

*Also by Raul Hilberg*  
The Destruction of the European Jews

# PERPETRATORS VICTIMS BYSTANDERS

THE JEWISH  
CATASTROPHE  
1933-1945

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town of Dobromil, the Commander of Einsatzkommando 6, Erhard Kröger, a Baltic German from Riga who was trained and specialized in international law, confronted a group of Jews about to be killed and explained to them through an interpreter that they would now be executed in "retaliation" for numerous murders committed by the retreating Red Army among the civilian Ukrainian population.<sup>29</sup>

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## NON-GERMAN GOVERNMENTS

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE JEWS was European-wide. In a large area holding about 2 million Jews, a multiplicity of measures were taken by non-German authorities. Four countries that engaged in such action had joined Germany for the sake of conquest: Italy, Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary. Two were satellite states that had been created by Germany: Slovakia and Croatia. Three others were occupied countries, which had fought against Germany, but in which collaborating governments or agencies were prepared to contribute anti-Jewish decrees or at least significant administrative assistance: Norway, France, and the Netherlands.

What Germany wanted from its allies was a cloning of the anti-Jewish regulations developed in Germany itself. It was hoped that steps would be implemented by friendly states in a proper order to make the Jews "ripe" for deportation. The sequence was to begin with a definition of the term *Jew* in accordance with the principle of descent; it was to continue with the expulsion of the Jews from any vital role in the economy; and it was to go on with devices for identification and concentration, notably the marking of the Jews with a star. Finally, help was welcomed in the form of roundups, rolling stock for transport, and payment to defray the costs of the

deportations. To assure the accomplishment of these goals, the German Foreign Office and Adolf Eichmann's specialists in the field stood by with appropriate "advice."

Not everything worked out in the hoped for manner. Some countries wrote definitions of the concept of "Jew" which contained subtle deviations from the German formulation. Thus Italy exempted children of converts and Bulgaria spared all converts married to Bulgarians. Hungary and Slovakia changed definitions in response to tightening or relaxing German pressure. Romania dispensed with a single controlling definition altogether, preferring to specify a circle of victims in each decree.

Almost all of Germany's allies were avid expropriators. In societies that valued farmland and forests, as in the case of Romania and Hungary, Jewish agricultural properties, however few, were targeted immediately for takeover. The acquisition of Jewish industrial and commercial enterprises mattered in Slovakia, which wanted a stronger ethnic Slovak presence in these sectors. In Romania, where most industrial and many commercial holdings were foreign, similar considerations propelled the attempt to create a purely Romanian economic base. Both Slovakia and Romania, however, lacked capital and expertise. In Slovakia, some former Jewish owners remained as managers to operate their old firms under Slovak strawmen, and in Romania some Jewish companies simply remained in business.

The ouster of Jewish professionals and skilled laborers was pursued as a means of rewarding non-Jewish aspirants. Here too there were limits. In Hungary, Jewish physicians were still essential, and in Romania, gentle beginners stood as "doubles" next to Jewish craftsmen to learn a trade. Policies were quite different, of course, with respect to unskilled or unemployed Jews. France, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, and Hungary drafted these people into labor companies, which were housed in camps and deployed in many outdoor projects. The Hungarian Jewish companies, which were the most numerous, were given such tasks as mining copper in Yugoslavia and clearing mine fields on the Eastern Front.

Concentration measures were sometimes adopted for pragmatic reasons. The housing shortage spurred the expulsion of thousands of Jewish families from the Slovak capital of Bratislava and the Bulgar-

ian capital of Sofia. In Romania, there was a law allowing ethnic Romanians to claim Jewish apartments anywhere in the country. The Romanian city of Cernauti (Chernovtsy) had a long-lasting ghetto. In unoccupied France, impoverished foreign Jews were assigned by French authorities to "forced residence" in small towns.

The Germans placed particular emphasis on the introduction of a yellow identifying star that the Jews were to affix to their clothes, but the practice of collaborating governments in this undertaking was far from uniform. Croatia, which was created in 1941, imposed the emblem at once. Slovakia instituted the star with a proviso (removed later) that many working Jews and their families would not have to wear it. Hungary had no external identification, outside the labor companies, until the Germans occupied the country in 1944. Bulgaria mandated a plastic yellow button and then halted its production. Romania introduced a star in some provinces and subsequently voided the measure. In France, the German military government, but not its French collaborators, decreed the yellow patch. Italy had no star.

A crucial difference between German and non-German agencies surfaced in the course of deportations. Within Germany and territories occupied by Germany, the Jews were to be rooted out completely. Exceptions were made only for those living in mixed marriages and deferments were granted mainly to irreplaceable laborers. Non-German governments were much less compulsive in this regard, and they made distinctions in a more compromising manner.

In Slovakia and Croatia, some Jews were privileged. Even though Croatia killed almost half of its Jewish population in its own annihilation camps, it resembled Slovakia in exempting old established families, individuals needed in the economy, or people with various connections. Hungary ousted non-Hungarian Jews from newly annexed regions in the summer of 1941, delivering the victims to the German-occupied USSR, where they were killed, but Hungarian Jewry as a whole was not deported until the spring of 1944. Collaborationist France was often ready to intern or hand over stateless and foreign Jews but was reluctant to surrender Jews of French nationality. Bulgaria and Romania drew the line territorially. The Bulgar-

ian government gave up the Jews of the freshly acquired regions in Macedonia, Thrace, and Piroi but resisted deportations from Old Bulgaria. Romania, which had lost Northern Bukovina and Bessarabia to the Soviet Union in 1940 and had recovered them in 1941, promptly expelled the Jews from these provinces. A year later, the Romanian government declined a German request to deport the Jews of Old Romania to Poland.

The unevenness of action in Germany's periphery was not an accident. Nowhere was the determination to implement the final solution so deep rooted as in Germany; nowhere was the issue so fundamental. Most of Germany's neighbors, whether allied or conquered nations, continually balanced a variety of considerations in their decision making. The result was a spectrum of reactions, from non-cooperation, to some forms of participation, to heavy involvement that nevertheless fell short in one aspect or another of reaching the German standard.

Two countries were unapproachable at any time. They were Finland, a German ally against the Soviet Union, and Denmark, wholly occupied by Germany, but with its prewar government still in place. Their small Jewish populations survived, in Finland, without a German foray, and in Denmark, after a largely abortive German attempt to act singlehandedly in a seizure operation.

Norway and the Netherlands had offered resistance to German invasions, and after they were overwhelmed, each was placed under a Reichskommissar. A Norwegian government in exile waited in London for an Allied victory, but in the meantime a puppet government under Vidkun Quisling in Norway pledged itself to support Germany. Although there were very few Jews in Norway, almost half of these few were rounded up for deportation with the help of old as well as newly established Norwegian police.<sup>1</sup>

Indigenous authority in the Netherlands was the product of a more complex situation. The Dutch cabinet had fled to London, but it had left behind the senior civil servants to run the country on a stable day by day basis under German rule. The principal functionaries in the Netherlands were four Secretaries General, one of them, Karl Johannes Frederiks, in charge of internal affairs, that is to say, general administration. The Dutch bureaucracy refrained from issuing any

regulations against the substantial Jewish community. All such measures were therefore exclusively German. The Reichskommissar, however, did have Dutch assistance in the implementation of German policy, notably in the issuance of identification cards and in registrations. When Jews were prohibited by a German ordinance of September 15, 1941, from changing their residence without permission, the SS and Police wanted any violators to be apprehended by the Dutch law enforcement machinery. The Mayor of Zutphen, whom the Germans considered to be pro-Jewish, thereupon sought a directive in this matter from the Dutch commissar of Gelderland Province. The commissar replied that Dutch police were to abstain from arresting any Jews who were not guilty of a punishable act, and Secretary General Frederiks agreed with this opinion. It was evident to the Germans that in the eyes of the Dutch administration, the disregard of a German anti-Jewish decree was not criminal behavior.<sup>2</sup>

Notwithstanding this display of Dutch rectitude in the face of German pressure, Dutch police participated in the large-scale round-ups of Jews less than a year later.<sup>3</sup> The Amsterdam police were injected into the operation at the end of August 1942. The Dutch police chief of the city was Sybren Tulp, a man with no prior anti-Jewish record, who had been an infantry officer in the Dutch colonial army of the East Indies. Tulp was popular with his men. He wanted them to be self-confident and he strove to shape them into a model force. He also sought the goodwill of the Higher SS and Police Leader Hanns Rauter, with whom he maintained regular contact by telephone and correspondence. Tulp's police took on more and more German features. Amsterdam had a newly formed police battalion, most of whose members had been drawn from demobilized soldiers of the Dutch army, and who were quartered in barracks. During the summer of 1942, Tulp expanded his headquarters, forming a bureau of Jewish affairs. Finally he led his men in the seizure of the Jews. Only one of his officers refused duty. The mobile battalion, Tulp reported, had acted with great dedication, looking for any Jews not found at home in the general neighborhood.<sup>4</sup>

Not all Dutch police were so arduous. A Jewish survivor recalls the arrest of his family in Apeldoorn on October 2, 1942. A member

of the German army's Field Police, accompanied by two Dutch policemen, appeared in the apartment. He ordered the family to prepare itself and left with one of the two Dutchmen. The Dutch policeman who was left alone with the Jews pleaded with them not to flee. Explaining that he was acting under orders, he said that he would be held accountable for their disappearance. The Jewish victims complied.<sup>5</sup>

The Dutch police would take the Jews to a concentration point, from which they would be sent to a railway station to board a train to a transit camp. In this shuttle, the Dutch railways, less visible than police in the streets, apparently cooperated with the Germans as a matter of course.<sup>6</sup>

When France approached defeat in 1940, a new government was formed, which asked for an armistice. Under the terms of this agreement, the northern part of the country, including Paris, and the entire Atlantic coast became a German-occupied area. The interior to the Mediterranean was unoccupied until November 1942. The French government had its capital in the small town of Vichy within the free zone. Its laws, decrees, and directives were also applicable in occupied territory, but there the German military administration could issue its own ordinances, preempting or overriding French enactments. Vichy remained independent in unoccupied France, where it was permitted to maintain a small army, and at the beginning it still controlled the French colonies. Yet in the French population on both sides of the demarcation line, there were feelings of humiliation, a sense of bewilderment over the sudden debacle, and the sheer pain caused by the burdens of the lost war. For these reasons, the Vichy regime emphasized old pride reflected primarily in the person of the aged Marshal Philippe Pétain; a new competence as represented in a corps of able leaders; and the necessity of facing reality in the form of an articulated policy of collaboration with Germany.

A comparison between Pétain and his German contemporary von Hindenburg is almost inescapable. Both men had triumphed in defensive battles during the First World War, Pétain at Verdun in 1916, Hindenburg against the Russians in 1914. Both had urged their governments to surrender. Hindenburg as Commander of the German

army in 1918, Pétain as Vice Premier in 1940. Both served as heads of state in their eighties with full lucidity of mind. Pétain, however, was more than a symbolic ruler. He acquiesced, even though reluctantly, in anti-Jewish measures, and opposed, albeit indirectly, the deportation of Jews of French nationality. With these attitudes he incorporated the compromises of his regime.

The new professionalism was stressed in the military and civilian hierarchies. The armistice army weeded out older officers and attempted to become leaner like the 100,000-man German Reichswehr of the 1920s. At the same time, it dismissed, with a few exceptions, its Jewish officers and non-commissioned officers in order to be wholly "French."<sup>7</sup> Many Frenchmen were still prisoners of war, but only a few had joined General Charles de Gaulle in London. As Robert Paxton has shown, the Vichy army had retained the loyalty of the officers at home and in the overseas possessions. On several occasions, the military fought against British onslaughts against the French empire. A British naval attack was beaten back at Dakar in 1940, and a British invasion of Syria was resisted for a month in 1941. In the Syrian battle, there were thousands of casualties on each side, and when the French defenders were given a choice at the end of the fighting to go home or join de Gaulle's Free French forces, all but 5,668 of the 37,736 officers and men returned to France. A colonel who opted for de Gaulle was told by a major who kept his allegiance to Vichy: "Go to the Jews, then; they will pay you well."<sup>8</sup>

Within the civilian branches of the Vichy regime, there was an infusion of technocrats and careerists who, like Tulp in the Netherlands, thought of themselves as innovators. Several of these entrants were graduates of elite schools. One was François Lehideux, educated at the Ecole Libre des Sciences Politiques and a veteran of the Renault concern, who as Secrétaire d'Etat of Industrial Production signed a number of anti-Jewish decrees in the economic sphere. Another was Jean Bichelonne, trained at the Polytechnique, who succeeded Lehideux and was also concerned with takeovers and liquidations of Jewish enterprises. Still another, Pierre Pucheu, was a product of the Ecole Normale Supérieure with experience in heavy industry who, as Minister of the Interior, signed a host of anti-Jewish measures leading to segregation and internments. Pucheu had been a

member of the extremist right-wing Parti Populaire Français before the war, but his colleague, Justice Minister Joseph Barthélemy, another signer of decrees, had come into the office from the University of Paris, where he had been a respected professor of law. The chief of the Vichy government's police, René Bousquet, was a former prefect, and at the time of the deportations in 1942, he was only thirty-three.<sup>9</sup>

The Vichy regime had not only new men, but also a new agency: a Commissariat of Jewish Affairs. This office was headed by Xavier Vallat, a nationalist and militant Catholic, whose principal achievement was the creation of a Jewish council that would have to take orders from him. Vallat, however, was sufficiently hostile to Germans to be replaced by Louis Darquier de Pellepoix, who was more exclusively anti-Jewish. Son of a physician and a seventeen-year-old soldier of the First World War as well as an officer in the second, Darquier had studied and abandoned chemistry. During the 1930s he acquired his principal credentials by heading the Rassemblement anti-Juif de France. As Vallat's successor, Darquier dealt with property transfers and a host of other activities, but he was not always at the center of the action.

One man who played a pivotal role in the Vichy regime and who became the principal advocate of the policy of collaboration was Pierre Laval. Neither a modernizer nor an ideologist, Laval was a pragmatic politician. Born in a peasant family and trained as a lawyer, he was a man of high visibility long before the German invasion. Twice a premier in the 1930s and for a short period a foreign minister, he was co-author with Britain's Foreign Secretary Sir Samuel Hoare of a plan to appease Italy's appetite for Ethiopia by offering Benito Mussolini a few of Ethiopia's provinces. War seemed to him folly, and toward Britain and the Soviet Union, France's potential allies in a conflict with Germany and Italy, he harbored distrust. When France fell, he joined Pétain's cabinet but then lost his post in a palace coup. He returned as premier in March 1942, at a time when the deportation of the Jews of the occupied zone was imminent. Laval threw in his lot and that of France with Germany. Predicating his policy on a German victory, he was willing to make deals with the Germans. Thus he sought the release of French prisoners of war

in exchange for an increase in the number of French laborers going to the Reich, and in the summer of 1942, he agreed to deport twenty thousand stateless Jews from the unoccupied zone as a concession to German demands. Among the victims were several thousand children who had not been expected by the SS and Police. In a gesture of largesse, Laval declared that the children did not interest him.<sup>10</sup> Germany's southeastern allies, Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary, were primarily interested in territory. All three had been territorial losers, and each was compensated under German patronage. As they drew nearer to Germany, they also commenced anti-Jewish activities.

Bulgaria's losses had occurred as a result of the Second Balkan War and the First World War. By spring 1941, Bulgaria controlled more land than it had ever had in the twentieth century. Yet the Bulgarian government was hesitant to be fully at Germany's disposal. Bulgarian troops did not fight on the Eastern Front and the Jews of Old Bulgaria were not deported. Anti-Jewish action was not omitted completely and something did happen to the Jews. The driving force in this campaign was Alexander Belev, the Commissar for Jewish Affairs. A prewar ultra nationalist, Belev was appointed to the newly formed commissariat by Interior Minister Peter Grabovski in August 1942. A number of steps had already been taken against the Jews by that time, and Belev was to preside over the deportations. His path, however, was at least partially blocked. Foreign Minister Ivan Popov and Gabrovski himself became sensitive to internal counter-pressures and to the evolving changes in Germany's fortunes. Belev's success was therefore limited to the deportation of somewhat more than eleven thousand Jews from the newly annexed areas of Macedonia and Thrace.<sup>11</sup>

Romania's losses had occurred in the course of a few months in 1940. Territory had to be ceded to Hungary, Bulgaria, and the USSR. In 1941, Romania reacquired its eastern provinces from the Soviet Union and occupied a portion of Ukraine. Unlike Bulgaria, however, Romania had to commit its army in bitter fighting for these gains.

At the beginning of September 1940, immediately following the trauma of the three amputations, Romania acquired a dictator, Gen-

eral Ion Antonescu. A veteran of the First World War, when Romania had fought against Austria-Hungary and Germany, Antonescu was a Chief of Staff of the Romanian army in the 1930s. Openly right wing, he allied himself with the Iron Guard, a mystical religious-nationalist movement that was hostile not only to Romania's neighbors but to the three quarters of a million Jews who lived within Romania's pre-1940 boundaries. As one of the Iron Guard's intellectual spokesmen, Mircea Eliade, wrote in 1936: "[W]e are waiting for a nationalist Romania, frenzied and chauvinistic, armed and vigorous, pitiless and vengeful."<sup>12</sup>

The Iron Guard held several portfolios in Antonescu's initial cabinet, but in January 1941 it launched a revolt, in the process of which it also slaughtered Jews in and around Bucharest. The uprising failed, as Germany decided to trust Antonescu. Within months the frenzy came at the hands of Antonescu's army and gendarmerie.

A few days after Romania's entry into the war, violence engulfed the Jewish community of the city of Iasi, leaving several thousand dead. When Bukovina and Bessarabia were retaken, Antonescu ordered the expulsion of the Jews in these regions across the Dniester River. This time the deaths were in the tens of thousands. After a Romanian general with his staff were killed in an explosion at their headquarters in the captured Soviet city of Odessa, Antonescu ordered a reprisal in the ratio of one to one hundred. The ensuing massacre of Jews was the largest in Europe. More mass dying of the expelled and more mass shootings of Soviet Jews followed in the wake of these events.

In the meantime, the Romanian bureaucracy imposed decree after decree on the Jewish population of Old Romania. A commissariat was established under a former newspaper correspondent of the Nazi party's *Völkischer Beobachter*, Radu Lecca. It is Lecca who was to hand over the remaining Romanian Jews to the Germans for deportation to Poland. At this point, however, the Romanian destruction process was frozen.

Antonescu was a man who had always had contacts with Jews and who never stopped arguing and talking with them. In an open letter to a Jewish leader, he attempted to justify the uprooting of Bukovinan and Bessarabian Jewry by claiming that during the one-year So-

viet rule and in the course of the Soviet retreat, they had been loyal to the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, he subsequently received a two-man delegation and allowed himself to be convinced not to introduce the Jewish star. After the summer of 1942, he was no longer accessible to German demands for deportations, and in 1943 he explicitly forbade any German killing of Jews in Soviet areas under Romanian occupation. The war was being lost, and Romania's frenzy had spent itself.<sup>13</sup>

Compared to Romania, Hungary was more stable and controlled. Its long-time leader was the Prince Regent, Admiral Miklós Horthy. His rank stemmed from his service as Commander in Chief of the Austro-Hungarian navy. Hungary, which is landlocked, had no navy. Horthy came to prominence in the turmoil of 1919 and 1920, when a Hungarian Communist government under Béla Kun, a Jew, dissolved under the impact of a Romanian invasion, and Communists were hunted by counter-revolutionary forces. A self-proclaimed anti-Semite of the old school, Horthy could stare down any upstarts approaching him with extreme ideas. He knew the role that Jews played in Hungary's economy, and he was not about to surrender the country's material fortunes to incompetent, self-seeking opportunists. He did want to raise the Hungarian flag in neighboring territories inhabited by Hungarians, and in pursuance of this aim, Hungary rapidly enlarged itself between 1938 and 1941 at the expense of Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Yugoslavia. All of these acquisitions were made possible by Germany and soon enough the price for them was to be paid. Hungary entered the war against the Soviet Union, and Hungarian measures were instituted against the Jews. By German standards, however, both of these efforts were limited. Hungary stopped short of fighting all out, and beyond the broad sweep of its economic constriction of the Jews, it refused to deport them. In March 1944, the Germans occupied Hungary and from May to July deported 450,000 Jews with matchless efficiency. Horthy, who was smarting under the German intervention, heard the protests of Allied and neutral governments. Before the deportations reached Budapest, he stopped them. A few months later, the Germans replaced him with an extremist. By then the transport of Jews to Auschwitz was no longer feasible.<sup>14</sup>

Laval, Antonescu, and Horthy were not political extremists and there was comparatively little room in their governments for such people. Too many of the revolutionaries on the ideological Right lacked the credibility of traditional leadership. The movements of the ultraists were either imitations of Nazism or were assumed to be Germany's tools. Only in Slovakia and Croatia did extremists monopolize governmental power from the start, but these countries were German products. Germany needed the nationalists of the Hlinka party in Slovakia and the Ustasha movement in Croatia, and to these groups in turn Germany presented the only chance of survival. Hence they aligned themselves with Germany fully, contributing soldiers to the campaign against the USSR and moving against their Jews. Croatia struck out at its Jewish inhabitants with heavy shootings, while Slovakia was the phant satellite falling into step with Germany's expectations. The only independence they manifested in Jewish affairs was in their protection of favored Jews.

After three years of war, the situation gradually changed in all of Germany's domains. In France during November 1942, Italy in September 1943, Slovakia in August 1944, and Hungary during the following November, German forces intervened physically to prevent a further deterioration of Germany's position. The indigenous bureaucracies still functioned, still collaborated, but they were no longer relied on as before. To round up the remaining Jews, the Germans were increasingly dependent on ultra parties and their motley crews of helpers.

## 8

## NON-GERMAN VOLUNTEERS

WHEN GERMANY MOVED north, west, south, and east to occupy territories, German civilian personnel, army garrisons, and police in these regions were spread thin. The occupation regime could be an overseer, and it could provide a core of the enforcement mechanisms, but it could seldom act alone to maintain basic services for public order. Still less could it rely wholly on its own resources for such tasks as the confiscation of harvests, the impressment of labor, the combating of partisans, and the guarding or killing of Jews. For all these missions, German agencies employed local mayors, indigenous police, and assorted militia. The non-German helpers were approved holdovers, or newly recruited, or, sometimes, self-organized. Not unexpectedly, they also varied in their motivations. Some of these men wanted to avoid hard physical labor; others wanted privileges or prestige; still others were inspired by conviction; but in essence they all served voluntarily.

In France, a number of ideologically based organizations furnished French manpower for the Nazi crusade. Thus a group of right-wing organizers led by Eugene Deloncle in occupied Paris formed the *Légion des Volontaires Français Contre le Bolchevisme* shortly after the German invasion of the Soviet Union. The legion, eventually a



regiment of the German army, was to participate in the campaign on the Eastern Front,<sup>1</sup> but in December 1942, French legionnaires training in the Radom District at Kruszyňa in occupied Poland had an opportunity to kill Polish Jews. By that time, most of the Jewish inhabitants of the area had already been deported, and clusters of remaining Jews, kept in labor camps, were gradually thinned out as well. According to a German gendarmerie lieutenant, Jewish police had caused anxiety among the 552 Jewish laborers in Kruszyňa by telling them that they were "next." The lieutenant had only two German gendarmes and eight men of the French legion lent to him by the German army, when he was attacked by Jews who tore his coat and scratched him. The Jews attempted to escape and the French opened fire on their own. With subsequent reinforcements of twenty-five Ukrainians and a larger number of French legionnaires, the Jewish breakout attempt was contained and 113 Jewish men lay dead in a wide circle around the encampment. "With special ardor," reported the lieutenant, "the Frenchmen charged solely with guard duty participated in finishing off the Jewish wounded."<sup>2</sup>

Militarized formations that remained in the French homeland offered their services in roundups during deportations, thereby providing backup for regular German and French police. One of these organizations was the Parti Populaire Français (PPF), established in 1936 by Jacques Doriot. Until 1934, Doriot had been an active Communist. When Marshal Pétain led French forces in support of Spanish troops in a campaign against Moroccan rebels in the early 1920s, Doriot handed out anti-war leaflets. Later he staged a Communist demonstration in the Place de la République in Paris. As a right-wing politician during the German occupation, Doriot had a number of followers in the Pétain administration, although—given his background—he did not have the trust of the Marshal himself. In occupied Paris, his party attracted more than a few adolescents, and, when the first major roundup of Paris Jews was conducted in July 1942, some three hundred to four hundred Doriot youths in blue shirts with PPF armbands volunteered to assist in the seizures.<sup>3</sup> After German forces occupied the free zone in November 1942, the southern branch of the party, which consisted of congeries of ideologues, underworld characters, and individuals who wanted to avoid labor

service in Germany, assisted the undermanned German and French police in tracking down Jews.<sup>4</sup>

Yet another militarized formation in France was the *milice*. Commanded by an adventurer who was also a First World War hero, Joseph Darnand, this organization was consecrated as an official body on January 30, 1943, after Vichy France was forced to demobilize its armistice army. The *milice* was now, as the French historian Jean-Pierre Azéma called it, the government's praetorian guard, fighting increasing numbers of French resisters. It also hunted down Jews trying to escape from the German dragnet in the former free zone.<sup>5</sup>

The French extremists had their counterparts in Italy. There the overthrow of Mussolini in the summer of 1943 and the subsequent surrender to the Allies by the government of Pietro Badoglio resulted in the occupation of northern and central Italy by the Germans and the reestablishment of a remnant Fascist regime with a relatively unreliable Italian police force. The skeletal SS and Police did, however, have the assistance of small, organized Fascist legions operating principally in Rome, Milan, and Florence, and partially supported by the Interior Ministry; a *Milizia volontaria* set up by the Fascist party and placed under the direction of an old Fascist, Renato Ricci; and finally uniformed Fascist party members formed into Black Brigades under Fascist Party Secretary Alessandro Pavolini.<sup>6</sup> In occupied Italy, only about a fifth of the more than forty thousand Jews were caught, but several thousand of them were arrested by Italians.<sup>7</sup>

Extremists were active also in Hungary. When Berlin no longer trusted Admiral Horthy to keep Hungary in the war, the German military, SS, and legation overthrew the aged Hungarian leader in October 1944. By then, the sole candidate who could completely satisfy German needs was the ultra-right-wing Arrow Cross leader Ferenc Szálasi. Most Jews had already been deported. Only the Jewish labor companies in the Hungarian army and the Jewish community in Budapest were still intact. It was too late for renewed deportations to Auschwitz, but not for death marches of Jewish laborers and for roving Arrow Crossists in Budapest, who shot thousands of Jews on the banks of the Danube and threw them into the icy river.<sup>8</sup>

In Slovakia, a revolt broke out in the summer of 1944. Fearing

defections. German forces disarmed the Slovak army and went on to crush the insurgents. Thousands of Jews who had been bypassed as essential or privileged during the 1942 deportations were rounded up with the help of Slovak police and militarized units of the Hlinka party. For the Hlinka guards, this occasion was not a debut. They had been volunteers for seizures of Jews in 1942, and there is nothing to indicate that they failed to perform their assignment two years later. In these twilight hours of the war, the German Security Service did notice, however, that corrosion had reached the core of the last Slovak loyalists. One of these collaborators, Josef Nemsilla, was overheard to say in the air-raid shelter that the Allied bombs raining on innocent Slovaks should rather have been aimed at Hitler and all those Germans who had brought about this situation.<sup>9</sup>

The native auxiliaries in occupied France, Italy, Hungary, or Slovakia, who donned a uniform to fight partisans or join in the hunt for Jews, had emerged in the wake of weakened or collapsing governments. In Polish and Soviet territories, the setting was totally different. Here no satellite states were permitted to exist and, apart from indigenous central offices with limited functions in each of the three prewar Baltic republics, the highest echelon of non-German administration was a mayor or a rural chief. These local authorities were closely supervised by German military or civilian organs.

Polish municipalities, which were located in the Warsaw, Lublin, Radom, and Krakow districts of the *Generalgouvernement*, played only a peripheral role in the establishment and maintenance of ghettos. During the time of ghettoization, Polish mayors and chairmen of Jewish councils were both placed under direct German control in administratively parallel as well as separate positions. Polish mayors were concerned with ghettos mainly in financial questions and certain residual functions, such as public utilities. The nature of the official city-ghetto relationship in Warsaw is discernible from the diary of Adam Czerniakow, Chairman of the Jewish council in the ghetto. Mayor Julian Kulski rebated to Czerniakow fees collected from Jews, and at one point, when the question of reducing the size of the ghetto arose, he told Czerniakow that he would support him in arguments against such a change.<sup>10</sup>

Mayors in occupied Ukrainian territory were chosen by military government officers, sometimes in consultation with the Security Police. The appointments were not always successful. In Mariupol the mayor had to be replaced after it was discovered that he was married to a Jewish woman.<sup>11</sup> The mayor of Kremenchug was actually shot by the Security Police for protecting Jews.<sup>12</sup> In several cities, however, the mayors were assigned a variety of tasks in Jewish matters. After the Jewish population was shot in Nikolaev, the mayor was ordered to reserve Jewish furniture for the military and Jewish apartments for ethnic Germans who had lost the roofs over their heads.<sup>13</sup> In Kharkov, the municipality was charged with the registration of the entire population. The census was to be conducted street by street in December 1941. The names and addresses of Jews were written down on separate yellow sheets.<sup>14</sup> Shortly after this procedure was completed, the Jews were removed from their apartments and placed in a tractor factory from which they were taken out in batches to be shot.<sup>15</sup>

In the Byelorussian city of Borisov, which was under military administration, the local mayor was Stanislaw Stankevich. According to an ethnic German whom Stankevich had recommended for the job of commanding the indigenous city police, a banquet was held on November 8, 1941, for about two hundred German and native policemen who had been pulled together from Borisov and other locations. The occasion was a planned action against the ghetto. With their food and drink, the men were treated to speeches by German army officers, representatives of the police, and Stankevich. On the next day, eight thousand Jews were shot. Stankevich transported the clothing of the dead from the grave site to the city for delivery to *White Russian Self-Help*, a welfare organization.<sup>16</sup>

In Lithuania, the German invasion of the USSR triggered an uprising by the Lithuanian Activist Front. Local Lithuanians fought the retreating Red Army in the Lithuanian capital of Kaunas, seizing the radio station and hoisting the Lithuanian flag hours before the vanguard of the German army reached the city on June 24, 1941. Two days later, a Lithuanian pogrom, instigated by the newly arrived German Security Police, resulted in the death of several thousand

Jews. At the beginning of July, a committee of Jews was summoned by the Security Police to be informed that the Jewish population would have to move into a ghetto. The measure was presented to the Jews as a means to preclude further violence against them. By that time, the Lithuanian Activist Front had established a rudimentary governmental structure, including a mayor's office in Kaunas. On July 10, the mayor, Kazys Palciauskas, issued an order for the ghetto's formation. His act was confirmed by the newly appointed German civilian Stadtkommissar, Hans Cramer, on July 31. The deadline for moving into the ghetto was August 15. Some thirty thousand Jews were to be squeezed into the Vilijampole quarter, a section without running water then housing about twelve thousand people. The Jewish Committee for the Transfer of the Jews to Vilijampole vainly appealed to the Germans and the Lithuanians for more space and time. Several meetings were held with Lithuanian municipal officials. After one of these talks, a Jewish negotiator, Anatolijus Rozenblumas, characterized the conversation as overly friendly, but he added that there was an undertone of pressure. The Lithuanians had insisted that the handling of the transfer would be even more stringent if the Jews did not comply with all demands.<sup>17</sup>

The Lithuanian municipality of Vilnius was busy with the orderly storage of furniture abandoned by Jews who had to move into two adjacent ghettos within the city. The warehouses of the city administration were not roomy enough to hold all these pieces, and Mayor Dabulevicius requested permission to use the synagogues outside the ghetto boundaries for the overflow.<sup>18</sup>

Agencies and units of indigenous police were a second tool in the hands of German occupation authorities in the east. The police were uniformed and armed, and their drastic activities were more direct than those of the mayoral offices, but they existed, like the municipal administrations, because they were needed by their German rulers.

Of all the native police forces in occupied Eastern Europe, those of Poland were least involved in anti-Jewish actions. Territorially, Polish police were confined in the main to the four original districts of the Generalgouvernement, where they numbered about fourteen thousand.<sup>19</sup> The Germans could not view them as collaborators, for in German eyes they were not even worthy of that role. They in turn

could not join the Germans in major operations against Jews or Polish resisters, lest they be considered traitors by virtually every Polish onlooker. Their task in the destruction of the Jews was therefore limited. In Warsaw, two policemen, one German and one Polish, would stand outside a ghetto gate, and a Jewish policeman inside. In the countryside, where no photographs were taken, Polish police tracked down Jewish escapees.<sup>20</sup>

Within the territories wrested from the Soviet Union, the Germans used police auxiliaries more freely. German disdain for local populations was not as great there as in Poland, and local reticence to collaborate with Germany was not as universal as that of the Poles. In a region ranging from the outskirts of Leningrad to the mountains of the Caucasus, new police forces came into being with rapidity. At first these eastern helpers were either self-organized or recruited by the army or the Security Police. Heinrich Himmler, who as chief of the SS and Police was an empire builder, seized the opportunity to bring a large number of them under his jurisdiction.<sup>21</sup>

The Security Police employed only a small percentage of these auxiliaries. The great bulk of the helpers, eventually hundreds of thousands, were placed under the command of the Order Police. Native personnel augmenting the Order Police were designated the *Schutzmannschaft*. Mirroring the organization of the Order Police in Germany, the *Schutzmannschaft* could be found in cities, rural districts, and battalions. The stationary component of the *Schutzmannschaft* included Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Russians, Estonians, Lithuanians, and Latvians. The battalions, which were organized by nationality, did not contain "Russians" but did include "Cossacks." Each battalion had an authorized strength of about five hundred and could be moved, sometimes far from its point of origin, to fight partisans or to kill Jews.

The multiplication of *Schutzmannschaft* battalions gave pause to Hitler himself. He did not want combat units of Ukrainians or Balts that could back claims for independence of their countries.<sup>22</sup> The momentum, however, could not be broken. In the final phase of the development, after most Jews in the area were already dead, a Ukrainian SS division was raised in Galicia, two Latvian divisions were fighting in the SS on the front, an Estonian SS division had been

raised, Lithuanian police battalions were in action, and Russians were added to the German army.

In the lineup of nationalities under German control, the Ukrainian population was most numerous. Its size as of 1939 was 36,000,000, and the Ukrainian SSR as a whole was occupied by the Germans by 1942.<sup>23</sup>

The district of Galicia, which had been a part of Poland before the war, was incorporated into the Generalgouvernement in 1941. Because most of the inhabitants of Galicia were Ukrainian,<sup>24</sup> the SS and Police Leader of the district, Katzmann, envisaged a Ukrainian police of sixty-three officers and twenty-nine hundred men for his area. Given the history of Galicia under twenty years of Polish rule and two years of the Soviet flag, he did not have a trained reservoir of acceptable Ukrainians in such numbers. Accordingly he established a police school for Ukrainians in Lvov.<sup>25</sup> Less than a year later, Ukrainian police in Galicia were used extensively for roundups of Jews destined for the death camp Belzec, as well as for some shootings.<sup>26</sup>

East of Galicia, the initial Ukrainian police was a militia formed under the patronage of the German army. Generally the Ukrainian mayors were given the responsibility of organizing this force, assuring its political reliability, and paying for it out of local budgets.<sup>27</sup> German military government was not altogether at ease with the militia, and rules were laid down to limit its size and weapons.<sup>28</sup> Soon enough, the Order Police stepped in to take over these Ukrainians. Henceforth they were under stricter control and their salaries were paid by the German Reich.<sup>29</sup> As of July 1, 1942, Ukrainian police and firemen in stationary posts numbered 5,631 in the cities and 31,027 in rural areas.<sup>30</sup> As in the case of Galicia to the west, very few of these men were officers or even non-commissioned officers.<sup>31</sup> Everywhere, however, they far outnumbered German personnel. Typically, in the Brest-Litovsk area of Volhynia, German gendarmes totaled 26 men and Ukrainian gendarmerie 308.<sup>32</sup>

Almost all the Jews left behind by the retreating Red Army in Ukrainian territory were killed. Einsatzgruppen composed of German Security Police, Order Police, and SS moved from city to city, shooting the victims or gassing them in vans. Almost from the beginning, Ukrainian militia were used in these killings as helpers. In

Zhitomir, for example, Ukrainians surrounded the Jewish quarter for the registration and killing of 3,145 Jews.<sup>33</sup> In Korosten, they drove 238 Jews into a building in preparation for an action.<sup>34</sup> In Kherson, a Ukrainian *Selbstschutz*, or "self-protection," group set up by Sonderkommando 11a helped seal off "execution" sites.<sup>35</sup> In Radomyshl, German Security Police shot 1,107 Jewish adults and Ukrainian militia shot 561 Jewish "youths."<sup>36</sup> In Kakhovka, a "cleansing" was conducted by a Ukrainian militia detachment consisting of twelve men under the command of an ethnic German, Oskar Ruf.<sup>37</sup> In Uman, there was an unplanned pogrom by Ukrainian militia and German soldiers, in the course of which Jewish apartments were demolished. This action displeased the Security Police, because it caused Jews to go into hiding.<sup>38</sup> Generally, however, the Security Police welcomed the presence of militia during killing operations, not only as auxiliaries, but as a means of involving at least a part of the Ukrainian population in the anti-Jewish measures.<sup>39</sup>

In Ukrainian areas quickly traversed in 1941 there was a second wave of shootings in 1942. This sequel was most intense in Volhynia, where hundreds of thousands of Jews were living in small ghettos. For the renewed killings, all available SS and Police forces were deployed along with the stationary Ukrainian police, now organized as a *Schutzmannschaft*.<sup>40</sup>

There were also Ukrainian *Schutzmannschaft* battalions, eighteen and a half of them by July 1, 1942.<sup>41</sup> In addition, the first three battalions set up in Byelorussia, and variously labeled as Ukrainian or White Ruthenian, were in fact staffed mostly by Ukrainians recruited in prisoner of war camps. In October 1941, when only a few members of the advancing Einsatzkommando 8 had been left behind in the Byelorussian capital of Minsk, the commander of this rear detachment, Sturmabführer (Major) Hans-Hermann Remmers, received instructions to begin killing the local Jews in the Minsk Ghetto, inasmuch as room had to be created for German Jews who were going to be taken there. Remmers approached the SS and Police Leader, Brigadeführer (Brigadier General) Carl Zenner, and pointed out that he could not ask his handful of men to undertake such a morally burdensome task. Zenner promised indigenous help

and Remmers, relieved, returned to his men to tell them: "Thank God, we are no longer going to have to do the shooting, the Ukrainians are doing it!"<sup>42</sup>

Still more Ukrainian prisoners of war who volunteered for service with the SS and Police were sent to a training camp at Trawniki in the Lublin District. The graduates of this camp became guards of ghettos and camps in the Generalgouvernement. They were the major component of the guard forces in the death camps of Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka, where one and a half million Jews were killed.<sup>43</sup> In the spring of 1943, a Trawniki training battalion was thrown into the battle of the Warsaw Ghetto. There, while shooting at the Jews, they suffered some casualties of their own.<sup>44</sup>

The Byelorussian population was not nearly as large as the Ukrainian, and the Byelorussian Schutzmannschaft numbered in the single thousands during 1942.<sup>45</sup> A single ethnically Byelorussian battalion was set up later. Yet the local Byelorussian police was used just as much as the Ukrainian. In the rural district of Baranovich, which contained several ghettos, the gendarmerie forces in posts included 73 Germans and 816 native auxiliaries.<sup>46</sup> The gendarmerie commander of this district, Lieutenant Max Eibner, was instructed by the Gebietskommissar in charge of the district, Rudolf Werner, to "liberate" the countryside from the Jewish population so far as possible. For this purpose Eibner was to use the men at his disposal.<sup>47</sup> In compliance with the order, Eibner organized several shootings, for which he deployed his German gendarmerie and his Byelorussian Schutzmannschaft.<sup>48</sup>

A major role in the east was played by Baltic police. This fact is remarkable, because the Baltic population was rather small. As of 1939, the number of Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians was less than five million all together.<sup>49</sup> The history, however, of the Baltic nations differed from that of their neighbors. They had had twenty years of independence, followed by a single year of Soviet rule. Officers and men who had served in the armed forces of the three countries, students and graduates of national universities, as well as members of nationalist movements and organizations were still on the scene when the German invasion began. Their anti-Soviet feel-

ings were intense and to Germany they looked for deliverance and restoration of their independence. In German eyes, these men were a ready made auxiliary.<sup>50</sup> The Reich did not permit the formation of Baltic governments or autonomous Baltic armies, but it encouraged the growth of the indigenous police, which equaled in size the Ukrainian and which had three times as many officers as the Ukrainian Schutzmannschaft.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, Balts were not only in the Order Police but served under the aegis of the Security Police as well. During the first weeks of the German occupation, Baltic volunteers took the initiative, striking out at Jews and suspected Communists to such an extent that the commander of the rear area of Army Group North ordered the cessation of all their self-empowered arrests and shootings. From now on, he decreed, they would have to confine themselves to actions authorized by German offices or an indigenous judicial arrest warrant.<sup>52</sup>

The smallest Baltic population, little more than a million, was the Estonian. The prewar Jewish inhabitants of Estonia numbered only some four thousand, and because the German army did not reach northern Estonia for a while, most were able to flee. The first Estonian police collaborators were called *Okamitse*, literally "self-defense," or *Selbstschutz*. Although subordinated to the German army, they were available to Sturmbannführer Martin Sandberger, Commander of Einsatzkommando 1, whose force was only about a hundred. The Selbstschutz rounded up a thousand Jews in Tallin, Dorpat, and various towns. Between September 26 and 29, 1941, the Einsatzkommando and its Estonian helpers shot 440 Jewish men, sparing the Jewish council members and physicians. (The women and children were subsequently transferred from a camp in Harku, near Tallin, to the Russian city of Pskov, outside Estonia, where they were shot.)<sup>53</sup>

Although the Jews of Estonia were gone, Estonian police were still in the killing business. By 1942, Sandberger had his own Estonian Security Police, organized under the Estonian Major Ain-Ervin Mere, with criminal police and political police components. When a transport from the Theresienstadt Ghetto in Bohemia-Moravia arrived in Raasiku, Estonia, on September 5, 1942, with a thousand

Jews, almost all the deportees were shot, mainly by Estonian Security Police posted to the camp Jägala. The same fate was meted out to a Berlin transport that came a week later.<sup>54</sup>

In 1943 and 1944, there was a regular concentration camp in Estonia: the Vaivara complex. Commanded by Hauptsturmführer Hans Aumeier and staffed by German and Estonian guards, Vaivara received several thousand Jewish workers for shale oil production from the remnant ghettos of Kaunas and Vilnius. When the Red Army suddenly appeared at the subcamp of Klooga in September 1944, two thousand inmates were shot. The Soviet vanguard found bodies still burning.<sup>55</sup>

The 2 million Lithuanians constituted the largest Baltic population. The Jews of Lithuania were also the most numerous in the region. Prior to the German invasion, more than 250,000 Jews lived in the Lithuanian SSR, which included most of the territory of pre-war independent Lithuania and the newly attached area of Vilnius.<sup>56</sup> About 90 percent of the Jews, unable to escape, remained behind in June 1941.

In the old Lithuanian heartland, many of the police collaborators were drawn from partisans who started an anti-Soviet uprising under the umbrella of the Lithuanian National Front during the first hours of the German invasion. One group, specifically mentioned by the German Security Police, consisted of about six hundred laborers under the command of a journalist, Jonas Klimaitis.<sup>57</sup> With Security Police encouragement, this group killed about thirty-eight hundred Jews in Kaunas and twelve hundred in other towns.<sup>58</sup> The partisans in the Kaunas area were soon disbanded by the military. "Reliable" men were selected from their ranks and formed into five police companies. Two of the companies were assigned to Sonderkommando 1b, which used them immediately for major shootings in Kaunas.<sup>59</sup> Lithuanian helpers also made themselves useful in smaller cities. As early as July 1941, the Lithuanian police of Marijampole (Kapsukas) prepared lists of "Jews" and "Lithuanians."<sup>60</sup> Inside and outside Kaunas, the killings were continued by Einsatzkommando 3, which noted on September 19, 1941, that a total of 46,692 people, the overwhelming majority of whom were Jews, had been shot with the help of Lithuanian partisans.<sup>61</sup> The killings inundated dozens of lo-

calities through the rest of the year. In many of these towns, local Lithuanian police and instant volunteers pitched in, seizing the Jews, holding them for the arrival of a detachment of the Einsatzkommando, and joining in the shootings.<sup>62</sup>

In the Vilnius region, where Lithuanians were only about 6 percent of the population, the German army found 3,600 deserters from the 29th (Lithuanian) Territorial Corps of the Red Army, already assembled and ready for an assignment.<sup>63</sup> By the beginning of July, 1,150 Lithuanians in Vilnius were employed by Einsatzkommando 9 to round up and shoot 500 Jews a day.<sup>64</sup> When the Jews of Vilnius were subjected to ghettoization two months later, Lithuanian police and freelancing "Selbstschutz" in the city lent a hand. At 6:00 A.M. on September 6, 1941, the police conducted the Jews to the ghetto site and the Selbstschutz formed a cordon around the ghetto to prevent escapes.<sup>65</sup>

When Lithuanian Schutzmannschaft battalions were set up, many of these units were sent out from their homeland to other regions. The first of the border crossers were the Lithuanian companies of Major Lechthaler's 11th Reserve Police Battalion, which killed thousands of Jews in Byelorussia. During August and September 1942, two Lithuanian battalions took part in "Operation Swamp Fever," which covered the marshes of Byelorussia and Ukraine. In this expedition, more than eighty-three hundred Jews were killed.<sup>66</sup> Two other battalions were posted in succession to the death camp of Majdanek (Lublin).<sup>67</sup> Lithuanian battalions ranged all the way to the southern Ukraine, eight hundred miles from the Lithuanian frontier, where they guarded Jewish laborers.

On a per capita basis, the Latvians, numbering some 1,600,000, were represented as heavily as any nation in the destruction of the Jews. As soon as German forces reached the Latvian capital of Riga on July 1, 1941, volunteers banded together with German approval. Among the entrants into the new auxiliary were officers and soldiers who had served in the army of independent Latvia; soldiers who had been discharged or who had deserted from the 24th (Latvian) Territorial Rifle Corps of the Red Army; former members of the *Aisargi*, the civil guard, which had been maintained by the prewar Latvian state; members and sympathizers of the Perkonrust, a right-

wing movement that was extreme enough to have been outlawed while Latvia was still independent; university graduates who had belonged to fraternities; athletes and gymnasiums teachers; relatives of Latvians deported by the Soviets; and assorted youths.<sup>68</sup> Not prevalent in this conglomeration were professional policemen, many of whom had been purged and arrested by the Soviet regime. Only 10 percent of the old police force served in the Latvian police under German rule.<sup>69</sup>

During July and August 1941, the principal German actors on the Latvian scene were the Security Police and the armed forces. The Chief of Security Police's Einsatzgruppe A, Walter Stahlecker, wanted to unleash some local violence against the Latvian Jews, who numbered seventy thousand when the Germans arrived. As early as July 1, the Einsatzgruppe was in contact with Latvian personalities, notably Viktors Arais, a young man of humble background born in a small town in 1910 who had attended the University of Riga, where he had managed to join the "aristocratic" Lettonia fraternity. He had received a law degree in March 1941, when Latvia was under Soviet rule, but he had also defended Latvian peasants threatened with expropriation by Soviet authorities, and he had gone into hiding before the German invasion. During the summer and fall 1941, Arais gathered a few hundred men. They served the Einsatzgruppe and did its work.<sup>70</sup>

The German armed forces, which included a naval command in the port city of Liepāja and army Kommandanturen in the interior, had jurisdiction over a much larger, albeit more amorphous indigenous police force, which was called Hilfspolizei or Selbstschutz. The organizers of this force were two officers of the old Latvian army, Lieutenant Colonel Voldermars Veiss and his deputy, Lieutenant Colonel Roberts Osis. One of the territorial commanders of the Selbstschutz was Lieutenant Colonel Karlis Lobe in the Ventspils area. After civil administration was established in Latvia at the beginning of September, the Selbstschutz was pruned and transformed into a Schutzmannschaft with stationary components and battalions. The pogrom-like violence envisaged by Stahlecker was slow to start. In Riga, the toll was 400.<sup>71</sup> In Liepāja, Latvian "civilians" with armbands and rifles drove Jews in trucks to an area near the beach,

where the victims were shot.<sup>72</sup> In Daugavpils, in the southeast of the country, where Latvians were only about a third of the population among Russians, Poles, and Jews, the Latvian residents hesitated to organize themselves and "confront" the Jewish inhabitants.<sup>73</sup> To be sure, this situation was soon remedied and the Latvian Selbstschutz there was engaged in massive shootings.<sup>74</sup> In Jelgava, south of the capital, the Security Police observed a similar lethargy but reported with satisfaction that finally the "population" had killed all the 1,550 Jews in the city and its environs.<sup>75</sup>

If, in the early days, Latvians appeared to be less spontaneous than their Estonian and Lithuanian neighbors, their efficiency increased over time. In Riga, the police prefecture and the central prison were used as holding pens for Jewish men whom the Arais Kommando removed in batches to a shooting site in the woods. In a number of towns, Arais men arrived in blue buses to shoot the Jews concentrated by local Latvian police. By mid-October, more than thirty thousand Latvian Jews had been killed by German and Latvian police forces.<sup>76</sup> Most of the remainder were shoved into a ghetto in Riga.

The sojourn of the survivors in the Riga Ghetto was brief. Transports of German Jews were due in the city, and to make room for the deportees, Higher SS and Police Leader Friedrich Jeckeln struck at the ghetto at the end of November and the beginning of December, killing another 27,800 Jews.<sup>77</sup> All available forces were thrown into this action: German police, a Schutzmannschaft battalion, Arais men, Riga precinct police, and Riga harbor police.<sup>78</sup> At the conclusion of the operation, Lieutenant Alberts Danskops of the Arais Kommando was observed with a mandolin, playing Chopin's funeral march, as he led a group of 450 Jews dragged out of hiding to the old cemetery, where they were shot.<sup>79</sup>

By 1942, Latvian police battalions made their appearance in Ukraine, Byelorussia, and the Generalgouvernement. In Byelorussia they assisted in shootings of Jews.<sup>80</sup> In Warsaw two battalions helped in the roundup of 300,000 Jews, who were sent from the ghetto to the death camp of Treblinka.<sup>81</sup> Gradually, more than 100,000 Latvians wore a German uniform. Thirteen thousand of them were casualties by July 1, 1944, among them Colonel Veiss, killed as a regimental commander in the 19th (Latvian) SS Grenadier Divi-

sion.<sup>82</sup> Viktors Arajs fought as a battalion commander, first in the 15th, then in the 19th Latvian SS divisions. Years later he was tried in a German court and sentenced to life imprisonment.

On February 24, 1942, a small incident occurred in the 19th (Latvian) Schutzmannschaft battalion. A young recruit in the battalion approached his commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Roberts Osis, with a request for a transfer to the Security Police. In the presence of a fellow lieutenant colonel, Carlis Lobe, Osis asked the young man whether he would prefer shooting Jews to service in a regular unit among true warriors. When the recruit said that he wanted to go to the front, Osis replied that no one in the Security Police was fighting there. Then Osis told him that he was too young to shoot Jews. If Osis was going to let him have his wish, what would this young man do ten years later, when he would see the dead bodies of Jews in his dreams? The young man launched an official complaint, reciting disparaging remarks by Osis and Lobe about the Security Police. The accusation was read by the two ranking German Security Police and Order Police commanders in the Baltic-Byelorussian area. Lobe, defending himself, pointed out that the complainant was seventeen or eighteen years old, that he had wanted to shoot Jews, and that Lobe had told him that he was unfit. As to Lobe's own experience, he only had to point to his record: During the previous year he had personally led the "cleansing action" in the area of Ventspils and Kuldīga.<sup>83</sup>

## PART II

# VICTIMS

"But I have always shaved you well."

—The Jewish barber Mania Hirsch-Schechter,  
an inmate of the Czortkow labor camp,  
to the camp commander Paul Thomanek  
on the day of the camp's liquidation, June 23, 1943