and adults slated as *lebensunwertes Leben* ('lives unworthy of life'). Burleigh and Wipperman are correct to note that the different elements of this racial-social blueprint (i.e. including persecution and elimination of the Jews) cannot be treated in isolation although the overall social engineering involved was *sui generis*. What Burleigh and Wipperman perhaps underplay is the broader context in which this was all to occur.

The Nazi attempt to realize an 'ideal future world',<sup>58</sup> in the interests of teutonic supremacy and well-being, could only be secured through the creation of a vast imperial hinterland – stretching far away to the east of Germany's traditional borders and thereby providing living space, *Lebensraum*, for Germany's expanding population – and an autarkic system of economic self-sufficiency guaranteed by the complete subjugation and monopolization of the region's labour, industrial and agricultural infrastructure and resource base, on terms to be determined exclusively by Berlin.<sup>59</sup> The Nazi racial agenda was thereby indissolubly linked to a developmental strategy of monumental proportions, embracing not only the fate of Jews and Gypsies but millions of Czechs, Poles, Russians and other Slavic peoples.

But how would the agenda *actually* be implemented? Would these populations be 'merely' enslaved, driven out to make way for new

German settlers or actively exterminated? Nobody responsible for planning in the apparatus of the pre-war Nazi state quite knew. The near-realization of the territorial element of the design, in the period 1938–42, simply threw up huge logistical problems in regard to the broader demographic-cum-social engineering issues at stake. Where did one begin? What was going to be the timescale for implementation? What proportion of the conquered populations was going to be needed to provide labour for the Reich? How do you classify who is productively useful and who is expendable? What do you *do* with the expendable ones? Certainly, despite the fact that these questions applied to all the subject populations, almost everybody in the new post-1939, and then post-1941, Nazi administrations in the occupied East agreed, at least *in principle*, that both Jews *and* Gypsies, in particular, would have to be removed.<sup>60</sup> The corollary was that Germany's satellite states – Croatia, Slovakia and, especially, Hungary and Romania – were thinking along similar lines as they developed their own smaller, imitative versions of empire within the framework of Nazi hegemony in the East. 'Getting rid' of the Jews seemed, moreover, to provide specific additional benefits for all participants: the removal of a particularly problematic 'high profile' element in the socio-economic matrix, the freeing up of expropriated capital and resources for national goals, occupational and business openings, much needed housing – in short, a window of opportunity for overall social and economic restructuring.<sup>61</sup>

The Holocaust is thus closely linked to the Nazi developmental agenda: a forced-pace programme of social and economic transformation, more stunning and radical than anything a Mussolini, a Kemal Atatürk, even a Stalin could have envisioned. Yet all these leaders willingly tore up the rule book of traditional and accepted means of incremental growth, and to varying degrees committed themselves to audacious programmes of 'alternative' development.<sup>62</sup> The problem they shared was that their achievement was entirely dependent on the taking of enormous risks from which the leaders of most states, most of the time, would flinch or ultimately turn back.

These particular state leaderships were, of course, not ordinary ones but themselves the products of extraordinary crisis-laden circumstances associated with massive social and economic dislocation, war and/or revolution, whose whole *raison d'être* was founded on the conviction that all other routes to national or societal regeneration and prosperity had been exhausted. It was their absolute insistence on their particular project for salvation, founded in turn upon some particular ideological premise about the nature of social reality, which inevitably posed questions about actual or perceived groups who either did not fit into, or actively opposed, their vision of the future shape of society and polity. In the examples

under discussion, that vision was, *in its respective forms*, a streamlined, homogeneous mono-culture. Any attempt to realize it was bound to give rise to conflict. But it was the running jump at political and societal transformation in the broadest sense and the inevitable crisis which resulted that accounts for a lurch, in each case, into the actuality of genocide.

In no case was this more true than with the Nazis. The only way they could come close to realizing their particular, special programme of development was through the ultimate, high-risk strategy of war. This however was not war *à la* Clausewitz, for limited ends otherwise unattainable through diplomacy, but total war geared towards the military and political annihilation of key opponents. The crux was the final phase of the process: the destruction of (Jewish-led) Soviet Russia. Achieve this and one could start putting all the other pieces of the programme into place, including the removal of extraneous, dangerous elements. A 'final solution of the Jewish question', 'a getting rid of' Jews to somewhere else, out there, perhaps over the Urals, or maybe even to Madagascar,<sup>63</sup> at long last seemed a feasible objective.

All this was dependent on a tremendous act of faith. Nobody in the Nazi hierarchy had considered what would happen if the overall agenda became unstuck, particularly if Soviet Russia failed to crumble under the impact of Operation Barbarossa. Genocide of the Jews may have been implicit before the summer of 1941 but it was certainly not explicit. No evidence exists for a planned programme of *systematic* physical elimination until this moment, a situation which closely approximates the chronologies of other key modern genocides. As elsewhere, it was the frustration of the vision, exacerbated, in this instance, by the monumental recognition that, by having attempted and then failed to destroy the Soviets, the Nazi state had engineered its own road to oblivion,<sup>64</sup> which precipitated the vengeful drive towards Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka and Auschwitz.

Added to this was the actual demographic and logistical bottleneck produced by the military stalemate in the East. The Nazi 'final solution' had been predicated on getting 'rid' of the Jews, not having millions of them to house and feed. At least Stalin, after 1939, had somewhere to send his 'dangerous' Balts, Ukrainians and, later, Tatars, Volga Germans and other ethnic 'enemies', even if hundreds of thousands died en route, even if millions more were ruthlessly hyper-exploited to death in slave labour camps in deepest Central Asia or Siberia.<sup>65</sup> Here, somewhat paradoxically, was an alternative scenario for Hitler, one which presents itself to any genocidal practitioner. Instead of exterminating the Jews outright would it not be better to punish them through hyper-exploitation? The new realities of late 1941–2 – the rapidly escalating war in the East, which would now certainly be a life-and-death struggle, not only with

Soviet Russia but also with the western Allies – posed the issue starkly: either Germany made good her acute manpower losses through maximization of the labour potential of her subject populations or her military-industrial complex would simply go under. Millions of Soviet POWs, Poles, Czechs and other Europeans were henceforth brought into the Reich,<sup>66</sup> thereby undermining the Nazi vision of its pure racial community, yet providing an essential – if expendable – slave labour force. The trajectory for the Jews was entirely different. Wherever possible, Jews were by this stage being deported *away* from the central Reich territories. As for the hyper-exploitation argument which sought to utilize the able-bodied amongst them in labour camps in the East, or even to enlist complete Polish ghettos in favour of war production, this was either quickly rejected or, when it did occur, was no more than a prelude to the Nazis' new and *final* final solution of the Jewish question, namely systematic conveyor-belt extermination.<sup>67</sup>

It is this aspect, and the extreme lengths to which the Nazis went to accomplish it, which surely lends to the argument for the special categorization of the Holocaust a cogency which it seems objectionable to dispute. Those efforts, thanks to Raul Hilberg's first groundbreaking study thirty years ago, are well-known: the enlistment of the instruments, skills and techniques of modern technology and administrative processes, of scientific expertise not to mention railway time tabling, of the resources of state bureaucracy as well as the military-industrial complex, and thus of the entire apparatus of the modern state.<sup>68</sup> All these were put at the disposal of those appointed, namely the SS, to carry out the extermination, even to the point, at critical moments, when resources were re-allocated away from urgent military priorities. It is this relentless systematization and routinization of the process that led to the final destination for the victims in the gas chambers which, argues Zygmunt Bauman, represents the ultimate – to date – in what can be achieved in deploying modernity on behalf of genocide.<sup>69</sup>

Yet even here, while acknowledging these facts, there may be a danger in reading into them a uniqueness over and above what is obviously unique. The process of killing Jews in the Holocaust followed, in part, well-defined contours associated with other twentieth-century genocides. These included death through malnutrition, famine and disease in enclosed 'reservations' (i.e. ghettos), through, as already noted, hyper-exploitation in slave labour camps, through mass deportations which turned into death marches, and through extremely gruesome, often messy executions and massacres in pits, trenches and ravines, using nothing more sophisticated than revolvers, rifles and machine guns. Recent research has confirmed that Nazi-sponsored mass murder of Jews in, for instance, Lithuania and the Balkans was far from industrial or tidy. On the

contrary, hot-blooded slaughter carried out by ordinary Wehrmacht soldiers, as well as by Einsatzgruppen and other paramilitary auxiliaries, was a persistent feature of both 'the war in the East' and the Balkan theatre.<sup>70</sup> Certainly, in terms of repeatedness and scale, these actions *on their own* dwarfed those committed by other modern genocidal practitioners against other victim groups. Certainly, too, the invention of gassing vans and then gassing chambers represented an attempt to surmount the actual logistical limitations inherent in these more traditional killing methods. Gas chambers were about the streamlining of process, an innovation which came as near as possible to an industrial method for liquidating unwanted human beings on the basis of a daily quota. Specially developed and, as it were, patented for this explicit purpose, though not exclusively for Jews, their killing and crematoria disposing functions, with those at Auschwitz as their model *par excellence*,<sup>71</sup> indicate, together with the atom bomb, developed more or less simultaneously, the modern world's capability to organize mass death on a new, more advanced and scientifically planned basis.

But the modern world is itself dynamic. Technological progress, particularly in military-industrial fields, is research-led and quickly renders former innovations obsolete. In the circumstances, one would not expect Auschwitz to be the last word on genocide any more than the now very antiquated 'dirty' bombs which destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki would be acceptable to NATO planners as the last word on 'limited' nuclear war.

### Today's Genocide: The Case of the Marsh Arabs

Today, in the marshlands of southern Iraq, Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist regime is committing genocide. The number of people threatened at the moment, perhaps 100,000, is obviously smaller than that of the Nazis' victims, and it is not clear yet whether Saddam's ultimate intention is to eliminate physically each and every one of them, or simply to 'get rid of them' by a programme of terror designed to drive them *en masse* across the border into Iran or into Iraq's own desert region.<sup>72</sup> What is clear is that he is punishing a people, the Marsh Arabs, most immediately, for daring to back the post-Gulf War Shia resistance to his regime and, more generally, for being different, for failing to conform to the Ba'athist agenda for development. All the evidence suggests that Saddam is going to any lengths to accomplish these ends, deploying his most advanced resources, technology and talented engineers to dam and drain thousands of square miles of marshlands,<sup>73</sup> while engaging his scientific experts to create a new generation of chemical weapons to target their inhabitants.



The geographical inaccessibility of the Marsh Arabs gives to this genocide a specificity of its own. Unlike the Jews of Europe, they cannot be easily located, rounded up and then deported to some suitable death camp. They first have to be flushed out of the marshes and this requires method. All sorts of formulas have been tried: there have been air attacks using napalm, artillery bombardments using phosphorus; the agricultural chemicals, Indolin and Endrine 192, have been poured into the water systems to poison it. Now there is evidence of a new range of chemical warheads which appear to be lethally toxic to both plant and animal life, including human beings. The results of a lot of these high-tech strategies are so far inconclusive – even rather messy.<sup>74</sup>

Far from abandoning his scheme, however, Saddam seems to be more than ever committed to finding ways and means of succeeding. The draining of the Hammar, Amara, Mosharah and Quma marshes – a huge water-filled environment which has supported a unique human habitat and culture stretching back millennia<sup>75</sup> – will certainly go down in the annals of prodigious Iraqi engineering feats. The marshes will be drained out of existence, wiped out, obliterated from the map. But the ultimate aim is not simply one of an environmental transformation, but of an Iraqi-style version of what can only be described as the ‘final solution’ of the Marsh Arab question.

## Conclusion

With reference to – and dare one say on behalf of – the Marsh Arabs, let me re-state the main thrust of this thesis. The occurrence of genocide in the modern world is associated with processes of attempted state-led modernization and, more particularly, a forced-pace acceleration of that modernization. The states in question, for whatever reason, seek to bypass or avoid generally accepted ground rules and conventions on incremental growth,<sup>76</sup> and in the attempt to execute their ‘alternative’ agendas encounter serious impediments which, symptomatic of the overload or overstretch implicit within them, threaten both agenda and state alike.<sup>77</sup> It is in such crisis situations that something, so to speak, has to give, that the state takes out its frustration on one or more perceived people-obstacles in its path, the destruction of whom, it is mentally posited, will enable the successful completion of its agenda.

In our contemporary age of resource scarcity, the most likely targets for this sort of genocidal victimization are likely to be ‘marginal’, native peoples in so-called Third World countries, where the consolidation and development of residual frontiers continues unabated. Any alleged threat which the victims pose, in these instances, is clearly going to be more

imaginary than real, though, paradoxically, increasing awareness, mobilization and resistance among native peoples, plus international support for them,<sup>78</sup> may exacerbate the perpetrators' *perception* of threat. If in these examples a 'dynamic' of genocide is created essentially out of the perpetrator's own state of mind, it does not follow that there cannot be circumstances in which the actual situation is more amenable to interpretation. It could be argued, for instance, that secessionist or neo-secessionist struggles in the modern world, such as the Kurds in inter-war Turkey or, more recently, in Ba'athist Iraq, have presented a more tangible challenge to their respective states.<sup>79</sup> Certainly, where party-led, ideologically-driven states, such as Iraq, promise to deliver on all fronts and then catastrophically fail, the actual succeeding power struggle is likely to be real and acute. In such circumstances the tendency of a Saddam to strike out at all and sundry – Kurds, Shia, Marsh Arabs as well as other more sharply defined 'political' opponents – may also suggest how tenuous are the distinctions between categories labelled as genocide or politicide.<sup>80</sup>

One does not have to refute the obviously visionary, indeed bewildering Manichaean elements in the Holocaust, nor the long historical backdrop provided by a christologically-inspired antipathy towards Jews, to argue that it, too, is a genocide, sharing features in common with others. Certainly, its intense projection, and subsequently the actual mechanics of a process in which the Nazis, having gone down a *cul-de-sac* of their own making, held every last Jew accountable for it, is altogether more toxic and far-reaching than anything comparable to date. Though projection, visionary ideology and a belief in some specially-ordained sanction to expunge the victim group are common, indeed prevalent, features of genocidal pathology, the Holocaust on all these accounts is the model *par excellence*.<sup>81</sup>

But that neither locates the Holocaust outside history nor demands that it be explained by a wholly different framework. Certainly the Holocaust as a product of its own time continues to stand as a warning and challenge to ours. But this statement also contains only half the truth. The destruction of Nazism in 1945 did not represent some cut-off point which precluded *other* genocides from ever being committed. On the contrary, not only have many been committed since then,<sup>82</sup> but the potential for more – simply bearing in mind Max Weber's observations on the claims by the modern state to hold a legitimate monopoly of physical violence within its territorial boundaries<sup>83</sup> – is ever-present. While the well-springs of genocide in the modern world, namely the demands of modernity itself, are hardly being addressed, the active insatiable drive towards rapid, fast-paced development is being confronted by all too obvious limiting factors: economic competition, demographic explosion, resource scarcity and massive ecological degradation. Forecasters of a world without genocide in the twenty-first century are optimists indeed.

NOTES

- 1 A version of this article was originally presented as part of the University of Southampton Parkes Seminars (autumn 1993). I would like to acknowledge with gratitude the support of Dr Tony Kushner at the University of Southampton for encouraging and expediting its publication, Dr Iain Smith of the University of Warwick and Dr David Cesarani of the Wiener Library for their helpful comments on its first draft.
- 2 Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* (Washington, DC 1944).
- 3 Quoted in Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn, *The History and Sociology of Genocide* (New Haven, CT 1990), 8–9.
- 4 See Leo Kuper, *Genocide: Its Political Use in the 20th Century* (New Haven, CT 1981), 23.
- 5 See Kuper, 19–39, for a full, critical discussion of the UN Convention and Soviet resistance to the use of ‘political’ in the definition.
- 6 Chalk and Jonassohn, 11.
- 7 See Chalk and Jonassohn, 12–23, for a broader review of the literature.
- 8 Lyman Letgers, ‘The Soviet gulag: is it genocidal?’, in Israel W. Charny (ed.), *Towards the Understanding and Prevention of Genocide* (Boulder, CO and London 1984), 62–5, argues for socio-economic groups to be included alongside national, ethnic and religious ones as identifiable victims of genocide. Chalk and Jonassohn, 22–6, argue more coherently that the victim group is defined by the perpetrator in instances of genocide, regardless of whether it *is*, in its own terms, a group. Similarly Helen Fein, ‘Genocide: a sociological perspective’, *Current Sociology*, vol. 38, 1990, 24, confirms that ‘genocide is sustained purposeful action by a perpetrator to destroy a collectivity...’.
- 9 Survival’s *Urgent Action Bulletins* provide detailed information on most of these cases: on the Nuba, *Bulletin*, January 1992; on the Yanomani, *Bulletin*, September 1993, and Robin Wright, ‘The Yanomani saga’, *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, vol. 5, 1982, 27–9; on the Jummas, *Bulletin*, May 1992 and January 1994, the Anti-Slavery Society’s Report no. 2, *The Chittagong Hill Tracts, Militarisation, Oppression and the Hill Tribes* (London 1984), and Amnesty International, *Bangladesh. Unlawful Killings and Torture in the Chittagong Hill Tracts* (London 1986); on the Maubere of East Timor, Carmel Budiardjo and Liem Soei, *The War against East Timor* (London 1984) and, more recently, Hugh O’Shaughnessy, ‘Secret killing of a nation’, *Observer*, 7 April 1991; on the Marsh Arabs, see Shyam Bhatia, ‘Murder in the marshes’, *Observer*, 28 February 1993, and also the impassioned appeal from Conservative MP Emma Nicholson, *Why Does the West Forget?* (Sevenoaks, Kent 1993). At the time of writing, in early May 1994, the Rwanda massacres, which had been going on for nearly a month were finally being referred to both by the UN Secretary-General, Boutros-Ghali, and by relief agencies as an example of genocide; Oxfam explicitly compared the scale of the killings to Kampuchea in the late 1970s (see Oxfam advert in leading Sunday newspapers, 8 May 1994).

- 10 Death tolls in the 1993 phase of the civil war in Angola, reported to have run at its high point at a thousand a day, topped the contemporary league of civil wars, wars between states and communal massacres *until* they were dwarfed by the army and death squad massacres in Rwanda in April and early May 1994, when possibly 250,000 died in the space of a few weeks. Other conflicts – in neighbouring Burundi and Zaire, the Sudan (SPLF versus government), Bosnia, Afghanistan, Moldova, Georgia, the Armeno-Azeri conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh as well as some other post-Soviet Central Asian republics – have exhibited extreme genocidal characteristics including ethnic cleansing, selective *and* indiscriminate massacres, i.e. of communal groups and populations regardless of age and gender. *In principle*, genocide has not occurred in these cases because the apparatus of state – and hence an overwhelming control of the means of systematic violence – has been fragmented between more than one competing group. In practice, *pace* Rwanda where a more traditional two-sided armed struggle parallels the state-sponsored massacres of civilians, what we are dealing with is a very broad, extremely fluid continuum of mass killings, with noticeable grey areas between different forms. Note both the main title and subtitle of Roy Gutman, *A Witness to Genocide: A First Inside Account of the Horrors of Ethnic Cleansing in Bosnia* (Shaftesbury, Dorset 1993); see also R. J. Rummel, ‘Democide in totalitarian states: mortacracies and megamurderers’, in Israel W. Charny (ed.), *Genocide. A Critical Bibliographical Review*, vol. 3 (London 1994), for a definition intended to embrace *all* state-organized mass killings.
- 11 Note Charny’s ultra-inclusivism on this score: ‘Unless clear-cut self-defence can be reasonably proven, whenever a large number of people are put to death by other people, it constitutes genocide’ (*Genocide*, xiii). This definition, amongst many other things, begs the question of what constitutes ‘clear-cut self defence’ given that practically all genocidal practitioners offer this justification (see note 34 below).
- 12 Note Charles S. Maier, *The Unmasterable Past. History, Holocaust and German National Identity* (Cambridge, MA 1988), 69: ‘To compare two events does not entail claiming that one caused the other. Comparison is a dual process that scrutinizes two or more systems to learn what elements they have in common, and what elements distinguish them. It does not assert identity; it does not deny unique components.’
- 13 See, as examples, a psycho-social perspective in George Kren and Leon Rappoport, *The Holocaust and the Crisis of Human Behaviour* (New York 1980), a theological one in Roy A. and Alice Eckardt, ‘The Holocaust and the enigma of uniqueness: a philosophical effort at practical clarification’, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 450, 1980, 165–78, and a measured historical one in Otto Dov Kulka, ‘Singularity and its relativisation’, in Yehuda Bauer *et al.* (eds.), *Remembering for the Future* (Oxford 1988), suppl. vol., 217–32. All these discussions assume that the Holocaust is only about Jews and does not embrace Gypsies, Russian POWs, Slavs, homosexuals and other Nazi victims. To avoid a weakening of the general line of argument I have – for the purposes of this article – accepted that the term ‘Holocaust’ refers exclusively to the Jewish victims.

- 14 Note, for instance, the lament of Elie Wiesel, *One Generation After* (New York 1970), 15: 'Nothing has been learned: Auschwitz has not served as a warning. For details consult your daily newspaper.' Yet the paradox here is that Wiesel, who has been prominent and tirelessly strenuous in his outreach to the non-Jewish world, is another exponent of the incomprehensibility of the Holocaust (see note 41 below). If, however, it is ultimately incomprehensible then there cannot logically be any point in relating it to other 'comprehensible' events.
- 15 Note, for instance, Peter Baldwin (ed.), *Reworking the Past. Hitler, the Holocaust and the Historians Debate* (Boston 1990), 21: 'The singularity of the Jewish suffering adds to the moral and emotional claims that Israel can make on her citizens and on other nations.'
- 16 Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Oxford 1989).
- 17 Ronald Aronson, *The Dialectics of Disaster. A Preface to Hope* (London 1983). Aronson's work is part scholarly treatise, part committed polemic which may account for its neglect by academics.
- 18 See Chalk and Jonassohn, 27–40. For a 'modernist' focus, see Gil Elliot, *Twentieth Century Book of the Dead* (London 1972).
- 19 I am perfectly aware that, by tentatively implying an interest in modernization theory, I am in conflict with those such as Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wipperman who have argued that such theories are 'intellectually redundant'; see their *The Racial State. Germany 1933–1945* (Cambridge 1991), 2. In fact, I accept their thesis that Nazi Germany in its emphasis on a racial blueprint had unique characteristics. What I fail to understand is why this precludes Nazism from being a particular developmental strategy which can be compared to other, equally idiosyncratic developmental strategies. Processes of modernization do not have to follow pre-ordained 'enlightened' or benevolent paths. They may include pronounced 'reactionary' elements and display 'archaic attributes'. However I accept that this begs important (and persistent) questions about the nature of both modernity and modernization.
- 20 See Henry Kamen, *Inquisition and Society in Spain* (London 1985) and his 'The Expulsion: purpose and consequences', in Elie Kedourie (ed.), *Spain and the Jews* (London 1992), 74–91; also Andrew Hess, 'The Moriscos: an Ottoman fifth column in sixteenth century Spain', *American Historical Review*, vol. 74, 1968, 1–25. Forced assimilation not extermination was the original governmental intention in this instance, but made more toxic by a sense of internal threat which either Jews or Moriscos were perceived as posing to the body politic at key crisis moments.
- 21 See Peter Berresford Ellis, *Hell or Connaught! The Cromwellian Colonisation of Ireland 1652–1660* (London 1975) and, more recently, Ian Gentles, *The New Model Army in England, Ireland and Scotland 1645–1653* (Oxford 1992), 357–64. Gentles argues for a systematic scorched earth policy in the aftermath of the extirpation of Irish resistance which was directly responsible for a population collapse from an estimated 1.5 million in 1641 to only 850,000 in 1652.
- 22 See Reynauld Secher, *Le Genocide franco-français. La Vendée-Venge* (Paris 1986) which has caused controversy with its thesis of a genocide committed

- by Frenchmen against Frenchmen. So, too, has its estimate of 117,000 genocide-related deaths. Yet an older, more conservative study, Peter Paret, *Internal War and Pacification: The Vendée 1789–1796* (Princeton 1961), 68, argues for 130,000 direct deaths or 15 per cent of a pre-Revolution population of 800,000.
- 23 See notably Robert Hughes, *The Fatal Shore* (London 1987) and Alan Moorhead, *The Fatal Impact. An Account of the Invasion of the South Pacific 1767–1840* (London 1966). The Tasmanian aboriginal population was completely eradicated.
  - 24 For particularly noteworthy case histories involving direct, intentional and systematic native-American destruction, *prior* to the final consolidation of the frontier, see Lynwood Carranco and Estle Beard, *Genocide and Vendetta: The Round Valley Wars of Northern California* (Norman, OK 1981) and Sherburne F. Cook, *The Conflict between the California Indians and White Civilisation* (Berkeley 1976).
  - 25 See Horst Drechsler, *Let Us Die Fighting. The Struggle of the Herero and Nama against German Imperialism 1884–1915* (London 1980) and Helmut Bley, *South West Africa under German Rule* (London 1971). An estimated 60 per cent of the tribal population was liquidated between 1904 and 1907.
  - 26 See Helen Fein, ‘Scenarios of genocide: models of genocide and critical responses’, in Charny (ed.), *Towards the Understanding*, 3–31. Fein’s ‘ideological’, ‘developmental’, ‘retributive’ and ‘despotic’ types of genocide represent the best and clearest working classification to date, though I might choose both to omit ‘despotic’ as being in practice indistinct from ‘retributive’ and to use my preferred term ‘visionary’ in place of ‘ideological’. I would add that most genocides contain elements of more than one and often all three types.
  - 27 See Kendal, ‘Some reflections on Kemalism’, in Gerard Chaliand (ed.), *People without a Country. The Kurds and Kurdistan* (London 1980), 68, quoting the Turkish Communist Party estimate of between one and one-half million Kurds deported and massacred between 1925 and 1938. Further corroboration and a fuller breakdown is needed to confirm these figures.
  - 28 R. S. Stafford, *The Tragedy of the Assyrians* (London 1935).
  - 29 Giorgio Rochat, ‘La repressione della resistenza in Cirenaica (1930–31)’, *Il movimento di liberazione in Italia*, vol. 110, 1973. See also his *Militari e politici nella preparazione della campagna d’Etiopia* (Milan 1971) for similar genocidal intentions and action in the Abyssinian campaign of 1935–6.
  - 30 Robert Conquest, *Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivisation and the Terror-Famine* (London 1986). The inclusion of post-kulak killings might be considered controversial in terms of a traditional definition of genocide. My inclusion does not relate to the gulag labour camp system *per se* in which survival was in principle (though rarely in practice) possible. Rather, it refers to the categories and groups who were marked down for *direct* physical elimination on the grounds of their alleged conspiracies against the Soviet state. This process embraced either the liquidation of their families and offspring as co-conspirators or the untying of the physical and social connection between conspirators and family members, e.g. through the placing of

- children in orphanages geographically far removed from their home communities. Note again Fein's 1990 definition in which she states that genocide 'can be accomplished through the imposed proscription or restriction of reproduction of group members, increasing infant mortality, and breaking of linkage between reproduction and socialization of children in the family or group of origin' (Fein, 'Genocide', 24); see also *Genocide in the USSR: Studies in Group Destruction* (Munich 1958) and Robert Conquest, *The Great Terror. A Reassessment* (New York 1990).
- 31 See Moshe Lewin, *The Making of the Soviet System* (London 1985), especially the chapter, 'Who was the Soviet kulak?'
- 32 'Alienation does not always have to be synonymous with enmity, as a lot of people in New York consider the Puerto Ricans to be foreign but do not kill them. Many people do not like blacks but do not kill them. A large number of people can be antagonistic towards another national group but it does not mean there has to be some ultimate reckoning. But it is bad. It is always bad, because dislike and alienation are the beginning of a far-reaching dislike, perhaps prejudice, perhaps hate. That is bad, but it does not have to all be thrown into the same pot, as it is not the same' (Professor Wladyslaw Bartoszewski, quoted in Antony Polonsky (ed.), *My Brother's Keeper. Recent Polish Debates on the Holocaust* (London 1990), 227).
- 33 Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions. A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China* (Cambridge 1979), 221.
- 34 Patrick Brogan, *World Conflicts* (London 1989), 604. Note also the following: 'Operating within the confines of this dominant political logic, the invocation of communal "self-defence" against Armenian sedition, actual and possible, explains nearly all that needs to be explained about Turkish behaviour during this critical moment of potential national dissolution' (Steven T. Katz, 'The Holocaust and comparative history', *Leo Baeck Memorial Lecture*, no. 37 (New York 1993)).
- 35 No state in the process of perpetrating such acts ever admits to them being genocide. Any such charge is refuted as a malicious fabrication. But Turkey is perhaps exceptional in that it has maintained this sophistry for seventy years by claiming the whole thing to be an Armenian-inspired conspiracy against the national interest. This includes 'scholarly' denials. See, for example, Kamuran Gürün, *The Armenian File. The Myth of Innocence Exposed* (London 1985).
- 36 See Robert F. Melson, *Revolution and Genocide: On the Origins of the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust* (Chicago 1992), especially the chapter, 'The Turkish revolution and the Armenian genocide'; Lewin, especially the chapter, 'Society, state and ideology during the first Five Year Plan'; Kendal, 68–72.
- 37 See Calvin Goldscheider and Alvin S. Zuckerman, *The Transformation of the Jews* (Chicago 1984). The same point has also been made about Armenians; see Robert F. Melson, 'Revolutionary genocide: on the causes of the Armenian genocide of 1915 and the Holocaust', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 4, 1989, 161–74.
- 38 Steven Katz calls it their 'biological givenness'; see 'Auschwitz and the gulag: discontinuities and dissimilarities', in Steven T. Katz, *Historicism, the*

- Holocaust and Zionism. Critical Studies in Modern Jewish Thought and History* (New York 1992), 150.
- 39 Michael R. Marrus, *The Holocaust in History* (London 1987), 24.
- 40 Saul Friedländer, 'On the possibility of the Holocaust: an approach to historical synthesis', in Yehuda Bauer and Nathan Rotenstreich (eds.), *The Holocaust as Historical Experience* (New York 1981), 2, 6.
- 41 For example, Nora Levin, *The Holocaust. The Destruction of European Jewry 1939–1945* (New York 1973), xi–xii: '... the events surrounding it [the Holocaust] are in a very real sense incomprehensible... The accumulation of facts does not yield this understanding; indeed comprehensibility may never be possible... The world of Auschwitz was, in truth, another planet.' For a linguistic corrective, see Dan Margushak, 'The 'incomprehensibility' of the Holocaust: tightening up some loose usage', *Judaism*, vol. 29, 1980, 233–42.
- 42 Friedländer, 'On the possibility', 2.
- 43 See 'Quantity and interpretation – issues in the comparative historical analysis of the Holocaust', in Katz, *Historicism*, 105–37, an essay (admittedly a prelude to a much larger study) in which Katz focuses on a number of historical comparisons – with witchcraft, black slavery, the native populations of the Americas – subjects which most scholars would agree do not, in general, fall within the framework of genocide. Though Katz's essay considers Gypsies, Poles and Ukrainians killed by the Nazis in the Second World War, he ultimately dismisses these as examples of victims of genocide. Neither, strangely, does he concern himself with, for instance, the Armenian massacres of 1915–16 or those in Cambodia of 1975–79. In another essay, 'Auschwitz and the gulag' (*Historicism*, 138–61), Katz concentrates on the Soviet camps making up the gulag system, not on the direct elimination of 'kulaks' or other 'class enemies' who, again, might seem more obvious candidates for categorization as victims of genocide. However he has addressed himself more recently to the issue of the Armenian massacres of 1915; see his 'Holocaust and comparative history'. Yet here again he downplays the whole episode both by attributing co-responsibility for these events to the Armenians and by seeking to demonstrate that the Turkish intent was not to eliminate the Armenian population *in toto*. As demonstrated elsewhere in my article these elements do not in themselves contradict a case for genocide.
- 44 Yehuda Bauer, 'The place of the Holocaust in contemporary history', *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, vol. 1, 1984, 201–24. A number of articles on the Armenian massacres have also appeared in the formerly Yad Vashem (currently United States Holocaust Research Institute) journal, *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, of which Bauer was editor-in-chief.
- 45 Bauer's insistence (in 'The place of the Holocaust') on ideological motivation as the critical separating point between the Holocaust and other genocides is noteworthy given that many genocide scholars would confirm that motivation is crucial to *all* genocides; see, for instance, Vakahn N. Dadrian, 'Towards a theory of genocide incorporating the instance of the Holocaust', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 5, 1990, 129–43, and Frank Chalk, 'Definitions of genocide and their implications for prediction and prevention', in Bauer *et al.* (eds.), *Remembering*, 67–79. By contrast, there is a whole body of Holocaust



- 'functionalist' historians who question the centrality of ideological motivation as the key to its particular outcome; see most obviously Karl A. Schleunes, *The Twisted Road to Auschwitz. Nazi Policy towards German Jews, 1933–1939* (Urbana, IL, Chicago and London 1970). In other words, the debate about motivation is vigorous both for the Holocaust and other genocide case histories. My personal view is that a different terminology (which I only allude to here as the development from 'potentiality' to 'actuality') might give a more accurate insight into what actually happens in a genocidal scenario.
- 46 Note, for instance, Katz, 'Auschwitz and the gulag' (*Historicism*, 142): 'The Holocaust remains always "beyond comprehension", an event as much revealed as mysterious, much as we must insist that it be open to scholarly investigation and ordinary rules of historical and philosophical enquiry. It is these very qualities that lead to the constant temptation – *to be resisted* – to remove it altogether from history.'
- 47 Martin Broszat, 'Plädoyer für eine Historisierung des Nationalsozialismus', *Merkur*, vol. 39, 1985, 373–85, reprinted in English as 'A plea for the historicization of National Socialism', in Baldwin (ed.), 77–87.
- 48 Saul Friedländer, 'Some reflections on the historicization of National Socialism', in Baldwin (ed.), 100.
- 49 Friedländer, 'Some reflections', and his letters to Broszat in 'A controversy about the historicization of National Socialism', in Baldwin (ed.), 102–28.
- 50 See Ernst Nolte, 'Vergangenheit, die nicht vergehen will', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 6 June 1986. There is now considerable literature on the historians' debate; for its development, see Baldwin (ed.) and Maier, *Unmasterable Past*.
- 51 Broszat's letters to Friedländer in 'A controversy', in Baldwin (ed.), 102–28.
- 52 See Hans Mommsen, 'Reappraisal and repression. The Third Reich in West German historical consciousness', in Baldwin (ed.), 179, and Alvin H. Rosenfeld, 'Another revisionism: popular culture and the changing image of the Holocaust', in Geoffrey Hartman (ed.), *Bitburg in Moral and Political Perspective* (Bloomington, IN 1986), 90–102; also the pertinent comments of Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship. Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation*, 3rd edn. (London 1993), 208.
- 53 See especially Bauer, 'The place of the Holocaust', and Uriel Tal, 'On the study of the Holocaust and genocide', *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. 13, 1979, 7–52.
- 54 See Moshe Lewin, *Russian Peasants and Soviet Power* (London 1968), especially chapter 17, and Raymond A. Bauer, *The New Man in Soviet Psychology* (Cambridge 1952). On the creation of the 'new' Turkey, see Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London 1993), especially the chapter, 'The new Turkey: society and economy (1923–1945)'.
- 55 On this point, Katz argues that 'ideologically, even for Stalin, re-education, not physical extermination, is the consummate goal. Bolshevism declares an uncompromising war against the class enemy *qua* class enemy, against his class status: it does not declare an unlimited, annihilatory war against his person *qua* person' (Katz, 'Auschwitz and the gulag', in *Historicism*, 150). The point might be legitimate if, as Katz implies, all 'enemies of the people'

were sent to the gulag. The problem is that a very considerable percentage was consciously and systematically executed as soon as they were found 'guilty': on the basis of Conquest's estimates in *Harvest of Sorrow*, 301–6, at least some of the three million immediate casualties in the anti-'kulak' drive of 1930–2, and at least another million at the height of the *Yezhovshchina* between mid-1937 and late 1938 (*Great Terror*, 485–6). In these terms, Stalin's repeated references to the liquidation of the kulaks as a class and the necessity to eradicate class enemies must be taken literally as intent physically to do just that.

- 56 There have been notable studies of this aspect of Hitler's psychopathological make-up; see Robert G. L. Waite, *The Psychopathic God. Adolph Hitler* (New York 1977) and the more determinist Rudolph Binion, *Hitler among the Germans* (New York 1976); see also, most obviously, Norman Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide. The Myth of the Jewish World Conspiracy and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (London 1967).
- 57 I am treading on dangerous ground here, particularly in disputing the potent argument of a number of historians, notably that of the 'moderate functionalist', Christopher R. Browning; in his *Fateful Months: Essays on the Emergence of the Final Solution* (New York 1985), Browning argues that it was success and elation, not a premonition of disaster, which precipitated the 'final solution'. The latter position has, however, been most recently – if controversially – upheld by Arno Mayer, *Why Did the Heavens Not Darken? The 'Final Solution' in History* (New York 1988) and also by Phillippe Burrin, *Hitler et les Juifs. Genèse d'une génocide* (Paris 1989). My own broader comparative research leads me to conclude that the lurch into genocide is often precipitated by military set-backs or disasters; see Mark Levene, 'The frontiers of genocide: Jews in the eastern war zones, 1914–20 and 1941', in Panikos Panayi (ed.), *Minorities in Wartime* (Oxford 1993). There is certainly evidence for a radicalization of killing, shifting from selected adult male targets to whole communities in the high summer of 1941; see Jurgen Forster, 'The Wehrmacht and the war of extermination against the Soviet Union', *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. 14, 1981, 7–34, and Christian Streit, 'The German army and the policies of genocide', in Gerhard Hirschfeld (ed.), *The Policies of Genocide* (London 1986), 1–14. Nevertheless, my assumption as to the exact catalyst for the 'final solution' may simply be incorrect.
- 58 Burleigh and Wiperman, 306.
- 59 See Eberhard Jäckel, *Hitler's Weltanschauung: A Blueprint for Power* (Middletown, CT 1972).
- 60 Getting rid of the Gypsies was distinct from getting rid of the Jews inasmuch as the former were perceived (not just by the Nazis) as the European example *par excellence* of a 'backward', socially as well as racially deviant group whose very existence challenged basic assumptions as to the nature of society and of its development. These distinctions, however, do not invalidate the comparable aspects of the Nazi and satellite regimes' genocidal policies towards *both* Gypsies and Jews, particularly the ultimate totality of their genocidal intent; see recent studies such as Sybil Milton, 'Nazi policies towards Roma and Sinti, 1933–1945,' *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, 5th Series,

- vol. 2, 1992, 1–18, and Ian F. Hancock, ‘Uniqueness, Gypsies and Jews’, in Bauer *et al.* (eds.), *Remembering*, 2017–25.
- 61 One does not have to accept the conclusion of the Aly and Heim thesis that the ‘final solution’ sprang from the initiatives of an economic ‘planning intelligentsia’ within Reich ministries to agree that technocratic arguments for a coherent developmental strategy did play an unquestionable role in its rationalization; see Götz Aly and Susanne Heim, ‘Die Ökonomie der Endlösung. Menschenvernichtung und Wirtschaftliche Neuordnung’, *Beiträge zur Nationalsozialistischen Gesundheits- und Sozialpolitik*, vol. 5: *Sozialpolitik und Judenvernichtung: Gibt es eine Ökonomie der Endlösung?* (Berlin 1987), 7–90.
- 62 For a discussion of Nazism in terms of modernization and development, see Rainer Zitelmann, *Hitler, Selbstverständnis eines Revolutionärs* (Hamburg, Leamington Spa, New York 1987), although, for a more nuanced account of it as a special ‘third way’ route to utopia, see Horst Matzerath and Heinrich Volkmann, ‘Modernisierungstheorie und Nationalsozialismus’, in Jürgen Kocka (ed.), *Theorien in der Praxis des Historikers* (Göttingen 1977), 90–109. For Mussolini, see A. James Gregor, *Italian Fascism and Developmental Dictatorship* (Princeton 1979), especially the chapter, ‘Fascism and development in comparative perspective’. For Kemal Atatürk, see Ali Kazancigil and Ergun Özbudun (eds.), *Atatürk. Founder of the Modern State* (London 1981), notably the Ahmad Feroz article, ‘The political economy of Kemalism’, and Çağlar Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey. A Study in Capitalist Development* (London 1987), especially the chapter, ‘State and capital’. For Stalin, see Alec Nove, *An Economic History of the USSR* (London 1976), especially the chapter, ‘The great leap forward. i. collectivisation’; also Robert Bidelux, *Communism and Development* (London 1985), especially the chapter, ‘Socialist forced industrialisation strategies’.
- 63 On this point, see notably Christopher R. Browning, *The Path to Genocide: Essays on Launching the Final Solution* (Cambridge 1992), especially ‘Nazi resettlement policy and the search for a solution to the Jewish question, 1939–41’, 3–27.
- 64 Note the intriguing comment of Alfred Jodl, chief of Hitler’s general staff, from the vantage point of defeat, in 1946: ‘Long before anyone else in the world, Hitler suspected or knew that the war was lost’ (quoted in Percy Ernst Schramm, *Hitler. The Man and the Military Leader* (Chicago 1971), 204).
- 65 See Robert Conquest, *The Nation Killers: The Soviet Deportation of Nationalities* (New York 1970) and Aleksandr Nekrich, *The Punished Peoples: The Deportation and Tragic Fate of Soviet Minorities at the End of the Second World War* (New York 1978).
- 66 Ulrich Herbert, ‘Arbeit und Vernichtung: Ökonomisches Interesse und Primat der Weltanschauung im Nationalsozialismus’, in Dan Diner (ed.), *Ist der Nationalsozialismus Geschichte?* (Frankfurt 1987), 198–236.
- 67 Certainly, there was a hyper-exploitation option and a running battle between those who favoured production versus extermination; Arno Mayer, however, in his chapter on ‘Auschwitz’ in *Why Did the Heavens*, overstates the case for the former; see also Christopher Browning’s corrective in ‘German

- technocrats, Jewish labour and the final solution' and 'The Holocaust as by-product? A critique of Arno Mayer', in *Paths*, 59–76, 77–85.
- 68 Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, 3 vols (New York 1985), III, 994: 'The machinery of destruction, then, was structurally no different from organised German society as a whole. The machinery of destruction was the organised community in one of its special roles.'
- 69 Bauman, especially chapter 4, 'The uniqueness and normality of the Holocaust'.
- 70 See notably Dina Porat, 'The Holocaust in Lithuania: some unique aspects', and Jonathan Steinberg, 'Types of genocide? Croats, Serbs and Jews, 1941–5', both in David Cesarani (ed.), *The Final Solution. Origins and Implementation* (London 1994); see also the studies by Omer Bartov, *The Eastern Front 1941–45: German Troops and the Barbarisation of Warfare* (London 1985) and Mark Mazower, *Inside Hitler's Greece. The Experience of Occupation 1941–1944* (London 1993). Jonathan Steinberg, 'The Holocaust, society and ourselves', *Jewish Quarterly*, no. 153, spring 1994, 46–50, contains a valuable critique of Zygmunt Bauman in relation to these and other issues.
- 71 See Konnilyn G. Feig, *Hitler's Death Camps: The Sanity of Madness* (New York 1981), Joseph Borkin, *The Crime and Punishment of I. G. Farben* (New York 1978) and, most recently, the English edition of Teresa Swiebocka (ed.), *Auschwitz. A History in Photographs* (Bloomington, IN 1994).
- 72 See Julie Flint, 'Shi'ites flee new marsh drainage', *Guardian*, 13 November 1993.
- 73 Flint, in which Dr Hussein Shahrstani, formerly Iraq's leading nuclear scientist, was quoted as saying that 'Saddam is putting all his engineering talents into this new project, using literally hundreds of machines'.
- 74 Bhatia; see also Julie Flint's reports in the *Guardian*, 23 and 27 October, 8 and 13 November 1993.
- 75 See Wilfred Thesiger, *The Marsh Arabs* (London 1964) for the definitive work on the subject.
- 76 Who makes the ground rules is something which will need to be examined further. What is not intended here is a suggestion that *only* a totalitarian state is thereby capable of genocide while 'liberal' capitalist ones are not; see, by contrast, the sociologist, Irving Louis Horowitz, *Taking Lives. Genocide and State Power* (New Brunswick, NJ 1980), who argues that societies can be classified as genocidal or non-genocidal depending on where they are on a spectrum running from repressive and totalitarian at one end to permissive and pluralist at the other. The Horowitz model is certainly valuable but does not address processes of historical change or crisis in which a society might pass from being non-genocidal to genocidal, or indeed vice versa.
- 77 Aronson, 169, pertinently refers to these scenarios as attempts to 'realise the unrealisable'.
- 78 See Julian Burger, *Report from the Frontier. The State of the World's Indigenous Peoples* (London 1987), especially chapter 13, 'International action'.
- 79 See Martin van Bruinessen, *Aghas, Shaiks and State. The Social and Political Structure of Kurdistan* (London 1990), especially the chapter on Shaik Said's revolt of 1925; Chaliand (ed.); Michael M. Gunter, *The Kurds of Iraq*.

*Tragedy and Hope* (New York 1992); Alexis Heraclides, *The Self-determination of Minorities in International Politics* (London 1991); as well as Mark Levene, 'Yesterday's victims: today's perpetrators?', *Jewish Quarterly*, no. 152, winter 1993/4, 11–16.

- 80 I would argue that the only essential requirement for a politicide to be labelled genocide is, with reference to Fein's terminology (see note 30 above), when the perpetrators seek to remove their 'enemies' in biological terms, i.e. not simply adult males and/or females but also a wider swathe of family members, including children and babies, if not always by direct elimination then by the removal of children from their biological relationships and social communities. On these grounds I would cite Argentina's 'Dirty War' (1976–80) as an example of politicide or genocide; see Barbara Harff, 'Recognising genocides and politicides', in Helen Fein (ed.), *Genocide Watch* (New Haven, CT 1992), 27–41.
- 81 'The ultimate and archetypal genocide' as Alan L. Berger refers to it in his contribution to Charny (ed.), *Genocide*, 59.
- 82 See the catalogue of cases in Harff, 32–6.
- 83 Max Weber, 'Politik als Beruf', *Gesammelte Politische Schriften. Zweite* (Tübingen 1958), 494; see also Kuper, 161: 'the sovereign territorial state claims, as an integral part of its sovereignty, the right to commit genocide, or engage in genocidal massacres, against people under its rule, and... the UN for all practical purposes, defends this right.'

## *Conceptual Blockages and Definitional Dilemmas in the “Racial Century”: Genocides of Indigenous Peoples and the Holocaust*

A. DIRK MOSES

Hegel was well aware of the terrible cost exacted by the march of civilization. Yet, precisely because the ‘History of the World is not the theatre of human happiness’, as he put it rather coyly, Hegel felt compelled to develop a philosophy of history that invested cosmic meaning in what otherwise would be an intolerable spectacle of pointless carnage.<sup>1</sup> He was thereby proposing a secular ‘theodicy’, a term coined by the German philosopher G. W. Leibniz in 1710 to mean ‘justification of God’.<sup>2</sup>

In 1940, at the beginning of a European catastrophe that would urgently re-pose the question of evil, the German-Jewish critic Walter Benjamin poured scorn on theodicies because they necessarily view the past through the eyes of its victors and retrospectively justify their actions and morality. Could the European civilization that produced colonial violence and the First World War be the greater good that redeemed the immeasurable suffering it caused? ‘There is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism’, Benjamin wrote famously in his ‘Theses on the philosophy of history’.<sup>3</sup> Rather than continue the destruction wrought by such barbarism, he urged ‘anamnesic solidarity’ with its victims as a way of interrupting the supposedly ineluctable and necessary ‘progress’ of civilization.<sup>4</sup>

Benjamin’s plea for the primacy of the victims’ point of view has certainly been absorbed by the scholarly community that studies genocides. But Hegel, or at least theodicy, still commands a following, for the

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enquiry into the extermination of so-called native or indigenous peoples continues to be overshadowed by the nationalistic and totalitarian 'cleansing' programmes of the twentieth century, particularly the Holocaust. Mark Mazower suggests two reasons for this low priority:

I think there may have... been a widely-held unspoken assumption that the mass killing of African or American peoples was distant and in some senses an 'inevitable' part of progress while what was genuinely shocking was the attempt to exterminate an entire people in Europe. This assumption may rest upon an implicit racism, or simply upon a failure of historical imagination.<sup>5</sup>

Another reason is the fact that the nation-states of 'the West', which are responsible for upholding human rights and the moral universalism on which they are based, profited enormously from imperialism, and often owe their very existence to their projects of settlement. The genocides of indigenous peoples by colonial powers and settlers necessarily pose thorny questions today regarding the dark past or provenance of these societies.<sup>6</sup> Then there is the prosaic problem that very few scholars dispose over sufficient knowledge to make plausible comparisons and linkages between different genocidal episodes. The upshot is that the genocide of European peoples in the twentieth century strikes many American, Anglo-European and Israeli scholars as a more urgent research question than the genocide of non-Europeans by Europeans in the preceding centuries or by postcolonial states of their indigenous populations today.<sup>7</sup>

Underlying this asymmetry is the claim that the Holocaust is 'unique', 'unprecedented' or 'singular'. Its implications for the study of indigenous genocide are as significant as they are dire: that such 'lesser' or 'incomplete' genocides – if indeed they are considered genocides at all – are marginal or even 'primitive', thereby reinforcing hegemonic Eurocentrism;<sup>8</sup> and that the moral caché of the indigenous survivors of colonialism is less than that of Jews. Predictably, they are rejected by some scholars who counter that genocide lies at the core of western civilization,<sup>9</sup> and by others who extend its meaning to a wide variety of phenomena, for example, to a European interest in indigenous spirituality, birth control for African Americans, disease in Hawaii and the murder of street children in South American city slums.<sup>10</sup> 'The coinage has been debased', observes Michael Ignatieff with exasperation: 'What remains is not a moral universal which binds us all together, but a loose slogan which drives us apart.'<sup>11</sup> Identity politics and academic enquiry are often conflated in polemical expressions of group trauma, and rancour sets the tone. The question almost raises itself: should the victim's point of view be authoritative in this field when different victim groups make incommensurable, indeed competing, claims?<sup>12</sup>

If we are to move beyond this unproductive intellectual and moral stalemate, rehearsing the now familiar arguments is insufficient.<sup>13</sup> A critical perspective that transcends that of victims (articulated by Benjamin) and perpetrators and their descendants (advanced by Hegel) is clearly necessary. Whether it can be done with sensitivity is a question I am not in a position to answer. One method has been undertaken by the anthropologist Michael Taussig. Turning to Benjamin for inspiration, he invokes the presentational strategy of montage to disrupt the normative status of the given order, placing stress not on 'facts and information in winning arguments...[but]...the less conscious image realm and in the dreamworld of the popular imagination'.<sup>14</sup> But what if the popular imagination is hopelessly divided about the identity of the 'real' victims of history or the hierarchy of their suffering?<sup>15</sup> In that case, an approach that lays bare the group traumas blocking conceptual development and mutual recognition can aid in their working through, as well as in stimulating the critical reflection needed to rethink the relationship between the Holocaust and the indigenous genocides that preceded it.<sup>16</sup>

### Trauma, the Sacred and the Profane

What is at stake in the 'uniqueness' question? In order to grasp its existential importance, it is necessary to appreciate that the events of the Holocaust were experienced by members of the victim group as a trauma of virtually metaphysical proportions, a defining rupture in personal and collective identity with world-historical significance. Many Jews, especially the direct survivors, accordingly treat this genocide as sacred,<sup>17</sup> and it has become an important marker of collective Jewish identity,<sup>18</sup> notwithstanding considerable discomfort in that community with such a heteronomous determination.<sup>19</sup>

Emile Durkheim's theory of the sacred provides a useful tool for understanding this phenomenon. Group identity, he wrote, is constituted by a shared sense of the basic division of the world into two domains, the sacred and the profane. The former comprises objects and events that are loved, venerated or dreaded, and that are superior in dignity to the ordinary world of the profane. This division implies an obvious hierarchy: the sacred is special, and the profane is not. Without a shared sense of the sacred, group identity would dissolve. But preserving the sacred status of certain objects and events is not only a matter of communal survival; it is a response to suffering. For the cosmic order provided by the sacred-profane division endows the survivor of trauma with 'more force either to endure the trials of existence or to conquer them'.<sup>20</sup>



Durkheim's analysis also helps expose other aspects of the Holocaust's sacredness. He calls the group's most holy thing or object its 'totem', the sacred aura of which extends to two further domains: the sign or representation of the totem, and the members of the clan (Durkheim had in mind indigenous Australians) who comprise the core of the community.<sup>21</sup> On this account, the survivors themselves assume a sacred status, and it is no surprise that they also vigilantly guard representations of the Holocaust lest it be defiled or contaminated.<sup>22</sup> This endeavour is necessarily sectarian. Finally, the Holocaust is read as a negative cult, a *piaculum*, as Durkheim would have it: the commemoration of a calamity, that is, a trauma.<sup>23</sup> Utilizing the literature on trauma, the historian Dominick LaCapra has come to similar conclusions:

Those traumatized by extreme events, as well as those empathizing with them, may resist working through because of what might almost be termed a fidelity to trauma, a feeling that one must somehow keep faith with it... Moreover... there has been an important tendency in modern culture and thought to convert trauma into the occasion for sublimity, to transvalue it into a test for the self or the group and an entry into the extraordinary... Even extremely destructive or disorienting events, such as the Holocaust or the dropping of the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki may become occasions of negative sublimity or displaced sacralization. They may also give rise to what may be termed founding traumas – traumas that paradoxically become the valorized or intensely cathected basis of identity for an individual or a group rather than events that pose the problematic question of identity.<sup>24</sup>

Of course, contemporary Jewish individual and religious identity precedes the Holocaust and continues apart from it. Jewish identity is not automatically Holocaust-centric.<sup>25</sup> Yet, for some influential contributors to the field, the Holocaust does in fact possess this status, due perhaps to their catholic interest in the fate of all Jews, since all Jews, irrespective of religious or political hue, whether religious or secular, were potential victims of National Socialist designs. 'I admit that my personal starting point, my bias if you will', confesses the historian Yehuda Bauer, 'is formed by my overriding interest in the fate of the Jews'.<sup>26</sup> The Holocaust is the trauma that all Jews share and it functions thereby, George Steiner observes, as the cement binding post-Holocaust Jewry. The *Shoah* (a term he prefers to 'Holocaust' because of its connotation of sacrifice), he writes,

is the one and only bond which unites the Orthodox Jew and the atheist, the practising Jew and the total secularist, the people of Israel and the Diaspora, the Zionist and the anti-Zionist, the extreme conservative Jew... and the Jewish Trotskyite or Communist. Above all else, to be a Jew in the second

half of this century is to be a survivor, and one who knows that his survival can again be put into question... We are, in certain respects, a traumatised, a crazed people. How could we not be? Especially where it is that trauma which keeps us from final dispersal.<sup>27</sup>

Elie Wiesel has made the logical connection between trauma, group identity and the insistence of uniqueness:

I always forbade myself to compare the Holocaust of European Judaism to events which are foreign to it. Auschwitz was something else. The Universe of concentration camps, by its dimensions and its design, lies outside, if not beyond, history. Its vocabulary belongs to it alone.<sup>28</sup>

Accordingly, he has expressed alarm that other victim groups are 'stealing the Holocaust from us... we need to regain our sense of sacredness'.<sup>29</sup> Renowned scholars such as Lucy Dawidowicz, Steven T. Katz and Bauer do not differ from Wiesel and survivors in this regard, even if they locate the Holocaust in history. Bauer himself has pointed out the traumatizing effect of the Holocaust on Israeli society, demonstrated, above all, by its instrumentalization by all sides in public debate for partisan political purposes.<sup>30</sup> And with characteristic forthrightness Katz insists on its centrality for Jewish identity:

To understand ourselves [as Jews] requires ineluctably that we come to some grasp of these events [the Holocaust] and our relation to them... Those who would enquire what it means to be a Jew today must ask not, or even pose primarily, vague and unformed questions about Jewish identity and the relation of Judaism and modernity and Judaism and secularity, but must rather articulate the much more precise and focused question through which all other dimensions of our post-Holocaust identity are refracted and defined: 'What does it mean to be a Jew after Auschwitz?' Auschwitz has become an inescapable *datum* for all Jewish accounts of the meaning and nature of covenantal relation and God's relation to man. Likewise, all substantial answers also need to be open and responsive to the subtleties of the dialectical alternation of the contemporary Jewish situation: that is, they must also give due weight to the 'miracle' which is the state of Israel. They must thoughtfully and sensitively enquire whether God is speaking to the 'survivors' through it, and if so how.<sup>31</sup>

Because Katz and Bauer locate the Holocaust at the centre of Jewish life, they are forced to insist on its uniqueness, for to do otherwise would undermine their personal identity and concept of collective Jewish existence.<sup>32</sup> The significance Katz and Bauer attach to the Holocaust cannot be sustained if it is 'merely' another case of the mass killing that punctuates

human history, for the problem of evil – the mystery of undeserved suffering – cannot be faced without the sense of a cosmic meaning subtended by the division of the world into sacred and profane domains.<sup>33</sup>

Consequently, both men have devoted considerable energy to establishing the logical corollary of their implicit faith in the sacredness of the Holocaust, namely, the division of all genocide victims into the same two categories, sacred and profane.<sup>34</sup> Although they profess not to posit a hierarchy of victims or to claim that individual Jewish victims suffered more than non-Jewish ones, the burden of their argument nonetheless is that the Jewish victims of the Holocaust are sacred, and that those of other genocides are not, because only the Jews as a group were singled out for total extermination.<sup>35</sup> For this reason, Bauer dismisses David E. Stannard's claim of an 'American Holocaust' (that is, of the Native Americans) with the telling statement that it 'cannot be seen on *a par* with the Holocaust'.<sup>36</sup>

Indeed, Bauer decries such equivalences as antisemitic. The temptation to 'submerge the specific Jewish tragedy in the general sea of suffering caused by the many atrocities committed by the Nazi regime', he fears, is in fact a 'worldwide phenomenon connected with dangers of anti-Semitism'.<sup>37</sup> Herewith, he acts out the two collective traumas of European Jewry: the suffering caused by more than a millennium of Christian anti-Judaism (including the Holocaust), and the 'second victimization' through the 'unspeakability' of the Holocaust in the immediate post-war years.<sup>38</sup> Now only the memory of the Jewish Holocaust can prevent the flourishing of the antisemitism that led to the catastrophe in the first place: 'A reversion back to "normalcy" regarding Jews requires the destruction of the Holocaust-caused attitude of sympathy'.<sup>39</sup> Understandable as this position is, it leaves Bauer open to the charge of Norman Finkelstein and denialists that he instrumentalizes the Holocaust to gain a moral advantage for Jews.<sup>40</sup>

Certainly, Bauer has made a career not only of policing the compound around the Holocaust, but also of regulating its meaning for Jewish self-understanding:

all these universalizing attempts [regarding the Holocaust] seem to me to be, on the Jewish side, efforts by their authors to escape their Jewishness. They are expressions of a deep-seated insecurity; these people feel more secure when they can say 'we are just like all the others'. The Holocaust should have proved to them that the Jews were, unfortunately, not like the others. Obviously it did not.<sup>41</sup>

The link between the ongoing maintenance of group identity and the sacredness of the Holocaust could hardly be made more explicitly than in this extraordinary statement.

Even Bauer's elucidation of the universal meaning of the Holocaust denies other victims of Nazi racial policies a place around its holy penumbra. The 'unique situation of Jewry in Western culture', he insists, meant that it alone was the object of fantasies of complete destruction; consequently, the specifically Jewish experience must be raised above all others in order to serve as a general warning for all minority groups, since they too could one day suffer a holocaust.<sup>42</sup> But this reasoning is muddled, because if the Jewish position in Europe was unique then the likelihood of another ethnic minority becoming the object of the same rhetoric of total extermination is more than highly improbable.<sup>43</sup> In fact, the logical conclusion of the argument that the less-than-total, non-Jewish, profane genocides are much more common is that they should be the focus of scholarly attention and public memory.

To be sure, Bauer has developed his position over the years, now characterizing the Holocaust as 'unprecedented' rather than 'unique', and pleading for a 'spectrum' of genocides, with the Holocaust at one end as the most extreme example of extermination. His sincere and generous advocacy on behalf of other victim groups is well known.<sup>44</sup> Yet, this concession to comparison does not alter significantly his consistently held belief since the 1970s that the differences between the Holocaust and other genocides outweigh any similarities, and that the Holocaust is thereby special (or sacred). He appears to confuse two, distinct tasks: on the one hand, reflecting specifically on the burden of history and identity for post-Holocaust Jewry; on the other, explaining generally how and why genocides occur. By collapsing the latter into the former, he ends up at times proffering identity politics in the name of disinterested scholarship.

Both in his and Katz's particular and universal rendering of the Holocaust, then, the centrality of Jewish victims must be foregrounded lest its meaning be traduced. In order to maintain the border between sacred and profane victims of genocide, they have to downplay the similarities between all victims of genocide by referring, somewhat ironically, to Hitler's own faith in the 'redemptive' act of killing all Jews, an unfortunate authority to which to appeal.<sup>45</sup> The point of drawing attention to their strategies, however, is not to dispute the fact that the Holocaust can be distinguished from other genocides in important respects. It is to note in this field of enquiry that group trauma is acted out in truculently held intellectual positions whose articulators are prepared to climb out on very thin limbs to make their cases.

As might be expected, the uniqueness argument is a particular anathema to members of the victim groups it consigns to profane status.<sup>46</sup> Historians from these groups have responded in three ways. First, they question whether there was in fact a Nazi will for total extermination of Jews, thereby desanctifying Jewish victims.<sup>47</sup> Second, they claim that the

Holocaust was a copy of the mass exterminations that had already taken place in the European colonies, thus claiming priority for such genocides. 'In fact, the holocaust of North American tribes was, in a way, even more destructive than that of the Jews', claims Russell Thornton provocatively, 'since many American Indian peoples became extinct'.<sup>48</sup> A third argument substitutes total regularity for absolute uniqueness: 'Queen Elizabeth, King Ferdinand, Queen Victoria, King Louis and so on were the "Adolf Hitler's" [*sic*] of their day', a collective of Canadian authors suppose. "'Auschwitz" was an everyday reality for many people across the world during the years of colonialism and the years that followed.'<sup>49</sup> The indignation stems from the fact that Native American deaths are considered 'unworthy' because they died at the hands of 'our very own [white] forebears', as Stannard notes: that is why there is no Holocaust Memorial for Native Americans or other victims.<sup>50</sup> This is a telling point, for most American public leaders and intellectuals are happy to pontificate about genocide in every country but their own.<sup>51</sup> Because of this taboo, Stannard has to resort to making creative analogies with the Holocaust: if Jews who died as slave labourers or of disease in the camps rather than in the gas chambers were equally victims of the Holocaust, then Native Americans who died in analogous circumstances, that is, from 'natural causes', were similarly victims of the 'American Holocaust'.<sup>52</sup>

Such reasoning is not the innocent product of the ivory tower as the prolific Native American scholar and activist Ward Churchill makes clear with endearing candour when he proclaims the purpose of his scholarship to be 'unequivocally political'. His explicit aim is to invest American Indians with 'every ounce of moral authority we can get. My first purpose is, and always has been, to meet my responsibilities of helping deliver that to which my people is due.'<sup>53</sup> Here are echoes of Bauer's position, and not surprisingly Churchill goes on also to claim uniqueness for the suffering of his group: 'The American holocaust was and remains unparalleled, both in terms of its magnitude and the degree to which its goals were met, and in terms of the extent to which its ferocity was sustained over time by not one but several participating groups.'<sup>54</sup>

That such a claim cannot be dismissed out of hand, as writers like Katz are inclined, has been shown recently by David Moshman in a searching article entitled 'Conceptual constraints on thinking about genocide'. The problem with definitions of genocide so far, he argues, is that they have been based on prototypes: a paradigmatic genocide underlies the normative definition against which all others are measured. Hitherto, the prototype has been the Holocaust, especially in relation to the centrality of state intention. But such a choice is conceptually capricious, he thinks, and there is no reason why another genocide could not be prototypical.

Suppose, for example, that we construed the European conquest of the Americas as a singular and ultimate set of interrelated genocides. This megagenocide... has been deliberately aimed at, and has succeeded in eliminating, hundreds of discrete cultures throughout the Americas. Moreover, it has for the most part been a consensus policy, pursued generation after generation by the governments of multiple colonial and emerging nations... The Holocaust, from this perspective, might be dismissed as relatively minor, having targeted only a handful of cultures and having ended after just a few years when the Nazi regime was defeated.<sup>55</sup>

Such a minimization of the Holocaust, Moshman adds, would be 'indefensible', but no less so than the 'routine genocide denials that result from taking the Holocaust as unique and/or prototypical'. The point, then, is to avoid one kind of mass death as prototypical.<sup>56</sup>

Indeed, there are good reasons to regard the indigenous critiques, at least in certain modes, with caution, for they too seek to be prototypical and proffer a metaphysics of their own. Consider Lilian Friedberg's 'Dare to compare' and John C. Mohawk's *Utopian Legacies*. Both authors attribute the colonial and twentieth-century genocides to the essence of the western intellectual tradition, namely, the epistemological hubris according to which all things are knowable and possible, and in the name of whose 'master race' other cultures and peoples can be destroyed.<sup>57</sup> For Friedberg, the universal meaning of the Native American Holocaust is elucidated when it is placed next to the Jewish Holocaust, for only in this way can the incubus of western civilization be laid bare. 'If we are to divert the disaster [of human self-destruction], Mount Rushmore must be placed on a par with burning synagogues, whose fires can never be extinguished.'<sup>58</sup>

Clearly, the problem with Holocaust-indigenous genocide discourse is that it is structured as a zero-sum game. Where Bauer and Katz see equations with the Jewish Holocaust as antisemitic and as the occlusion of its world-historical meaning, Friedberg regards the resistance to precisely such analogies as anti-Native American and the enabling condition for the continuing rape of the world by the western spirit. The discourse is also remarkably static because each side dogmatically asserts the similarities or differences between cases for its own advantage without exploring the conceptual and historical relations between them. What is more, whether the similarities are more significant than the differences is ultimately a political and philosophical, rather than a historical, question and, as we have seen, the answers are driven by passionate, extra-historical considerations. Consequently, creative research questions about the processes that link the genocides of modernity are hindered by the mechanism that prompts each side to stress the specialness (or sacredness) of its respective genocide in the face of contrary assertions.

This game has no winner, unless the dreary spectacle of assertion and counter-assertion can pass for innovative scholarship. It is time for historians in the field to play by other rules, namely, those of the community of scholars dedicated to presenting arguments directed to and for the world at large, rather than primarily to and for an ethnic or political group. It is necessary also for them to dispense with the vocabulary of uniqueness they have all appropriated and abused. Uniqueness is not a useful category for historical research; it is a religious or metaphysical category, and should be left to theologians and philosophers to ponder for their respective reading communities.<sup>59</sup> Where historians employ it, they stand in danger of relinquishing their critical role and assuming that of the prophet or sage who offers perspectives for group solidarity and self-assertion.

Indigenous scholars and their supporters may object that this entreaty sounds like yet another technology of western domination from which they can derive little benefit, because they need to cultivate group solidarity in the face of colonialist dissipation.<sup>60</sup> Yet, abandoning the communicative rationality inherent in the appeal to the putative universal reader risks relinquishing the very weapon with which to unmask exploitation and extermination. Moreover, an overarching moral consensus on the value of alterity is necessary to secure its existence, and this perforce entails appealing to standards of verification to which everyone can assent. To valorize difference implies the universalization of this particular good.<sup>61</sup> But what if most readers view colonial genocide through the lenses of the Holocaust and thereby discount it, as Churchill and others complain? Counter-claiming uniqueness or primacy of indigenous genocides may have raised the profile of the latter, but it can no longer advance the scholarly or political discussion. The categories and critical tools with which historians approach the subject need to be rethought.

## NOTES

- 1 G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History* (New York: Dover 1956), 26.
- 2 Zachary Braiterman incorrectly asserts that Leibniz coined the term 'after an earthquake devastated Lisbon in 1755', but Leibniz died in 1716!: Z. Braiterman, *(God) after Auschwitz* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1998), 19.
- 3 Walter Benjamin, 'Theses on the philosophy of history', in W. Benjamin, *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books 1969), 256. Michael Löwy, 'Revolution against "progress": Walter Benjamin's romantic anarchism', *New Left Review*, no. 152, July–August 1985.
- 4 For an analysis of the concept of 'anamnestic solidarity' and its appropriation, see Max Pensky, 'On the use and abuse of memory: Habermas, "anamnestic solidarity", and the *Historikerstreit*', *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, vol. 15, no. 4, 1989, 351–81.

- 5 Mark Mazower, 'After Lemkin: genocide, the Holocaust and history', *Jewish Quarterly*, vol. 5, winter 1994, 5–8.
- 6 For useful surveys of issues surrounding genocide and indigenous peoples today, see Robert T. Hitchcock and Tara M. Twedt, 'Physical and cultural genocide of various indigenous peoples', in Samuel Totten, William S. Parsons and Israel W. Charny (eds.), *Genocide in the Twentieth Century* (New York and London: Garland Press 1995), 483–514; Katherine Bischooping and Natalie Fingerhut, 'Border lines: indigenous peoples in genocide studies', *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, vol. 33, no. 4, 1996, 481–506; John H. Bodley, *Victims of Progress* (Menlo Park, CA: Cummings 1975).
- 7 Ziauddin Sardar, Ashis Nandy and Merryl Wyn Davies, *Barbaric Others: A Manifesto on Western Racism* (London and Boulder, CO: Pluto Press 1993); Donald Bloxham and Tony Kushner, 'Exhibiting racism: cultural imperialism, genocide and representation', *Rethinking History*, vol. 2, no. 3, 1998, 349–58.
- 8 Scott L. Montgomery, 'What kind of memory? Reflections on images of the Holocaust', *Contention*, vol. 5, no. 1, autumn 1995, 101.
- 9 Native American scholar and activist Ward Churchill goes so far as to claim that the uniqueness argument is tantamount to the denial of indigenous genocides; indeed, that it is worse, because it dovetails with the exculpatory imperatives of colonial-national governments at the expense of their impotent indigenous minorities, and is purveyed by those with institutional power: *A Little Matter of Genocide* (San Francisco: City Lights Books 1997), 31–6, 50.
- 10 Bron Taylor, 'Earthen spirituality or cultural genocide? Radical environmentalism's appropriation of native spirituality', *Religion*, vol. 27, 1997, 183–215; Simone M. Caron, 'Birth control and the black community in the 1960s: genocide or power politics?', *Journal of Social History*, vol. 31, no. 3, 1998, 545–69; O. A. Bushnell, *The Gifts of Civilisation: Germs and Genocide in Hawai'i* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press 1993); Nancy Scheper-Hughes, 'Small wars and invisible genocides', *Social Science and Medicine*, vol. 43, no. 5, 1996, 889–900.
- 11 Michael Ignatieff, preface, in Simon Norfolk, *For Most of It I Have No Words* (London: Dewi Lewis 1998).
- 12 Arlene Stein, 'Whose memories? Whose victimhood? Contests for the Holocaust frame in recent social movement discourse', *Sociological Perspective*, vol. 4, no. 3, autumn 1998, 519–41.
- 13 The relevant arguments have been analysed thoroughly in two recent publications: Gavriel D. Rosenfeld, 'The politics of uniqueness: reflections on the recent polemical turn in Holocaust and genocide scholarship', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 13, no. 1, 1999, 28–61; Alan S. Rosenbaum (ed.), *Is the Holocaust Unique?*, 2nd edn (Boulder, CO: Westview Press 2001).
- 14 Michael Taussig, *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press 1987), 368ff.
- 15 Katherine Bischooping and Andrea Kalmin, 'Public opinion about comparisons to the Holocaust', *Public Opinion Quarterly*, vol. 63, no. 4, winter 1999, 485.
- 16 Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press 2001).



- 17 Adi Ophir, 'On sanctifying the Holocaust: an anti-theological treatise', *Tikkun*, vol. 2, no. 1, 1987, 61–7. Ophir calls it 'a new religion' with its own commandments: 'Thou shalt have no other holocaust'; 'Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image or likeness'; 'Thou shalt not take the name in vain'; and 'Remember the day of the Holocaust to keep it holy, in memory of the destruction of the Jews of Europe'. Cf. Mark Levene, 'Is the Holocaust simply another example of genocide?', *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 28, no. 2, 1994, 6.
- 18 Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (New York: Houghton Mifflin 1999). For critical discussion, see Harold Kaplan, 'Americanizing the Holocaust', in John K. Roth and Elisabeth Maxwell (eds), *Remembering for the Future*, vol. 1 (London: Palgrave 2001), 309–21; and Berel Lang, 'On Peter Novick's *The Holocaust in American Life*', *Jewish Social Studies*, vol. 7, no. 3, 2001, 149–58.
- 19 For a plea that the Holocaust not become 'the crucible of [Jewish] culture', see David G. Roskies, *Against the Apocalypse: Responses to Catastrophe in Modern Jewish Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1984), 9. See also Michael André Bernstein, *Foregone Conclusions: Against Apocalyptic History* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1994), 10, 13.
- 20 Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (New York: Free Press 1915), 52–4, 142, 240, 464.
- 21 *Ibid.*, 140, 150ff.
- 22 Witness the bitter protest of survivors against the New York exhibition, 'Mirroring evil: Nazi imagery/recent art', which opened on 17 March 2002. See Walter Reich, 'Appropriating the Holocaust', *New York Times*, 15 March 2002, A23.
- 23 Durkheim, 434ff.
- 24 LaCapra, 22–3.
- 25 Space does not permit considering the differences between Jewish identity in different countries.
- 26 Yehuda Bauer, 'A past that will not go away', in Michael Berenbaum and Abraham J. Peck (eds), *The Holocaust and History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1998), 20. To be sure, Bauer maintains, against theologians, that the Holocaust is 'meaningless', but it nonetheless remains for him a sacred event in the Durkheimian sense.
- 27 George Steiner, 'The long life of metaphor: an approach to "the Shoah"', *Encounter*, February 1987, 57.
- 28 Elie Wiesel, 'Now we know', in Richard Arens (ed.), *Genocide in Paraguay* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press 1976), 165. To be sure, in the Paraguayan genocide of the Aches, Wiesel recognizes the analogy: 'it is indeed a matter of a Final Solution: It simply aims at exterminating this tribe' (166).
- 29 Quoted in Robert G. L. Waite, 'The Holocaust and historical explanation', in Isidor Wallimann and Michael N. Dobkowski (eds), *Genocide and the Modern Age* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press 1987), 169. Cf. Zev Garber and Bruce Zuckerman, 'Why do we call the Holocaust "the Holocaust"?', *Modern Judaism*, vol. 9, no. 2, 1989, 197–211.
- 30 Yehuda Bauer, 'We are condemned to remember', *Jerusalem Post*, 19 April 2001. Bauer assumes the posture of the analyst.

- 31 Steven T. Katz, *Post-Holocaust Dialogues* (New York and London: New York University Press 1983), 142f. See also the chapter 'The "unique" intentionality of the Holocaust', 287–318. Cf. Yehuda Bauer, who makes the same point in 'The place of the Holocaust in contemporary history', *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, vol. 1, 1984, 224.
- 32 Durkheim, 427–33, 462–79. Conversely, Jews that do not put the Holocaust at the centre of Jewish identity presumably do not have to insist on its uniqueness.
- 33 This point is elaborated in A. Dirk Moses, 'Structure and agency in the Holocaust: Daniel J. Goldhagen and his critics', *History and Theory*, vol. 37, no. 2, 1998, 194–219. See also Braiterman.
- 34 This observation is John M. Cuddihy's in 'The Holocaust: the latent issue in the uniqueness debate', in Philip F. Gallagher (ed.), *Christians, Jews and Other Worlds* (London and New York: University Press of America 1988), 62–79.
- 35 Steven T. Katz, *The Holocaust in Historical Context*, vol. 1 (New York: Oxford University Press 1994). See also Steven T. Katz, 'The Holocaust: a very particular racism', in Berenbaum and Peck (eds.), 56–63, in which Katz takes pains to distinguish between the eugenic world-view that underlay Nazi policies towards all supposed racially inferior people from anti-Jewish racism.
- 36 Yehuda Bauer, 'Comparison of genocides', in Levon Chorbajian and George Shirinian (eds), *Studies in Contemporary Genocide* (New York: St Martin's Press 1999), 33, emphasis added.
- 37 Yehuda Bauer, 'Whose Holocaust?', in Jack Nusan Porter (ed.), *Genocide and Human Rights: A Global Anthology* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America 1982), 35, 38, reprinted from *Midstream*, vol. 26, no. 9, November 1980.
- 38 Jean-Michel Chaumont, *Die Konkurrenz der Opfer: Genozid, Identität und Anerkennung*, trans. Thomas Laugstein (Lüneburg: Dietrich zu Klampen Verlag 2001). See also Gerd Korman, 'The Holocaust in American historical writing', *Societas*, vol. 2, no. 3, 1972, 251–70.
- 39 Bauer, 'Whose Holocaust?', 44.
- 40 Norman Finkelstein, *The Holocaust Industry* (London and New York: Verso 1999).
- 41 Bauer, 'A past that will not go away', 17.
- 42 *Ibid.*, 43; Yehuda Bauer, *A History of the Holocaust* (New York: Franklin Watts 1982), 332.
- 43 See Dan Stone, *Constructing the Holocaust: Genocide and History* (London: Vallentine Mitchell). Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), ch. 3: 'Comparisons with other genocides'; and Yehuda Bauer, 'Plenary address', in Roth and Maxwell (eds), 21–4.
- 44 Bauer is an active member of the Elmau Initiative: An International Taskforce to Prevent Genocide.
- 45 Cuddihy, 72.
- 46 It is also the object of attack by Jewish scholars. Ismar Schorsch warns that the insistence of uniqueness 'impedes genuine dialogue, because it introduces an extraneous, contentious issue that alienates political allies from among other victims of organized human depravity': 'The Holocaust and Jewish

- survival', *Midstream*, vol. 17, no. 1, January 1981, 39. Steven T. Katz attempts a refutation in his *The Holocaust in Historical Context*, 39–42; David Biale critically reviews Katz and attacks the uniqueness thesis in *Tikkun*, vol. 10, no. 1, January–February 1995, 79–82. See also the differentiated discussion by Irving L. Horowitz, 'Genocide and the reconstruction of social theory', in Wallimann and Dobkowski (eds), 61–80.
- 47 Ian Hancock, 'Uniqueness as denial: the politics of genocide scholarship', in Rosenbaum (ed.), 163–208. Hancock is greatly irritated by Bauer's contention that Gypsies represented only a 'minor irritant' for the Nazis.
- 48 Russell Thornton, *American Indian Holocaust and Survival* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press 1987), xvi; M. Annette Jaimes, 'Sand Creek: the morning after', in M. Annette Jaimes (ed.), *The State of Native America* (Boston: South End Press 1992), 1–12; Churchill, *A Little Matter of Genocide*; David E. Stannard, *American Holocaust* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press 1992), 255.
- 49 Antoon A. Leenaars *et al.*, 'Genocide and suicide among indigenous people: the North meets the South', *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, vol. 19, no. 2, 1999, 338.
- 50 David E. Stannard, 'Preface', in Churchill, *A Little Matter of Genocide*, xviii. Here Stannard is influenced by the thesis of Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky that the West divides victims of genocide and government oppression into two categories, worthy and unworthy, depending on its foreign policy agenda. See their *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (New York: Pantheon Books 1988), 37.
- 51 Symptomatic of this taboo is Samantha Power, *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide* (New York: Basic Books 2002). She is scathing of the United States as an impotent bystander to genocides abroad, but does not consider the possibility that her country might be a co-perpetrator or that it was founded on genocide.
- 52 Stannard, *American Holocaust*, 255. By contrast, Gavriel Rosenfeld thinks that the uniqueness thesis is a defensive response to attempts by writers like Stannard to equate all genocides (Rosenfeld). There is insufficient space here to address this issue.
- 53 Churchill, *A Little Matter of Genocide*, 11.
- 54 *Ibid.*, 4.
- 55 David Moshman, 'Conceptual constraints on thinking about genocide', *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 3, no. 3, 2001, 436.
- 56 *Ibid.*
- 57 Lilian Friedberg, 'Dare to compare: Americanizing the Holocaust', *American Indian Quarterly*, vol. 24, no. 3, 2000, 353–80; John C. Mohawk, *Utopian Legacies: A History of Conquest and Oppression in the Western World* (Santa Fe, NM: Clear Lights Publishers 2000).
- 58 Friedberg, 373.
- 59 Philosophical reflections include: Raimond Gaita, *A Common Humanity: Thinking about Love, Truth and Justice* (London: Routledge 2000); Avishai Margalit and Gabriel Motzkin, 'The uniqueness of the Holocaust', *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, vol. 25, no. 1, 1996, 65–83. There is insufficient space

here to consider Steven T. Katz's claims to have access to a 'phenomenological' reality in which the Holocaust is unique: *The Holocaust in Historical Context*, 51–64. Surprising is the little space he devotes to justify posing the question in the first place.

- 60 In the place of numerous references: Hayden White, *The Content of the Form* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press 1987), 80ff.; and Jan Kociumbas, 'Introduction', in Jan Kociumbas (ed.), *Maps, Dreams, History: Race and Representation in Australian History* (Sydney: Department of History, University of Sydney 1998).
- 61 Thomas McCarthy, 'Doing the right thing in cross-cultural representation', *Ethics*, no. 3, 1992, 644. McCarthy calls the resulting ethic 'multicultural universalism'.