NAZI POLICY, JEWISH WORKERS, GERMAN KILLERS

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FROM "ETHNIC CLEANSING" TO GENOCIDE TO THE "FINAL SOLUTION"

The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, 1939–1941

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

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

how Hitler and the Nazi system functioned and how historically the fateful line was crossed between population decimation and genocide on the one hand and the Final Solution and Holocaust on the other.

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

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

In the months before the invasion of Poland, Hitler made clear on several occasions that the outbreak of war would set a new level of expectation on his part. For instance, in his Reichstag speech of January 1939, he prophesied that a world war would mean the destruction of

the Jews in Europe. And to his generals on August 22, he called for a "brutal attitude," "the destruction of Poland," and the "elimination of living forces."[1] When Quartermaster General Eduard Wagner asked Reinhard Heydrich about the tasks of the Einsatzgruppen, he was bluntly informed: "Fundamental cleansing: Jews, intelligentsia, clergy, nobles" *(Flurbereinigung: Judentum, Intelligenz, Geistlichkeit, Adel).*[2] But what did *Flurbereinigung* mean? How were Hitler's prophesies and exhortations transformed by his eager subordinates, especially Heinrich Himmler and Heydrich, into specific and concrete policies?

The arrest and decimation of Poland's leadership classes seem to have been decided even before the invasion.[3] But plans for a more sweeping demographic reorganization of Poland, including a solution to the Jewish question, emerged only during the month of September. On September 7 Heydrich told his division heads that Poland would be partitioned and Germany's boundary would be moved eastward. Poles and Jews in the border region annexed to the Third Reich would be deported to whatever remained of Poland.[4] A week later Heydrich discussed the Jewish question before the same audience and noted: "Proposals are being submitted to the Führer by the Reichsführer, that only the Führer can decide, because they will be of considerable significance for foreign policy as well."[5] The nature of these proposals was

[1] *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression* (hereafter cited as NCA), III, p. 665 (1014-PS); Franz Halder, *Kriegstagebuch* (Stuttgart, 1962), I, p. 25; Winfried Baumgart, "Zur Ansprache Hitlers vor den Führern der Wehrmacht am 22. August 1939," *Vierteljahresheft für Zeitgeschichte* (hereafter cited as VfZ), 1968, pp. 120–149.

[2] Halder, *Kriegstagebuch*, I, p. 79.

[3] Heydrich and Quartermaster General Eduard Wagner reached agreement in August that the Einsatzgruppen would arrest all potential enemies – that is, all "who oppose the measures of the German authorities, or obviously want and are able to stir up unrest due to their position and stature" (*die sich dem Massnahmen der deutschen Amtsstellen widersetzen oder offensichtlich gewillt und auf Grund ihrer Stellung und ihres Ansehens in der Lage sind, Unruhe zu stiften*). According to Wagner, the Einsatzgruppen had lists of 30,000 people to be sent to concentration camps. Edward Wagner, *Der Generalquartiermeister: Briefe und Tagebuch Eduard Wagners*, ed. by Elisabeth Wagner (Munich, 1963), pp. 103–4. In early September, Wilhelm Canaris pointed out to Wilhelm Keitel that he "knew that extensive executions were planned in Poland and that particularly the nobility and the clergy were to be exterminated." Keitel confirmed that "the Führer had already decided on this matter." NCA, V, p. 769 (3047-PS).

[4] National Archives (hereafter cited as NA), T175/239/2728499-502 (conference of Heydrich's division heads, 7.9.39).

[5] NA, T175/239/2728513-5 (conference of Heydrich's division heads, 14.9.39).

revealed the following week, when Heydrich met not only with his division heads but also the Einsatzgruppen leaders and his expert on Jewish emigration, Adolf Eichmann. Concerning Poles, the top leaders were to be sent to concentration camps, the middle echelon were to be arrested and deported to rump Poland, and "primitive" Poles were to be used temporarily as migrant labor and then gradually resettled, as the border territories became pure German provinces. According to Heydrich, "The deportation of Jews into the non-German region, expulsion over the demarcation line is approved by the Führer." This "long-term goal," or *Endziel,* would be achieved over the next year. However, "in order to have a better possibility of control and later of deportation," the immediate concentration of Jews into ghettos in the cities was an urgent "short-term goal," or *Nahziel.* The area east of Cracow and north of the Slovak border was explicitly exempted from these concentration measures, for it was to this region that the Jews as well as "all Gypsies and other undesirables" were eventually to be deported.[6]

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

[6] NA, T175/239/2728524-8 (conference of Heydrich's division heads, 21.9.39); NCA, VI, pp. 97–101 (3363-PS); Helmuth Groscurth, *Tagebücher eines Abwehroffiziers 1938–40,* ed. by Helmuth Krausnick and Harold Deutsch (Stuttgart, 1970), p. 362 (document nr. 14, Groscurth memorandum over verbal orientation by Major Radke, 22.9.39).

[7] *Das politische Tagebuch Alfred Rosenbergs,* ed. by Hans-Günther Seraphim (Göttingen, 1956), p. 81. NA, T175/239/2728531-2 (conference of Heydrich's division heads, 29.9.39). According to Götz Aly, *"Endlösung": Völkerverschiebung und der Mord an den europäischen Juden* (Frankfurt/M., 1995), p. 39, the decision to repatriate all Baltic Germans from the Soviet sphere was reached between Hitler and Himmler only on September 27.

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

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

[8] Aly, *"Endlösung,"* esp. pp. 13–17; Aly and Susanne Heim, *Vordenker der Vernichtung. Auschwitz und die Pläne für eine neue europäische Ordnung* (Hamburg, 1991); Michael Burleigh, *Germany Turns Eastward. A Study of Ostforschung in the Third Reich* (Cambridge, 1988); Hans Mommsen, "Umvolkungspläne des Nationalsozialismus und der Holocaust," *Die Normalität des Verbrechens: Bilanz und Perspektiven der Forschung zu nationalsozialistischen Gewaltverbrechen* (Berlin, 1994), pp. 68–84. Deborah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt, *Auschwitz: 1270 to the Present* (New York, 1996), pp. 66–159.

[9] Klaus-Jürgen Müller, *Das Heer und Hitler. Armee und nationalsozialistische Regime 1933–40* (Stuttgart, 1969), pp. 671–2 (document nr. 47: Heydrich to Einsatzgruppen leaders, 30.9.39).

experiences, in order . . . to be able to carry out evacuations in much greater numbers."[10]

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

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

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

[10] Yad Vashem Archives (hereafter cited as YVA), 0-53/93/283, Eichmann Vermerk, 6.10.39. For general studies of the Nisko Plan, see: Seev Goshen, "Eichmann und die Nisko-Aktion im Oktober 1939," VfZ 19/1 (January 1981), pp. 74–96; Jonny Moser, "Nisko: The First Experiment in Deportation," *The Simon Wiesenthal Center Annual*, II (1985), pp. 1–30; H. G. Adler, *Der Verwaltete Mensch* (Tübingen, 1974), pp. 126–140.

[11] Gerhard Botz, *Wohnungspolitik und Judendeportation in Wien 1938 bis 1945: Zur Funktion des Antisemitismus als Ersatz nationalsozialistischer Sozialpolitik* (Vienna, 1975), pp. 164–86 (document VII: Becker memorandum, 11.10.39).

[12] YVA, 0-53/93/299-300 (Eichmann to Nebe, 16.10.39) and 227–9 (Günther-Braune FS-Fernspräch, 18.10.39.

[13] YVA, O-53/93/235-8 (R. Günther Tagesbericht, 19.10.39), 220 (undated R. Günther telegram), and 244 (R. Günther Vermerk, 21.10.39).

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

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

[14] Botz, *Wohungspolitik und Judendeportationen*, p. 196 (document X, Himmler to Bürckel, 9.11.39).

[15] Hans Umbreit, *Deutsche Militärverwaltungen 1938/39* (Stuttgart, 1977), p. 218.

[16] *Trials of the War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal* (hereafter cited as IMT), vol. 26, pp. 378–9, 381–3 (864-PS).

[17] *Faschismus, Getto, Massenmord* (hereafter cited as FGM) [Berlin (East), 1960], pp. 42–3 (NO-4059); YVA, JM 21/1, Frank Tagebuch: Streckenbach report of 31.10.39; *Biuletyn Glownej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich W Polsce* (hereafter cited as *Biuletyn*), XI, pp. 11F–14F, and Hans Frank, *Diensttagebuch des deutschen Generalgouverneurs in Polen 1939–1945*, ed. by Werner Präg and Wolfgang Jacobmeyer (Stuttgart, 1975), pp. 60–1 (conference of 8.11.39).

established General Government were to be moved from west to east of the Vistula the following year.[18]

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

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

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

[18] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (hereafter cited as USHMM), RG 15.005m, 2/104/15 (Müller, RSHA, to EG VI in Posen, 8.11.39).
[19] IMT, vol. 30, p. 95 (2278-PS).
[20] FGM, p. 46 (Frank speech in Radom, 25.11.39).
[21] Umbreit, *Militärverwaltung,* pp. 216–21.
[22] Aly, *"Endlösung,"* pp. 114–26.
[23] Herbert Levine, "Local Authority and the SS State: The Conflict over Population Policy in Danzig–West Prussia," *Central European History,* II/4 (1969), pp. 331–55.
[24] YVA: O-53/69/639–41 (Polizeisitzung in Danzig, 15.11.39) and 642–3 (conference of 20.11.39); JM 3582 (Hildebrandt speech, 26.11.39).

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

The Germans in the Warthegau exceeded the quota and reported triumphantly that they had succeeded in deporting over 87,000 "Poles and Jews" by December 17, 1941. The primary thrust of the "first short-range plan" (*1. Nahplan*) was not to solve the Jewish question but rather to remove Poles who posed "an immediate danger" and find space for the Baltic Germans.[27] The reason why the precise number or percentage of Jews among the expellees was not reported becomes clear from local documents. In Lodz local authorities had been too incompetent or inefficient to identify "politically suspicious and intellectual Poles" in sufficient numbers to fill their quotas. Thus they had "had to fall back on Jews."[28] The indiscriminate seizure of Jews was obviously administratively easier than the selective seizure of Poles. In the end, about 10,000 Jews were deported, mostly from Lodz after all, owing to the insufficient number of deportable Poles identified and listed by the local authorities. This figure of 10,000 Jewish deportees from Lodz was not included in the self-congratulatory final reports on the "first short-range plan," because it was evidence not of a success in

[25] *Biuletyn,* XII, pp. 15F–18F (Heydrich to HSSPF Cracow, Breslau, Posen, Danzig, 28.11.39; and Heydrich to Krüger, Streckenbach, Koppe, and Damzog, 28.11.39).
[26] USHMM, RG 15.015m, 1/5/4-7 (Rapp draft, 10.11.39) and 2/99/1-5 (Koppe circular, 12.11.39).
[27] *Biuletyn,* XII, pp. 22F–31F, and USHMM, RG 11.001m, 1/88/185–202 (Rapp report, 18.12.39); YVA, JM 3582, and USHMM, RG 15.015m, 3/208/1–12 (Rapp report, 26.1.40).
[28] USHMM, RG 15.015m, 3/218/13–14 (undated Richter report) and 27–35 (Richter report, 16.12.39).

deporting Jews but rather of a failure to identify and seize Polish political activists and intelligentsia.

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

However, despite the German recommitment to the immediate expulsion of all Jews from the incorporated territories, the problems that stood in the way of realization of expelling both Jews and Poles only multiplied in the new year. The arrival of 40,000 Baltic Germans was to be quickly followed by a further deluge of 120,000 Volhynian Germans. Hans Frank, so enthusiastic the previous fall, was now considerably sobered. He complained bitterly about the impact of the chaotic deportations of the "first short-range plan" and emphasized the limited absorptive capacity of the General Government.[34] The latter had been a matter of no concern in the fall of 1939 but increasingly became so as Hermann Göring insisted upon harnessing the productive capacities of the conquered territories to the war effort.[35] There were other problems as well. No trains were available until mid-February.[36] And Himmler, worried about a sufficient stock of German

[29] YVA, JM 3581 (RSHA II/112 an den Leiter II im Hause, 19.12.39).
[30] YVA, JM 3581 (Heydrich to Sipo-SD in Cracow, Breslau, Posen, Danzig, and Königsberg, 21.12.39).
[31] YVA, JM 3581 (Müller to all Staatspolizeistellen, 21.12.39).
[32] USHMM, RG 15.015m, 2.97/1–7 (2. Nahplan, 21.12.39).
[33] *Biuletyn,* XII, pp. 37F–39F (Abromeit Vermerk of 8.1.40 on conference of 4.1.40).
[34] *Biuletyn,* XII, pp. 37F–39F (Abromeit Vermerk of 8.1.40 on conference of 4.1.40; FGM, pp. 48 and 53 (reports of Gschliesser and Wächter); *Documenta Occupationis* (hereafter cited as DO), vol. 8, pp. 37–8 (report of Mattern); IMT, vol. 26, pp. 210–12. (661-PS); Frank, *Diensttagebuch,* pp. 93–7 (Abteilungsleitersitzung, 19.1.40).
[35] Aly, *"Endlösung,"* pp. 113–14.
[36] USHMM, RG 15.015m, 1/96/12–13 (Krumey report, 30.1.40, on Leipzig Fahrplanbesprechung of 26–27.1.40).

blood to repopulate the incorporated territories, insisted that cases of contested ethnic German status and Poles capable of Germanization not be deported without screening; hence only Jews and recent Polish emigrants but not longtime Polish residents were to be deported.[37] But that often meant exempting the political and economic leadership classes whose property was needed for accommodating incoming ethnic Germans while deporting the propertyless Polish workers most needed for economic production. The labor issue was intensified further when the Warthegau was targeted to provide 800,000 agricultural workers for the Reich. German occupation authorities immediately demanded that further deportations to the General Government had to be stopped if local labor needs were to be covered.[38]

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

The Nazi leadership attempted to solve this welter of self-imposed contradictions with very limited success. On January 30, 1940, Heydrich chaired a meeting of leading officials from the occupied east, his own Reich Security Main Office, and Göring's representative, at which the hoped-for expulsion of all Jews was postponed once again. The deportation of 40,000 Jews and Poles for the purpose of "making room" (*Platzschaffung*) for the remaining Baltic Germans –

[37] Nuremberg Document NO-5411 (Creutz to Koppe, 18.1.40); *Biuletyn,* XII, pp. 44F–45F (Vermerk of Eichmann Seidl conversation, 22–23.1.40).
[38] USHMM, RG 15.015m, 2/146/9–15 (meeting of 11.1.40).

the so-called intermediate plan (*Zwischenplan*) – was now to be followed by an "another improvised clearing" of 120,000 Poles to provide space for the Volhynian Germans – a "second short-range plan." Unlike the urban Baltic Germans, the Volhynian Germans were a rural population, for whom the removal of Jews was even less relevant. Thus the evacuation of all Jews from the incorporated territories would take place only "as the last mass movement."[39]

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

Himmler took for granted that the Baltic and Volhynian resettlements would continue in what were now designated the "intermediate" and "second short-range" plans. But Himmler agreed to postpone the resettlement of a further 40,000 Lithuanian Germans, 80,000 to 100,000 Bukovinian Germans, and 100,000 to 130,000 Bessarabian Germans, as well as the ethnic Germans west of the Vistula. However, the 30,000 ethnic Germans in the Lublin district east of the Vistula would have to be resettled, he insisted, because their present homeland was destined to become the *Judenreservat.* Finally, Himmler assured Frank that they "would reach agreement upon the procedures of future evacuations."[40]

Back in the General Government in early March, Frank explained what he thought had been agreed upon. The General Government would receive 400,000 to 600,000 Jews, who would be placed along the eastern border. "It is indescribable, what views have formed in the Reich, that the region of the General Government east of the Vistula is increasingly considered as some kind of Jewish reservation," he noted. The final goal was to make the German Reich free of Jews, but "that

[39] *Biuletyn,* XII, pp. 66F–75F (NO-5322: conference of 30.1.40); USHMM, RG 15.015m, 12/109/1–3 (Rapp Vermerk, 1.2.40).

[40] IMT, vol. 36, pp. 300–306 (EC-305).

that shall not occur in a year and especially not under the circumstances of war, Berlin also recognizes." Moreover, no resettlement actions would take place without prior approval from the General Government. And most important, "the great resettlement ideas have indeed been given up. The idea that one could gradually transport 7.5 million Poles to the General Government has been fully abandoned."[41]

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

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

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

Sometime in May 1940 Himmler drafted a memorandum entitled "Some Thoughts on the Treatment of Alien Populations in the East."

[41] Frank, *Diensttagebuch,* pp. 131 and 146–7 (Sitzung des Reichsverteidigungsausschuss, Warsaw, 2.3.40, and Dienstversammalung der Kreis und Stadthauptmänner des Distrikts Lublin, 4.3.40).

[42] Frank, *Diensttagebuch,* pp. 158 (entry of 5.4.40) and 204 (entry of 19.5.40); *Dokumently i Materialy Do Dziejow Okupacji Niemieckiej W Polsce,* III, *Getto Lodzkie* (Warsaw, 1946), pp. 168–9 (Riegierungspräsident to officials of Bezirk Lodz and Kalish, 8.5.40).

[43] *Documents on German Foreign Policy,* D, VIII, p. 912–13.

The 15 million people of the General Government and 8 million of the incorporated territories – "ethnic mush" (*Völkerbrei*) in Himmler's view – were to be splintered into as many ethnic groups as possible for "screening and sifting" (*Sichtung und Siebung*). Himmler wanted "to fish out of this mush the racially valuable" to be assimilated in Germany, with the rest to be dumped into the General Government, where they would serve as a reservoir of migrant labor and eventually lose their national identity.

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

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

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

Heydrich rather than Himmler in fact met with Hans Frank on June 12. However, "in view of the dire situation" in the General Government it was agreed for the moment not to go beyond the Karinhall accord – that is, the Volhynian action then in progress followed by the general expulsion of Jews scheduled for August.[45] For Frank, even these expulsions loomed as catastrophic, given the food shortages in the General Government.[46] For the beleaguered Frank, a surprising order from Himmler suddenly stopping the impending expulsion of the Jews into the General Government came as a veritable deliverance.[47] Himmler had found his colony in Africa for the Jews!

For decades the island of Madagascar had exercised a fantastical attraction for European anti-Semites as a place for Europe's expelled Jews.[48] It had been frequently mentioned by leading Nazis since 1938, most recently by Frank in January 1940.[49] With the lightning defeat of France, it was a freakish idea whose time had suddenly come. In another example of timely initiative from below that dovetailed with changes in circumstance and policy at the top, the newly appointed Jewish expert of the German Foreign Office, Franz Rademacher, pro-

[44] Helmut Krausnick, ed., "Einige Gedanke über die Behandlung der fremdvölkischen im Osten," VfZ, V/2 (1957), pp. 194–98.

[45] *Biuletyn*, XII, pp. 94F–95F (R. Günther to Höppner, 1.7.40).

[46] Frank, *Diensttagebuch*, pp. 210, 216 (Polizeisitzung, 30.5.40); Nuremberg Document NG-1627 (Frank to Lammers, 25.6.40).

[47] *Biuletyn*, XII, pp. 96F–97F (Vermerk on Höppner-IV D 4 discussion, 9.7.40).

[48] For the most recent scholarship on the European anti-Semitic tradition and the Madagascar Plan, see: Magnus Brechtken, *"Madagaskar für die Juden": Antisemitische Idee und politische Praxis 1995–1945* (Munich, 1997), and Hans Jansen, *Der Madagaskar-Plan: Die beabsichtigte Deportation der europäischen Juden nach Madagaskar* (Munich, 1997).

[49] IMT, vol. 26, pp. 210–22 (661-PS).

posed that in planning for the peace treaty with France, Germany consider removing the newly acquired west European Jews to the French colony of Madagascar.[50] The proposal not only moved up the hierarchy with incredible speed but also was quickly expanded to include all European Jews. On June 18, both Hitler and Joachim von Ribbentrop mentioned the plan to use Madagascar for a Jewish reservation to Benito Mussolini and Galeazzo Ciano respectively in their talks in Munich over the fate of the French empire.[51] By June 24, 1940, Heydrich had gotten wind of the project and asserted his long-standing jurisdiction over Jewish emigration. He insisted that he be included in any discussions Ribbentrop was planning on a "territorial solution" to the Jewish question.[52] Ribbentrop immediately conceded, and henceforth planning on the Madagascar Plan was a mixture of cooperation and competition between the Foreign Office and SS.[53]

The demise of the Lublin reservation and the emergence of the new Madagascar Plan was, in Frank's words, a "colossal relief" ("*kolossale Entlastung*") for German officials in the General Government.[54] Two fundamental changes in policy immediately resulted. First, "an order from Cracow [Frank's capital] was issued to stop all work on ghetto construction in view of the fact that, according to the plan of the Führer, the Jews of Europe were to be sent to Madagascar at the end of the war and thus ghetto building was for all practical purposes illusory."[55] Second, when Frank met with Gauleiter Arthur Greiser of the Warthegau in late July, the latter conceded that according to Himmler the Jews were now to be sent overseas. Nevertheless, as an interim measure he was still desperate to resettle Jews from the starving Lodz ghetto into the General Government in August as previously planned. Frank flatly refused and advised Greiser instead to see that the Lodz Jews were considered first in line for Madagascar if their situation were so impossible.[56]

[50] Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes (hereafter PA), Inland II A/B 347/3, Rademacher memorandum "Gedanken über die Arbeit und Aufgaben des Ref. D III, 3.6.40." A synopsis of this memorandum is Nuremberg Document NG-5764.

[51] Paul Schmidt, *Hitler's Interpreter* (New York, 1951), p. 178; Galeazzo Ciano, *The Ciano Diaries 1939–43* (Garden City, NY, 1947), pp. 265–6. Two days later, on June 20, Hitler repeated his intention to resettle the European Jews on Madagascar to Admiral Raeder. Klaus Hildebrand, *Vom Reich zum Weltreich: Hitler, NSDAP, und koloniale Frage 1919–1945* (Munich, 1969), pp. 651–2.

[52] PA, Inland IIg 177, Heydrich to Ribbentrop, 24.6.40.

[53] For the details of this planning, see: Christopher R. Browning, *The Final Solution and the German Foreign Office* (New York, 1978), pp. 35–43.

[54] Frank, *Diensttagebuch*, p. 248 (entry of 10.7.40) for HSSPF Friedrich Wilhelm Krüger's announcement of the news), and pp. 252 and 258 (Abteilungsleitersitzung, 12.7.40, and entry of 25.7.40) for Frank's boisterous reception.

[55] FGM, p. 110 (Schön report, 20.1.40).

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

In the summer and fall of 1940, German ethnic cleansing continued to encounter difficulties. The Germans expelled over 70,000 people from Alsace–Lorraine and blocked the return of an additional 70,000 refugees who had fled.[57] Gauleiter Robert Wagner took the opportunity to propose expelling the Jews of Baden and Pfalz at the same time, and Hitler "impulsively" agreed.[58] Some 6,500 German Jews were expelled

[56] Frank, *Diensttagebuch*, pp. 261–3 (entry of 31.7.40).

[57] IMT, vol. 31, pp. 283–94 (2916-PS); Akten der Partei-Kanzlei der NSDAP, 101 23821 (Chef der Zivilverwaltung in Elsass, 22.4.41, to Martin Bormann).

[58] Bundesarchiv Koblenz, All. Proz. 6/Eichmann Interrogation, I, pp. 141–5; Jacob Toury, "Die Entstehungsgeschichte des Austreibungsbefehle gegen die Juden der Saarpfalz und Baden (22/23. Oktober 1940) – Camp de Gurs," *Jahrbuch des Instituts für Deutsche Geschichte*, Beihefte X (1986), pp. 435–64.

over the demarcation line into southern France, but the ensuing diplomatic complications with the Vichy government ensured that this measure was not repeatable.

In the east, the "second short-range plan" was somewhat expanded and considerably delayed. As part of the expanded plan, the so-called Cholmer Aktion for the repatriation of ethnic Germans from the eastern border of the Lublin district was particularly significant because it also involved the reciprocal exchange of Poles and ethnic Germans between the Lublin district and the incorporated territories.[59] These ethnic Germans came from within the German sphere and were thus in no imminent danger. In short, repatriating ethnic Germans to the incorporated territories was not just a reactive measure to rescue ethnic Germans from the Soviet sphere but a program carried out for its own sake. The vision of Germanizing the new borderlands fired Himmler's imagination as a historic mission of great consequence. This was the construction of German *Lebensraum* as understood at the time. Two years later, the Germans would try to reverse the Cholmer Aktion with the Zamosc Aktion, resettling Germans in areas from which they had in fact been recently removed. With ethnic German resettlement as with the Lublin and Madagascar plans, the hindsight perspectives of Generalplan Ost and Auschwitz are not the proper yardstick by which to measure Himmler's ideological horizon in the summer of 1940.

By the time the "second short-range plan" was concluded six months behind schedule in December 1941, the Germans had expelled some 460,000 people, of whom at least 36,000 or approximately 8 percent were Jews.[60] (Vastly greater numbers of Jews, of course, had fled on their own as refugees from the incorporated territories to the General Government and from the General Government over the demarcation line into the Soviet sphere). The Nazis, therefore, had achieved only a pathetic fraction of the overall goals and expectations of ethnic cleansing that they had set in the fall of 1939. Progress toward solving their self-imposed Jewish problem in particular was

[59] USHMM, RG 15.015m: 2/115/38 (conference of Ansiedlugnstab, Posen, 12.7.40), 40–41 (Höppner to Eichmann and Ehlich, 12.7.40), and 50 (Krumey Aktenvermerk, 21.8.40); 3/228/3 (Aufstellung der Cholmer Aktion).

[60] The sources for these statistics are too lengthy to include here but are based on my manuscript, "The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939–March 1942," to be published as part of Yad Vashem's multivolume history of the Holocaust.

even more scant. In the repatriation of ethnic Germans, at least from the Soviet zone, they had come closer to meeting expectations, but the difficulties and delays in moving them from transit camps to permanent resettlement was yet another source of frustration.

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

As the pioneering research of Götz Aly has now shown, the "third short-range plan" for the intensified expulsion of Poles was paralleled by yet another plan for the expulsion of the Jews beyond those of Lublin and Madagascar. On December 4, Eichmann submitted to Himmler a brief summary on the status of the Jewish question, noting that 5.8 million European Jews had to be taken into consideration for resettlement to a destination mysteriously characterized as "a territory yet to be determined" ("*ein noch zu bestimmendes Territorium*"). Clearly the General Government was not this mysterious destination, for its Jews formed the bulk of the 5.8 million to be expelled, and as Himmler wrote concerning the General Government, in notes for a speech delivered 1 week later: "Jewish emigration and thus yet more space for Poles"

[61] At the October 2, 1940, meeting of Hitler and the eastern Gauleiter: IMT, vol. 39, pp. 426–9 (USSR-172). At the November 2, 1940, meeting of Hitler with Frank and Greiser: Frank, *Diensttagebuch*, p. 302 (entry of 6.11.40). For December: Ibid., p. 327 (entry of 15.1.41). For the Vienna Jews: NCA, IV, p. 592 (1950-PS).

[62] Frank, *Diensttagebuch*, p. 327 (conference of 15.1.41); USHMM, RG 15.105m, 3/199/4-6 (Vermerk on conference of 8.1.41) and 8-9 (Höppner Aktenvermerk on Fahrplankonferenz in Posen on 16.1.41); *Biuletyn*, XII, p. 127F (Krumey to Eichmann, 6.1.41); YVA, JM 3582 (Abschlussbericht 1941).

(*"Judenauswanderung und damit noch mehr Platz für Polen"*).[63] Himmler's speech was given on the eve of the finalization of two important policies in December 1941, namely the "third short-range plan" for sending more than 1 million Poles from the incorporated territories into the General Government and the decision to invade the Soviet Union. The latter, because it obviously could not be talked about openly, had to be referred to in code language as a "territory yet to be determined" and was to provide the destination for Jewish expulsion. This in turn would break the demographic impasse in the General Government and create space for the realization of the ambitious "third short-range plan."

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

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

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

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

[63] Susanne Heim and Götz Aly, eds., *Beiträge zur nationalsozialistischen Gesundheits und Sozialpolitik,* vol. 9: *Bevölkerungsstrukture und Massenmord: Neue Dokumente zur deutschen Politik der Jahre 1938–1945* (Berlin, 1991), pp. 24–7 (Eichmann summary "submitted to the RFSS," 4.12.40; Aly, *"Endlösung,"* pp. 195–200.

[64] Cited in: Serge Klarsfeld, *Vichy-Auschwitz: Die Zusammenarbeit der deutschen und französischen Behörden bei der "Endlösung der Judenfrage: in Frankreich* (Nördlingen, 1989), pp. 361–3. In February 1941 Heydrich also dropped reference to the Madagascar Plan and wrote Undersecretary Martin Luther in the Foreign Office about a "later total solution to the Jewish question" (*"späteren Gesamtlösung des Judenproblmes"*) to be achieved through "sending them off to the country that will be chosen later" (*"nach dem zukünftigen Bestimmungslande abzutransportieren"*) PA, Inland II A/B 809-41 Sdh. III, Bd. 1, Heydrich to Luther, 5.2.41.

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

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

As Aly has pointed out, the reference to Rosenberg's jurisdiction – he was soon to be designated the future minister of the occupied Soviet territories – indicates once again that the proverbial territory yet to be determined was the Soviet Union.[65]

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

[65] Cited in: Aly, *"Endlösung,"* p. 270, with Aly's analysis, pp. 271–2. The document is from the Moscow Special Archives, 500/3/795.

[66] *Trials of the War Criminals before the American Military Tribunal,* I, p. 732 (testimony of Viktor Brack, May 1947); Nuremberg Documents NO-203 (Brack to Himmler, 28.3.41) and NO-204 (Tiefenbacher to Brack, 12.5.41).

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

Hitler's declarations that the war against the Soviet Union would not be a conventional war but rather a conflict of ideologies and races and that one avowed war aim was the "removal" of "Judeo-Bolshevik intelligentsia"[67] evoked responses from both the SS and the Wehrmacht. Himmler and Heydrich created the Einsatzgruppen and procured military agreement for their operation up to the front lines. The German military itself stripped the civilian population of protection of law by restricting military court martial jurisdiction and mandating collective reprisal. And it prepared to make its own contribution to the elimination of Judeo-Bolshevism through dissemination of the infamous "commissar order" and the equally infamous guidelines for troop behavior that equated Jews with Bolshevik agitators, guerrillas, and saboteurs.[68]

[67] *Kriegstagebuch des Oberkommandos der Wehrmacht 1940–1941*, I, pp. 341–2 (entry for 3.3.41).

[68] For the growing body of literature on Germany's preparation for a war of destruction in the Soviet Union, see: Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, "Kommissarbefehl und Massenexekutionen sowjetischer Kreigsgefangener," *Anatomie des SS-Staates* (Freiburg, 1965), II, pp. 161–278; Andreas Hillgruber, "Die 'Endlösung' und das deutsche Ostimperium als Kernstück des rassenideologischen Programmes des nationalsozialismus," VfZ, 20 (1972), pp. 133–53; Christian Streit, *Keine Kameraden: Die Wehrmacht und die sowjetischen Kreigsgefangenen, 1941–1945* (Stuttgart, 1978); Helmut Krausnick and Hans-Heinrich Wilhelm, *Die Truppe des Weltanschauungskrieges: Die Einsatzgruppen des Sicherheitspolizei und des SD, 1938–1942* (Stuttgart, 1981); Helmut Krausnick, "Kommissarbefehl und 'Gerichtsbarkeiterlass Barbarossa' in neuer Sicht," VfZ, 25 (1977), pp. 682–738; and especially the contributions of Jürgen Förster in *Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg,* IV, *Der Angriff auf die Sowjetunion* (Stuttgart, 1983), pp. 3–37, 413–47, 1030–88.

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

Himmler was not to be outdone by the military and ministerial plans for the starvation death of "umpteen million" Soviet citizens and the forced migration to Siberia of millions more. Meeting on June 12–15, 1941, in his renovated Saxon castle at Wewelsburg with his top SS associates and the designated higher SS and police leaders (HSSPF) for Soviet territory, Himmler sketched out his own vision of the coming conflict. "It is a question of existence, thus it will be a racial struggle of pitiless severity, in the course of which 20 to 30 million Slavs and Jews will perish through military actions and crises of food supply."[72] And on June 24, 1941, Himmler entrusted one of his demographic planners, Professor Konrad Meyer, with drawing up Generalplan Ost, which in one version would call for the expulsion of 31 million Slavs into Siberia.[73] In short, within the SS, ministerial

[69] For military plans for economic exploitation: Rolf-Dieter Müller, "Von Wirtchaftsallianz zum kolonial Ausbeutungskrieg," *Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg,* IV, *Der Angriff auf dem Sowjetunion,* esp. pp. 125–29 and 146–52.

[70] IMT, vol. 36, pp. 141–45 (126-EC: report of Wirtschaftsstab Ost, 23.5.41).

[71] IMT, vol. 31, p. 84 (2718-PS: state secretaries' meeting, 2.5.41).

[72] The Wewelsburg meeting has now been dated to June 12–15, 1941, according to Himmler's Terminkalendar found in the Moscow Secret Archives (Osobyi 1372-5-23. The accession number for the copy in the US Holocaust Memorial Museum is: 1997.A.0328). I am grateful to Dr. Jürgen Matthäus for providing me with a copy of this document. Testifying at the trial of Karl Wolff in Munich, Bach-Zelewski erroneously dated the meeting to March 1941. JNSV, XX (Nr. 580, LG München II 1 Ks 1/64), p. 413. At his even earlier Nürnberg testimony, Bach-Zelewski said that it had taken place early in 1941. IMT, vol. 4, pp. 482–88.

[73] Dietrich Eichholz, "Der 'Generalplan Ost.' Über eine Ausgeburt imperialistischer Denkart und Politik," *Jahrbuch für Geschichte,* 26 (1982), p. 256 (Doc. Nr. 2: Meyer to Himmler, 15.7.41). Richard Breitman, *The Architect of Genocide: Himmler and the Final Solution* (New York, 1991), p. 168. Helmut Heiber, "Der Generalplan Ost," *Vierteljarhshefte für Zeitgeschichte,* 3 (1958), 300–313 (Doc.Nr. 2: Stellungnahme und Gedanken zum Generalplan Ost des Reichsführer SS, by Wetzel, 27.4.42).

bureaucracy, and military, there was a broad consensus on what the German scholar Christian Gerlach has aptly dubbed the "hunger plan" as well as ever vaster schemes of "ethnic cleansing."[74]

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

In my opinion, the last months before and the first weeks after the invasion of the Soviet Union can best be seen as an important transi-

[74] Christian Gerlach, *Krieg, Ernährung, Völkermord: Forschungen zur deutschen Vernichtungspolitik im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Berlin, 1998) pp. 13–30.

[75] Heydrich to HSSPFs Jeckeln, v.d. Bach, Prützmann, and Korsemann, 2.7.41, printed in: Peter Klein, ed., *Die Einsatzgruppen in der besetzten Sowjetunion 1941/42: Die Tätigskeits und Lageberichte des Chefs der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD* (Berlin, 1997), pp. 324–5.

[76] Helmut Krausnick and Hans-Heinrich Wilhelm, *Die Truppe des Weltanschauungskrieges: Die Einsatzgruppen der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD 1938–1942* (Stuttgart, 1981), pp. 150–65; *Der Mord an den Juden im Zweiten Welktrieg*, ed. by Eberhard Jäckel and Jürgen Rohwer (Stuttgart, 1985), pp. 88–106.

[77] Alfred Streim, *Die Behandlung sowjetsicher Kriegsgefangenen im "Fall Barbarossa"* (Heidelberg and Karlsruhe, 1981), pp. 74–93.

[78] Christian Streit, *Keine Kameraden: Die Wehrmacht und die sowjetischen Kriegsgefangenen 1941–1945* (Stuttgart, 1978), pp. 127 and 356.

[79] In particular, see: Peter Longerich, "Vom Massenmord zur 'Endlösung.' Die Erschiessungen von jüdischen Zivilisten in den ersten Monaten des Ostfeldzuges im Kontext des nationalsozialistischen Judenmords," *Zwei Wege Nach Moskau: Vom Hitler-Stalin-Pakt zum 'Unternehmen Barbarossa,'* ed. by Bernd Wegner (Munich, 1991), pp. 251–74; and Ralf Ogorreck, *Die Einsatzgruppen und die "Genesis der Endlösung"* (Berlin, 1996).

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

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