

WAR OF EXTERMINATION
The German Military in World War II,
1941-1944

Studies on War and Genocide
General Editor: Omer Bartov, Brown University

Volume 1

The Massacre in History
Edited by Mark Levene and Penny Roberts

Volume 2

National Socialist Extermination Policies: Contemporary German
Perspectives and Controversies
Edited by Ulrich Herbert

Volume 3

War of Extermination: The German Military in World War II,
1941/44

Edited by Hannes Heer and Klaus Naumann

Volume 4

In God's Name: Genocide and Religion in the Twentieth Century
Edited by Omer Bartov and Phyllis Mack

Volume 5

Hitler's War in the East, 1941-1945
Edited by R.D. Müller and G.R. Ueberschär

Volume 6

Genocide and Settler Society: Frontier Violence and Stolen
Indigenous Children in Australian History
Edited by A. Dirk Moses

Volume 7

Networks of Nazi Persecution: Business, Bureaucracy, and the
Organization of the Holocaust
Edited by G. Feldman and W. Seibel

Volume 8

Gray Zones: Ambiguity and Compromise in the Holocaust and its
Aftermath
Edited by J. Petropoulos and J. Roth

Edited by

Hannes Heer and Klaus Naumann



Berghahn Books
New York • Oxford



First published in 2000 by
Bergahn Books

First paperback edition published in 2004
Reprinted in 2006

© 2000, 2004 of English-language edition by Bergahn Books

© 1995 of German edition by Hamburger Edition

This edition is based on the original German edition, published as
Vernichtungskrieg. Verbrechen der Wehrmacht 1941 bis 1944.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any
form by any means without the written permission of Bergahn Books.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

War of extermination : the German military in World War II, 1941-1944 / edited by
Hannes Heer and Klaus Naumann.

p. cm. -- (Studies on war and genocide ; v. 3)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 1-57181-232-6 (cl.: alk. paper) — ISBN 1-57181-493-0 (pbk.: alk. paper)

1. Germany--Armed Forces--History--World War, 1939-1945. 2. World War,
1939-1945--Atrocities. 3. Genocide--Germany--History--20th century. 4. World War,
1939-1945--Germany. I. Series. II. Heer, Hannes. III. Naumann, Klaus, 1939-

D757 . W2612 1999

940.54'1343 21--dc21

99-043734

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Printed in Canada on acid-free paper.



CONTENTS

List of Abbreviations viii

Preface

Volker R. Berghahn

xii

Introduction

Hannes Heer and Klaus Naumann

1

Chapter 1

The Concept of the War of Annihilation:

Clausewitz, Ludendorff, Hitler

Jan Philipp Reemtsma

13

PART I – Crimes

Chapter 2

“Coming Along to Shoot Some Jews?”

The Destruction of the Jews in Serbia

Walter Manoschek

39

Chapter 3

Killing Fields: The Wehrmacht and the Holocaust in

Belorussia, 1941–42

Hannes Heer

55

Chapter 4

Soviet Prisoners of War in the Hands of the

Wehrmacht

Christian Streit

80

<i>Chapter 5</i>	The Logic of the War of Extermination: The Wehrmacht and the Anti-Partisan War Hannes Heer	92
<i>Chapter 6</i>	Men of 20 July and the War in the Soviet Union Christian Gerlach	127
<i>Chapter 7</i>	Military Violence and the National Socialist Consensus: The Wehrmacht in Greece, 1941–44 Mark Mazower	146
<i>Chapter 8</i>	Civitella della Chiana on 29 June 1944: The Reconstruction of a German “Measure” Michael Geyer	175
PART II – Formations		
<i>Chapter 9</i>	Local Headquarters Liepaja: Two Months of German Occupation in the Summer of 1941 Margers Vestermanis	219
<i>Chapter 10</i>	On the Way to Stalingrad: The 6 th Army in 1941–42 Bernd Boll and Hans Safrian	237
<i>Chapter 11</i>	Incident at Baranivka: German Reprisals and the Soviet Partisan Movement in Ukraine, October–December 1941 Truman Anderson	272
<i>Chapter 12</i>	Korück 582 Theo J. Schulte	314
<i>Chapter 13</i>	How Amoral Became Normality: Reflections on the Mentality of German Soldiers on the Eastern Front Hannes Heer	329

<i>Chapter 14</i>	Emptying the Gaze: Framing Violence through the Viewfinder Bernd Hüppauf	345
PART III – Aftermath		
<i>Chapter 15</i>	Forward Defense: The “Memorandum of the Generals” for the Nuremberg Court Manfred Messerschmidt	381
<i>Chapter 16</i>	Whose History Is It, Anyway? The Wehrmacht and German Historiography Omer Bartov	400
<i>Chapter 17</i>	The “Unblemished” Wehrmacht: The Social History of a Myth Klaus Naumann	417
	Notes on Contributors	430
	Appendix: Charts and Maps	433
	Index of Names	444
	Index of Locations	454

But we still burnt down the village and shot around 50 people. Even women and children. And then we moved on to the fourth village and did exactly the same as we had done in the other villages. There we shot about 100 people, burnt down the village and made 80 arrests. We took them with us. After we had destroyed all these villages we moved on towards Osipovichi. On our way there we combed the woods in search of partisans.¹

This report is remarkable in several respects. It describes a form of behavior entirely void of military logic. Irrespective of whether the population behaves hospitably, with aggressive animosity, or with neutral caution toward the occupying forces, the outcome remains the same—the village is reduced to ashes, the livestock is taken away, and the inhabitants are either shot on the spot or taken prisoner. What kind of war is it, one asks, where there is no longer any difference between friend and foe? This scheme of things evidently no longer applies. And what about the partisans, the actual reason for the operation? Maybe they represent just the convenient heading for an entirely different set of events. In any case they are mentioned only in passing at the very end, as if it all had nothing to do with them, the objects of a listless search that is ultimately called off without result. So what then is the real purpose? Rodenbusch was a recruit and this was his first operation. Did arson constitute part of the basic training? This too could be a clue—one of many. They all point to the heart of an event that has so many aspects for the very reason that it virtually embodies the quintessence of the war in the East. Evidence for this theory is based on occurrences and developments in occupied Belorussia between 1941 and 1943.

1941

The strategy of the Eastern campaign was a combination of four elements. In a surprise attack, the fully motorized armies were to penetrate deep inside the country in a spearhead movement, destroy enemy forces in huge encirclement battles and bring about the collapse of the Soviet Union's political system while it was still reeling from the shock. This plan took account of the probability that hundreds of thousands of Red Army soldiers, once overrun by the German troops, would seek refuge in the vast unoccupied areas. There was a fair chance that the dispersed militia might join up with those institutions that were still intact to form a dangerous body of potential resistance. For this reason the precautionary measure was taken of assigning three security divisions to each of the

- Chapter 5 -

THE LOGIC OF THE WAR OF EXTERMINATION

The Wehrmacht and the Anti-Partisan War

Hannes Heer

On the ninth day of the Minsk trial for crimes committed by the Wehrmacht, the police, and the SD, the proceedings were fairly unspectacular. The defendants who were called onto the witness stand on that day, 23 January 1946, were neither generals nor officer—they were just simple soldiers. One of them, Albert Rodenbusch, who had belonged to the 635th Training Regiment at the time of the incidents, described his participation in an anti-partisan campaign in Belorussia. It was the first time he had served on the Eastern front.

On the evening of 29 December 1942 we started our operation in a village. There were no partisans in this village. The people from the village provided us with heated rooms and gave us food, so we were very surprised when the company commander later ordered us to burn down the village and arrest the village people. So 50 inhabitants were taken prisoner.... We then moved on to another village. It was about 10 or 11 kilometers away. On our arrival we came under fire from rifles. Our company commander ordered us to occupy the village and to shoot on sight anyone offering resistance or attempting to flee.... We shot about 70 people. Among them also women, old people and children. And then we burnt down the village. From the first village we took 14 head of cattle and from the second village 10 head of cattle. We then proceeded to the third village. We didn't come across any partisans there.

¹Notes for this section begin on page 120.

three Army groups to deal with areas behind the lines. Besides safeguarding railway lines, landing strips and communication routes,² their duties consisted above all of the following: 1) The "systematic purging of dispersed enemy elements"; 2) "The arrest of civilians suspected of collaborating with the enemy"; 3) "The prevention or crushing of revolts, acts of sabotage, and terrorist groups."³ These measures, it was felt, should and could be performed with the same swiftness as the army's advance.

While the surrounding woods were being combed and the most important villages searched, posters and air-dropped leaflets ordered former Red Army militia to give themselves up to the nearest German unit, otherwise anyone who was captured would be considered a guerrilla (*Freischärler*) and consequently shot.⁴ However, this order dating from mid-July appears to have had so little impact that it had to be repeated several times, and the deadline for registration was extended to 15 August and then once more to 31 August. The reason for this was the manner in which German troops dealt with dispersed enemy soldiers. "Soldiers in plain clothes (mostly recognizable by their short haircuts) are to be shot following their identification as Red Army soldiers (with the exception of deserters)."⁵ Whoever was unable to prove that he was a deserter or could not think of any other excuse, was shot. As activity reports filed by the security divisions in August and September show, this applied to almost half of those taken prisoner.⁶ But even those who gave themselves up usually fared no better. This is revealed in the much reiterated ban issued by the commander of the Army Group Rear area, that only those men may be shot who "are intercepted in combat, are found to be carrying weapons, or are caught plundering."⁷

There were also other obstacles hampering the swift conclusion of "pacification." The extensive task of exposing and arresting civilian suspects, so as to prevent the formation of resistance groups, meant that the original restriction of the troops' duties to safeguarding landing strips and railway lines was soon relinquished. Instead it was decreed that "every village within the area of cleaning operations and, as far as possible, every single farm is to be registered and thoroughly searched"⁸ for strangers, Red Army militia, saboteurs and communists, in other words, for suspects. The Wehrmacht had turned into a police force. Surrounded on all sides by supposed enemies and without the help of interpreters or informants, it made do with collective measures of punishment. The military mind took this to mean "mass executions or the partial or total razing of villages."⁹ This seems to have been the constant

response to attacks upon Wehrmacht units or the discovery of the corpses of shot comrades, if no culprit could be found. In the first two months of the campaign, the commanders of the Rear Army Center and of the Army Group Rear area attempted to contain such actions by initiating investigations and issuing orders.¹⁰ After that there were no more interventions. At first sight, this appears to stem from the fact that resistance only started taking shape behind the front lines the further the army advanced toward the East. There were reports of sabotaged telephone lines and blown-up railway tracks, raids on *kolchoz* farms and attacks upon collaborators.¹¹

The Anti-Partisan War without Partisans

However, in order to properly assess the quality of this resistance, it must be remembered that these self-assured *Blitzkrieger* were wholly unaccustomed to any resistance of this kind; hence exaggerations were not surprising. And after the war the Soviet side too portrayed the initial phase in a heroic light because the partisan struggle was expedient in promoting identification. The reality was in fact quite different.

On 3 July 1941 Stalin had delivered his famous speech on Moscow Radio in which he called for "the partisan war to be unleashed" behind the German lines and on 11 July the Central Committee issued the directive ordering the organization of this war.¹² In western Belorussia this did not immediately produce concrete results. Since this former Polish territory had only belonged to the Soviet state for two years, the Party and mass organizations were still weak and poorly established; besides, the steamrolling German invasion also increased the unlikelihood of any thoughts of resistance. In the areas to the east of Minsk however, and in particular beyond the Beresina, the situation was very different. Here there were enough weapon-trained men to make up the first "annihilation battalions" and to carry out their tasks—the destruction of strategic objects during retreat, tracking down saboteurs, and enemy reconnaissance. These forces and the "diversion groups" dropped behind the lines by Soviet aircraft—explosives experts who undertook the first assaults upon communications and supply lines—unquestionably received adequate support from loyal cadres. The annihilation battalions formed the nucleus of the first locally based partisan groups. On the way back to their units, the diversion groups came into contact with the remaining forces of the Red Army, which were also heading back toward the front and, as migrant armed groups, they played a major role in the later emergence of the partisan movement.¹³

However, in the first six months of occupation there simply was no such movement. At most—as was revealed in prisoner interrogations—it was still in the early stages of being set up, both improvised and uncoordinated. And more than anything else, it was to a large extent isolated. According to the very precise and undeniably critical reports of the Einsatzgruppen, the reaction by the majority of the population was one of friendly reticence. This attitude only vacillated when the German front operations came to a standstill—though not as a result of partisan activities. The resistance behind the lines improvised by Moscow headquarters had already failed by the autumn.¹⁴ Tens of thousands of former Red Army soldiers had survived and were hiding out in the woods or remained undetected, having taken refuge in the villages. However, this should be interpreted neither as a result of successful Soviet propaganda, nor as an expression of patriotism. The motive for not heeding the German calls for capitulation was unpolitical and, as Wehrmacht reports made clear, sprang from a survival instinct. Most raids also followed this same logic: “The mass of partisans are convinced that, were they to be taken prisoner, they would be shot anyway.”¹⁵ Or: “Fear of execution and starvation in the prisoner camps are the reasons why they do not give themselves up.”¹⁶ And: “Only when they [the partisans—H.H.] were forced to go in search of food for their own subsistence would they risk leaving their hiding-places.”¹⁷ It was a matter of pure survival.

Such appraisals, which correctly described the character of these groups as unpolitical, were in a minority. For the Wehrmacht, the purported existence of politically motivated resistance was obviously both desirable and necessary as legitimation for their policies. Similarly, the much-reported fact that large groups of dispersed enemy soldiers were gradually moving toward the East, in other words back toward their still unoccupied homeland, was interpreted not as evidence of a retreat but as proof of the existence of a central command and a nationwide communications network.¹⁸ Orders were tightened up accordingly, special assault groups established, training courses in anti-partisan combat carried out, and the first generalized guidelines for this type of war were formulated by the Army High Command (OKH). The terror began to escalate.¹⁹

Any attempt to form a picture of the extent of the German operations performed in the Army Group Rear area runs up against severe difficulties. In vain might one search for lists numbering shot victims. All one finds in the often incomplete monthly reports compiled by the commander are the numbers of prisoners taken. From July through to the end of November 1941 these add up to

45,700.²⁰ The term “prisoner” is misleading. The orders in fact required all prisoners to be shot after a short interrogation.²¹ Those who were considered a source of more important information were handed over to the SD commandos or to the Wehrmacht’s own secret police, the Army Secret Field Police (GFP). There the prisoners met with the same fate.²²

If, as reports by the security divisions operating in the Army Group Rear area indicate, one assumes that almost two thirds of the prisoners were shot, this aforementioned list of prisoners can in fact be read as a death roll.²³ This is backed up by figures given in a commander’s report from March 1942, stating that 63,257 partisans had been killed since the start of the campaign. The low number of German losses—638 killed and 1,355 wounded—illustrates that most of the “partisans” were civilians and that they had not been killed in combat.²⁴ Even higher figures for the short period of only two months were provided in mid-November 1941 by the Wehrmacht commander’s representative in Ostland in the western region of Belorussia, an area which was under civil administration: here 10,431 of the 10,940 prisoners had been shot.²⁵

The popular image of the anti-partisan war in the East is still characterized by accounts which, excepting a certain apologetic undercurrent, are actually based on the later reality of 1943/44, by which time the partisan movement had grown and posed a real threat. Such personal accounts fail to mention and indeed even conceal the events of 1941/42 and how tens of thousands of civilians were hunted, captured, and executed.²⁶ By contrast, the following report filed in September 1941 by an “assault group” of the 252nd Infantry Division offers a realistic picture of the bizarre situation of an anti-partisan war without partisans.²⁷

After a fruitless two-day search for partisans or even traces of them, this group made up of three companies finally comes across informants. According to the regional commander of C., it appears there is extensive Communist activity in the village of M. The local village mayor confirms this, but with the reservation “that in many places in the vicinity people had turned up whose behavior bore a resemblance to partisan activity.” And then finally something crops up which seems to be a concrete lead: in P. a Communist is reported to have stolen and slaughtered 30 calves and sheep, as well as being in league with partisans. So the village is surrounded and the family taken prisoner, before the denunciation is then discovered to have been an act of revenge by their neighbors. Similarly, checks on a Communist woman from the next village prove to be a false lead. And then, following so many setbacks, events take a more serious

turn. The same Ortskommandant has received new information. A teacher in his area appears to have been getting food to partisans or communists hiding in the woods, and his daughter is apparently even married to the commissar of this group. And it is alleged that another Communist is maintaining contact with this teacher. Once more the village is surrounded, those under suspicion are arrested together with other members of the family who just happen to be present, and all are interrogated. "They denied everything. In their statements they all contradicted each other in every single point.... From the way he looked, the man's son-in-law gave the impression of being a commissar. They were all shot." Following this outcome, further successes seem close at hand, for a report comes in of a partisan encampment which is claimed to have served as accommodation. But the base turns out to be unoccupied and a search of the surrounding villages produces no evidence of partisans—on the contrary, the inhabitants all oppose the partisans. Obviously under pressure to act, the commando subsequently switches to carrying out police activities, doing without any additional "burdensome" measures such as interrogations. It arrests four "Communists," shoots a "former soldier," arrests "50 male suspects," and empties a Russian military hospital, from which those who "were able to march" are dispatched into captivity. When new information from the area surrounding M. is received and the squadron is deliberating how it should react, a division officer arrives, and after declaring the reconnaissance results to be "adequate and completed," orders a "concerted operation." After the unit leader fails to find a Jew and a partisan leader who have been reported to be in the neighboring village, the operation is launched—with success. "110 partisans," some still in their sleep, are taken unawares in village barns and then shot. Just before they are about to be killed, a Red Army second lieutenant and a quartermaster are discovered among them. The weapons found are a machine-gun and a mortar. Where the group has come from or where it is stationed cannot be ascertained. During the subsequent search of the surrounding woods they find absolutely no traces of partisans ("weapons, equipment, or the remains of campfires"). On the German side the casualties reported amount to two wounded military policemen.

This sortie by the Anderssen assault group is described in such detail since the account offers insight into three characteristic elements of the "anti-partisan campaign" during the first six months of occupation. 1) In their operations the role played by the security divisions was more one of a police force than of combat troops. These operations were based on information which was imprecise

and arbitrary, the only reliable orientation point during action being the images of hate the occupiers had brought with them. Nonetheless, there were also instances when wrong, decisions could still be corrected. 2) The growing number of failed raids and the increased frustration saw a marked rise in the willingness to perform executions. At the outset a quasi-legal framework of interrogation and cross-questioning was still adhered to. But once the surge in violence occurred, there was no longer any time for such formal niceties. This could only climax in mass murder. 3) Following the operation, it seems that the memory of a military moral code returned and normal human behavior was resumed. This is the only possible interpretation of the subsequent attempt to disguise the mass murder of defenseless people as active combat by claiming that two enemy officers and heavy weapons had been discovered in the group.

This form of distortion is a regular feature throughout all the war journals, situation reports, and daily dispatches of this period. Other measures like the razing of villages are disguised in phrases such as: "elimination of partisan nests, partisan camps, partisan bunkers." Ultimately, the murder of women and children is only disclosed by the orders the commanders gave to their troops that they should "adhere to their task."²⁸

This evidence of manipulation and falsification in the Wehrmacht's official documents adds fuel to the justified concern voiced by critical historians toward relying exclusively upon official military records when attempting a historical reconstruction of the war of extermination.²⁹ But this is not the point at issue in this context. Here our focus is directed more at the question why manipulation proliferated to such a degree, particularly during the first phase of the war in the East. Linked to this is the phenomenon of a totally disproportionate explosion of violence toward the civilian population. Because, contrary to claims made by revisionist, but also some critical historical studies,³⁰ no organized partisan resistance existed during the first six months of occupation, there must be other reasons for the "new dimension" of German measures in autumn 1941.

The Power of Orders

The radius of the violent measures had been determined prior to the campaign and was then progressively expanded once hostilities had commenced. In the general directive defining the "practice of wartime military jurisdiction" in the "Barbarossa" area issued on 13 May 1941, the civilian population was removed from the jurisdiction

of the military courts and placed under the direct control of the ranks. Should civilians act as "guerrillas" exercising violence against German soldiers or installations, or as "hostile civilians" carrying out other forms of attack, they were to be eliminated. Those localities from which attacks were started were to be treated to "collective measures of violence." Members of the Wehrmacht committing military offenses during such operations would not automatically have to reckon with prosecution. This break with all international conventions was defended on two counts: in military terms it was justified by the "expansion of the operative areas in the East," and in psychological terms it was a response to the "special nature of the enemy."³¹ The "guidelines" drawn up 19 May 1941 for the troops described the Red Army soldier as "inscrutable, unpredictable, underranked, and callous," characterized by "treacherous methods of fighting," while the civilian population was to be treated as "hostile." Beyond this, attention was drawn to the historical role played by Bolshevism and its responsibility for the collapse, revolution, and civil war in Germany in the years following 1918.³²

In a series of meetings held in May and June, the Ic officers of the Eastern forces were introduced to this decree. The real intention underlying the separate, relatively vague guidelines was made clear: whoever "as a civilian either personally obstructs or calls for the obstruction of the German Wehrmacht" is also deemed to be a Freischärler. This broadening of enemy categories was further intensified by the fact that henceforth even the mere suspicion of such an offense could entail execution. This measure too was legitimized by evoking historical reminiscences—the reminder of Russian war atrocities in 1914—and was again backed up by global military arguments: "In certain circumstances principles of Justice must take second place behind the exigencies of war."³³

Despite these instructions certain sections of the troops appear not to have fully grasped the intended purpose. At any rate, the Wehrmacht leadership felt obliged to further tighten the screw of terror. On 23 July 1941 Keitel issued a directive from the Führer headquarters that the occupying forces should "instill such fear as is suitable to entirely discourage any form of disobedience within the population."³⁴ Two days later this order was supplemented by the OKH: offering the argument "that the required ruthlessness is not being applied in all quarters," it broadened the range of measures. In cases of passive resistance or if the culprit could not be immediately seized, collective penalties were to be imposed. "Suspicious elements," the OKH order dictated, "who perhaps cannot be proved to have committed a serious offense, yet seem [!] suspicious in terms

of attitude and behavior, are to be passed on to the Einsatzgruppen or the SP [SD]."³⁵ As the Wehrmacht leadership was fully aware, that meant certain death.

The finale of this campaign was provided by a further order from Keitel on 16 September, in which he criticized the Wehrmacht's current measures for dealing with the "insurrective movements" organized by Moscow "as inadequate," and relayed Hitler's express wish that "the most severe steps [be taken] to crush this movement in the shortest possible time." As a solemn afterthought he added: "It should be taken into account that in the countries concerned individual human life is widely felt to be worth nothing, so a deterrent can only be achieved through unaccustomed severity."³⁶

These orders were not issued in response to an objectively assessed military situation. The general decree, the "jurisdiction edict" (*Gerichtsbarkeitserlass*), had been formulated before hostilities had begun, at a time when the behavior of the enemy could only have been a subject of speculation. And, as has been shown, the more draconian commands issued in the summer and early autumn of 1941 did not arise from a dramatic change in the situation. One should not be misled by the astonishing coincidence between the timing of the most important decrees and the developments in occupied Serbia.³⁷ At best, the "Serbian uprising" in July and its escalation in September served as a welcome opportunity to carry out a well-planned campaign. The overall thrust becomes evident when one registers how extraordinarily little military substance is contained in these military guidelines. Instead we find argument. Its target is the individual soldier, and the constantly named theme is his motivation. Let us recapitulate: 1) On each occasion the catalogue of punishable offenses and the group of potential culprits is extended. 2) For the targeted and responsible organs of occupation this involves an enormous expansion of their executive functions. 3) This executive power means the mass murder of the civilian population; in other words, and something that is repeatedly stressed, this denotes a break with the conventions valid in the rest of the world. 4) This rupture is legitimized in a historical context by evoking the ordeal suffered at the hands of the Russians and the Bolsheviks in 1914 and 1918, in ethnic terms by the perfidious character of the enemy, and on moral grounds by the lesser value reputedly attached to human life in Eastern culture. 5) Adherence to these orders is stipulated and desired by Adolf Hitler, they are Führer commands (*Führerbefehle*).

Ian Kershaw has proposed the Weberian notion of "charismatic leadership" to characterize the Nazi system,³⁸ and Jan Philipp

Reemtsma has demonstrated the usefulness of this notion by applying it to the function and character of the order. As instructions for specific action, Hitler's orders are in fact rather general and vague, but as definitions of objectives they are unconditional and precise. On the one hand, this explicitness prohibits the follower from considering any other loyalties and establishes the Führer as his only authority, while on the other hand, the order's very vagueness—which requires interpretation—points to the Führer's dependence upon the interpretative ability of his follower. Thus, under National Socialism, the grammar regulating order and obedience has been extended. The imperative "you must" is now joined by the potential "you may"; the pressure of obligation is compensated for by the pleasure of permission. Only this consensus—which not existing in its own right, needs to be constantly regenerated—only the awareness of this mutual dependence—which under ideal conditions becomes a symbiosis—provides the opportunity to confirm and renew this form of rule.³⁹

On the assumption that this description of the dynamics of the order in the Nazi system and the mechanisms of its impact is correct, it should be possible to make sense of the escalation of the "anti-partisan war without partisans." The avalanche of orders which descended upon the troops in summer and autumn 1941 would therefore have served the purpose of creating the right climate of inexorability and ambiguity to allow charismatic leadership to flourish. The orders set about destroying previously valid moral conventions and establishing Hitler as the single and new voice of moral authority. Thus they constantly extended the category of actual enemy groups and increased the radius of permitted punitive measures; this was the reason why, instead of employing military arguments, the complete range of historical resentments and racist prejudice was brought into play. Each order triggers action, offers the opportunity to gain new experience. With their mixture of unambiguous destructive purpose on the one hand and ambivalent choice of reasons, methods, and victims on the other, the orders in question magnified the potential for such experience. "I am supposed to wipe out the partisans, and to do this I am allowed to burn down the village. But am I then also permitted to drive women and children into the flames?"—the campaign against the partisans became an arena in which practical answers to such questions were found. And the games of manipulation and hide--and--seek encountered throughout the war journals reveal that these answers were neither arrived at immediately nor all at once. Hence, the "criminal orders" were neither propaganda, nor military commands with

an "ideological background," as a certain work of critical military history would have us believe, and the terror which they unleashed was not merely and primarily intended as a measure to deter the subjugated, as military history's apologetic wing claims.⁴⁰

What these orders prepared the ground for and subsequent actions then brought forth, was a heightened form of combat morale within the German ranks, the morale of annihilation which Hitler needed to pursue his war. When on 3 July Stalin called on his people to fight behind the German lines, the Führer was overjoyed. The pleasure at the prospect of being able to "exterminate that which opposes us" was feigned, since that was precisely the strategy that had been planned from the very outset.⁴¹ Entirely genuine was the satisfaction at having been presented with a bundle of arguments—proof of the enemy's perfidy, justification for the necessity of their own acts of terror, confirmation of the notion that this was a mortal combat being waged between two world views. Since Hitler was indeed a master of depth psychology, he knew that the struggle for the hearts of his soldiers would be decided within the first weeks. Without a victory on this battlefield it would have been impossible to win the campaign. The mass murder behind the front in the summer of 1941 and the orders issued by Reichenau and Manstein in autumn of that year showed that Hitler had indeed won this battle.

The Jews as Demonstration Objects

Whereas in the first phase of the *Ostkrieg* there was clearly still a certain reluctance to simply slay "weaponless," capitulating Red Army soldiers or to unquestioningly murder even women and children at mass executions, such moral barriers were absent when it came to one particular enemy group: the goal of exterminating the Jews was known and sanctioned by the Wehrmacht from the first day onwards. There was a broad consensus that Jews were agitators, saboteurs, and natural intermediaries for the partisans. Without exception, every situation report from every unit in Belorussia echoed this attitude:

On 22 July 1941: "[In] great masses running into several thousand, Jews suspected of agitation have been shot. As a result, Jewry has been intimidated and shows willingness to work."⁴²

On 18 August: "It is ultimately of the utmost importance to eradicate the influence of the Jews and deploy the most radical measures to eliminate these elements, because they in particular ... maintain contacts with the Red Army and the bandits we are fighting."⁴³

3 September: "Communication between the various partisan units is maintained above all by the Jews."⁴⁴

10 September: "The Jewish class, which forms the largest section of the population in the towns, is the driving force behind the growing resistance movement in some areas."⁴⁵

19 October: "As the spiritual leaders and supporters of Bolshevism and the Communist idea, the Jews are our mortal enemies. They are to be eliminated. Whenever and wherever reported incidents of sabotage, incitement of the population, resistance, etc. have forced us to act, Jews were found to be the masterminds and wirepullers, and in most cases they were in fact the culprits themselves."⁴⁶

This attitude was reflected in military practice from the very first day of the war onwards. "The first large operation against Jews was carried out directly behind the borders of the *Generalgouvernement* in the large Bielovitz forest in Poland. On the grounds that the Jews were giving help to Russian soldiers hiding out in the woods and swamps, the commander of the Army Group Rear area ordered all male Jews to be evacuated from the villages and transferred to forced labor camps."⁴⁷ As can be gauged from the number of evacuees (7,800), a great many non-Jews were evidently also deported.⁴⁸ The macabre background to this measure was Göring's desire to use this area of primeval forest so abundant with game as his personal hunting grounds.⁴⁹

The fate met by the Jews living in the Pripjat marshes was not only deportation, but also mass murder. Since the spearheads of the German armies had marched around this impassable region to the north and the south, it had been decided to clear this zone at a later date. The task was allotted to the SS-Cavalry-Brigade, which for this mission was assigned to the commander of the Army Group Rear area.⁵⁰ From 27 July onwards, the SS brigade hunted down Red Army stragglers, partisans, and "plunderers." According to a special order from Himmler, this was the term to be used to define Jews: "In most cases Jews are to be treated as plunderers. The only exceptions to this rule are particularly skilled workers, such as bakers, etc., and above all, doctors."⁵¹ These were still needed. By contrast, women and children were to be driven into the swamps. On 18 September the commander was informed of "14,178 shot plunderers, 1,001 shot partisans, 699 shot Red Army soldiers, and 830 prisoners."⁵² The role played in this by General von Bechtolsheim has been described elsewhere.⁵³ Bechtolsheim, holder of the highest Wehrmacht rank in the "Generalkommissariat Weisruthenien," not only led the "Jew hunt" in the flat countryside, but also carried out the first large-scale ghetto massacres.

Insight into the behavior of the troops toward the Jews is not only provided by such large-scale operations. More revealing was the day-to-day handling of the "Jewish question." Similar to the regular reports which the regional military commanders were required to file on this subject, the security divisions were also obliged to submit separate reports on the capture or shooting of Jews.⁵⁴ This process of selective awareness and treatment probably contributed more to the creation of the phantom image of the Jew than any massacre, and its daily repetition made it impossible to erase.

403rd Security Division, 14 July 1941: "Between 9 and 14 July interception commandos captured: a) 16 Russians, b) 66 Jews, c) 18 otherwise suspicious persons."⁵⁵

252nd Infantry Division, 25 July: "On 24 July 7 male Jews and 1 female Jew caught tearing down official notices and constituting a public menace were shot in Hrozov."

26 July: "In Novogrodok Jews refused to take up work. The Jewish Council was again ordered to supply the required work force in spite of the Sabbath, otherwise 50 Jews would be shot. Since the work detail did not arrive by the set deadline, 50 Jews were shot. Once the execution had been carried out, the Jews began working."

16 August: "Of the 48 prisoners, 19 were Great Russians, 2 Belorussians, 13 Ukrainians, 13 Asians, and 1 was a Jew."

17 August: "Shot: 146 Jews, 1 civilian, 1 political commissar."

18 August: "Total number of prisoners 179; those shot by the SD: 107 Jews and 3 guerrillas."⁵⁶

221st Security Division, 1 September: "In retaliation for the raid on the provisions vehicle, the 701st Guards Battalion carried out a reprisal operation in the villages of Susza, Usakino and Rasvada. 25 Jews and 9 Russian soldiers picked up near the scene of the crime were shot."

12 September: "1 Communist and 22 Jews were shot for supporting the partisans."⁵⁷

286th Security Division, 15 September: "In a smaller operation ... 5 Jewish intermediaries of the partisan groups and 3 partisans were taken prisoner." Situation report for the period between 1 and 7 October: "In Esmon 22 Jews with proven links to the partisans were shot.... A patrol unit in Golovtchin was shot at on 4 October 1941 at 2100 hrs., presumably by a Jew. One man was wounded in the arm. Following this, 19 Jews were executed as a reprisal measure."⁵⁸

The army's confidence in handling the Jew = partisan equation is evident. One is witness to deliberate provocations—compulsory work for Jews on a Sabbath—and then—all in strict accordance with instructions—to the subsequent execution. One learns how

well the mechanism functions which makes Jews responsible for unsolved criminal attacks and uses them as hostages. The sweeping observation made by General Max von Schenckendorff, commander-in-chief of the Army Group Rear area, concerning anti-partisan combat—it offers a “rich store of soldierly activity” for resourceful troop commanders⁵⁹—was particularly true for the Jewish dimension of this front-line sector. Like the mobile targets on a training ground, the Jews offered the means to demonstrate and practice the art of eliminating the enemy. This was an opportunity to conjugate the entire range of comparative forms of terror, and to override—in effigy, as it were—the inhibitions of conventional morality: the blow on the head with a rifle-butt, the shot in the back or through the base of the skull, the murder of women and children, the burning down of villages, and the executions performed on the rim of open mass graves. The Jews became demonstration objects and practice fodder. When on one occasion during an anti-partisan training course in the Army Group Rear area, a planned exercise threatened to come to nothing because no partisans had been encountered, a solution was quickly found: “On the other hand, a check on the inhabitants revealed the presence of 13 male Jews, 27 female Jews and 11 Jewish children. Of these, 13 males and 19 females were executed in cooperation with the SD.”⁶⁰

1942

On 1 March 1942 the commander of the Army Group Rear Area Center presented “proposals for the liquidation of the partisans” to the Army Group and the OKW. The twelve-page document was a harsh criticism of the current policy for the occupied Eastern territories in general, and in particular of the measures employed to achieve military security in the areas behind the front line. Based on the view that the “amicability” of the Russian population offered the most effective protection against the partisan threat, the commander pointed out that neither the vanquished people’s political aspirations for a free Russia, nor the social clamor for private land had as yet been met. “Until now little has been undertaken by our side to win the sympathy of the population.” Given the difficult situation on the front and the growing strength of the partisans, now was the last opportunity to make concessions “of our own free will.” Without a switch toward a positive population policy and the provision of additional security forces, the general concluded that it would be “impossible to actively combat the partisans.”⁶¹

The document painted a fairly accurate picture of the mood swing within the population and of the changed “partisan situation.” After one year of pitiless terror there were no longer any doubts concerning the aims of the German occupiers. In contrast to the summer and autumn of 1941, resistance now offered a greater chance of survival. This was also a result of the changes in the front situation, i.e., of the Red Army’s successful winter offensive. On the one hand, the nimbus of German invincibility had been eroded and a return of the Soviet forces once again seemed conceivable. On the other hand, the imperative transferral of security forces from the hinterland to the threatened front line enhanced the combat options available to the remaining cells of resistance. A gap in the front in northwest Belorussia, which the Germans repeatedly failed to close, opened up a land corridor into the unoccupied area of the Soviet Union. The Central Committee in Moscow reacted to this situation without delay. A specially established operative group stepped up the landing of cadres behind the front and forged the isolated cells into a functioning network. This was particularly advantageous for one hitherto marginal group: those sections of front-line partisans, which had been set up by the retreating Red Army in the previous autumn. These militarily organized forces managed to re-establish contact with their headquarters and were able to receive personnel and technical reinforcements over land. In addition, the underground organizations improvised by the Party at the outset of the war had by this stage stabilized and were now beginning to provide support for existing resistance groups or to establish new ones. Altogether, by the summer of 1942 the number of partisans had mushroomed to 150,000 from 30,000 in the winter of 1941. At the same time Soviet propaganda was intensified. By January, two radio stations had started broadcasting in Belorussia.⁶²

The Appetite for War

The change in policy which the Army Group Rear area commander had pleaded for, and which other Wehrmacht leaders in the rear areas had also repeatedly demanded using similar arguments, never transpired.⁶³ It was thwarted by the very mentality of the ranks, as was shown in the first large scale anti-partisan operation in the Army Group Rear Area Center. Just one month after Schenckendorff’s urgent request, the former commander of the civil administration region of Belorussia, General von Bechtolsheim, launched “Operation Bamberg” with about 18,000 men of his own, supported by an additional Slovak division. The preliminary orders showed who the enemy was: around 1,800 heavily armed partisans

reputed to be entrenched in fortified bases, women and children acting as spies, Jews from the surrounding area who had taken refuge there, and the entire local populace, since it was generally regarded to be anti-German. Making explicit reference to the positive experience of the previous autumn—meaning the active role played by the division in the Jewish massacre—the orders called for “the most ruthless action possible to be taken against men, women and children.”⁶⁴ The outcome of the week-long operation was commensurate with this demand—3,423 “partisans and helpers” were shot dead.⁶⁵ Given that the operation met with no resistance—beyond two exchanges of fire—one can imagine who the victims were: the civilian population. The report filed by one unit involved which notes that 2,000 persons were shot “during pacification maneuvers” peripheral to the fighting, is evidence of this fact,⁶⁶ as are the critical remarks later formulated by the commander, von Schenckendorff: “Among those the division reported as being partisan helpers, there appear to be many who were only very loosely connected with the partisans.”⁶⁷

In spite of this criticism, the operation did set a precedent, as we shall see. The reasons for this could probably be described as follows: 1) Such an extensive operation, coupled with its preliminary orders, the garish depiction of the enemy situation and the latest reports of atrocities, allowed each enemy group to be registered individually before they were then lumped together into one single enemy block. 2) The large number of opponents, all rated as equally dangerous, made it possible at any moment to vent fear, anger, and frustration on any one of them—preferably on the weakest group. 3) All of this became possible because one basic precondition had been fulfilled: the military buildup, the allocation of combat sectors and the tactics of encirclement—confining then clearing enemy units. This all added up to create the fiction of a war which offered maximum possibilities for killing against minimal chances of being killed. Compared to the enemy’s 3,423 losses, the 707th Infantry Division suffered only 7 dead and 8 wounded.⁶⁸

Although certainly gross, “Operation Bamberg” nonetheless represented an example of the development of the war of extermination. In July and August 1942, thirty operations were carried out against partisans in the Army Group Rear area. The German army suffered hardly any losses. Two operations in particular demonstrate this disproportion: “Operation Adler” resulted in 1,809 of the enemy shot dead, compared to 25 dead and 64 wounded on the German side,⁶⁹ while “Operation Greif” ended with 1,395 enemy losses as opposed to the Germans’ 26 dead and 26 wounded.⁷⁰ The theory

that the kill-or-be-killed mechanism was suspended in the “anti-partisan war” is backed up not only by the incongruity of the figures, but also by the location and the timing of the killings. According to eye-witness accounts, of the 2,000 victims killed in “Operation Bamberg,” 608 were burnt to death in the *kolchoz* building and the school in Karpilovka, 240 died in the flames at the distillery in Rudobelka, and 845 were burnt to death in the villages of Kovali and Lavstyki.⁷¹ Mass killing thus occurred when the fighting—i.e., the hunt for partisans—was over, and in places where there were no partisans: in the villages. It was the villages which were caught in the net of the encirclement forces, even if the partisans had managed to slip through the mesh. Yet in the Wehrmacht reports nothing whatsoever is mentioned about the fate of the villages. The only exceptions to this are the reports made by a unit which normally only experienced the battlefield from above—the pilots of the Air Service Command East. In the second half of 1942 they were deployed to assist the forces of the Army Group Center and the Army Group Rear area in ground combat against the partisans. In their final report they noted that “76 partisan villages were seized and burnt down.”⁷²

Villages might be empty, evacuated by inhabitants who knew what was about to befall them. On certain occasions, if villagers still held some hope in life, “they placed their meager belongings in the garden so as to avoid losing everything when their houses are burnt down.”⁷³ Other times they didn’t manage to flee, or they stayed on out of misplaced belief. It might happen that they were killed individually:

Then the order came to shoot the village inhabitants.... The Germans and Bartschke’s people combed the village on their own or in groups, whereupon shooting started in various places throughout Studenka. I also walked down the street and encountered a woman carrying a child of pre-school age. I followed her into the garden and shot at her with the Nagant revolver I was carrying.... I fired one shot only and she fell down. I then shot the child. I did that because Bartschke and the German commanders had ordered all inhabitants of the village of Studenka to be shot. I believe they numbered about five hundred.⁷⁴

But they might equally be herded together to be shot on the edge of the village or to be burnt to death in the community’s largest building. According to a report by Rudolf Burchard, the second lieutenant and interpreter at the Bobruysk garrison headquarters, which described a measure carried out in July 1942, “All inhabitants were ordered to assemble and, apart from the village elder and the policemen’s families, they were taken to the edge of the village and driven into the mill. The mill was then set on fire. Those

attempting to flee were shot on the spot." This exercise was more like a Sunday outing, and it was not just about partisans. Lieutenant Burchard participated because he wanted to improve his food rations. Thus his report concluded: "Afterwards Müller and I drove back to Bobruysk. We took a considerable amount of provisions with us. The share I received was about two kilos of bacon and a slab of pork."⁷⁵

Robbery, pillage, and organization are constant themes in the reports submitted by the General Commissariat at civil administration and by the commander of the Army Group Rear area. "The army holds the view that Russia equals Communism equals all state property, hence booty, hence fair game."⁷⁶ The theme of rape receives no mention unless entire units are involved.⁷⁷ This gives an indication of its prevalence on an individual level. Then there is the feeling of absolute power in deciding who will be sent into the fire and who is permitted to carry on living, and the thrill sensed watching women and prisoners who are made to cross paths mined by the partisans in order to detonate the hidden explosives: The clearing of minefields is to be performed "exclusively by clearing units composed of prisoners of war or Jews."⁷⁸ Vandalism. Pyromania. On several occasions during the summer of 1942 the commander of the Army Group Rear area called his men to order: "Take action against the soldiers' desire to see something burn." Or: "No wanton commandeering, no pillaging, no burning down of villages and shooting of women and children."⁷⁹ The anti-partisan war consisted of a multitude of wars, so once they had been let off the leash, the troops were reluctant to be harnessed again by vexed commanders—something the above-mentioned air force soldiers were quick to realize, once they became acquainted with this kind of land warfare: "Concerted large-scale operations in collaboration with the 221st Security Division did not result in enemy contact. Carrying out these operations was nonetheless of great benefit to the troops' training and contributed to the pacification and security of the population."⁸⁰

Himmler Takes Over

A shift in occupation policy was not only hindered by the mentality within the ranks, but more importantly, the idea of a change in Eastern Front policy did not tally with the strategic concept favored by the Führer's headquarters. However, the situation in the hinterland behind the front had dramatically deteriorated during the summer months of 1942. Large partisan units, some of which were operating in unison with regular Red Army forces, had

advanced to within menacing proximity of major roads and Wehrmacht bases, especially in administered middle Russia, so that for the first time they posed a serious threat to supply lines. In the civilian-administrated General Commissariat, the system of indigenous administration and agricultural levying were on the brink of collapse. The selective murder of mayors and auxiliary policemen in the area surrounding Minsk led to over half the municipalities being abandoned. In this "partisan country," Soviet rule was reinstated. A report by the Army Secret Field Police (GFP) at the end of June summed it up: "It is a widely held view that, although the Germans may control their bases, the partisans control the broad countryside."⁸¹ The reasons for this rapidly changed situation lay in a recent development: the old scourges of a controlled economy on the land—accompanied by crippling levies—and forced labor in the towns—synonymous with being condemned to slow death by starvation—had been compounded by a new evil: deportation to Germany's forced labor camps.⁸² To avoid the system of compulsory recruitment which was introduced in early 1942 and involved the Wehrmacht's participation from the outset, the population fled in large numbers into the forests. From the summer of 1942 onwards, refugees no longer hesitated before taking up active resistance.⁸³

The Führer's headquarters was fully aware of the gravity of the situation. Yet the failure of the *Blitzkrieg* and the development of a second front to the rear of the Wehrmacht had done nothing to alter Hitler's basic attitude toward the Russian people: except for a small minority which served the Germans as helots, the Russians had to be obliterated. Whether their elimination was meant to be achieved through the stranglehold of terror accompanying the advance or through a systematic selection process following a lightning victory in the 1941 scenario, or whether, given the changed context of 1942, it was effected through a combination of starvation, forced labor, and bullets—the method made no difference whatsoever to the result. But something needed to be done. This was Himmler's opportunity—not in his role as the racial engineer of *Volkstum*, but as a specialist in genocide.

On 23 July OKW chief Keitel announced that the Wehrmacht leadership had requested Himmler to "set up a centralized command unit to take charge of the war against the partisans."⁸⁴ This move may have been prompted by a report by Martin Bormann's representative in the OKW on 26 May, describing a visit to the "Generalkommissariat Weissrussland" in which he was informed of the murder of 33 town mayors; on the other hand, the appointment

might equally have been triggered by an official request submitted on 17 June by Lohse, the Reich Commissar of *Ostland*, demanding action by the OKW in response to the shooting of 27 men in a unit made up of SD personnel and indigenous auxiliary volunteers (HiWis).⁸⁵ The new command unit was only supposed to centralize and evaluate all in-coming data relevant to partisans, hence had no apparent repercussions on Wehrmacht responsibilities. Yet the directive stipulated that the army pass on all incoming information, thereby enabling Himmler's men in the occupied area to collect intelligence with complete autonomy. This suspicion was confirmed by Hitler's directive No. 46 on 18 August. In the area under military command, the Wehrmacht remained responsible for the anti-partisan campaign—on condition that, should the necessity arise, it would have to place troops at the disposal of the Higher SS and Police leadership—and the Reichsführer himself assumed responsibility in the Reich Commissariats.⁸⁶

Himmler had grasped the initiative, and from now on his troops—the SD commandos, police regiments, and SS brigades—set the standards. This move had been in preparation for a long time: as early as 6 July 1941, Himmler's command staff drafted an initial assessment of the partisans' aims and methods of combatting them,⁸⁷ on 17 July this was followed by directives defining enemy reconnaissance and intelligence;⁸⁸ shortly afterwards, translations of the "Combat rules for partisan groups of the Red Army" were in circulation,⁸⁹ in August and September Einsatzgruppe A submitted its first comprehensive field reports⁹⁰—it was on these reports that Himmler based his directive No. 42 on 18 November 1941.⁹¹ This was the first well-founded appraisal of the emerging second front and a cogent attempt to establish an effective defense. The essential points made were: 1) A precondition for active anti-partisan combat is the establishment of a network of informants and constant surveillance; 2) The purpose of the campaign is not "to gain ground" by flushing out the enemy, but "the actual elimination" of the enemy.⁹² Thanks to this early assessment, Himmler's Einsatzkommandos were able to take the lead ahead of all other counterintelligence and espionage services, making themselves indispensable to the Wehrmacht in the Army Group Rear area. From September 1941 onwards, they accompanied every large-scale operation.⁹³ This monopoly obviously gave them the power to determine the speed and the range of the anti-partisan war from early on. Starting with his very first order in this new function, Himmler made it quite clear that he had no military misconceptions about his mission. "For psychological reasons," in future the term "partisan" is

always to be replaced by "bandit"; accordingly, anti-partisan operations were henceforth to be called "anti-bandit warfare" (*Bandenkämpfung*), and areas suspected of partisan presence referred to as "contaminated with bandit groups" (*bandenverseucht*).⁹⁴ Anti-partisan measures mutated into vermin extermination. So it was entirely apposite for the new era that its first operation was given the code name "swamp fever." In a personally signed order, Himmler prescribed preparations for the use of "nerve gas and stun bombs."⁹⁵

Due to start on 25 August, the operation's objective was, as Himmler put it, to "thoroughly cleanse" the General Commissariat. Yet despite the massive deployment of 6,500 men, the operation proved unsuccessful. Although the Wehrmacht garrisons at Minsk and Vilna supplied 140 trucks to transport troops across the country, partisan units could not be prevented evading larger battles in this impassable terrain.⁹⁶ Naturally, the troops did not return empty-handed: they managed to shoot 389 "bandits" and 1,274 "suspects," and had also, since it lay en route, "cleared" the Baranovich ghetto of its 8,000 Jews. Apart from a dozen burnt-out villages, the whole area had been cleared and the population evacuated.⁹⁷

But this didn't impress Himmler, who reacted by making further changes. The first step, on 23 October, was to appoint von dem Bach-Zelewski, the Higher SS and Police Leader for Central Russia, as "Commissioner for anti-bandit warfare."⁹⁸ Through an abundance of small-scale operations, which also extended to the Army Group Rear area, Bach-Zelewski had grasped the initiative in the anti-partisan campaign, while simultaneously demonstrating that if this type of warfare were to succeed, it had to be waged without letup.⁹⁹ The second measure concerned the transfer to Belorussia of SS-Brigadeführer von Gottberg: as head of the "combat unit Gottberg" his assignment was to ensure that this warfare was waged on a permanent basis. A former member of the Freikorps, Gottberg had gathered considerable experience; besides which, with his career as a top SS officer having been impeded for quite some time as a result of various criminal and internal party proceedings, he was also highly motivated by the desire for rehabilitation. Things worked out just as Himmler had planned. Gottberg radicalized operative conduct by declaring the entire populace to be the enemy—"bandits, a population of bandit suspects and bandit sympathizers, Jews, Gypsies, horse-riders and juveniles to be considered spies."¹⁰⁰ Such opponents could only be dealt with by waging war, deploying heavy weapons to hamper their retreat, by burning down their villages and systematically robbing them so as to destroy their very

means of existence. Such was the outcome of Gottberg's first major operations, "Operation Nürnberg" and "Operation Hamburg," staged in November and December 1942, each of which lasted only ten days: 5,000 murdered Jews, 5,000 "eliminated bandits or suspects," 30 villages burnt down.¹⁰¹ and, as Bach-Zelewski radioed to Himmler, "an enormous amount of plunder, especially provisions, which as yet cannot be estimated."¹⁰²

Taking plunder did not stem from Gottberg's own personal initiative. On 26 October 1942 Göring had issued directives for "anti-bandit warfare," especially in the Army Group Rear Area Center, in which with his own particular brand of candidness he demanded that during anti-partisan operations "all cattle stocks" be driven away and all available food provisions be requisitioned. All men and women capable of work were to be "compulsorily registered" and deported either to the Reich or to the secure territories.¹⁰³ Even the policy of declaring war on the population had been decided a long time in advance by the political and military leadership. In the "combat directive for anti-bandit warfare in the East," which the OKH had issued to the troops on 11 November 1942, "sentimental considerations" were castigated as irresponsible; captured "bandits" were to be hanged or shot, "preferably hanged," as a supplementary note stated. In reference to targeted victims a further category was added: "women too." A month later the OKW dispelled any remaining doubts concerning this directive: "against women and children every available means is to be used so long as it leads to success."¹⁰⁴ Thus the radicalization and extension of the campaign against the partisans can neither be attributed to the initiative of a few junior officers gone wild, nor should Himmler's assumption of the command be misinterpreted as a putsch. Both aspects were part of an overall strategy which aimed at fusing the area behind the front with the forward lines of combat to create a single battle zone, instead of selectively declaring war on the partisans within the population. In the second half of 1942 the foundations of this strategy were laid. In 1943 its results could be seen.

Clausewitz Is Wrong

The escalation which occurred in summer 1942, finding its expression in Himmler's seizure of power and the orders issued by the Reich leadership, initially had varied impact in each part of Belorussia. In the General Commissariat the Higher SS and Police Leader, flanked by his police and SS troops, had assumed complete control of all matters concerning anti-partisan warfare. The SD

became solely responsible for intelligence relating to the "partisan situation" and for decisions defining "collective measures."¹⁰⁵ This organizational collusion made it possible to carry out the second phase of Jewish extermination (with the code name "Clearance of the border ghettos") as part of the anti-partisan campaign.¹⁰⁶ To this end, certain occasions required the Wehrmacht commander to make his units available, as was stipulated by the OKW directive No. 46 of 18 August 1942.

Within the Army Group Rear area the chief commander attempted, to some degree with the support of several divisional commanders, to hinder the escalation of aggression. The issues of contention were the execution of women and children, the application of collective reprisal measures, and the establishment of a death zone on either side of railway lines.¹⁰⁷ His adversary in this clash was von dem Bach-Zelewski, the Higher SS and Police Leader of Russia Center. First celebrated as a war hero for his reckless bravery in the euphoric summer phase of the campaign, and then, with his police and SS reserves, regarded as an indispensable helper during the 1941 winter retreat and the 1942 partisan spring, he quite suddenly appeared in a new guise to the old trooper von Schenkendorff—as a brutal and irresponsible hard-liner. But as Himmler's representative, Bach-Zelewski had been nothing else right from the start; he asserted his interests with relative ease by citing the special powers of the Reichsführer.¹⁰⁸ Only on the question of maintaining railway security through deforestation and evacuation of the population did the commander of the Army Group Rear area succeed in achieving a delay, by arguing that Himmler lacked the authority to issue directives for his area of command.¹⁰⁹ This respite lasted for no longer than one month.

On 27 August partisans attacked the small railway station of Slavnya, killing the station-master as well as several collaborators in the village. The report submitted by this station's head office turned this incident into an event of apocalyptic proportions.¹¹⁰ By the time the nature of these extraordinary exaggerations and the real facts about the incident were exposed shortly after (the station officials had been taken by surprise during a bout of drinking in the neighboring village),¹¹¹ it was already too late: in a message wired on 28 August, Hitler called for an "immediate reprisal operation."¹¹² On 29 August the OKH instructed the Army Group Center to carry out Himmler's demand for a no-man's-land all along the railway lines. The dispute had been decided.¹¹³ With his hands now tied, there was little else the commander for the Army Group Rear area could do than perform the retaliatory measure—

which meant shooting "100 male or female local residents who are either partisan supporters or Communists or members of partisans' families."¹¹⁴ This action stood in stark contrast to an order he himself had recently issued not to punish the families of mere suspects.¹¹⁵ Shortly afterwards, these one hundred victims were shot by a unit of the 286th Security Division.¹¹⁶ None of them had been arrested in connection with the incident; 60 had been held in detention for some time by the Army Secret Field Police (GFP), while the other 40—making up the prescribed total—were taken from the reservoir of hostages held by the Higher SS and Police Leader Bach-Zelewski.¹¹⁷ Hitler's original order had been far more extensive, stipulating that all the villages bordering the 150 kilometer stretch of railway line from Borisov to Orsha be burnt down. As General Richert, commander in charge of the Slavnoya hostage massacre, testified in the 1946 Minsk trial, this order had been opposed by Field Marshal von Kluge, the chief of Army Group Center.¹¹⁸ But although von Kluge managed to prevent this order being carried out in August, he too was duped in October 1942. On this occasion, Göring directed his air force troops (at that time deployed in ground operations in the Army Group Rear area) to burn down any villages located in the vicinity of the sabotaged tracks.¹¹⁹ Although both Schenckendorff and Kluge protested against this order, arguing that this strategy would leave Russian railway workers homeless and drive them into the arms of the partisans,¹²⁰ their intervention had no impact on the conduct of Göring's men, as can be gauged from their reports of successful punitive actions.¹²¹

On 18 December a remarkable meeting took place in Berlin. Representatives of the three Army Group Rear areas and of Army Groups A and B discussed the situation with emissaries of the OKW and the OKH. In their findings the army leaders were unanimous. The mood of the population had hit rock-bottom and it was felt that an improvement could only be reached by introducing a radical shift in current occupation policy: this meant granting restricted political and cultural autonomy, introducing private ownership, guaranteeing food supplies and putting an end to manhunts and deportations. As the minutes of the meeting recorded, it was predominantly the comments made by General von Schenckendorff which "made a great impression on all those present."¹²² The general, as will be remembered, had already voiced the same criticism in spring, repeating it in varied forms successive dispatches. In the summer, he discovered that all his dispatches had been piling up unread in the OKH.¹²³ Not only did he now hope to persuade the

attentive audience of his views, he also had received the assurance that these would be relayed directly to the Führer. It was his bad luck that the meeting was held in the wrong place—at the ministry for occupied Eastern territories—and that the officer reporting, Rosenberg, while gaining entry into the Führer headquarters to deliver his report, was never actually given a hearing.

On the part of the commanders this was indeed a case of veritable quixotry. In the beginning they wholeheartedly and emphatically embraced Hitler's war. There was no order to murder which they did not happily pass on, no act of atrocity they did not rigorously instruct their troops to perform. At that stage they were thrilled by the limitless terrain for war and the increased scope for action, which made victory seem inevitable. However, now that they could no longer guarantee the passage of reinforcements through to the front, nor safeguard the flow of supplies, as they were no longer able to protect their territory against partisans, and now faced the looming prospect of military failure, these generals sought political change as the only means of fulfilling the campaign's objective. But in the war Hitler was waging, such changes were not on the agenda. When by summer 1942 the cost of maintaining the *kolkhoz* economy and local government had rocketed because the partisans had been pillaging the harvest crops and murdering local mayors, Hitler renounced the system of cooperation with the cowed, yet obliging helots. From then on, the only choice available to the subjugated population was between unqualified support for the German cause and the death sentence. The permission to shoot women and children, the call for a larger number of villages to be burnt down, the order to systematically plunder, and the conversion of supply lines into corridors of death all constituted measures which would ultimately enable occupied territory to be transformed into a no-man's-land, linked up by a network of fortified villages and military strongpoints. Putting Himmler in charge of anti-partisan warfare was entirely consistent with this vision. Far from signalling a change, his appointment gave higher definition to the original idea behind this campaign. Clausewitz had been wrong: the war of extermination was structured not only by grammatical rules, but also by a particular kind of logic.¹²⁴ Whereas the grammar—as Schenckendorff and Kluge both correctly assumed—could be controlled, the logic behind the war of extermination—as Hitler knew full well—was utterly dominant and tolerated no half-measures. At the end of the second year of the war in the East this principle was nowhere so clearly in evidence as on the partisan front.

there was as new and normal as anything experienced during their first maneuver.

Let us recapitulate: "On the evening of 29 December 1942, we started our operation in a village. There were no partisans in this village.... We then moved on to another village.... We shot about 70 people. Among them also women, old people and children. And then we burnt down the village.... We then proceeded to the third village. We didn't come across any partisans there. But we still burnt down the village and shot around 50 people. Even women and children."¹²⁹

No one questioned the military value or rationale behind such an operation. When the judge in the Minsk trial asked Lance-corporal Rodenbusch, who had given this account, "So you burnt down those villages too, even though there were no partisans there?" the accused replied "Yes, of course. That's what the company commander had ordered us to do."¹³⁰ The orders issued in early 1941, which had taken so much care to provide historical justification for the need to wipe out Jewish Bolshevism, followed by supplementary directives issued in summer and autumn which so assiduously addressed and dispelled any possible moral qualms—these orders had finally found their way down to the troops. Yet these orders, which historians would later call "criminal," had changed beyond recognition in the course of two years; they had been transformed into completely normal orders issued by some company commander or other. The shooting of women and children—that moral outpost where a number of veteran generals had fought a derisory last stand for self-esteem—had long since become an automatic reflex for their own soldiers. In the words of Rodenbusch, the recruit:

We had just shot the four men when I saw two women and three children running away. My rifle still contained five bullets and I took one shot at each of them. All five fell over, and by the time I got to them they were already dead. I had hit four in the back and one child was shot through the neck.¹³¹

—Translated by Matthew Partridge

1943

During the large-scale partisan hunts of autumn and winter 1942, the troops of the Reichsführer's SS had clearly spelt out the lesson to be learned by the Wehrmacht. The enemy was not to be considered as consisting of partisan groups plus sympathizers, but instead as an entire criminal population minus the collaborators. The security divisions had no problems accommodating this approach; after one-and-a-half years of war in Russia, they were thoroughly acquainted with the enemy groups both in theory and practice. What in the campaign's early phase began as a wish concerning Red Army troops stranded behind the front and still roaming at large or in hiding, the wish that these stragglers would no longer have to be separated into distinct categories (Red Army militia, guerrillas, prisoners, deserters, men in uniform, men in civilian dress), but could instead be viewed in toto as one "organic, special entity" and then treated accordingly,¹²⁵ this wish could now be directed at the populace as a whole: 1,627 shot partisans or anyone considered to be a partisan, 2,041 persons deported to Germany as force labor, 21 villages burnt down in one single district alone. Overall, the booty amassed consisted of 9,265 head of cattle and 580 tons of foodstuffs—these statistics represent the balance of an average operation performed by an average security division—operation "Waldwinter," in January 1943.¹²⁶ Whereas Wehrmacht units had initially continued to operate on their own in the Army Group Rear area, by the middle of 1943 there was an increasing tendency to involve the SS and HSSPF units in joint major operations. This symbiosis was long overdue. None of the Wehrmacht commanders were any longer bothered by the fact that most of these operations were placed under the command of a higher SS officer—the aforementioned Brigadeführer von Gottberg. Any criticism of the fact that—as in "Operation Cottbus"—6,087 adversaries had been killed in battle and 3,709 had been "dealt with" afterwards, or that these 9,796 enemy dead compared to a mere 88 German losses, had by this point fallen silent.¹²⁷ Descriptions like the following passage from this operation's final report will probably have caused no more than a knowledgeable grin: "The mines planted along most roads and paths make the production of mine detectors a necessity. The mine detection device developed by the Dirlewanger Battalion has proven very successful."¹²⁸ The term "device" means captured civilians who were chased across minefields to detonate the explosives. For the recruits, who from autumn 1942 onwards spent the rest of their training period carrying out regular anti-partisan operations, what they witnessed

MEN OF 20 JULY AND THE WAR IN THE SOVIET UNION*

Christian Gerlach

The literature on the "men of 20 July" contains a small deficiency: it relies almost completely on verbal statements made after the fact, memoirs, and reminiscences. When contemporary sources are drawn upon, one thing is hardly considered at all by historians—the on-going, daily work of the officers in their staffs and offices. It is almost as if they lived in a kind of never-ending leave. This oversight is astonishing because in some areas sufficient documents are available.

Up until now, the officers' opposition to Hitler has been faulted on two grounds: its members' stand on specific issues, such as the anti-Jewish policy,¹ and their ideas about Germany after Hitler's fall, because they tended to favor a monarchy, a corporate state, or other reactionary models. Examining how they actually functioned, on the other hand, enables us to criticize not what they thought or perhaps desired, but what they did or failed to do.

More than one assassination attempt against Hitler originated in the far-flung circle of officers conspiring against him. In March 1943 alone two attempts were made to blow him up. Both originated among officers of the high command or Army Group Center, "in which was concentrated the strongest opposition group that had ever existed."² There, Henning von Tresckow, Rudolf-Christoph Freiherr von Gersdorff—who, on 21 March 1943, meant

Notes for this section begin on page 141.

to blow himself and Hitler up while acting as a human bomb—and others had been considering assassination since 1941.

Yet, at the same time, some of the conspirators were participating in mass crimes. And really *at the same time*. For example, the picture of von Tresckow painted by his biographer Scheurig—that he went along in 1933, and even later in some ways, but then cleansed himself of guilt—is false.³

The findings presented below relate primarily to opposition officers from Army Group Center, which conquered Belorussia while driving toward Moscow and was responsible for Belorussia for months and for its eastern half throughout the occupation. Belorussia lost a higher percentage of its population in World War II than any other country. According to official statistics compiled in 1944 and 1945, 2.2 million civilians and prisoners of war died out of a population of 10.6 million.⁴ In recent years, segments of the German public have become aware of a related phenomenon—the 600 to 5,000 (depending on how the term is interpreted) “burned-out villages” of Belorussia whose inhabitants were either shot or burned alive as part of the German anti-partisan campaign.

Knowing and Going Along

Existing treatments of the opposition group in the high command of Army Group Center⁵ stress the complex structure of the conspiracy, plans to assassinate Hitler, and profound conversations over moral issues. Von Gersdorff, the counterintelligence officer (Ic/AO) of the army group, is surpassed in fame by Henning von Tresckow, its First General Staff Officer (Ia), who “emphasized ethical and moral motivations”⁶ within the conspiracy by allegedly remarking with reference to the imminent putsch that it was “no longer a question of practical aims but of whether the German resistance movement, in the eyes of the world and before history, would risk taking decisive action.”⁷

Reports based on the participants’ memories also mention German crimes in the areas controlled by the army group, though almost exclusively the murders of Jews and the commissars (political officers) of the Red Army. Those crimes are said to have provided the impulse for active anti-Hitler involvement. The thrust of these treatments is that the high command of the army group and its officer corps prevented whatever could be prevented, such as the implementation of the order to kill commissars; but one could not

prevent what one did not know about. Especially with reference to the murder of Jews, “the SS” is said to have deceived the officers by killing in secret, filing incomplete reports or none at all; if general staff officers protested, the SS threatened them.

Even the established fact that the first head of Einsatzgruppe B, the director of the Reichskriminalpolizeiamt and notorious mass murderer Arthur Nebe, had been involved in the conspiracy since as early as 1938 did little to discredit this version. Von Schlabrendorff, who sat on the Bundesverfassungsgesicht from 1967 to 1975, claimed that von Tresckow and he—he was von Tresckow’s ordnance officer—had convinced themselves that “under the mask of the SS leader lurked a committed anti-Nazi ..., who invented a thousand pretexts for sabotaging Hitler’s murderous orders. We succeeded in saving the lives of many Russians. The Russian population often expressed their thanks to us.”⁸ According to von Gersdorff, von Tresckow personally brought Nebe to the army group.⁹ Nothing was said about the 45,467 murder victims of Einsatzgruppe B by November 1941,¹⁰ the point at which Nebe returned to Berlin. It was said that Nebe was filing false reports, a fact which allegedly only became known later, especially following the murder of 7,000 Jews in Borisov on 20 and 21 October, which was witnessed by members of the staff.¹¹

This is, of course, nonsense. Von Gersdorff, who was in charge of information gathering, would have had to be a very bad counterintelligence officer to miss the murder of several thousand people for months on end—even if the Einsatzgruppe had not been filing regular reports and reporting to him orally from the beginning, which was clearly the case. A series of such reports, all of them sent to von Gersdorff as the staff member responsible for contact with the Einsatzgruppe, has survived, for instance for the time periods of from 23 June to 13 July 1941; from 9 to 16, from 17 to 23, from 24 to 31 August 1941; from 1 to 15, and from 16 to 30 September 1942, as well as from 15 November to 15 December 1942, along with notes relating to oral presentations from July 1941.¹² Excerpts from a report for the period from 14 to 28 July 1941 were contained in documents of Panzergruppe 3. Thus it stands to reason that the army group forwarded at least parts of the reports to the armies.¹³ The reports from 1942, moreover, always went to Gersdorff in six copies. Many of the reports were initiated by von Tresckow and von Gersdorff; the report from December 1942, which gives 134,198 as the “total number of specially treated [people],” was initialed twice, on the cover sheet and on the first page. Some bear the stamp of the supreme commanders, General Field Marshals von

Bock and von Kluge, and other staff officers. The report covering the period from 9 to 16 August was submitted to Gersdorff, and a summary from mid-July was read by von Bock, von Tresckow, and von Gersdorff.¹⁴ Such reports were, so to speak, nothing special. Einsatzgruppe D, for example, reported regularly to the Ic/AO of the 11th Army.¹⁵

In any event, von Tresckow and von Gersdorff were much better informed than is generally thought. In July 1941, Heydrich transmitted to them an order concerning the handling of the Polish intelligentsia in the occupied regions of the Soviet Union, which stipulated "that the purging operations are to extend primarily to Bolsheviks and Jews," while, concerning the Poles, "the decision may come down later."¹⁶

The opponents of the regime in the high command of Army Group Center learned much earlier, however, and in fairly full detail of the crimes being planned (not after or shortly before the war began, as the history of the resistance would have it). Already at the beginning of March 1941, more than three months before the attack on the Soviet Union, one of their number, Rittmeister Schach von Wittenau, member of the counterintelligence section and later Gersdorff's deputy, received information about the "operation of SS Einsatzkommandos behind the forward troops" and some desired improvements for which the OKW wanted to obtain Hitler's approval, for example, "that executions be carried out as far away from the troops as possible." Schach von Wittenau reported as "requests of the army group" merely the suggestion that the Secret Field Police should be strengthened and that its authority should be differentiated from that of the SD.¹⁷

It is also not true that the real dimensions of the crime could not be gleaned from the reports of the Einsatzgruppe (not to mention reports from other units involved in murder). How might the staff of Army Group Center have interpreted "major operation against Jews and other communist elements and looters" in Slonim, or the report: "In Minsk there is no longer a Jewish intelligentsia"?¹⁸ In the left-hand margin of the report covering the period from 24 to 31 August, someone added a handwritten notation of the numbers of people reported killed and totaled them up: 719, and in two operations in Minsk and Zembin an indefinite "fairly large number" (the SD was actually not always completely candid); hence, one could calculate far more than one hundred, perhaps even several hundred dead per day. Between 20 August and 26 October 1941, the murder rate for Einsatzgruppe B averaged about 300 people daily.¹⁹

However, knowing is one thing; approving is another. Three days before the invasion of the Soviet Union, on 19 June 1941, Henning von Tresckow met with the chief of the command staff of the Reichsführer-SS, SS-Brigadeführer Kurt Knoblauch, on the exercise field in Arys, East Prussia. At that meeting, "the use of SS brigades and cavalry regiments was discussed."²⁰ A few weeks later, the units referred to—the 1st and 2nd SS Infantry Brigades and SS Cavalry Regiments 1 and 2—were already committing mass murders. Their victims for 1941 ran into the tens of thousands. They were troops supplied by Himmler to support and complement operations by the Einsatzgruppen and police battalions.

Von Tresckow and Knoblauch agreed to place the command staff and all its units under the authority of Army Group Center, specifically under Army Corps XXXXII (9th Army), not at the front, but specifically "to be used for purging and security duties."²¹ In the course of this mission, the 1st SS Infantry Brigade destroyed at least one village in the area of Bialystok from which it had taken no incoming fire.²² Army Corp XXXXII wanted to use parts of the 2nd SS Infantry Brigade to "clean out" Vilna on 26 June—long before any Einsatzkommandos were active there—a proposal that came to nothing due to tactical differences with Himmler.²³

After units of the command staff had been withdrawn in order to complete their training in "pacification" matters, there developed even closer contact with the resistance fighters of Army Group Center at the end of July. Plans had been drawn up to "clean out" the Pripyat Marshes—an operation in which around 14,000 Jews were shot between 27 July and 13 August.²⁴ From 20 to 23 July, a delegation from the counterintelligence section of the command staff of the Reichsführer-SS traveled to Borisov for consultations with Army Group Center. In those sessions, the army group's Ic officer, Major von Gersdorff, appeared to be informed regarding the task of the SS cavalry regiments. His colleague from the command staff of the Reichsführer-SS summarized his meeting with von Gersdorff as follows: "Deployment of units of the Waffen-SS for pacification of the army's rear area is much appreciated by the army group."²⁵ That what was appreciated was murdering Jews is indicated, among other things, by the fact that, as early as the evening of 3 August, von Bock, supreme commander of the army group, sent the SS cavalry regiments his "special congratulations."²⁶ At this point, these units had not yet had the slightest contact with the enemy—that did not occur until the middle of August near the town of Turov—but had merely "liquidated 3,247 partisans and Bolshevik Jews. No losses sustained."²⁷

A second example. At the end of September 1941, the commander of the rear area of Army Group Center, who was chief of security troops and military administration in the largest area under the army group's control, hosted a workshop on combating partisans in Mogilev, which was broadly attended. The speakers included Arthur Nebe, Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski, and Hermann Fegelein, the commander of the SS cavalry brigade. Nebe's subject was "the Jewish question with special emphasis on battling partisans." The cliché of the day was: "Where there is a partisan, there is a Jew, and where there is a Jew, there is a partisan."²⁸

Three representatives of the army group's high command were invited to this session: "Ia or his representative," thus von Tresckow, the supply officer (Ib), Major Günther von Gericke, and Supreme Commander von Bock's adjutant, Major Carl-Hans von Hardenberg—another 20 July conspirator. Von Tresckow appears not to have attended, presumably due to his heavy workload in preparation for the offensive on Moscow, which was set for 2 October. But von Gericke wrote a brief report, primarily on two practical demonstrations that were the crowning events of the session. (He wrote not one word about the above-mentioned clichés.) On the afternoon of 25 September, the "lighting raid on a village"—the village Knyazhichi—was presented as a "police training exercise," "followed by searching the houses and interrogating the inhabitants. Police teams could have subsequently been used to seal off the village given appropriate consideration of the terrain. The searches and interrogations met with the approval of the leader of the exercise. Along with several Jews, suspicious characters from outside the village were apprehended (32 executions)." At dawn the next day, an operation was staged to clean out the village Kusikovici. "The mission was carried out effectively by a reinforced company of Security Regiment 2, which succeeded in sealing off the village and surprising and rounding up the inhabitants in a relatively short time. Interrogating the inhabitants, weeding out suspicious elements, and obtaining information about partisan troops was an excellent exercise for all participants in the course, who had had a hand in the entire operation beginning with the planning stage." Von Gersdorff initiated the report; he did not consider a marginal notation required. Along with security issues, the campaign against partisans fell into his area of responsibility at this time; had he wanted to dissent on any point for the future, even on the participation of Wehrmacht units, he could have done so with a good chance of success.²⁹

Potsdam Infantry Regiment 9

The participation of some "men of the resistance" in the mass crimes committed in Belorussia was clearly not limited to knowing what was underway and openly or silently approving it.

From the first day, many German soldiers waged the war against the Soviet Union with an enormous urge to annihilate. Examples are found where not everyone would expect them, for example, in the case of the Infantry Regiment 9 from Potsdam, which the literature on the period usually tricks out with the decorative nickname "the tradition-laden," and which, due to the high percentage of nobility in its ranks and to its arrogance, was also called "Regiment Graf 9" (regiment of counts), or "von 9." More of the men who would later be involved in the 20 July conspiracy passed through this regiment than any other, and some of them were fighting in its ranks in the summer of 1941.

Infantry Regiment 9 announced on 25 June, the fourth day of the war against the Soviet Union, that the day before three Red Army soldiers had run up a white flag, and six Germans who had intended to take them prisoner had been shot from ambush. Generalmajor Hellmich, commander of the 23rd Infantry Division, immediately ordered the entire division to cease honoring the white flag. "No quarter is to be given!" On 28 June, following battles southeast of Bialystok, IR 9 reported: "No prisoners were taken! But in place of the old excuse, the regiment cited 'mutilations of fallen German soldiers.'³⁰ On the same day, Fritz-Dietlof Graf von Schulenburg, a member of the regiment who was later executed as a 20 July conspirator, noted in his diary: "Doubtlessly ... the danger will arise when our people start killing on their own. If we allow that, we shall have sunk to the level of the SS. Doubtlessly, the Russian does not deserve quarter due to [his] way of fighting. But they must be shot either in battle or on officers' orders. Anything else will simply loosen all restraints and make it impossible to regain control of instincts once unleashed." On the following day, he noted with satisfaction: "Only armed enemy, snipers, or prisoners offering resistance or running away may be shot. In no other cases, except on an officer's orders, who is then responsible. I am glad that the army has again clearly and decisively clarified its principles, without which things fall apart."³¹ The former deputy police commissioner of Berlin and head of the administration in the area of Breslau certainly had a way with words. So let us pin things down. Soviet soldiers might be shot without cause and without offering the slightest resistance—in a disciplined manner of course,

on an officer's command. Shooting Red Army men who had already been taken prisoner could have nothing at all to do with protecting German soldiers; at best, it was done out of revenge, but it was also done for the sake of killing. And the SS was having similar thoughts about the dangers of a loss of inhibitions.

Even the two most famous heroes of the resistance from Army Group Center were not uninvolved. It is true that von Gersdorff wrote a notation after returning from a tour of the front on 9 December 1941, that "the existing facts" regarding the murder of the Jews were fully known there, were a general topic of conversation, and were regarded by officers as a stain on the honor of the German army.³² But it is also true that von Gersdorff was responsible for the units of the Secret Field Police (GFP) deployed in Army Group Center's occupation area.³³ This secret police within the Wehrmacht served first to keep an eye on German soldiers, and second, to repress the "enemy population," beginning with the prevention of resistance operations aimed at German troops. Its personnel was the same as that of the Einsatzgruppen, that is, it was dominated by members of the criminal police and the Gestapo who had been assigned to the Wehrmacht. The Secret Field Police committed mass murders to an extent that can no longer be determined with precision, primarily in the occupied Soviet regions. According to a report by the army's police chief, for example, they killed "around 21,000 persons, some in combat, some after they were interrogated, between 1 July 1942 and 31 March 1943."³⁴ They did not spare Army Group Center's theater of operations. The GFP killed 1,001 people in the area in October 1942 alone.³⁵ The monthly reports of GFP Group 723, which was active in the area, have been preserved for the period from July 1941 to September 1943. According to their incomplete numbers, by the end of 1942 they had shot at least 1,486 people, including at least 133 Jews, usually not "in combat."³⁶ And that was but one of several GFP groups under von Gersdorff's supervision.

It is often forgotten that German crimes, especially in occupied Soviet territory, were not at all limited to "the business with the Jews," and that Jews comprised a minority of the victims. In August 1942, Hitler's directive number 46 specified that the struggle against partisans was to have higher priority than before, and that it would, therefore, be handled by the command sections of the armies.³⁷ Thus, Henning von Tresckow assumed that responsibility for Army Group Center, and he continued to discharge that duty until he left in August 1943. This period was definitely not characterized by any moderation in the "struggle against bandits," which was the term used from then on, but rather by a gruesome intensification.

This intensification was the result of a new tactic introduced in the early spring of 1942 and broadly applied in the following summer. In "major operations," forces several battalions strong surrounded partisan-infested areas, "cleaned them out," and then "combed through" them in reverse direction. These tactics struck not only the partisan camps, most of which were in the forests, but also villages in the forefield that the Germans no longer fully controlled, which were burned because they, allegedly or in fact, served as supply bases for the partisans. In time, as the partisans grew stronger, these villages became the *main* targets. In some cases, the inhabitants were warned or evacuated, later to be sent to Germany as forced laborers. But often they were all either shot or burned alive in buildings suitable for that purpose.

According to an interim report on "Operation Cottbus," which was conducted in the region bordering the area under civilian control in May 1943 by combined forces of the Wehrmacht, the SS, and police troops, the Generalkommissar for Weissruthenien, Kube complained: "If only 492 rifles are taken off 4,500 enemy dead,³⁸ the difference shows that many peasants are among these enemy dead." In partisan units at this time, bringing along one's own rifle was a requirement for membership, and the numerical ratio of victims to rifles in such operations held fairly steady at ten to one. Kube's superior, Hinrich Lohse, Reichskommissar for Ostland, added: "What is Katyn by comparison? ... Locking men, women, and children in barns and burning the barns down does not seem to me to be a suitable method of fighting bandits *even if the aim is to exterminate the population.*"³⁹ The total number of victims of these operations in the occupation area of Army Group Center, with some of "Weissruthenien" included, has been estimated at no less than 250,000,⁴⁰ and was probably higher. On 6 February 1943, von Tresckow's section reported to the operations section at general staff that "for the first time, the number of bandits eliminated has exceeded 100,000" in Army Group Center's rear area.⁴¹

That was exactly five weeks before a bomb was placed in Hitler's airplane during his visit to Army Group Center.

This report merely adopted verbiage from the commander of the rear area, which was the typical practice. Based on the numerous documents of the army group's leadership section relating to the "struggle against bandits," most of which are housed in the military archive in Freiburg, it can be said that von Tresckow was surely not the main strategist in this campaign against the civilian population. He received reports, initialed many papers, passed

reports along, and prepared some general orders. At times he shared this task with the army group's Ia/op (operations officers), Schulze-Büttger and von Voß—two more “men of the resistance.” Otherwise, he left the task of initiating operations and working out plans to the commander of the rear area of the Army Group Center and the commanding officers of the rear areas of the armies (Korückes). Von Tresckow's influence on their content is seldom detectable.

And yet it would have been possible for a man in his position to exert some moderating influence. One example: During the night of 27–28 August 1942, partisans attacked the Slavnoye station on the main rail line linking Minsk and Smolensk, burned it and part of the town, and in the process killed several German soldiers. A report of the event caught Hitler's eye, and he demanded retribution without specifying what should be done. His wish was conveyed by Heusinger, the chief of the operations division in the general staff, a conspirator and later Generalinspekteur of the Bundeswehr, to von Tresckow, who passed it to the commander of the rear area of the Army Group, who passed it along to Generalmajor Richert, who commanded the 286th Security Division. Richert made a recommendation, which passed back up the same chain of command without being altered, and was then put into effect. The telegram from von Tresckow's section to Heusinger described it as follows: “A total of one hundred persons consisting of gang sympathizers (not members; C.G) and relatives of gang members from the Slavnoye region, who are suspected of having participated in or approved of the attack, are to be shot. Their houses are to be burned down. The measure is to be announced and explained on the radio.”⁴² Von Tresckow merely prevented the mass shooting from being carried out *before* its approval by the command.

Consequently, near the town of Krupki near Slavnoye, one hundred people, among them women, young people, children from ten to twelve years old, even nursing babies, were actually shot with machine pistols by a battalion of the 286th Security Division in the presence of—estimates vary—between 1,500 and 5,000 witnesses, who had been rounded up by force.⁴³ The phrase “[family] members of partisans” was unambiguous. If von Tresckow, who had advance knowledge, had wanted to prevent the murder of women and children, there is no doubt that he could have done so by replacing them with male prisoners.

At one point, von Tresckow lent a hand in designing the “struggle against gangs.” On 23 June 1943, Major Georg Freiherr von Boeselager, commander of Army Group Center's cavalry regiment—also a man of the resistance—sent him a “report on the combat

tactics of partisans and opportunities for reducing the risk posed by gangs,” in which, after a really quite empathetic description of the combat tactics and everyday life of partisans, he proposed new measures. “It is impossible for a German soldier to distinguish between partisans and non-partisans.... The regiment's view is that the area must be subdivided into a) pacified areas, b) areas threatened by gangs, c) gang-infested areas.” While normal security would suffice in areas of the first category (“only where there are German troops”), “in areas threatened by gangs, the men should be permitted to leave town and work only in groups. All males passing through such areas alone or in small groups must be shot or imprisoned at once.... The gang-infested area⁴⁴ must be swept clean of all males. Up to a specific point in time, males up to the age of 50 will be seized and turned over to the economic office as laborers. After the deadline, men in this area will be shot.”

Von Tresckow was quite taken by these ideas, which were similar to models for the creation of “dead zones” that were being developed independently by several agencies. On 27 June, he personally sent copies of Boeselager's recommendations for comment to all the armies comprising Army Group Center, to the commander of the rear area, to various colleagues on the staff, to the operations section, even directly to the training section of the High Command of the Army and the Commanding Officer of the Eastern Troops (units made up of Soviet collaborators with the Germans). A copy is even to be found among the documents of the commander of the rear area for Army Group South. Von Tresckow had a summary of the predominantly positive responses prepared, and on the critical response of the 2nd Army, he noted: “1.) Of course, the 2nd Army faces special circumstances! 2.) Theoretically the unsystematic constantly shifting tactics [is] certainly the ideal, but in practice the clear demarcation of certain areas [is] often advantageous given the lackadaisical security forces. T.”⁴⁵

Von Tresckow, along with others, thus authorized a further ratcheting up of a campaign against partisans, which culminated in Himmler's order of 10 July 1943. “The Führer has decided that the gang-infested areas of the northern Ukraine and the middle region of Russia are to be cleansed of all inhabitants.”⁴⁶ Initial steps in the execution of this order were taken somewhat later. Something else: During Hitler's visit to Army Group Center in March 1943, the original plan had been to shoot him and overpower his entourage. The unit assigned the latter task was none other than the cavalry regiment of Boeselager, who made these recommendations and probably had experience in this manner of “repressing gangs.” At some point after 15 July 1944, the same unit set off marching for

Berlin in order to carry out the same assignment, but failed to arrive by the time set for the assassination.⁴⁷

Peter Yorck von Wartenburg and the Policy of Pillage

In Berlin, another prominent member of the resistance contributed to the idea of creating "dead zones." Peter Yorck Graf von Wartenburg was the "heart" of the "Kreisau Circle" resistance group, a man "of exceptional modesty," whose "unqualified grounding in the Christian faith" led "to his devout recognition of eternal verities."⁴⁸ Reserve Lieutenant Peter Yorck von Wartenburg had been working since 15 June 1942 on the staff of Economic Staff East, the huge organization in charge of pillaging the occupied areas of the Soviet Union. As Deputy Group Leader I/1a Ec(onomics), he was responsible for fiduciary issues and the "collection of all economic data."⁴⁹ In May 1943, a major conference on the partisan situation and how to combat it took place at the headquarters of the General Quartermaster of the Army, in preparation for which, on 22 May, Economic Staff East provided statistical data. With the aid of tables, diagrams, and schematic charts, the data highlighted the fact that Belorussian partisans operating from the Pripjat Marshes posed a threat to the delivery of hundreds of thousands of tons of Ukrainian grain to the Wehrmacht and to the Reich; moreover, there were 1.5 million workers in partisan areas who could not be seized. Yorck directed the preparation of these data. Indeed, Generalquartiermeister Eduard Wagner, also a resistance fighter—the man who supplied the airplane in which Stauffenberg flew from Hitler's headquarters to Berlin on 20 July 1944 after his assassination attempt⁵⁰—had made specific suggestions as to how Yorck might "drastically express" those facts. But Yorck went even farther in transmitting his instructions.⁵¹ In connection with the efforts of Economic Staff East and the May conference,⁵² the anti-partisan operations "Weichsel" and "Seydlitz" led to a partial evacuation and extermination of the population of the Pripjat region: more than 9,000 people were killed, and at least 27,000 were expelled, most of them "seized for the work force."⁵³

Yorck von Wartenburg also seems to have been a kind of multifunctionary in organizing pillage. In July 1943 he held a position in the Chief Fiduciary Office for the East (Haupttreuhandstelle Ost), which was responsible for converting non-agricultural Polish property into German holdings in the annexed regions of Poland.⁵⁴ For Fritz-Dietloff Graf von der Schulenberg, Yorck von Wartenburg was

one of those men "who, because of their Christianity could not bring themselves to do the right thing," specifically to kill Hitler.⁵⁵ In other cases, his conscience permitted certain exceptions. It is all the more astonishing that Yorck, following his arrest in 1944, stated for the record that it was not just the persecution of the Jews that had especially motivated his opposition, but also "the activities that we sometimes exposed in the occupied regions."⁵⁶

Resistance—to What?

As late as 28 June 1944, three weeks before the assassination attempt, Henning von Tresckow, in his capacity as chief of the general staff of the 2nd Army, signed an order, which read in part: "In operations against gangs, any boys and girls taken between the ages of 10 and 13 who are physically healthy, whose parents either cannot be located or who, as persons unable to work, are to be sent to the areas earmarked for remaining families (the dregs), are to be sent to the Reich." Transportation was to be provided by the labor authorities through the "OT-camp for young people in Lesin near Baranovich."⁵⁷

This order was issued as part of the so-called "hay operation" (*Heuaktion*; "h" for homeless [*heimatlos*], "e" for "without parents" [*elternlos*], "u" for "unhoused" [*unterkunftlos*]), in which, on the initiative of Army Group Center, from 40,000 to 50,000 "youths between ten and fourteen years of age" were to be rounded up and used as workers in the Todt organization, in the Junker factories and in German handicrafts—a major motivation being to weaken the enemy, specifically "to lower his biological vitality over time."⁵⁸ The most varied agencies, such as Army Group Center and its armies, the Board for the Four Year Plan, and the Reich Youth Leadership, cooperated in the effort. In fact, an additional 4,500 were kidnapped.⁵⁹ "Resistance"—but against what?

The question of what motivated the conspirators to want changes in the political leadership and, in part, in the political system, cannot be dealt with comprehensively here. However, their primary thrust was surely to try to preserve German interests—whatever they were thought to be—and win (or at least not lose) the war, possibly "better" than Hitler and his followers. Here are but some clues.

Legationsrat Dr. Adam von Trotz zu Solz, the resistance movement's foreign policy expert with good relations to English diplomats, met on 15 July 1942 with Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler.

His aim was the formation of an Indian SS Legion and the undermining of Indian troops fighting for the British in North Africa.⁶⁰ Friedrich Werner Graf von der Schulenburg, German ambassador to Moscow until 1941 and an uncle of the Schulenburg mentioned above, opposed the war against the Soviet Union. That did not prevent him from preparing propaganda in 1942 for the Foreign Office designed to destabilize certain ethnic groups in the Soviet hinterland. He suggested playing the Crimean Tartars off against the Soviet Union by giving them preferred treatment in the German agrarian reform in the occupied regions of the Soviet Union, which later actually took place.⁶¹ Generalquartiermeister Wagner, who has already been mentioned, seriously participated in preparation for the coup only beginning in June, arguing that it would be "insupportable if Russian soldiers penetrated Reich territory. That would mean absolute ruin."⁶²

It should be noted that we are not denying that the persons named in these pages worked to kill Hitler and risked their lives. Many forfeited their lives: Schulze-Büttger, the two von der Schulenbergs, Yorck von Wartenburg, von Trott zu Solz, and Nebe were executed; von Tresckow, Wagner, and von Voß committed suicide; von Gersdorff barely managed to escape prosecution (and was later cut from the Bundeswehr). Statements made here apply only to the named persons, not to other resistance fighters.

The tributes of the year 1994, the fiftieth anniversary of the attempted assassination of Hitler, demonstrated that "the 20th of July" is an affair of state significance in the Federal Republic of Germany. And the participants will continue to be honored, including all the resistance figures from Army Group Center. But everyone should know who is being honored.

—Translated by Roy Shelton

Notes

*This chapter is the revised, expanded version of an article that appeared in *Freitag* 30 (22 July 1994) under the title "Männer des Widerstands und der Massenmord." It originated as a research project, supported by the Hamburg Institute for Social Research, on German occupation policy in Belorussia.

1. See Christof Dipper, "Der deutsche Widerstand und die Juden," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 9 (1983): 349–380.
2. The reference is to the group of officers who opposed Hitler. Peter Hoffmann, *Widerstand—Staatsstreich—Attentat*, 3rd rev. and exp. ed. (Munich: 1979), 332.
3. See Bodo Scheurig, *Hemming von Tresckow* (Frankfurt am Main, Berlin, and Vienna: 1980 [originally 1973]), 37ff.
4. These figures do not include soldiers who perished. Minsk Central State Archive, 845-1-58, 9.
5. In addition to Scheurig, the most important examples are: Fabian von Schlabrendorff, *Offiziere gegen Hitler*, ed. Walter Bußmann, based on the edition published by von Gero Schulze-Gaevernitz (Berlin: 1984 [originally 1946]); Rudolf-Christoph Freiherr von Gersdorff, *Soldat im Untergang* (Frankfurt am Main: 1977); Philipp Freiherr von Boeselager, *Der Widerstand in der Heeresgruppe Mitte* (Berlin: n.d. [1990]); cf. Hoffmann, *Widerstand*, 327–388.
6. Klaus-Jürgen Müller, 20. Juli 1944: *Der Entschluß zum Staatsstreich* (Berlin: 1985), 13.
7. Von Schlabrendorff, *Offiziere*, 109.
8. *Ibid.*, 50.
9. Von Gersdorff, *Soldat*, S. 85.
10. See Incident Report Nr. 133 (14 November 1941) of the Einsatzgruppen of the Security Police and the SD. Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv (BA-MA) SF-01/28934, 3190.
11. See von Schlabrendorff, *Offiziere*, 50f., Von Gersdorff, *Soldat*, 97ff., Hoffmann, *Widerstand*, 334f.
12. For 1941: The Federal Commissioner of Documents of the State Security Service of the former GDR (BStU), Central Archive, ZUV 9 (legal proceeding 1 BS 13/71 of the State Attorney of Karl-Marx-Stadt against F.), 31: 3-17, 27-33, 34-44, 45-55 (reports for August, each with the notation: "for oral presentation at Army Group Center"), report notes, 20–26. These are copies of documents from an unidentified Soviet archive. For 1942: ZstA Minsk, 655-1-3, 133-203, 20-132, 4-59 (originals). A copy of the last-mentioned report is in the Federal Archive, R 70 SU/9.
13. Einsatzgruppe B II (SD); Summary report dated 29 July 1941 for the period from 14 July to 28 July 1941 (copy), BA-MA WF-03/ 5769, 175–177.
14. BStU ZA, ZUV 9, 18f.
15. See BA-MA, RH 20-11/488. My thanks to Andrej Angrick for bringing this to my attention.
16. Chief of the Sicherheitspolizei and SD, Order Nr. 2 of 1 July 1941 (copy of a copy), transmitted during July (exact day illegible) by the Administrative (*Kriegsverwaltung*) Section of the General Quartermaster of the Army. BA-MA, WF-03/9121. The heading contains von Tresckow's initials and the notation: "Forward to all Ic [officers]."

17. Conference of 6–7 March 1941, Secret Command Level Material! BA-MA WF-03/9121. The highest ranking participant was Oberst i. G. Oster, Chief of the Central Section of the OKW intelligence (Abwehr) office dealing with foreign countries, who was later executed for his involvement in the plot against Hitler. The documents show the initials of many officers from the High Command of Army Group B, among whose papers is "Overview [Chiefsachen] Barbarossa."
18. Einsatzgruppe B, Note for Army Group Center of 22 July 1941; BSU ZA, ZUV 9, 31: 21.
19. This number can be calculated based on incident reports of the Chief of the Security Police and SD number 73 of 4 September and number 125 of 26 October 1941 (16,964 and 37,180 victims respectively). BA-MA SF-01/2893 1, 2201, and /28933, 3050.
20. RFSS Command Staff in the SS Main Office, Chief of Staff, IA, dated 19 June 1941, to Chief of SS Main Office Jüttner (copy), BA-MA SF-02/37 542.
21. War Diary of the RFSS Command Staff for 20 July 1941, in *Unsere Ehre heißt Treue* (Vienna, Frankfurt am Main, and Zürich: 1965), 9, cf. 3 and 8. Cf. the order of the General Command of XXXXII Army Corps (copy) of 20 June 1941. BA-MA SF-02/37542.
22. See the interrogation of O.S. on 23 October 1942 in an SS and Police proceedings against the battalion commander, as well as the examination of W. A. on 13 December 1967, Zentrale Stelle Ludwigsburg 202 AR-Z 1212/60, 13:3552, also 12:1828-33.
23. See General Order of XXXXII Army Corps of 26 June 1941 (copy), BA-MA SF-02/37542, and the War Diary of the RFSS Command Staff of 27 June 1941 in *Unsere Ehre heißt Treue*, 13. On 5 July a company of the 2nd SS Infantry Brigade was dispatched to Vilna "to carry out special assignments." *Ibid.*, 16 (entry of 4 July 1941)
24. See Activity Report of the SS Cavalry Brigade for 14 August 1941, BA-MA SF-02/37575, 443, and more generally the verdict of the Braunschweig State Court 2 Ks 1/63 against Magill et al. of 20 April 1964. In *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen* (Amsterdam: 1979), 20: 23ff.
25. RFSS Command Staff, Ic Section, Activity Report Nr. 7 of 28 July 1941. BA-MA SF-02/37615.
26. In fact, this was done in a telephone conversation with the Higher SS and Police leader (HSSPF) Bach-Zelewski, who was with the SS Cavalry Regiment on 2 and 3 August. See his diary entry of 3 August 1941, as well as the entry of 2 August. BA R 20/45b, 6.
27. Daily report of HSSPF Russia-Center of 4 August 1941 to, among others, Himmler personally, relaying the status as of the evening of 3 August. BA, Zwischenarchiv Dahlwitz-Hoppegarten, ZB 6735, vol. 1, 268.
28. Helmut Krausnick and Hans-Heinrich Wilhelm, *Die Truppe des Weltanschauungskrieges* (Stuttgart: 1981), 248.
29. Note on the workshop "Combating Partisans" at Command of Rear Area Center (25 and 26 September 1941). ZStA Minsk 655-1-1, 279f. Cf. Corps Order Nr. 53 of the Commander of the Rear Area Center of 16 September 1941, three drafts of the order of the day, a list of the workshop participants, and additional material: BA-MA WF-03/13302, 74–106.
30. IR 9, Section Ia, Noon Report of 25 June and Evening Report of 28 June 1941. BA-MA (BArchP) F 55447, 991 and 1040f. 23. ID, Section Ia, order of 25 June 1941. (BArchP) F 55448, 239. See also the incorrect treatment by Wolfgang

- Paul, *Das Potsdamer Infanterie-Regiment 9 1918–1945*, 2nd improved ed. (Osnabrück: 1985), 175f.: It is not true that "the number of prisoners and deserters made this harsh policy impracticable." On the contrary, countermanding orders were issued on 1 July by the 4th Army (von Kluge) and the VIII Army Corps because Soviet soldiers were resisting more bitterly and hardly any were willing to surrender. ("The Russian, as a simple-minded half-Asiatic, believes that he will be shot if he is captured.") "Necessary executions" were to be continued in secret. Nuremberg Document NOKW 2104, BA F 44993, 366, und BA-MA (BArchP) F 55447, page number illegible. Paul seems to believe that atrocities were committed only on the Soviet side.
31. Cited in Ulrich Heinemann, *Ein konservativer Rebell. Fritz-Dietlof Graf von der Schulenburg und der 20. Juli* (Berlin: 1990), 73.
32. Cited in Krausnick and Wilhelm, *Truppe*, 226. Gersdorff merely stated the fact but he withheld judgment.
33. Duty roster for the High Command of Army Group B of 20 June 1941; also duty rosters of the High Command of Army Group Center of 15 November 1942 (postwar copy). BA-MA (BArchP) F 18495, here 901, also 617.
34. Field Police Chief at the High Command of the Army, 10 April 1943, reprinted in Klaus Geßner, *Geheime Feldpolizei* (Berlin: 1986), quotation on 133; see also Geßner, "Geheime Feldpolizei—die Gestapo der Wehrmacht," in Hannes Heer and Klaus Naumann, eds., *Vernichtungskrieg. Verbrechen der Wehrmacht 1941–1945* (Frankfurt am Main: 1999), 343–358.
35. Geßner, *Feldpolizei*, 98.
36. See Bundesarchiv, Zwischenarchiv Dahlwitz-Hoppegarten ZM 868 A.4, 2-377.
37. Führer Directive Nr. 46, Guidelines for Combating more Intensely the Scourge of Gangs in the East, 18 August 1942. Reprinted in *Hitlers Weisungen für die Kriegführung 1939–1945*, ed. Walter Hubatsch (Frankfurt am Main: 1962), 201–206.
38. Apart from these "enemy dead," 5,000 other killed "suspected gang members" were reported, as was usually the case.
39. Kube on the subject of Lohse to Reichsminister for the Eastern Regions Rosenberg; Lohse to Rosenberg on 5 and 18 June 1943. In *Der Prozeß gegen die Hauptkriegsverbrecher vor dem Internationalen Militärgerichtshof* (Nuremberg: 1948) 38:371ff; emphasis added.
40. Timothy Mulligan, "Reckoning the Costs of the People's War: The German Experience in the Central USSR," *Russian History* 9 (1982): 27–48.
41. High Command of Army Group Center, Ia Nr. 1086/43 g.Kdos., 6 February 1943. Archiv des Instituts für Zeitgeschichte München (IfZ), Fb. 101/34. The signature is that of Chief of Staff of the Army Group Wöhler.
42. High Command of Army Group Center Ia, 30 August 1942 to Heusinger. See the latter's affirmative reply of 1 September 1942, in *Dokumente über die Verbrechen Adolf Heusingers* (Moscow: 1962), 193–195. In addition, transmission of recommendations of the Commander of the Rear Area of 30 August 1942 and his report on orders for carrying out the proposals to the 286th Security Division on the same day with von Tresckow's handwritten notations: "20.05 hours, return telephone call with Obstlt Boehm, not to be carried out until OKH decision received. I." BA-ZA Dahlwitz-Hoppegarten FW 490, A. 11, 2 and 6. Also, War Diary of the Commander of the Rear Area of Army Group Center of 27 and 29 August, as well as A. Barantschik, in *Dokumente ... Heusingers*, 188ff; interrogation of K., Pi., Pe., and M. from 1945 and 1969 (resulting from a West

- German request for legal assistance). BStU, ZUV 9, 18: 5f., 21f., 82f.; and 19: 354. Also, War Diary of the Rear Commander of Army Group Center on 3 September 1942, BA-MA WF-03/13352. Note that, in contrast to the selection of victims, only men between the ages of sixteen and fifty-five were chosen as witnesses; see the statements of Pe. and Pi.
44. At this point roughly 43 percent of the operational area of Army Group Center was considered "gang-infested," about 30 percent as "threatened by gangs." *Region before and after the "Hagen" Maneuver*, BA-MA WF-03/5375, 1211f. Summary report on orders of the Ia (von Voß) of 8 August 1943 (*ibid.*, 1215) by "Obtln. v. Schlabrendorff."
45. BA-MA RH 19 II/172, 11 as well as 33–60, quotations on 45 and 57, also BA-MA WF-03/5367, cf. WF-03/7422, 1195–1199.
46. Copy in BA-MA RH 19 II/173, 48.
47. See Boeselager, *Der Widerstand*, 16–23.
48. *Der Kreisauer Kreis. Porträt einer Widerstandsgruppe. Begleitband zu einer Ausstellung der Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz* (Berlin: 1985), 21.
49. See Economic Staff East, Staff Order Nr. 22/43, 13 July 1943, BA-MA RW 31/34; personnel list for the fourth quarter of 1942, BA-MA (BArchP) F 43386, 1121. At the end of 1943, he was promoted to Gruppenleiter: see personnel list for the period of 31 December 1943 to 1 April 1944, BA-MA (BArchP) F 43390, 474, und BA-MA RW 31/39, 154ff.
50. See Hoffmann, *Widerstand*, 486.
51. Chefgruppe La Ia 91/43 g.Kdos. of 20 May 1943 concerning a telephone conversation with Yorck on the same day, as well as a communication of the General Staff of the Army/General Quartermaster to Economic Staff East on 5 May 1943 (copy); BA-MA RW 3 1/250, 46 and 50.
52. Documents for the conference of 25 May 1943 with the report of Economic Staff East of 22 May 1943 and addenda 1–21 in Moscow Special Archive, 700-1-50, 153-197; an incomplete version is also in IZ Fb 101/34.
53. See the final report on operations in the "Wet Triangle" on 10 June and "Seydlitz" of 30 July 1943 in the War Diary of the SS Cavalry Division, BA F 41848, 1188-90 and 1666, also the bimonthly report of the chief of units combating gangs of Reichsführer-SS of 6 August 1943; Zentrale Stelle Ludwigsburg, 202 AR-Z 52/59, Evidence Vol. 10, 99.
54. In the files of the HTO, Fiduciary Office in Kattowitz, there is a written report, dated 13 July 1943, on the conversation with the executives of the real estate companies in the Gau that took place on 7 July 1943; among those listed as present, under the heading "from the HTO," appears "Graf York von Warthenburg." Peter Yorck was Oberregierungsrat beginning in 1938 and had served from 1936 to 1942 in the department responsible for policy decisions for the Reichskommissar for Price Control. See *Der Kreisauer Kreis*, 24. In the meeting referred to here, the "York" listed among those attending expressed expert opinions with regard to price structures. BA F 72661, therein "F 16203," 103–112.
55. The statement was repeated by Marion Gräfin von Dönhoff and is quoted in Ines Reich and Kurt Finker, "Poisdam und der 20. Juli 1944," in *Brandenburg in der NS-Zeit*, ed. Dietrich Eichholtz (Berlin: 1993), 337. Similar attribution was made by Kaltenbrunner to Bormann, on 25 August 1944, in *Spiegelbild einer Verschwörung* (Stuttgart: 1961), 299–301.
56. Kaltenbrunner to Bormann, 31 July 1944, *ibid.*, 110.

57. Army High Command 2, Nr. 4758/44 of 28 June 1944, MZAP WF-03/26818, 299. "OT" means "Organisation Todt," the official institution for construction works of military use.
58. Note of the Head of the Führungsstab Politik (in the Ostministerium)—pers. ref.—12 June 1944, quoted in Barbara Bromberger and Hans Mausbach, *Feinde des Lebens* (Cologne: 1987), 185ff.
59. Of incidental interest is the fact that Henning von Tresckow is listed in at least one of the shadow governments drawn up by the conspirators as "Head of the German Police" in the Reich Ministry of the Interior, hence as Himmler's successor. Kaltenbrunner to Bormann on 27 July 1944, in *Spiegelbild einer Verschwörung*, 61.
60. See Himmler's notation for the date 15 July 1942, Moscow Special Archive 1372-5-23, 171, and the Foreign Office's *Special Report on India*, by Dr. vom Trost zu Solz (secret) of 21 August 1942 to Himmler's personal adjutant Grothmann, BA, F 3327, 3078.
61. See note of Economic Staff East, Chefgruppe La on 23 May 1942, MZAP (BArchP) F 42749, 973f.
62. The statement was attributed to Stieff by Kaltenbrunner to Bormann on 28 July 1944; see *Spiegelbild einer Verschwörung*, 90.