THE HOLOCAUST AND HISTORY

The Known, the Unknown, the Disputed, and the Reexamined

EDITED BY

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Published in association with the
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
Washington, D.C.

Indiana University Press
Bloomington and Indianapolis

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Ordinary Germans or Ordinary Men?

A REPLY TO THE CRITICS

In the spring of 1992, I published a book entitled *Ordinary Men*, the case study of a reserve police battalion from Hamburg that became the chief unit for killing Jews in the northern Lublin district of the General Government. In general, the book has been quite well-received, but it has not been without its critics in both the United States and Israel. While these critics have accepted the narrative presentation in the book that reveals the mode of operation and degree of choice within the battalion, they have objected to my use of sources, my portrayal of the perpetrators (particularly their motives and mindset) and, above all, the conclusions that I draw—the crux of which is summed up in the title *Ordinary Men*. As one friendly but critical letter-writer suggested, "Might not a preferable title . . . possibly have been Ordinary Germans?"

The argument of my critics for German singularity rests above all upon their assertion of a unique and particular German antisemitism. The letter-writer cited above argued that "cultural conditioning" shaped "specifically German behavioral modes." He continued, hypothesizing that "even many decidedly non-Nazi Germans . . . were so accustomed to the thought that Jews are less human than Germans, that they were capable of mass murder." Non-Germans in the same situation as the men of Reserve Police Battalion 101, he implies, would have behaved quite differently.

Daniel Goldhagen, the most severe critic of what he called my "essentially situational" explanation, put the matter more pointedly. The "Germans' singular and deeply rooted, racist anti-Semitism" was not "a common social psychological phenomenon" that can be analyzed in terms of "mere" negative racial stereotypes, as I had so "tepidly" done. "The men of Reserve Police Battalion 101 were not ordinary 'men,' but ordinary members of an extraordinary culture, the culture of Nazi Germany, which was possessed of a hallucinatory, lethal view of the Jews." Thus, ordinary Germans were "believers in the justice of the murder of the Jews." In their "inflamed imaginations," destruction of the Jews "was a redemptive act."[1]

The issue raised here, namely the appropriate balance of situational, cultural, and ideological factors in explaining the behavior of Holocaust killers, is an important—indeed central—subject that merits further exploration. I would like to approach this issue along two lines of inquiry. First, what has the bulk of recent scholarship concluded about the nature, intensity, and alleged singularity of antisemitism within the German population at large? Second, what light can comparisons between German and non-German killers of Jews in the Holocaust shed on the issue of "specifically German behavioral modes"?

Let us turn to the first line of inquiry, namely the nature and intensity of antisemitism within Nazi Germany. Perhaps the most ardent advocate of an interpretation emphasizing the singularity and centrality of German antisemitism was Lucy S. Dawidowicz. In her book *The War against the Jews*, she argued that

> generations of anti-Semitism had prepared the Germans to accept Hitler as their redeemer. . . . Of the conglomerate social, economic, and political appeals that the NSDAP directed at the German people, its racial doctrine was the most attractive. . . . Out of the whole corpus of racial teachings, the anti-Jewish doctrine had the greatest dynamic potency. . . . The insecurities of post-World War I Germany and the anxieties they produced provided an emotional milieu in which irrationality and hysteria became routine and illusions became transformed into delusions. The delusional disorder assumed mass proportions. . . . In modern Germany the mass psychosis of anti-Semitism deranged a whole people.[2]

A large number of other scholars, however, have not shared this view.[3] Three scholars in particular—Ian Kershaw, Otto Dov Kulka, and David Bankier—have devoted a significant portion of their scholarly lives to examining German popular attitudes toward National Socialism, antisemitism, and the Holocaust.[4] While there are differences of emphasis, tone, and interpretation among them, the degree of consensus on the basic issues is impressive.

While Kulka and Bankier do not pick up the story until 1933, Kershaw argues that prior to the *Machtergreifung*, antisemitism was not a major factor in attracting support for Hitler and the Nazis. He cites Peter Merkl's study of the "old fighters," in which only about one-seventh of Merkl's sample considered antisemitism their most salient concern and even fewer were classified by Merkl as "strong ideological antisemites." Moreover, in the electoral breakthrough phase of 1929–1933, and indeed up to 1939, Hitler rarely spoke in public about the Jewish question. This reticence stood in stark contrast to the Hitler speeches of the early 1920s, in which his obsession with and hatred of the Jews was vented openly and repeatedly.[5] Kershaw concludes that "antisemitism cannot . . .be allocated a decisive role in bringing Hitler to power, though . . . it did not do anything to hinder his rapidly growing popularity."[6]

For the 1933–1939 period, all three historians characterize German popular response to antisemitism by two dichotomies. The first is a distinction between a minority of party activists, for whom antisemitism was an urgent priority, and the bulk of the German population, for whom it was not. Party activists clamored and pressed, often in violent and rowdy ways, for intensified persecution. The antisemitic measures of the regime, though often criticized as too mild by the radicals, served an integrating function within Hitler's movement: they helped to keep the momentum and enthusiasm of the party activists alive. Despite Hitler's pragmatic caution in public, most of these radicals correctly sensed that he was with them in spirit.

The second dichotomy characterizes the reaction of the general population to the antisemitic clamor of the movement and the antisemitic measures of the regime. The vast majority accepted the legal measures of the regime, which ended emancipation and drove Jews from public positions in 1933, socially ostracized the Jews in 1935, and completed the expropriation of their property in 1938–1939. Yet this same

majority was critical of the hooliganistic violence of party radicals toward the same German Jews whose legal persecution they approved. The boycott of 1933, the vandalistic outbreaks of 1935, and above all the Kristallnacht pogrom of November 1938 produced a negative response among the German population. Bankier and Kulka emphasize the pragmatic concerns behind this negative response: destruction of property, foreign policy complications, damage to Germany's image, and general lawlessness offensive to societal notions of decorum. In Kershaw's opinion, the idea that the population discounted virtually any moral dimension is "a far too sweeping generalization."[7] Nonetheless, these historians agree that a gulf had opened up between the Jewish minority and the general population. The latter, while they were not mobilized around strident and violent antisemitism, were increasingly "apathetic," "passive," and "indifferent" to the fate of the former.[8] Antisemitic measures—if carried out in an orderly and legal manner—were widely accepted for two main reasons: such measures sustained the hope of curbing the violence most Germans found so distasteful, and most Germans ultimately agreed with the goal of limiting, and even ending, the role of Jews in German society.

The records of the war years upon which Kulka, Bankier, and Kershaw based their studies were sparser and more ambiguous. Accordingly, the difference in interpretation is greater. Kulka [9] and Bankier[10] deduce a more specific awareness of the Final Solution among the German people than does Kershaw. Kershaw and Bankier advocate a more critical and less literal reading of the SD reports than does Kulka.[11] Kershaw sees a general "retreat into the private sphere" as the basis for widespread indifference and apathy toward Nazi Jewish policy. Kulka sees a greater internalization of Nazi antisemitism among the population at large, particularly concerning the acceptance of a solution to the Jewish Question through some unspecified kind of "elimination," and accordingly prefers the term "passive" or "objective complicity" over "indifference."[12] Bankier emphasizes a greater sense of guilt and shame among Germans, widespread denial and repression, and a growing fear concerning the consequences of impending defeat and a commensurate rejection of the regime's antisemitic propaganda.[13] But these differences are matters of nuance, degree, and diction. Fundamentally, the three scholars agree far more than they differ.

Above all, they agree that the fanatical antisemitism of the party "true believers" was not identical to the antisemitic attitudes of the general population and that the antisemitic priorities and genocidal commitment of the regime were not shared by ordinary Germans. Kershaw concludes that while

> the depersonalization of the Jew had been the real success story of Nazi propaganda and policy . . . the "Jewish question" was of no more than minimal interest to the vast majority of Germans during the war years. . . . Popular opinion, largely indifferent and infused with a latent anti-Jewish feeling . . . provided the climate within which spiralling Nazi aggression towards the Jews could take place unchallenged. But it did not provoke the radicalization in the first place.[14]

Kershaw summarized his position in the memorable phrase that "the road to Auschwitz was built by hatred, but paved with indifference."[15]

Despite his subsequent critique of Kershaw, Kulka's conclusions are strikingly similar. Surveying the SD reports, he notes that "during the war period the unques-

tionably dominant feature was the almost total absence of any reference to the existence, persecution and extermination of the Jews—a kind of national conspiracy of silence." The few reactions that were noted were "characterized by a strikingly abysmal indifference to the fate of the Jews as human beings. It seems that here, the 'Jewish Question' and the entire process of its 'solution' in the Third Reich reached the point of almost total depersonalization"[16]: "What is known is that the composite picture that the regime obtained from popular-opinion reports pointed toward the general passivity of the population in the face of the persecution of the Jews." While the Jewish Question "might not have been high on the list of priorities for the population at large . . . there were sufficient numbers who chose to give the regime the freedom of action to push for a radical 'Final Solution.'"[17]

Bankier noted the "deep-seated anti-Jewish feelings in German society," but likewise concluded that "on the whole the public did not assign antisemitism the same importance as the Nazis did. . . . The policy of deportations and mass murder succeeded because the public displayed moral insensibility to the Jews' fate." Bankier goes beyond moral insensibility and passivity to argue for a growing schism between the people and the regime:

> From 1941 onwards, the failure of Nazi promises to materialize drove a wedge between the population and the regime. . . . Declining hopes of victory and spiralling presentiments of a bitter end issued in a move to distance themselves from propaganda in general and from the Jewish issue in particular. . . . Ordinary Germans knew how to distinguish between an acceptable discrimination . . . and the unacceptable horror of genocide. . . . The more the news of mass murder filtered through, the less the public wanted to be involved in the final solution of the Jewish question.[18]

The general conclusions of Kershaw, Kulka, and Bankier—based on years of research and a wide array of empirical evidence—stand in stark contrast to the Dawidowicz/Goldhagen image of the entire German population "deranged" by a delusional mass psychosis and in the grips of a "hallucinatory, lethal view of the Jews." If "ordinary Germans" shared the same "latent," "traditional," or even "deep-seated" antisemitism that was widespread in European society but not the "fanatical" or "radical" antisemitism of Hitler, the Nazi leadership, and the party "true believers," then the behavior of the "ordinary Germans" of Reserve Police Battalion 101 cannot be explained by a singular German antisemitism that makes them different from other "ordinary men."

My characterization of the depersonalizing and dehumanizing antisemitism of the men of Reserve Police Battalion 101, which Goldhagen finds too "tepid," places them in the mainstream of German society as described by Kershaw, Kulka, and Bankier, distinct from an ideologically driven Nazi leadership. The implications of my study are that the existence of widespread negative racial stereotyping in a society—in no way unique to Nazi Germany—can provide fanatical regimes not only the freedom of action to pursue genocide (as both Kershaw and Kulka conclude) but also an ample supply of executioners.

In regard to the centrality of antisemitic motivation, it should be noted that German executioners were capable of killing millions of non-Jews targeted by the Nazi regime. Beginning in 1939, systematic and large-scale mass murder was initiated

against the German handicapped and Polish intelligentsia. More than three million Soviet prisoners of war perished from hunger, exposure, disease, and outright execution—two-thirds of them in the first nine months after the launching of Barbarossa but before the death camps of Operation Reinhard had even opened. Tens of thousands fell victim to horrendous reprisal measures. Additionally, the Nazi regime included Gypsies in their genocidal assault. Clearly, something more than singular German antisemitism is needed to explain perpetrator behavior when the regime could find executioners to murder millions of non-Jewish victims.

Let us follow another approach to this issue as well by examining the behavior of non-German killing units in the Ukraine and Belorussia, which carried out killing actions quite similar to those performed by Reserve Police Battalion 101.[19] I will not be looking at those elements that enthusiastically carried out the initial murderous pogroms in the summer of 1941—often at German instigation—and were then frequently formed into full-time auxiliaries of the Einsatzgruppen for the subsequent large-scale systematic massacres. The zealous followers of Jonas Klimaitis in Lithuania or Viktors Arajs in Latvia, who eagerly rushed to help the invading Germans kill communists and Jews, are not appropriate counterparts of Reserve Police Battalion 101 for the purpose of cross-cultural comparison.

Instead, I will examine the rural police units in Belorussia and the Ukraine, which did not really take shape until 1942, when they participated in the "second wave" of killing on Soviet territory. Like the men of Reserve Police Battalion 101 in Poland, these policemen provided the essential manpower for the "mopping-up" killings of Jews in small towns and villages and for the "Jew hunts" that relentlessly tracked down escapees.

On July 16, 1941, Hitler made known his desire for accelerated pacification in the occupied Soviet territories. They were to be turned into a "garden of Eden" from which Germany would never withdraw.[20] Nine days later, on July 25, Himmler gave orders for the formation of units to be designated as Schutzmannschaften.[21] During his inspection tour of the Baltic in late July, Himmler spoke about the immediate creation of police formations of Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians, and Ukrainians to be used outside of their home areas.[22]

While Himmler concerned himself primarily with the formation of battalion-sized police formations, the behind-the-front security divisions and the local Feldkommandanturen and Ortskommandanturen of the military administration also found themselves confronted with the need to create smaller units of local police for what the Germans called Einzeldienst (precinct service). As early as July 11, 1941, the chief of staff of Rear Army Area Ukraine had approved the formation of Ukrainian police to maintain order and provide protection within the Ukrainian communities.[23] As one Wehrmacht officer subsequently explained: "The vast tasks of the German security forces in the rear army areas require an extensive recruitment of reliable portions of the population to provide help of all kinds."[24]

German army officers of the military administration toured the outlying small towns and villages in their occupation zones and appointed mayors, who in turn helped recruit local police units.[25] One Ortskommandantur noted that the local population was very hesitant to provide manpower to the German-appointed mayors until after the fall of Kiev in late September.[26] As an enticement, each mayor was to offer ten rubles per day to each volunteer as well as free rations to his wife and children. If sufficient volunteers were not forthcoming, the Ortskommandantur was instructed to contact the nearest POW camp concerning the release of Ukrainian prisoners for police service.[27]

Variously called "auxiliary police" (Hilfspolizei), "order service" (Ordnungsdienst), "citizens' guard" (Bürgerwehr), and "militia" (Miliz), only a minority of these local police forces were initially armed , and only then for special assignments and with limited ammunition (10 rounds per man).[28] In Uman, the Ortskommandantur provided weapons for only 20 of 139 Ukrainian police.[29] In Dnepropetrovsk, arms were given to between 100 and 400 auxiliary policemen.[30] In Novi Saporoshje, 50 firearms were provided for 126 police.[31] These local police were to be used for numerous tasks—guard duty, patrol, price and market controls, as well as "guarding Jews" (Judenüberwachung) and "special tasks" (Sonderaufgaben). In the cities where the Einsatzgruppen were organizing large-scale massacres, the Ukrainian police were involved. As one Ortskommandant reported in mid-October 1941, "At the moment a police action against the remaining Jews in Krivoy-Rog is in progress, during which the entire Ukrainian auxiliary police is being put to work. Krivoy-Rog shall become free of Jews."[32] In contrast to the Baltic, however, such participation in Einsatzgruppen mass killings during 1941 seems to have been less widespread in the Ukraine.[33] Other employment of the Ukrainian police was apparently much more mundane. Their use as "errand boys" (Laufburschen) and private servants in the military was apparently so widespread that it had to be explicitly forbidden.[34]

When large portions of the Ukraine were transferred from military to civil administration in mid-November 1941, the army prepared to transfer its plethora of local Ukrainian police units to the Order Police. Rear Army Area South insisted, however, that this transfer was not to take place until these units were no longer militarily indispensable.[35] The transfer of the local Ukrainian police to the Order Police and their renaming as Schutzmannschaften generally occurred in December 1941 and January 1942.[36] Kurt Daluege, head of the Order Police, reported a phenomenal increase in the size of the Schutzmannschaften over the next year—from 30,000 in December 1941 to 300,000 in December 1942.[37] The initial figure may not have included numerous police still under army jurisdiction, but the growth of the Schutzmannschaften was still significant. What must be kept in mind, quite simply, is that the vast majority of the 300,000 Schutzmänner in December 1942 had been in German service for less than a year. They had not yet become policemen during, much less personally involved in, the "first wave" of killing in 1941.

The Order Police were vastly outnumbered by the Schutzmannschaften they recruited, trained, and supervised. This was particularly the case for the German and Ukrainian police scattered throughout the occupied territories in precinct service. For instance, in the district (Generalbezirk) of Nikolayev in the Ukraine, 271 German Schutzpolizei (city police) supervised 700 Ukrainian police at the urban precinct level as well as three "Schuma" battalions, totalling about fifteen hundred men. In the rural areas, 410 German Gendarmerie supervised 4,946 Ukrainian Schutzmänner. The overall ratio was more than 10 to 1. In the neighboring district of Kiev, the ratio was nearly 12 to 1.[38] Approximately two-thirds of the German police, moreover, were not career police but middle-aged reservists conscripted after 1939.[39]

As Lieutenant Deuerlein, the commander of the Gendarmerie outside Brest-Litovsk, complained, 14 of his 22 German police were reservists who had only four weeks of training with weapons and themselves were in need of basic weapons training. Such was the manpower with which he was to train and supervise his 287 Schutzmänner—surely a case of the one-eyed leading the blind.[40]

Recruiting and training remained ongoing problems. Order Police calls for new recruits were issued in the press, over the radio, on placards, and through flyers.[41] In addition to the pay and family rations, one further inducement proved to be the most effective in attracting recruits: the immediate families of Schutzmänner were exempt from deportation to forced labor in Germany.[42] Lieutenant Deuerlein, outside Brest-Litovsk, reported: "Whenever the natives are supposed to be sent to Germany for labor, the rush for employment in the Schutzmannschaft is greater."[43] Nevertheless, he concluded, recruitment went very slowly, and those who did volunteer were "not always good human material."[44]

In summary, the precinct-level Ukrainian police were first organized by the military administration in 1941. They were vastly expanded under the Order Police in 1942, whom they outnumbered in precinct service by at least a 10 to 1 ratio. The local police joined for numerous reasons, including pay, food for their families, release from POW camps, and especially a family exemption from deportation to forced labor in Germany. Although the Germans had difficulty recruiting as many Ukrainian police as they wanted, the Ukrainian police nonetheless numbered in the tens of thousands and constituted a major manpower source for the "second wave" of the Final Solution that swept through the Ukraine in 1942.

There is scant documentation from the precinct level on the day-to-day participation of the auxiliary police in the mass murder of Jews. From the Ukraine one series of police reports survives, from which we can see that the local Schutzmänner and their supervising German Gendarmerie performed precisely the same duties as Reserve Police Battalion 101 in Poland, with one exception—there were no deportations to death camps, only shooting actions. The first series of reports came from Lieutenant Deuerlein, Gendarmerie commander in the countryside surrounding Brest-Litovsk. In October 1942 Deuerlein reported:

> On the 19th and 20th of September a Jewish action was carried out in Domatshevo and Tomatshovka through a Sonderkommando of the SD, in conjunction with a mounted squadron of Gendarmerie stationed in Domatshevo and the Schutzmannschaft. A total of 2,900 Jews were shot. . . . After the Jewish action in Domatshevo and Tomatshovka the Jews living in the region are now almost totally destroyed.[45]

The next month he reported: "Participation in the action against the Jews in the city and region of Brest-Litovsk since October 15. Up until now some 20,000 Jews have been shot." For his anticipated activities in the near future, he added: "Search for bunkers to be found in the area around Brest-Litovsk. . . . Taking care of (Erledigung) the fleeing Jews still found in the region."[46] One month later the "Jew hunt" was still in progress as Deuerlein once again reported on his future activities: "Search for the Jews even now hiding in bunkers in the forests."[47]

The Gendarmerie outpost in Mir, in Belorussia, likewise reported the results of its killing activities to headquarters in Baranoviche. Its commander noted that "560

Jews were shot in the Jewish action carried out in Mir" on August 13, 1942.[48] The Gendarmerie commander in Baranoviche thereafter reported to Minsk:

> I have been given general instructions by the Gebietskommissar in Baranoviche to clear the area, especially the lowlands, of Jews, so far as the forces at my disposal permit. As a result of the major actions which were carried out in the past months, large numbers of Jews fled and joined groups of bandits. To prevent further escapes, I have eliminated Jews who were still living in the towns of Polonka and Mir. Altogether, 719 Jews were shot. In the meantime, 320 Jews who had escaped from the major actions could be recaptured by the Gendarmerie posts and executed after court martial.[49]

Around Mir the Jew hunt continued. On September 29, 1942, a "patrol of the Mir Schutzmannschaft" found in the forest six Jews, who "had fled the previous Jewish action." They were shot on the spot."[50] Six weeks later a forest keeper discovered a Jewish bunker. He led a patrol of three German gendarmes and sixty Schutzmänner to the site. Five Jews, including the former head of the Judenrat of Mir, were hauled from the bunker and shot. "The food"—including 100 kilos of potatoes—"as well as the tattered clothing were given to the Mir Schutzmannschaft."[51]

In short, the role in the Final Solution of the precinct-level police recruited on Soviet territory seems scarcely distinguishable from that of German reserve police in Poland. The precinct-level Schutzmänner were not the eager pogromists and collaborators of mid-summer 1941, just as the German reserve police were not career SS and policemen but post–1939 conscripts. The role and behavior of the Ukrainian and Belorussian auxiliary police in carrying out the Final Solution do not lend support to the notion of "specifically German behavioral modes."

I would like to look into the particular case of the German Gendarmerie in Mir and their Belorussian auxiliaries in greater detail because this case pertains to a further criticism of my book, my alleged misuse of German sources and nonuse of Jewish sources. It has been suggested on the one hand that I was much too gullible and methodologically uncritical in my acceptance of German testimony, particularly that which I cited in support of my portrayal of a differentiated reaction by the perpetrators and a dramatic transformation in character of many of the policemen over time. I argued that most of the men were upset by the initial killing action, and that over time a considerable minority of the men became enthusiastic and zealous volunteers for the firing squads and Jew hunts; that the largest group within the battalion did not seek opportunities to kill but nonetheless routinely contributed to the murder operations in many ways with increasing numbness and callousness; and that a not insignificant minority remained nonshooters while still participating in cordons and roundups. On the other hand, both Goldhagen and a number of my Israeli colleagues have chided me for not using Jewish sources. If I had been more critical of my German sources and more inclusive in my use of Jewish sources, a more reliable image of a uniform and pervasive bestiality, sadism, and even "jocularity," "boyish joy," and "relish" on the part of the perpetrators would have resulted, they suggest.

After working with these German court testimony records for more than twenty years, I would readily concede that the vast bulk of it is pervasively mendacious and apologetic, especially concerning the motivation and attitude of the perpetrators. It

was precisely on the basis of my previous experience with German court testimony, however, that I judged the court testimonies of Reserve Police Battalion 101 to be qualitatively different. The roster of the unit survived, more than 40 percent of the battalion members (most of them rank and file reservists rather than officers) were interrogated, and two able and persistent investigating attorneys spent five years carefully questioning the witnesses.

The resulting testimony provides a unique body of evidence that permits us to answer important questions for which previous court records did not provide adequate information. A historian would be wrong to lump this body of evidence together indiscriminately with other court records. Admittedly, these are subjective judgments on my part, and other honest and able historians could reach other conclusions. My critics' dismissal of my use of this particular German testimony as gullible and methodologically unsound, without giving due attention to the special character of these records, ought to be noted, however.

As for the nonuse of Jewish sources, I would make several observations. First, Jewish testimony was indispensable to my study in establishing the chronology for the fall of 1942. What became a blur of events for the perpetrators remained quite distinct days of horror for the victims. Also, while survivor testimony may be extremely valuable in many regards, it does not illuminate the internal dynamics of an itinerant killing unit. It would be difficult for the victim of such a unit to provide testimony concerning the various levels of participation of different perpetrators and any change in their character over time. Where long-term contact between victims and perpetrators did occur, survivors are able to and in fact do differentiate on such issues. Such long-term contact did not occur in the situations that I examined, however. The testimony of survivors and even Polish bystanders of a massacre or ghetto-clearing action by a unit such as Reserve Police Battalion 101 would inevitably focus on the brutality, sadism, and horror of the perpetrator unit, with little differentiation among its individual members. It would indeed support the conclusions of my critics concerning the uniform and enthusiastic behavior of the perpetrators, but that does not make those conclusions correct.

I would note, furthermore, that several survivor testimonies have come to my attention since the publication of *Ordinary Men*. These confirm the conclusions I reached based on perpetrator testimony. First, the memoirs of Sobibor escapee Thomas Blatt relate the following incident.[52] Shortly before the liberation, Blatt and another Jew in hiding were caught by a patrol of three German policemen. Blatt was vouched for by nearby Poles, but one of the policemen took the other Jew into the woods and a shot was heard. Several days later, the other Jew rejoined Blatt. He explained that once he was out of sight of his comrades, the policeman had fired his gun into the ground to give the impression of an execution and then chased the Jew away. In short, the phenomenon testified to by some of the men in Reserve Police Battalion 101, namely that Jews were allowed to escape by certain police when the latter were not being observed by those who might report them, is not without confirmation from a Jewish source. This is, however, precisely the kind of testimony—undoubtedly self-serving and exceedingly difficult to confirm but not thereby necessarily false—that I have been criticized for citing.

A remarkable testimony has recently been published by Nechama Tec in her book about Oswald Rufeisen. It is especially valuable because Rufeisen observed the internal workings of the Mir Gendarmerie post as a translator for the German sergeant in charge.[53] Since some of Rufeisen's testimony so strikingly confirms the dynamics within the reserve police that I portrayed based on perpetrator testimony, I will quote it at length. Tec reports that, according to Rufeisen, there was:

> a visible difference in the Germans' participation in anti-Jewish and anti-partisan moves. A selected few Germans, three out of thirteen, consistently abstained from becoming a part of all anti-Jewish expeditions. . . . No one seemed to bother them. No one talked about their absences. It was as if they had a right to abstain.

Among these middle-aged gendarmes too old to be sent to the front, Rufeisen noted the presence of enthusiastic and sadistic killers, including the second-in-command, Karl Schultz, who was described as "a beast in the form of a man." "Not all the gendarmes, however, were as enthusiastic about murdering Jews as Schultz," Tec notes. Concerning the policemen's attitude toward killing Jews, she quotes Rufeisen directly:

> It was clear that there were differences in their outlooks. I think that the whole business of anti-Jewish moves, the business of Jewish extermination they considered unclean. The operations against the partisans were not in the same category. For them a confrontation with partisans was a battle, a military move. But a move against the Jews was something they might have experienced as "dirty." I have the impression that they felt that it would be better not to discuss this matter.

This is hardly the image of men uniformly possessed of a "lethal, hallucinatory view of the Jews" who viewed their killing of Jews as "a redemptive act."

Finally, I would like to look at a third example of crosscultural comparison that is very suggestive: the Luxembourgers. Reserve Police Battalion 101 was composed almost entirely of Germans from the Hamburg region, including some men from Bremen, Bremerhaven, and Wilhelmshaven, as well as a few Holsteiners from Rendsburg who felt like relative outsiders. In addition, the battalion included a contingent of young men from Luxembourg, which had been annexed to the Third Reich in 1940. The presence of the Luxembourgers in Reserve Police Battalion 101 offers the historian the unusual opportunity for a "controlled experiment" to measure the impact of the same situational factors upon men of differing cultural and ethnic background.

The problem is the scarcity of testimony. Only one German witness described the participation of the Luxembourgers in the battalion's activities in any detail.[54] According to this witness, the Luxembourgers belonged to Lieutenant Buchmann's platoon in first company and were particularly active in the roundups before the first massacre at Józefów. This was a period in late June and early July 1942 when the trains were not running to Bełżec, and Jews in the southern Lublin district were being concentrated temporarily in transit ghettos such as Piaski and Izbica. On the night before the initial massacre at Józefów, Lieutenant Buchmann was the sole officer who said he could not order his men to shoot unarmed women and children, and who

asked for a different assignment. He was designated responsible for taking the work Jews to Lublin and, according to the witness, the Luxembourgers under his command provided the guard. Hence they did not participate in the massacre.

Thereafter Lieutenant Buchmann continued to refuse participation in any Jewish action. However, those in his platoon, including the Luxembourgers, were not exempted. Under the command of the first sergeant, who was a "110% Nazi" and real "go-getter,"[55] the Luxembourgers in particular became quite involved. According to the witness, *the company captain took considerable care in the selection of personnel* for assignments. "In general the older men remained behind," he noted. In contrast, *"the Luxembourgers were in fact present at every action* [emphasis mine]. With these people it was a matter of career police officials from the state of Luxembourg, who were all young men in their twenties." Despite their absence at Jozéfow, it would appear that the Luxembourgers became the shock-troops of first company simply because of their younger age and greater police experience and training, the absence of "specifically German behavioral modes" and a singular German antisemitism notwithstanding.

None of the Luxembourgers of Reserve Police Battalion 101 was interrogated by the German investigators. However, two of them, Jean Heinen and Roger Weitor, wrote brief accounts of their wartime service with the German police that were published in Luxembourg in 1986.[56] According to this testimony, the Luxembourgers in question were not career police but prewar volunteers in Luxembourg's army—the so-called "Luxembourg Voluntary Company." After Luxembourg's annexation by Germany, one large contingent of Luxembourg soldiers was assigned to a police unit from Cologne and then sent to Slovenia. When the Luxembourgers were deemed "unreliable" in February 1942, they were disarmed and sent to Innsbruck. From there they were dispersed in much smaller groups among various German cities. Fifteen of them, all between the ages of twenty and twenty-four, were sent to Hamburg in early June 1942. One fell ill there, but fourteen departed with Reserve Police Battalion 101 on June 21 for the Lublin district.

Two aspects of the accounts of Heinen and Wietor stand out. First, they portrayed themselves as victims of both German conscription and the horrors of war. After the withdrawal from Slovenia to Innsbruck, however, Wietor admitted that he had had the choice of leaving the German police but had chosen to remain to protect his parents, as he claimed, from the threat of resettlement. Second, both men portrayed the actions of the Luxembourgers as consistently nonsupportive of the German cause. The local population in Poland could easily distinguish the Luxembourgers from the Germans because the "latter, exclusively reservists, were twice our age."[57] Thus the Luxembourgers were contacted by the Polish resistance, and Wietor claims to have provided them, at great risk to himself, with both information about impending searches and arrests as well as captured guns and ammunition.[58] Heinen claimed that on several occasions Luxembourgers assigned to machine-gun duty did not shoot in action, since machine-gun crews would immediately draw concentrated enemy fire and suffer excessive casualties.[59] Between June 1944 and January 1945, when the front line reached Poland, five Luxembourgers successfully deserted and two others were killed trying to go over to the Russians.[60]

Most notable, given what we know about the battalion's mission in Poland, is that neither account mentions even the presence of Jews, much less the battalion's participation in their mass murder. At most, there is a slight hint behind several comments of Heinen. He notes that although the battalion was engaged in numerous actions, the Luxembourgers did not suffer their first casualty until mid-1943.[61] A tacit consensus for silence among themselves emerged in the postwar period, he concludes: "When we meet one another by accident now, we no longer speak of our tour of duty in Poland, or at most of the great amount of vodka that helped us through many difficult times."[62]

One can make a very strong argument from the silence of German and Luxembourger testimony. The Luxembourgers detailed every aspect of dissident behavior that they could. If they had been among the nonshooters in anti-Jewish actions, would they not have claimed this to their credit in postwar accounts? Many German witnesses could still remember the nonshooters in the battalion twenty years later, though it was not always in their interest to do so. Yet the Luxembourgers attracted no comment whatsoever in this regard. Did the Luxembourgers stir no memories and cause no comment by German witnesses in the 1960s precisely because they were behaving like most of their German comrades in 1942?

I will conclude briefly. If the studies of Kershaw, Kulka, and Bankier are valid and most Germans did not share the fanatical antisemitism of Adolf Hitler and the hardcore Nazis, then an argument based on a singular German antisemitism to explain the murderous actions of low-level perpetrators does not hold up. If the Nazi regime could find executioners for millions of non-Jewish victims, the centrality of antisemitism as the crucial motive of the German perpetrators is also called into question. If tens of thousands of local policemen in Belorussia and the Ukraine—taken as needed by the Germans, who were desperate for help and offered a variety of inducements—basically performed the same duties and behaved in the same way as their German counterparts in Poland, then the argument of "specifically German behavioral modes" likewise fails. Finally, if Luxembourgers in Reserve Police Battalion 101 did not behave differently from their German comrades, then the immediate situational factors to which I gave considerable attention in the conclusion of my book must be given even greater weight. The preponderance of evidence suggests that in trying to understand the vast majority of the perpetrators, we are dealing not with "ordinary Germans" but rather with "ordinary men."

NOTES

1. Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, "The Evil of Banality," *New Republic*, July 13 and 20, 1992, pp. 49–52.

2. Lucy S. Dawidowicz, *The War against the Jews* (New York, 1975), pp. 220–21.

3. Marlis Steinert, *Hitler's War and the Germans* (Athens, OH, 1977); Walter Laqueur, *The Terrible Secret* (Boston, 1981); Lawrence Stokes, "The German People and the Destruction of the European Jews," *Central European History* 6/2 (1973): 167–91; Sarah Gordon, *Hitler, Germans, and the "Jewish Question"* (Princeton, 1984); Robert Gellately, *The Gestapo and*

German Society: Enforcing Racial Policy, 1933–1945 (Oxford, 1990). In contrast, however, see Michael Kater, "Everyday Anti-Semitism in Prewar Nazi Germany," *Yad Vashem Studies* 16 (1984): 129–59.

4. See, by Ian Kershaw, "The Persecution of the Jews and German Public Opinion in the Third Reich," Leo Baeck Institute *Year Book* 26 (1981): 261–89; *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent in the Third Reich: Bavaria 1933–1945* (Oxford, 1983); *The Hitler "Myth": Image and Reality in the Third Reich* (Oxford, 1987); "German Popular Opinion and the 'Jewish Question,' 1939–1943: Some Further Reflections," in *Die Juden im Nationalsozialistischen Deutschland: 1933–1943* (Tübingen, 1986), pp. 365–85. See, by Otto Dov Kulka, "'Public Opinion' in Nazi Germany and the 'Jewish Question,'" *Jerusalem Quarterly* 25 (Fall 1982): 121–44 and 26 (Winter 1982): 34–45; and see Otto Dov Kulka and Aaron Rodrigue, "The German Population and the Jews in the Third Reich: Recent Publications and Trends in Research on German Society and the 'Jewish Question,'" *Yad Vashem Studies* 16 (1984): 421–35. And see David Bankier, "The Germans and the Holocaust: What Did They Know," *Yad Vashem Studies* 20 (1990): 69–98; *The Germans and the Final Solution: Public Opinion under Nazism* (Oxford, 1992).

5. Kershaw, *Hitler "Myth,"* pp. 232–39.

6. Kershaw, "Persecution of the Jews," p. 264.

7. Ibid., p. 279.

8. Ibid., pp. 280–81; Bankier, *Germans and the Final Solution*, pp. 72, 84.

9. Kulka, "'Public Opinion' in Nazi Germany," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 26 (Winter 1983), p. 36.

10. Bankier, *Germans and the Final Solution*, pp. 101–15.

11. Ibid., p. 117; Kershaw, "German Popular Opinion," p. 373.

12. Kulka and Rodrigue, "German Population and the Jews," pp. 430–35.

13. Bankier, *Germans and the Final Solution*, pp. 114–15, 137, 140, 146, 151–52.

14. Kershaw, "Persecution of the Jews," pp. 281, 288.

15. Kershaw, *Popular Opinion*, p. 277.

16. Kulka, "'Public Opinion' in Nazi Germany," pp. 43–44.

17. Kulka and Rodrigue, "German Population and the Jews," p. 435.

18. Bankier, *Germans and the Final Solutions*, pp. 155–56 and pp. 151–52.

19. For a brief overview of the "non-German volunteers," see Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators Victims Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe 1933–1945* (New York, 1992), pp. 87–102.

20. IMT, vol. 38, pp. 86–94 (221-L: conference of July 16, 1941).

21. Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv Freiburg (hereafter BA-MA), RW 41/4, Daluege to HSSPF, July 31, 1941.

22. Ereignismeldung no. 48, August 10, 1941, in *The Einsatzgruppen Reports*, ed. Yitzhak Arad, Shmuel Krakowski, and Shmuel Spector (New York, 1989), p. 82.

23. BA-MA, 16407/4, "special orders for the treatment of the Ukrainian question," Rückw. H. Geb. 103, July 11, 1941.

24. BA-MA, 16407/8, Rückw. H. Geb. Süd, November 14, 1941.

25. BA-MA, RH 26-45/121, 45th Infantry Division, July 22, 1941; Special Archives Moscow (hereafter SAM), 1275-3-662, pp. 6–13, FK 675 to Security Division 444 via FK 675, August 11, 1941; and pp. 14–16, FK 183 to Security Division 444, August 13, 1941.

26. SAM 11 B/1275-3-662, pp. 38–40, Ortskommandantur II/575 to FK 676, September 25, 1941.

27. Bundesarchiv Koblenz (hereafter BAK), R 94/6, Security Division 454, "special order" concerning Ukrainian auxiliary police, August 18, 1941.

28. BA-MA, 16407/4, Rückw. H. Geb. 103, "special orders" for the treatment of the Ukrainian question, July 11, 1941; SAM, 1275-3-662, pp. 5–8, Oberfeldkommandantur Winniza (FK 675) to SD 444, August 1, 1941; BAK, R 94/6, SD 454, special order concerning the Ukrainian auxiliary police, August 18, 1941.

29. SAM, 1275-3-662, pp. 38–40, OK II/575 to FK 676, September 25, 1941.

30. SAM, 1275-3-666, pp. 13–18, FK 240 monthly report, October 19, 1941.

32. SAM, 1275-3-665, pp. 12–22, FK I/253 to FK 246, October 15, 1941.

33. Dr. Dr. [*sic*] Otto Rasch of EG C reported that it was not easy to incite pogroms in the Ukraine. It was "deemed important to have men from the militia (Ukrainian auxiliary police force) participate in the execution of Jews." EM no. 81, September 12, 1941. Six days earlier, in Radomshyl, SK 4b shot 1,107 adult Jews, while the Ukrainian militia shot 561 Jewish children. EM no. 88, September 19, 1941. But the Einsatzgruppen in the south do not report the kind of regular participation of local auxiliaries that is reported by Jager and Lange in the Baltic.

34. SAM, 1275-3-662, pp. 5–8, Oberfeldkommandantur Winniza to SD 444, August 1, 1941; pp. 14–16, FK 183 to SD 444, August 13, 1941.

35. BA-MA, 16407/8, Rückw. H. Geb.Süd, "auxiliary manpower from the native population," November 14, 1941.

36. Zhitomir Archives, 1182-1-2, Generalkommissar Zhitomir to Stadts/Gebietskommissare, December 15, 1941; Nikolayev Archives, 1432-1-1, FK 193 Order no. 34, January 13, 1942.

37. Nuremberg Document NO-286: Daluege report of January 1943.

38. BAK, R 19/122, SSPF Ukraine to RFSS, November 25, 1942.

39. BAK, R 19/464, RFSS to BdO Prague and others, November 17, 1941; R 19/121, RFSS note, November 8, 1941.

40. BAK, R 94/7, Gendarmerie-Gebietsführer Brest-Litovsk, monthly report, December 5, 1942.

41. Zhitomir Archives, 1151-1-21, Generalkommissar Zhitomir, February 24, 1942, to Gebiets- and Stadtskommissare.

42. Zhitomir Archives, 1182-1-35, KdO Zhitomir, May 24, 1943.

43. BAK, R 94/7, Gendarmerie-Gebietsführer Brest-Litovsk, monthly report, November 8, 1942.

44. Ibid., December 5, 1942.

45. Ibid., October 6, 1942.

46. Ibid., November 8, 1942.

47. Ibid., December 5, 1942.

48. Brest Archives, 995-1-7, Gend. Post Mir to Gend. Geb.-führer Baranoviche, August 20, 1942.

49. Brest Archives, 995-1-7, Gend.-Hauptmannschaft Baranoviche to KdG Belorussia (Minsk), September 29, 1942.

50. Brest Archives, 995-1-4, Gend. Post Mir to Gend. Geb.-führer Baranoviche, October 1, 1942.

51. Ibid., November 15, 1942.

52. Thomas Tori Blatt, *From the Ashes of Sobibor: A Story of Survival* (Evanston, 1997), pp. 211–12.

53. Nechama Tec, *In the Lion's Den* (New York, 1992), pp. 102–104.

54. Staatsanwaltschaft Hamburg, 141 Js 1957/62, testimony of Heinrich E., pp. 2167, 2169, 2172, 3351.

55. Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York, 1992), p. 151.

56. *Freiwëllegekompanie 1940–1945*, ed. L. Jacoby and R. Trauffler, vol. 2 (Luxembourg: Imprimerie St. Paul SA, 1986), pp. 207–21. I am very grateful to Dr. Paul Dostert, Luxembourg representative on the International Committee for the History of the Second World War, for providing me with this material.

57. Ibid., p. 209 (Heinen testimony).

58. Ibid., p. 221 (Wietor testimony).

59. Ibid., p. 212 (Heinen testimony).

60. Ibid., pp. 212–17 (Heinen testimony).

61. Ibid., p. 209 (Heinen testimony).

62. Ibid., p. 219 (Heinen testimony).