



Final Solution: Nazi Population Policy and the Murder of the European Jews

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Introduction

The war

This book demands something difficult of its readers; namely, they are forced to become involved with the inner workings of the perpetrators: their logic, their thought processes, calculations, and actions. On the following pages, details will be discussed – statistics, attempts to side-step issues, etc. – that in light of the outcome, the Holocaust, seem trivial and sometimes confusing. But this unreasonable demand is a necessary one, for there is no other way to analyse the political processes that preceded the decision to undertake the ‘Final Solution’.

My analysis starts with events of 1 September 1939 and ends with the Wannsee Conference of 20 January 1942. As amoral and racist as the anti-Jewish politics already were in 1933, the most important prerequisites to the Holocaust did not emerge until the war began. Far beyond the level reached in the first six years of Nazi dictatorship, the war promoted a non-public atmosphere, atomizing individuals and destroying any ties they still had with religious and legal traditions. Because foreign policy considerations became virtually non-existent, a situation emerged that the perpetrators referred to as a ‘unique opportunity’. It became necessary that ‘the operation’, as a confidant of Heydrich termed the mass deportation of 1 million individuals planned for 1941, be carried out during the war, ‘because the war affords the opportunity to take relatively rigorous action without regard for world opinion’.¹ When at the same time Hitler spoke of the ‘Jewish question’ with his closest associates, his reasoning was ambivalent; on the one hand, ‘the war accelerated the resolution of this question; on the other hand, it brought with it many additional difficulties’.² Finally, Goebbels noted in March 1942 on the same issue:

This is making use of a rather barbaric procedure, not to be described here in greater detail, and not much of the Jews themselves

will remain. . . . Thank God that in the course of war, we now have a number of options that would not be open to us in time of peace. We must take advantage of these options.³

In the first two years of World War II, the Jews who came under German rule became victims of the same discriminatory policies that had already been experienced by Jews in Germany and Austria. In occupied Poland, Holland, and France, the dependent states of Slovakia, Romania, and Hungary, Jews were disenfranchised and robbed of their property as they had been in Germany.

Josef Bürckel, Reich Commissioner of Austria and a zealous Aryanizer, had already thought the inherent consequences of such marginalization through to their logical conclusion by the autumn of 1938. He wrote:

Let us never forget, if we are intent on Aryanizing and removing from the Jews their means for survival, then the Jewish question must be resolved entirely. Namely, to view them as dependants of the state . . . is inconceivable. Hence conditions must be created such that they be sent out of the country.⁴

Forced emigration was difficult enough with respect to foreign policy. On top of that, the German leadership itself created additional obstacles by going to war. As a result of the war, the number of Jews who came under German rule grew by incredible proportions. After the destruction of Poland alone, there were no longer merely a few hundred thousand, but more than two and a half million Jews under German jurisdiction. Moreover, the situation of the persecutees became more and more threatening starting in October 1939, since they were subjected to new, comprehensive policies that aimed to 'ethnically segregate', i.e., deport and resettle, many millions of people in the ever-expanding German-occupied part of Europe. The systematic murder of European Jews was preceded by various deportation projects conceived by the Reich Security Main Office (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*, RSHA). They emerged under specific basic conditions, and they failed for reasons I shall explain below.

In the autumn of 1939, Hitler, Himmler, and Heydrich had wanted to create a 'Jewish reservation of Lublin' on Poland's eastern border. They then filed away the plans and abandoned the project, since it proved incompatible with other military and economic goals. There is extensive documentation of plans to deport European Jewry to Madagascar. This arose out of Hitler's Continental Block plan, which had several prerequisites: victory over England, the existence of the Hitler-Stalin pact, and collaboration by the Vichy regime in France. A 'German Central African colonial empire' was supposed to be established as an 'economic sphere of influence'. In retrospect, the plan seems completely absurd, but if one considers the fact that the 'Axis Powers' – i.e., Italian troops – had already occupied Addis Ababa and Mogadishu for quite some time, and that

Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia were part of a defeated France, it becomes more understandable that, in the summer of 1940, discussion was already under way in Hitler's Chancellery regarding future governorships in 'German East Africa'.

In summer 1940, Heydrich justified the Madagascar project in military and foreign policy terms as follows:

The Jews are considered hostile to us because of our standpoint on race. For this reason they are of no use to us in the Reich. We must eliminate them. Biological extermination, however, is undignified for the German people as a civilized nation. Thus after the victory we will impose the condition on the enemy powers that the holds of their ships be used to transport the Jews along with their belongings to Madagascar or elsewhere.⁵

I agree with Hans-Günter Adler's assumption that although the phrase 'Final Solution' already existed in the summer of 1940, it did not yet refer to extermination in the sense of systematic murder.⁶

Not until spring 1941 did Heydrich, Eichmann, and others begin planning the 'biological extermination' of the Jews. Those unfit for work were to die of hunger and deprivation on reservations, and all designated fit for work were to be deported to unknown destinations 'in the East' to drain swamps and build roads, 'whereby a large proportion', according to Heydrich later, would 'without a doubt drop out owing to natural reduction'. At the same time, it was resolved to liquidate all able-bodied Jewish men in the territories of the Soviet Union that were to be occupied. The plan fitted into the new imperial programme for 'The Move Eastward' (*Ostraumlösung*, literally 'Eastern Territorial Solution'), and it included the aim of exterminating European Jewry within the foreseeable future using so-called biological, yet – in comparison with subsequent practice, as horrible as this sounds – 'conventional' means. Although the programme far exceeded the terms of the Madagascar Plan, and contained all the elements of genocide, it was still fundamentally different from death in the gas chambers, which became the favoured method of extermination a short time later.

The plans devised in early 1941 also failed, in autumn of the same year, since the Red Army – despite great losses – set clear limits to the German offensive. But the protagonists of the Third Reich had long since incorporated the 'forced migration' (*Abwanderung*) of European Jewry into their plans, making deportation the foundation of their planning for wartime and the post-war period. They continued to view the individual projects – unrealistic as they might have been – as having a basis in fact. Faced with the 'imminent total solution', they robbed Jews of all means of subsistence and forced them into improvised ghettos or camps, all the time assuming it was a temporary solution for a few months, in preparation for a final deportation. These temporary conditions started to become a more and

more lasting 'burden'; from the murderers' point of view, real political conditions for the 'Final Solution' were developing step by step.

In the book *Vordenker der Vernichtung* (Pioneers of Destruction), Susanne Heim and I revealed the obvious connections between 'ethnic redistribution' (*völkische Flurbereinigung*),* on the one hand, and the extermination of minorities, on the other. We were able to show how different groups of experts, with very different motives, had considered reducing the (Eastern) European population by several tens of millions. Some devised plans to 'deport all Poles' in order to gain 'settlement space' (*Siedlungsraum*). Others suggested 'reducing the population density' of vast expanses of Eastern Europe in order to rationalize agriculture, since successive partitioning of land due to inheritance had eliminated market surpluses. Still others preferred to let 30 million Russians die in an artificially triggered famine, in order to render continental Europe 'blockade-proof', with the help of Ukrainian grain. The murder of European Jewry seemed to us to be part of even broader plans for extermination – in fact, the part that was given priority under wartime conditions and implemented to the greatest extent.

The criticisms levelled at that book could also be raised against this one: the plans were both unrealistic and megalomaniac, and could never have succeeded. It is a moot point whether and how these projects, designed for the immediate future, could have been implemented in the absence of Churchill's steadfastness, the anti-Hitler coalition, and the Red Army. Rather, as the Tower of Babel demonstrated, projects on a titanic scale unleash destructive force not because they are realistic, but because they are regarded as feasible.

Analytical approach

Whereas in *Vordenker der Vernichtung* we viewed the events from the perspective of a planning elite that thought in terms of *tabula rasa*, here we are dealing with the complement to that, the reactions and plans of the practitioners. I seek here to determine how the difficulties the Germans faced in the war they were waging and their policies of annexation, resettlement, and establishment of a new order affected plans for the 'solution of the Jewish question'.

Relevant documents contain numerous references to this. It is obvious, for example, when Eichmann's subject reference for an entire series of deportations of Jews was: 'Re: Making room for Lithuanian Germans'. Nevertheless, the connection between resettlement of ethnic Germans and the murder of the Jews has never yet been examined, even though projects

* *Völkische Flurbereinigung*: derived from an agricultural term for the consolidation of splintered landholdings, the Nazi distortion referred to the territorial consolidation and mutual separation of different ethnic groups.

entitled 'Settlement policy/*Lebensraum*' and 'Solution of the Jewish Question' reflected the main goals of the Third Reich, and both were combined institutionally under one and the same person – Heinrich Himmler. This seemed logical from a Nazi perspective. Both involved population policies aimed at the restructuring of Europe in terms of demography and political control. These policies presupposed military victory and the unity of settlement and expulsion. Theoretically, this was supposed to proceed 'step by step'. In fact, however, megalomaniacal projects aimed at 'ethnic redistribution in Europe', on the one hand, and the 'territorial final solution of the Jewish question', on the other, began facing difficulties in October 1939. They began to obstruct each other and to face limitations caused by the war, which was originally merely a means to achieve their ends.

In addition to his office as Reichsführer SS and Chief of the German Police, Heinrich Himmler took on another, albeit lesser-known, position in 1939, shortly after the war started – that of Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood (*Reichskommissar für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums*, RKF). In that office, Himmler brought some 500,000 ethnic Germans 'home to the Reich' (*Heim ins Reich*) in the following years, with the help of several thousand employees and a dozen institutions created for that purpose. The ethnic Germans came from the Baltic states and South Tyrol, from Volhynia and Bessarabia, from Bukovina and Dobruja. Their property there, worth approximately 3,000,000,000 Reichsmarks, was exchanged by the treasury of the German Reich – for the benefit of the foreign trade balance – with the Soviet Union, Romania, and Italy, for oil and food. The 'ethnic German settlers' received the homes, farms and businesses, tools and equipment, livestock, and household goods of the Jews and Poles whom Adolf Eichmann had deported or ghettoized in his capacity as coordinator of the Central Resettlement Office (*Umwandererzentralstelle*, UWZ) in Posen/Litzmannstadt (Lodz).

The resettlement policies were focused from the very beginning on occupied Poland. Hitler and Stalin had divided up the country amongst themselves. The Germans split their section into the 'incorporated eastern territories', i.e., the economically most significant annexed western region, and the Generalgouvernement, the area of central Poland between Warsaw, Krakow, and Lublin. In 1940 roughly 12 million Poles were living in that central region, including 1.5 million Jews. In the annexed western region, there were 8 million Poles, 550,000 of whom were Jews. From the latter region, about half the Poles and all the Jews were forced into the eastern Generalgouvernement to make room for German settlers.

Contemporary German historians were concerned with devising plans to carry out this task. Supported by an understanding of themselves as 'past-oriented [*rückwärtsgewandte*] prophets' (Leopold von Ranke), an idea still familiar to us today, they contributed to the formulation of the political goals of the time, as specialists of past structures that were to be either 'restored' or destroyed. For example, on 18 September 1939, Breslau

medievalist and *Volkstum* scholar Hermann Aubin wrote the following to Albert Brackmann, historian for Eastern European history, in Berlin: 'The questions of ethnic nationality [*Volkstum*] in the East have reached a decisive stage. After having received approval for our proposal for regulation from the highest authorities last week, there seems now to be an obstruction.' He continued that it seemed advisable to discuss the issue again with the Ministry of the Interior, in order for 'the questions of *Volkstum* to be put on the right track when re-establishing the German administration in Poland'. 'Scholars', Aubin concluded, 'cannot simply wait to be asked; they must speak up of their own accord.'⁷

Only three days later, Brackmann met Werner Essen, officer for *Volkstum* issues in the Ministry of the Interior, who later worked on the General Plan for the East in Riga.⁸ Obviously encouraged in their plans, the activist scholars met on 28 September in Breslau and drafted a working plan 'for a memorandum on the eastern German Reich border and ethnic boundary'. It explained 'the historical prerequisites and conditions for the success of a large-scale settlement policy in the eastern territories'. Theodor Schieder, a 31-year-old assistant also present at the meeting, was assigned to draft the memo. Schieder presented his draft on 7 October. In it, he developed possible alternative contours for the new eastern boundary of the German Reich and commented as follows on the second, more far-reaching alternative: 'Creation of a contiguous German ethnic region [*Volksboden*] in these territories necessitates extremely extensive population shifts. Such a development requires not a programme for a few years, but very long-range planning.' Among the 'immediate measures', Schieder included confiscation of land, resettlement of a portion of the Polish population, construction loans for the ethnic Germans and 'settlement of German persons', but 'under no circumstances should developments be left uncontrolled'. To the problem of 'how and where to direct the expected flow of Polish emigrants', Schieder responded:

increased migration to 'rump Poland' appears possible under two conditions: (1) if the Jewish population is removed from Polish cities, and (2) if agriculture is intensified such that the food production margin in Poland is raised and the agrarian overpopulation is at least decreased through far-reaching land improvement and separation.⁹

The notion that annexation and resettlement formed a consistent whole was formulated here, with all its implications: the expulsion of the Poles, their resettlement in 'rump Poland' at the expense of the Jews living there, and the creation of an increased 'food production margin' by reclaiming swamplands. All of these suggestions were implemented at least in part in 1940–41 – and all of them failed.¹⁰ It was precisely this failure that led to the second step, the erection and operation of extermination camps, as will be shown in the following chapters.

Schieder's draft never attained the status of a formal 'memorandum for

Adolf Hitler'. Since 'events' then happened so quickly, Schieder's superiors sent the results of their brainstorming session in unfinished form 'to a few officials we knew personally in the Foreign Office and the Ministries of the Interior, Science, and Agriculture, for their personal use' on 16 October, nine days later.¹¹ This example serves to demonstrate how, between 1939 and 1942, the murderous ideas spread osmotically, rising through a type of capillary action. And it shows how, to this day, respected and – taking their work as a whole – commendable scholars have examined these ideas, successfully reformulating the Nazi 'worldview' into a mercilessly instrumentalized form of rationality and transforming it into practice-oriented programmes.¹²

As can be seen by Schieder's expulsion plan, which was only one among many, the resettlement policies affected the Jews as a whole incomparably more severely than they did the Poles. Jewish property was almost completely expropriated very early on. Moreover, the Jews had to make room not only for ethnic German settlers, but for Polish exiles. Whenever problems arose in the subsequent months in the *Heim-ins-Reich* programme to bring approximately 500,000 ethnic Germans 'home' to the Reich; if homes, money, household goods, or jobs were needed for 'resettled' Germans, 'displaced' Poles, or 'exchanged' Romanians, members of Europe's Jewish minority were robbed still faster, crowded still closer together, and forced to the periphery of their respective cities and regions.

Since the settling of Germans was always linked with economic rationalization, two or even three 'ethnically alien' (*fremdvölkisch*) families – in the official terminology – often had to make way for one German family. In addition, huge military training grounds were to be set up and approximately 300,000 small farmers and their families from the poverty-stricken rural areas of the Reich were to be 'transplanted' onto roughly 50-acre farms in the eastern territories. From all of these different projects, in the winter of 1940–41 alone, a total of 5 million people were to be forced from their homes within a short period of time.

The staff of the Central Resettlement Office accomplished far less than that goal. According to Eichmann, they had 'evacuated a total of 408,525 Poles and Jews in the period from October 1939 to March 1941 from the incorporated eastern territories and sent them to the Polish General-gouvernement'.¹³ Consequently, by winter 1940–41 there were already a quarter of a million ethnic German 'returnees' in 1500 resettlement camps that had to be established in the eastern and southern regions of the German Reich. The pact with Italy, too, in which the resettlement of 200,000 South Tyroleans had been agreed upon, could only be partly satisfied. As a result, pressure was continuously growing – brought about by Himmler and his staff themselves – to develop more and more comprehensive plans for expropriation and deportation.

For those who had to implement the plans, it was never clear how, when, and to where these deportations were to take place. As a result, in

September 1941, when mass deportations to the newly seized Soviet 'areas' were already on the agenda, the director of the Central Resettlement Office of Posen/Litzmannstadt asked Eichmann, 'It is essential [to] be totally clear . . . what is to be done in the end with these displaced populations that are undesirable for the Greater German settlement areas. Is the goal to permanently secure them some sort of subsistence, or should they be totally eradicated?'¹⁴

Reinhard Heydrich, like Himmler, held two positions. His special responsibility to implement the 'solution of the Jewish question' is well known and has been described in numerous accounts. Examined in less detail have been the overlapping tasks of the Central Immigration Office (*Einwandererzentralstelle*, EWZ) and the Central Resettlement Office, both of which were under his direction. Heydrich participated in the *Heim-ins-Reich* programme for the ethnic Germans from eastern and southeastern Europe and also organized the 'evacuation measures' necessary to enable their settlement.¹⁵ This is the reason he created Eichmann's section IVD4 (later IVB4) in December 1939. The section, in 1940 called 'Emigration and Evacuation Matters' (*Auswanderungs- und Räumungsangelegenheiten*), was responsible for the resettlement of Poles and later Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, as well as the deportation of Jews, until the summer of 1941.

Oswald Pohl was not only in charge of the entire concentration camp administration and an ever-expanding SS economic empire; in 1940–41, he was also the ambitious head of the board of the German Settlement Company (*Deutsche Ansiedlungsgesellschaft*, DAG). Here he was faced with the growing problem of 'making room' for those interned in resettlement camps and had to confront the dissatisfaction of the ethnic Germans. It is no coincidence that the same people who had spent months supervising the forced expulsion of Poles helped organize the murder of European Jews in the years that followed. Eichmann's staff member Dieter Wisliceny, who later became the 'Jewish advisor' to the German embassy in Pressburg (now Bratislava), organized the removal of Poles from Gnesen (Gniezno) in the Warthegau in early 1940. Franz Abromeit, who was later the 'Jewish advisor' in Zagreb, led the relocation of Poles from Danzig–West Prussia from 1939 to 1941. Siegfried Seidl, staff member at the Lodz Central Resettlement Office (Lodz UWZ), who was responsible for 'making room for the Volhynian Germans' throughout 1940, became the commandant of the Theresienstadt concentration camp in 1942. His direct superior, Hermann Krumei, travelled to Budapest in 1944 with Eichmann and Wisliceny to supervise the deportation of Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz. Herbert Otto, another member of Krumei's staff, was sent to the 'Central Office for Jewish Emigration' in Prague in July 1942.¹⁶ In late 1941, several members of the Lodz UWZ staff were transferred to the nearby Chelmno (Kulmhof) concentration camp, where they were directly involved in the murder of Jews.¹⁷ Both tasks, the removal of the Poles and the 'implemen-

tation of appropriate measures against Jews and asocials', as it was put by one of the SS men working there, were combined under the 'jurisdiction of the UWZ'.¹⁸

When, beginning in the autumn of 1941, German authorities spoke of 'deportation', 'displacement', 'resettlement', or 'evacuation' of Jews while now in fact meaning murder, this should not be seen merely as an effort to camouflage their actions; it also serves as an indication of the evolution of events leading up to the Holocaust.

Sources

The connections have been obscured up to now in part because Himmler's actions as Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood (RKF) have never been examined systematically. The unsatisfactory study of the RKF offices and departments, and of their cooperation with one another and with other authorities, is all the more surprising since extraordinarily good source materials are available.¹⁹ Furthermore, it is remarkable how close the directors of the resettlement authorities and planning offices were to the highest authorities, Hitler, Göring, and Himmler.²⁰ Since it is clear that the Germans responsible for population policies sought to solve the problems that arose in implementing the *Heim-ins-Reich* programme for the ethnic Germans at the expense of the Jews, the entire policy of 'ethnic redistribution' must be examined in order to trace the political process that led, in the end, to the murder of much of European Jewry. As early as 17 January 1940, Eichmann referred to 'the difficulties arising from the interaction between resettling ethnic Germans and evacuating Poles and Jews'.

An investigation of that interaction was also obstructed for historians – myself included – who have researched the subject of the Holocaust, because we regarded the ethnic Germans brought 'home' from Eastern Europe as members of the perpetrators' camp. At best, we considered them to have unthinkingly profited from history. Their fate was presented by only a few historical researchers, often in connection with the local history of individual ethnic groups. These almost always ignored the circumstances of their settlement, treating the expropriation and expulsion of 'ethnically alien (*fremdvölkisch*) elements' as taboo.²¹

Conversely, the very notion that something could be learned of the decisions affecting the Holocaust by analysing the resettlement of ethnic Germans appeared absurd. Such reservations, though understandable, have impeded the advancement of research, resulting in countless extant documents on the resettlement of German minorities not even being read with an eye to the murder of European Jews. Even if many ethnic Germans forced to resettle sympathized greatly with the Third Reich and were themselves active Nazis, they were nevertheless objects of power politics.

Individual ethnic Germans living in eastern and southeastern Europe were not given a choice. Their so-called 'option for Germany' did not truly involve any freedom to decide. These 'returnees', as Himmler liked to call them, were shunted about in the interest of population policy as were the Jews, albeit with categorically different procedures and in opposing directions.

The success experienced by those under Himmler's command who were responsible for resettling ethnic Germans was directly dependent on how fast Eichmann was able to transport out the 'ethnically alien elements'. Until autumn 1941 he was never able to meet either deportation deadlines or target figures; he constantly had to concede and recalculate them in countless meetings with the staffs of both the Central Immigration Office and the 'Human Deployment' (*Menscheinsatz*) Department of the RKF. These calculations always included the Jews.

Thus it proved useful to work through the comprehensive written archival materials on the displacement and resettlement of ethnic Germans with this question in mind.²² One of my aims was to reconstruct a concrete context tied to the history of events, as this was absolutely necessary for the analysis. I also wanted to determine a procedure based on the sources. Since Eichmann's main files for the period after 1939 had been destroyed completely by fire, all documents on the activities of his department had to be sought in the existing files of other authorities and offices. It made sense to look for them among the records of those who constantly attempted to accelerate the deportations. Upon closer examination, the following also became clear: representatives of the authorities in charge of resettling ethnic Germans did not merely keep records of the 'Emigration and Evacuation' Department; they also developed their own ideas about how to accelerate this evacuation.

Though similar approaches were tried in Alsace-Lorraine and later in annexed parts of Slovenia, by far the most significant as well as controversial site of German resettlement policy was occupied Poland – and here, above all, the Warthegau. For this reason, the most meaningful documents and files, from which the further development of policies regarding Jews and files, from which the further development of policies regarding Jews during the course of the war can be reconstructed, can be found in the legacies left by the offices in Posen (Poznań), Lodz, Warsaw, and Krakow that were responsible for carrying out the resettlement.

The most important documents – approximately 1000 items from the UWZ in Posen/Litzmannstadt (Lodz) – have been preserved in the Warsaw archives of the Main Commission for the Prosecution of Hitler's Crimes. They contain hundreds of memoranda, telex messages, and reports by Eichmann and his staff. The files have been accessible to the public for decades, but they were evaluated in the 1960s from a Polish, expressly non-Jewish perspective. And for some inexplicable reason, Hans Safrian, author of the extraordinarily helpful book *Die Eichmann-Männer* (Eichmann's Men), which is cited many times in the following pages, entirely

failed to consult this major source in his research. This means that for different reasons, historians have isolated individual questions from the overall context, thus forfeiting the chance to analyse Himmler's race and resettlement policies in their complex totality and on the basis of their inner logic.

What is true for the sources in Warsaw also applies in principle to the comprehensive inventory of the German Federal Archives. This includes materials from the Ethnic German Liaison Office (*Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle*, or Vomi), the Central Office of Immigration (EWZ), the Staff Main Office (*Stabshauptamt*) of the RKF, and the German Foreign Institute (*Deutsches Auslandsinstitut*), which Himmler commissioned in 1940 to document the entire 'settlement project'. In addition, the extensive files of the German Resettlement Trusteeship Company (*Deutsche Umsiedlungs-Treuhand GmbH*, DUT), located in the Potsdam office of the Federal Archives, have now become available. Archive administrators in East Germany had kept them under lock and key in order to prevent any possible Polish claims for compensation. These files, too, were read at most within the context of historical questions involving specific national groups or institutions, but were not evaluated or understood as a complement to source materials on the decision-making process leading up to the Holocaust.²³

Presentation

In contrast to the specifically ideologized language of German ethnocrats, 'Baltic Germans', for example, referred to themselves as 'German Balts'. 'Ethnic Germans' viewed themselves over centuries as (loyal) citizens of the countries in which they lived. Up to 1918, residents of Meran, Lemberg (Lvov), or Czernowitz, for instance, saw themselves as belonging to Austria-Hungary, not a 'German nation'.

The term 'resettlement' virtually reeks of Nazi ideology. Of course, the Volhynian Germans, for example, who were 'transplanted' to the Warthegau, were neither 'brought home' nor 'repatriated'. Nevertheless, I have utilized such wording as the jargon of the period. Only occasionally – as a reminder, as it were – do I establish the necessary detachment from the vocabulary of the nationalist *Volkstum* politicians.

The following text is interrupted four times by chronologies. I felt this was necessary for several reasons. First of all, I am convinced that the history leading up to the Holocaust must be reconstructed in as much detail as possible. Moreover, my approach is a new one. For this reason, too, I felt it was important to provide a thorough presentation of the empirical material. The chronologies also serve to reveal parallels involving different events, as well as the contradictory yet parallel reactions of different officials within the political apparatus.

The chronological presentation of historical material is also helpful in view of yet another consideration. If the decision to exterminate European Jewry was not the sudden, voluntaristic act of a dictator and his henchmen, but a political decision-making process stretching over a period of many months and involving the participation of individuals holding various functions and hierarchical positions, then each individual stage and every argument is significant.

In the winter of 1944–45, the perpetrators burned most of the evidence of their murderous actions. Only a very few offices were prevented from obeying the orders from above to destroy all files. And only by chance did one of the 30 copies of the record of the Wannsee Conference survive. The existence of a 'Memorandum on the Expulsion of all Poles', a plan drafted in March 1941 to deport European Jews to the areas of the Soviet Union to be occupied, has been confirmed, yet the documents themselves have disappeared. Also, the files contain numerous references to the fact that important matters were often decided verbally for the purpose of confidentiality and were expressly not recorded in writing.

To the extent that perpetrators were interrogated at all after the 'collapse' of the Third Reich, they were quite successful in adopting a common strategy of lies, denial, and silence. They were nevertheless unable to destroy all the essential, sometimes minute, pieces of evidence completely. If these are interpreted correctly, it is possible to draw conclusions about the intricate motives and the division of labour in the not-always-smooth cooperation of those involved in the discussions and political decisions that in the end led to the murder of much of European Jewry.

Notes

- 1 Bruno Streckenbach, 15 January 1941; Frank diary, BAK, R52/II/233, 4060–76.
- 2 Engel, 94ff.
- 3 Goebbels diaries, Reuth, 1777ff.: entry on 27 March 1942.
- 4 Quoted in Safrian, 36. For a detailed discussion, see Aly and Heim, 21–68.
- 5 This was a statement by Heydrich, according to testimony by Herbert Strickner given in 1948 (no exact date is available) during a hearing by the public prosecutor's office in Poznań; AGK, SOP/154, 288.
- 6 Adler, 74.
- 7 Ebbinghaus and Roth, 78f. There is also mention in the letter of future use of the Polish Institute for Silesian Ethnology. Aubin: 'One must ask, for instance, whether we should turn around the "Silesian Institute" and thus fire upon Poland.'
- 8 Aly and Heim, 427ff.
- 9 The memorandum appears in Ebbinghaus and Roth, 84–91.
- 10 This can be found in the Frank diary and the diary of Adam Czerniaków.
- 11 Ebbinghaus and Roth, 93.
- 12 Whereas doctors at the German Society for Gynaecology and Obstetrics have since issued an official apology to victims of forced sterilizations of any kind

(see *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 7 September 1994), members and the board of directors of the Association of German Historians have not even considered any comparable action.

- 13 Letter from Eichmann to Sandberger, 3 April 1941; AGK, UWZ/L/838/2, 4.
- 14 See Chapter 10, p. 221 and note 28.
- 15 Heydrich strongly identified with these tasks, assigned to Himmler in his capacity as RKF, as shown by a secret speech he held on 2 October 1941 in Prague, reprinted in Kárný and Milotová, 98ff.
- 16 Letter from Krumej to Günther (RSHA IVB4), 3 July 1942; AGK, UWZ/L/205, 27.
- 17 According to Fritz Ismer and Karl Goede. See Ismer's testimony of 9 November 1960; ZStL, 203/AR/7/69/59, vol. 4.
- 18 Letter from Heinrich Kinna, staff member of the Litzmannstadt UWZ, to the main SS personnel office, 13 July 1943; BDC, PA/Kinna. In the letter, Kinna gave a report of his earlier activities.
- 19 Deserving of special mention is the work of Robert L. Koehl, which was published in 1957 in Cambridge but received little attention in Germany. It was based on a collection of documents from the Nuremberg trials that was not very comprehensive on this subject. Regarding regional studies, the most significant publications are those by Pospieszalski (western Poland), Ferenc (Slovenia), and Madajczyk (the Zamość region). Two excellent individual studies on the resettlement of ethnic Germans are those by Stuhlpfarrer (on South Tyroleans) and Jachomowski (on Germans in Bessarabia, Bukovina, and Dobruja).
- 20 Bracher, 409f.
- 21 This situation has recently started to change, albeit slowly. For example, the 1993 yearbook of the German-Baltic *Landsmannschaft* (cultural association for Germans born in the Baltic states) included, for the first time, recollections of settlement in the Warta region (Warthegau), some of which dealt with the issue of the related deportation of the local population; *Jahrbuch des baltischen Deutschtums* 41 (1994) (Lüneburg and Munich, 1993), 59–150.
- 22 This was only feasible to a limited extent, considering the mountains of extant files. Further research along these lines is necessary.
- 23 I cite the inventories of the German Federal Archives according to the location where I viewed the material. As there has since been considerable reorganization, which is still ongoing, many of the files I viewed in Koblenz are now located in Potsdam. Among the complications connected with the research is the fact that, half a century after the end of the war, there is insufficient funding for search aids for the extensive inventories of either the RKF or the DUT. In contrast, Polish and Russian inventories were evaluated at a very early date and are of good quality.

1

Policy towards the Jews, war, and resettlement

Deportation zones

Up until the start of the war, German authorities constantly attempted to increase the 'pressure to emigrate' felt by German and Austrian Jews. By wanting not only to expel the Jews, but to expropriate their property, the Reich government itself blocked the path to achieving its goal,¹ since foreign governments were increasingly turning away refugees, especially those totally without means. This was even more the case once Germany invaded Poland.

Faced with this situation, Heydrich did an immediate about-face. Instead of forcing the Jews to emigrate, he gave absolute priority to deporting them to the most remote reaches of the German sphere of influence. This meant that the Jews – plundered and humiliated as they were – could not even reach the territory of another sovereign state; they remained totally marginalized and subject to German measures.

In his guidelines of 21 September 1939, Heydrich spoke clearly, albeit indirectly, of the planned formation of a 'Jewish reservation'.² He ordered the exclusion of Jews from a certain region near the new southeast Polish border from the general 'concentration', since he planned to deport all Jews and Gypsies to a 'Jewish state under German administration near Krakow'. On the same day, Heydrich defined four goals:

- (1) Jews to be moved to the towns as quickly as possible;
- (2) Jews to be moved out of the Reich into Poland;
- (3) the remaining 30,000 Gypsies also to be moved to Poland;
- (4) Jews in the German [i.e., formerly Polish] territories to be systematically deported by goods train.³

On 19 September, Heydrich was present at a meeting of the ministerial council for Reich defence, chaired by Göring. At that meeting, plans were discussed that went beyond the guidelines laid down in writing two days

later, but they were opposed by the military. The brief minutes of the meeting mention 'the question of the population of the territory of the future Polish protectorate and accommodation of Jews living in Germany'.⁴ On the same day, Heydrich spoke with Eduard Wagner, General Quartermaster of the army, about the possibility of deporting all Jews from Germany to a remote corner of carved-up Poland.⁵ But on 22 September, only one day after Heydrich's guidelines on future policy towards the Jews were approved, Walther von Brauchitsch, Commander in Chief of the army, expressly demanded that population transfers be discontinued for the time being and that, in the future, they be carried out under the direction 'not of the civil authorities', such as the SS, but 'by the military'.⁶ In view of the resistance he knew he faced from the military, Heydrich refrained from discussing in writing his plan also to deport German, Austrian, and Czech Jews to a southeastern or eastern corner of the future Generalgouvernement. In order to circumvent Brauchitsch's objections, he made a tactical distinction between the final goal and short-term, interim measures, allowing the 'concentration' of Polish Jews as a (temporary) alternative to 'immediate clearance' of the area. But Brauchitsch once again expressed his disapproval. On 1 October, Himmler personally revised Heydrich's orders of 21 September, allowing the SS *Einsatzgruppen* (Special Units) to 'initiate *only* preparatory measures' for the concentration and deportation of the Jews; all further action would have to wait 'until a later time'.⁷

The transition from a military to a civilian administration in occupied Poland, which became official on 26 October 1939, boded no good for the Jews. The change greatly increased the scope of action of the (civilian) Reich Security Main Office.⁸ In Goebbels' words, 'the military administration in Poland should be replaced by a civilian administration as soon as possible. Military offices are too weak and accommodating. Only force works with the Poles.'⁹

Thus once the war started, policies towards the Jews changed fundamentally. Forced emigration was replaced by a policy of deportation or, to be more precise, plans for deportation. This did not occur primarily because of the approximately 350,000 Jews still living in the 'Greater German Reich (including the Protectorate)', but because with every step of military and economic expansion, more and more Jews entered the German sphere of influence – no longer hundreds of thousands, but millions.

Between September 1939 and September 1941, the Germans expanded the area they controlled four times. The conquest and partition of Poland in September 1939 were followed – aside from the occupation of Denmark and Norway, which is not significant to the context of this book – by the victory over the Benelux states and France early in the summer of 1940, and then the 'peaceful' conquest of southeastern Europe as the 'economic sphere of the German nation' in summer 1940 (with the subsequent war

against Yugoslavia and Greece in spring 1941), and finally, the war against the Soviet Union, concrete preparations for which had begun in winter 1940–41. All four expansionist steps directly affected plans for policy towards the Jews and 'ethnic cleansing'. Occupation plans for Poland, France, and later the Soviet Union were – despite numerous differences – all similar as regards one point in the initial phase. In each case, the conquered countries were divided into three sections: one was annexed, or at least plans existed to Germanize it; one was occupied; and one became a peripheral zone of lesser interest. In occupied Poland, this was manifested in Germany's incorporated eastern territories, the Generalgouvernement, and the planned eastern reservation for 'undesirables'. In the same way, parts of France and Belgium were immediately annexed by Germany – albeit not *de jure*; other parts (e.g., Burgundy) were supposed to be annexed; and in addition to the occupied zone, an unoccupied zone was also established. The occupation strategies developed in spring and summer 1941 for the Soviet Union were similar.¹⁰

Residents of the peripheral zones were to be left to their own resources, in so far as they were not used for slave labour. Without the Germans taking any concrete responsibility for their subsistence, but definitely within the limits of military and police restrictions imposed by the victors, the people there were expected to eke out an existence under miserable conditions. In addition, German population policy experts hoped to deport 'surplus', 'burdensome', and 'undesirable' persons to these less important zones. Former Krupp director Wilhelm Muehlon noted on 19 July 1940 from Swiss exile:

France looks with horror and fear at the unoccupied zone, in which millions of refugees and demobilized soldiers cannot return to their homes in the occupied zone, separated by a 'Great Wall of China'. The Germans are unmoved by the fact that the French have to suffer the consequences of their sins, reminding them of France's harshness in starving Germany after the World War.¹¹

The periphery of the German imperium was also always conceived as a deportation site for the Jews. In this sense, it was entirely logical that a few thousand Viennese and Stettin (Szczecin) Jews, and several tens of thousands of western Polish Jews, were deported to the eastern Generalgouvernement in 1939–40 and that Jews from Baden, Saar-Palatinate, Alsace, and Lorraine were deported in the autumn of 1940 to the unoccupied zone in France. German ethnocrats did not carry out these deportations in isolation, but parallel to more extensive plans to force certain segments of the Polish and French populations from their homeland.

But in both occupied Poland and unoccupied France, German occupation officials quickly changed this strategy. They did this for economic reasons, with the goal of making these regions useful to the German wartime economy. In the process, the Germans reduced their own options

for deportation and tried to overcome the conflict of interest, at first, through more and more extensive plans for conquest and deportation.

Though they are very different from Auschwitz, it is important to note that all German deportation plans between 1939 and 1941 took for granted the death of tens of thousands, and later hundreds of thousands, of people. Among the planners of the deportations, consensus prevailed that many Jews would die under wretched conditions in the course of their resettlement – under the cover of war – from hunger or from slave labour, insufficient medical care, or the measures of a German police state. Complete physical exposure, travelling in winter on foot or in unheated freight cars, and finally, abandonment in uncultivated, infertile regions – these were not intended to protect and preserve human life. This was desired and ordered quite openly by those who prepared the deportations and continued to discuss them in hastily constituted *ad hoc* working groups.

On 20 November 1939, during an inspection tour by Deputy Generalgouverneur Arthur Seyss-Inquart, SS Brigadeführer Schmidt expressed his opinion that a certain eastern Polish area was suitable as a reservation for Jews, since 'its very marshy environment' could 'possibly lead to considerable decimation of the Jews'.¹² At about the same time, Himmler remarked about the Polish Jews that 'it is high time that this riff-raff be herded together in ghettos; then bring in epidemics and let them rot'.¹³

Hans Frank, head of the administration of the Generalgouvernement in Krakow, told his staff on 25 November 1939 in Radom how he imagined the 'large concentration area . . . east of the Vistula', which he was supposed to – and indeed at the time still wished to – establish.

The winter will be a harsh one. If there is no bread for Poland, don't come with complaints. . . . Don't waste any time on the Jews. It is a joy finally to be able to deal with the Jewish race. The more that die, the better.¹⁴

Eduard Könekamp of the German Foreign Institute reported in December 1939 from occupied Poland to his colleagues in Stuttgart:

Many Germans are seeing such masses of Jews for the first time in their lives. . . . The extermination of these subhumans lies in the interests of the whole world. But this extermination is one of the most difficult problems. We will not get by with executions. And we cannot allow the shooting of women and children. Here and there one reckons with losses during the evacuation transports; and during the transport of 1000 Jews from Lublin that was set in motion, 450 died. . . . All offices dealing with the Jewish question are aware of the inadequacy of all these measures. But no solution to this complex problem has yet been found.¹⁵

As early as 24 October, the London *Times* had reported and – in every sense – realistically interpreted the fact that

in well-informed quarters in this country, the German Government's apparent intention to form a Jewish State in Poland is regarded as a remarkable example of political cynicism. . . . Herr Hitler now proposes to concentrate the 3,000,000 Jews of Poland in a State which is to be cut out of the body of Poland and will have Lublin for its centre. . . . To thrust 3,000,000 Jews, relatively few of whom are agriculturists, into the Lublin region and to force them to settle there would doom them to famine. That, perhaps, is the intention.¹⁶

'Ethnic redistribution'

With respect to their goals, all deportation projects failed. Heydrich and Eichmann were not able to achieve more than the very basics of their plans. Instead of 30,000 Gypsies, only 2800 were deported by the end of April 1941. The ghettoization of the Jews was achieved very inconsistently.¹⁷ Of the 350,000 'Reich Jews,' only 15,000 had been deported by summer 1941; of the 550,000 living in the incorporated eastern territories, the figure was about 110,000.

The deportation of Jews to the border between the German and Soviet spheres of influence, scheduled for the autumn of 1939, not only ran into considerable technical problems and increasing resistance from the German civilian administration in the Generalgouvernement. In addition, the original plans were foiled by unforeseen obligations to bring ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe and South Tyrol 'home to the Reich'. German leaders had bound themselves by treaty in the summer of 1939 to resettle half a million so-called ethnic Germans over the next 15 months in the Greater German Reich, expanded through annexation. From that point on, the task of 'making room' for them fell to Heinrich Himmler and Reinhard Heydrich and, a short time later, to Adolf Eichmann as well. In his Reichstag speech of 6 October 1939, Hitler announced and explained the new ethnic policy goals. Although he propagated them as an independent, 'high priority' task, the power politics involved were obvious from the term 'sphere of interest' he used to introduce the subject. The resettlement of the South Tyroleans, although already agreed upon, was not yet definite enough to speak of publicly. Hitler thus concealed the issue behind the concept of 'a far-reaching order of European life'. In the speech, he said:

The goals and tasks that have emerged as a result of the fall of the Polish state are basically the following, as concerns the German sphere of interest:

1. To establish a Reich boundary that does justice to historical, ethnographic, and economic conditions.
2. To pacify the entire region in the sense of creating tenable order and peace.

3. To guarantee absolute security, not only in the territory of the Reich, but throughout the entire sphere of interest.
4. To create a new order for and to restructure economic life, transport, and thus also the development of culture and civilization.
5. But the main task is to create a new ethnographic order; i.e., to resettle the nationalities so that in the end, better lines of demarcation exist than is today the case.

In this sense the problem is not limited to German territory; rather, the task extends much farther, for the entire eastern and southeastern regions of Europe are filled with *in part untenable splinters*¹⁸ of the German nation. Precisely therein lies a reason for continued disturbances between nations. In the age of the principle of nationalities and the notion of race [*Rassegedanke*], it is utopian to believe that these members of a high-quality nation could simply be assimilated. It is thus one of the tasks of a far-sighted ordering of European life to carry out resettlements, in order thus to eliminate at least some of the potential for European conflict.

Germany and the Union of Soviet Republics have agreed to support each other to this end.

In this initial declaration of principle, Hitler had already gone beyond the scope marked out for him with the 'fall of the Polish state'. In the second part of his speech, he formulated further plans for the 'area west of the German-Soviet Russian demarcation line recognized as within the German sphere of influence'. According to Hitler, this included:

1. The establishment of a Reich boundary that, as already emphasized, corresponds to historical, ethnographic, and economic conditions.
2. The ordering of the entire *Lebensraum* [living space] according to nationalities, i.e., a resolution of those minority issues that affect not only this region, but beyond that, almost all southern and southeastern European states.

Hitler also announced that 'in this context, an attempt to order and regulate the Jewish problem' would be necessary.¹⁹

On the day of his speech, Hitler ordered the formal annexation of those western Polish areas that were to be 'united with Germany', irrespective of the fact that the exact borders had not yet been determined. He was obviously influenced by the resettlement of the Baltic Germans, which had already started. The next day, Hitler transferred all authority for the organization and implementation of the 'ethnic new order' – initially restricted to the soon-to-be annexed regions of western Poland – to Heinrich Himmler. Himmler was given the title of Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood (RKF), and he set up an office to organize and implement population policy.²⁰ At the same time,

diplomats in the Foreign Office were working feverishly on the wording of appropriate resettlement agreements with the independent (in name only) Baltic republics, with the Soviet Union, and with Italy.

On 6 October, Hitler issued a statement of intent as regards population policy that surprised the officials for Jewish and *Volkstum* (nationhood) issues at the Reich Security Main Office. On 26 September, two days before signing the 'secret protocol' to the Nazi-Soviet treaty, Himmler had met Erhard Kroeger, leader of the Latvian Germans, and informed him of the pending political agreement between Germany and the USSR. At this time it was certain that Latvia and Estonia would go to the Soviet Union. Himmler was not yet planning to resettle *all* Baltic Germans. He intended to bring only a group of 'directly threatened Germans' – active Nazis and 'fighters for nationhood' – to safety. He also wanted to 'place young Baltic Germans fit for service in the Waffen SS'. It was Kroeger who told Himmler that there was a great fear of Bolshevism in Riga, and that the Germans there vividly remembered the massacre of 22 May 1919 'committed by the retreating Bolsheviks in the final hours'. Kroeger

finished by assuring that a large majority of Baltic Germans had to be regarded as highly threatened by the Bolshevik occupation. . . . It would be irresponsible for any national leadership to characterize a segment of the population, no matter how small or large, as not at risk and thus excluded from emigration.

Himmler promised to inform Hitler the following evening. The spontaneous decision was made as Kroeger had recommended. However, power politics and military considerations caused Hitler to condition his approval on the requirement 'that the entire operation take place in cooperation with the Soviet government'. Furthermore, it was already clear to Himmler on that morning of 27 September that the present state of affairs allowed 'settlement only in the new regions of the Reich that had previously belonged to the Polish state'.²¹

The next day, following a hectic exchange of telegrams between the Foreign Office and the German embassy in Moscow, Ribbentrop and Molotov signed the 'secret protocol' to the Nazi-Soviet non-aggression pact that had been concluded on 23 August 1939. The agreement provided for, on the one hand, the 'resettlement' of the ethnic German population from the Soviet sphere of influence, including the Baltic republics, which were still formally independent, and in return, the 'corresponding' resettlement of 'persons of Ukrainian and White Russian descent' from East Prussia and the German-occupied part of Poland. The wording of the annex suggested a 'minority exchange' between German and Soviet spheres of power. On the surface this called for Germans living within the future borders of the Soviet Union to be exchanged for Ukrainian and White Russian minorities on the German side of the German-Soviet demarcation line. In fact, however, the term 'minority exchange' veiled the signatories'

true intentions. German negotiators had sought a choice of words 'that would suggest emigration to the Soviet Union in a gentle, non-discriminatory fashion'. 'The sole purpose' of this wording was 'to allow the Soviet Union to save face and thus to facilitate agreement. In truth, however, no Ukrainian or White Russian was enthusiastic about returning to the Soviet Union.'²² Himmler later commented on this secret agreement as follows:

Germany and Russia declared boundaries to their spheres of interest in an agreement that expressed political reason in a most realistic sense. It clearly laid down that Germans who *lived* on Russian soil would be sent to Germany and, vice versa, that Russians and Ukrainians who *wished* to go to Russia, were *permitted* to do so. It was a pact expressing a most simple and natural matter of course, a natural sense of reason.²³

Though absolutely no preparations had been made, the resettlement of 60,000 people was virtually forced ahead within a mere eight weeks in late autumn 1939. It could not fail to radicalize annexation plans and proposed forms of racist discrimination that had been considered up to then. For example, the Lodz region was not originally slated for annexation. On the eve of the war, approximately 500,000 Poles and more than 200,000 Jews lived in the city of Lodz. After Göring had declared in early November that he 'agreed to let the cities of Kutno and Lodz remain within the Generalgouvernement',²⁴ Werner Lorenz, one of the highest-ranking officials involved in the resettlements, successfully pushed for Lodz to be added to the Warthegau region. The entry of 13 November in Frank's diary says that

Reich Minister Seyss-Inquart reports on the drawing of the borders: The final decision has been left to the Führer. The Reich Ministry of the Interior has thus declared only a provisional administrative boundary. With respect to Lodz, the General Field Marshal [i.e., Göring], the OKW, and the Reich Ministry of the Interior were in favour of including it within the Generalgouvernement; SS Obergruppenführer Lorenz was opposed.²⁵

The latter headed the Ethnic German Liaison Office (*Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle*, or Vomi). At this time, he was organizing the '*Heim ins Reich*' programme to resettle the Baltic Germans in the Reich. Since he did not think Posen would be sufficient to settle 60,000 mostly urban ethnic Germans, he wanted Lodz to be 'incorporated' into the German Reich. *De facto* he got his way.

For different reasons, the situation was similar in Upper Silesia, where this time it was Göring who put the pressure on. After an extended dispute with the administration of the Generalgouvernement, German economists finally drew the border so that the cities of Sosnowiec, Będzin, and Dąbrowa became part of the German Reich. The motive in this case was

the coalmines there. Historical developments had also caused more Jews to live here than in all of the rest of Upper Silesia.²⁶

Nine months later there still had not been a 'final' decision on whether Lodz and the Dąbrowa region belonged to the Reich or not.²⁷ Hitler never made an official decision. Even Himmler's powerful representative in Posen, Higher SS and Police Chief Wilhelm Koppe, had to resort to indirect reasoning in trying to achieve the deportation of the Jews of Lodz. In July 1940 he said the following to Hans Frank: 'Since the Führer has given the name Litzmannstadt to the city formerly known as Lodz, all are convinced that this city has finally been made part of the Warthegau and will stay there.'²⁸

This process demonstrates how German leadership at that time made 'provisional' decisions, how Hitler tried to overcome real differences in interests as, one could say, an ideal 'total polycrat', and how the consequences of such 'non-decisions' in the case of Lodz were imposed upon the large Jewish minority of the city.

In autumn 1939, Hitler 'established' the authority of the future Generalgouverneur, Hans Frank, in the same manner. The 'Edict from the Führer and Reich Chancellor' of 27 September 1939 comprised nine short paragraphs. In paragraph 3, Hitler declared 'the Generalgouverneur is directly responsible to me'; paragraph 5 states that the Council of Ministers for Defence of the Reich and the Plenipotentiary for the Four-Year Plan [along with Frank] 'can enact laws by decree'; in paragraph 6, Hitler allowed all senior Reich authorities to 'issue orders that are necessary for planning the German living and economic sphere, even in areas within the jurisdiction of the Generalgouverneur'; paragraph 7 required that the budget of the Generalgouverneur, who was supposedly 'directly' under Hitler, be 'approved by the Reich Finance Minister'; and finally, paragraph 8 declared that the 'main official for the occupied Polish territories is the Reich Minister of the Interior'; he was to enact 'all legal and administrative measures necessary for the implementation and supplementation of this edict'.²⁹ The most important point is not even mentioned in the edict, namely, that hundreds of thousands of 'ethnic aliens' (*Fremdvölkische*) were to be deported to the Generalgouvernement in the foreseeable future with only a blanket and a few days' supply of food. But this had already been decided upon on 27 September 1939, when the rapid resettlement of the Baltic Germans had been resolved within only a few hours. Heydrich declared:

Developments in former Poland have been initially planned such that the former German provinces become German Gaus and that an additional district be formed with a foreign-language-speaking population with its capital in Krakow. . . . RFSS [i.e., Himmler] shall be named settlement commissioner for the East. Deportations of Jews to the foreign-language district [i.e., what later became the

Generalgouvernement] has been approved by the Führer. However, the entire procedure will take place in the course of one year.

This delay was new, a consequence of the sudden decision to resettle the Baltic Germans.

However, at this time Heydrich was still assuming he would have roughly 170,000 Jews to deport from the newly annexed Polish regions to the Generalgouvernement. Only a few weeks later, the annexation of the Lodz and Dąbrowa regions – for reasons that had nothing to do with policy towards the Jews – had raised the figure to 550,000. The number of Jews to be evacuated from the 'new Reich areas' had tripled within six weeks because of these decisions, while at the same time the territory they were to be deported to, the Generalgouvernement, had been reduced in size. On top of that, it had been economically weakened to a greatly disproportionate extent.

Whereas the Polish elite, estimated by Heydrich at about 3 per cent of all Poles, was 'to be taken care of' in concentration camps, the procedure regarding the majority of Poles varied from region to region and had not yet been determined in detail: 'Leaders of the *Einsatzgruppen*', according to Heydrich, 'are to consider how to incorporate primitive Poles into the labour force while deporting them at the same time. The goal is for the Poles to remain permanent seasonal and migrant labourers, with permanent residence in the environs of Krakow.'³⁰

Two days later, Heydrich remarked that no 'Jewish reservation' would be built 'southeast of Krakow', as originally planned; instead a "nature preserve" or "Reich ghetto" [was] to be created" in the 'area beyond Warsaw and around Lublin', for 'all Polish and Jewish elements . . . who have to be evacuated from future German Gaus'.³¹ The original idea for a reservation had already been modified on 29 September as part of the new resettlement policy, so that it no longer pertained only to 'Jewish elements', but to non-Jewish Poles who were to be evacuated as well. In the beginning, the latter were even given preference, since Heydrich wrote on 9 October that in view of the pending arrival of several tens of thousands of Baltic Germans in Gdynia ('*Gotenhafen*'),

it will be necessary largely to clear the city of its Polish population . . . to acquire the required housing. The Polish population, or some of it, is to be deported without delay to the eastern parts of the Polish region occupied by German troops.³²

The politics of speedy ethnic 'redistribution' began in September 1939 in an extraordinarily rushed, improvised form, because the power and alliance politics of war preparations had yielded the 'resettlement' of, initially, about 500,000 ethnic Germans as a by-product. The hastily resolved resettlement of the Baltic Germans marked only the beginning, followed in the course of the German–Soviet and German–Italian agreements by the

evacuation of an additional 440,000 ethnic Germans. This had a lasting impact on Heydrich's attempts to quickly drive out the Jews. The planned deportations of German, Austrian, and Czech Jews were a consequence of racist policies and deliberate economic expropriation. Jews in the incorporated eastern territories, on the other hand, were – at first – to disappear and be shipped to a 'Reich ghetto' merely because they were Jews. But then another motive emerged: the necessity of making room for Baltic Germans 'returning home' in only a few weeks' time. This required not only that Jews be deported, but that certain cities, living quarters, farms, estates, businesses, and jobs be 'cleared' on short notice; also, household goods, cash, and loans had to be made available.

Bringing the Baltic and, a few weeks later, the Volhynian and Galician Germans 'home to the Reich' affected both Jews and non-Jewish Poles. The evacuation procedures were no longer solely a means towards the ends of a more or less separate policy towards the Jews; in addition, and indeed increasingly (as will be shown), the evacuations had become responses, necessitated by other motives, to quickly accommodate the ethnic Germans – who had already started arriving – according to their accustomed standard of living or even better.³³

Resettlement Commissioner Himmler

The story behind Heinrich Himmler's appointment as Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood started in the spring of 1939. After the annexation of Austria and in the interests of a lasting alliance with fascist Italy, Germany's leaders discussed a 'final solution of the South Tyrolean problem'. In contrast to the cases of Austria, the Sudetenland, and the First Vienna Award,³⁴ however, they did not follow the principle of correcting the Paris peace treaties of 1919–20 according to *völkisch* (ethnic national) considerations. Rather, as regards South Tyrol, the Reich government explicitly refrained from making any territorial revisions. This was done for overriding considerations of power and alliance politics. The so-called German–Italian steel pact of 22 May 1939³⁵ was a prerequisite for war, as was the subsequent Hitler–Stalin pact of 23 August 1939. Leaders of the German Reich viewed both agreements as diplomatic, material, and military safeguards for their war preparations. They saw minority issues as less significant, since these hindered efforts to secure German expansionist aims through alliances. Instead of revising borders, as it had preferred to do up to that point, the German leadership now wanted a mass exodus, an 'organized migration', to 'resolve once and for all' the minorities issues, which went far beyond German minorities, dominating European politics throughout the 1920s and 1930s. From that point on, German minorities were to be evacuated from the regions in question and permanently brought

'home to the Reich' *only* in cases where their presence interfered with international agreements.

Against this background, in May 1939 Heinrich Himmler devised a plan to resettle the approximately 200,000 South Tyroleans in the Reich, in a 'perhaps historically unique, generous procedure'.³⁶ Ulrich Greifelt, who later became head of RKF headquarters, was already involved in preparations, as was the Vomi under the direction of SS General Werner Lorenz.³⁷ In preparation for 'solving the South Tyrolean problem', Himmler created virtually all the resettlement authorities in summer 1939, though some of them were not officially established until later and then quickly expanded. The question *where* to put the South Tyroleans remained largely unanswered. However, German Consul General Max Lorenz had already determined back in March 1939, when German–Italian relations had become somewhat precarious after the annexation of Austria, that the future resettlement of all South Tyroleans would require the creation of *Lebensraum* in the East.³⁸

On 23 June 1939, German and Italian negotiators met for the Berlin Conference, with Himmler presiding. Many controversial details could not be resolved, not even the definition of which South Tyroleans were actually considered ethnic Germans. The delegations were nevertheless agreed in their willingness to resettle the South Tyroleans.

On 2 August 1939 in Bayreuth, Hitler gave Himmler 'written authorization' concerning the 'treatment of all issues relating to the South Tyrol problem'. This authorization, which was very broad and vague, was written by Hans Lammers, chief of the Reich Chancellery. It was worded as follows:

Reichsführer Himmler is hereby authorized to issue all necessary orders and instructions in Germany, to negotiate with the Italian authorities, and to make contact with inhabitants of South Tyrol. He is further authorized to take all steps necessary for the resettlements and return of Reich and ethnic Germans presently living in South Tyrol.³⁹

The brevity and vague wording of the text resembled the 'euthanasia' authorization issued by Hitler a short time later. But in contrast to the later authorization, Reich Chancellery officials took another look at this one because of the great influence it would give Himmler on both domestic and foreign policies. They deemed it too imprecise and too comprehensive, and instead formulated an 'edict from the Führer',⁴⁰ containing considerable restrictions. It required Himmler to 'utilize existing authorities and facilities' and permitted him to negotiate with representatives of the South Tyroleans and Italian authorities only 'in cooperation' with the Foreign Minister. In addition, he was required in cases of dispute to 'ascertain Hitler's decision through the Reich ministers and the chief of the Reich Chancellery [i.e., Lammers]'.⁴¹

Himmler's new area of competence had hardly been agreed upon and

put to paper in the summer of 1939 when Hitler expanded his 'settlement and ethnic national policy [*volkstumpolitisch*]' responsibilities only a few weeks after the start of the war. On 28 September, precisely the day when Ribbentrop and Molotov signed the secret protocol on reciprocal population exchange in Moscow, Lammers wrote the following to the Reich Finance Minister:

The Führer has given the Reichsführer SS the task of resettling the Reich and ethnic Germans returning to the Reich from abroad (starting with the South Tyroleans), as well as that of placing agricultural settlers in previously Polish areas. An edict on the subject will be issued by the Führer within the next few days. The Führer requests that 10 million Reichsmarks, initially, be made available immediately to the Reichsführer for his activities.⁴²

As had previously been announced, the Reich Chancellery issued an 'edict from the Führer and Reich Chancellor on the consolidation of German nationhood' on 7 October. It was not intended for the public eye. The edict required Himmler 'to adapt [the resettlement measures] to the needs of the military leadership', but at the same time it gave him a specific new task: 'Eliminating the influence of ethnically alien populations that present a threat to the Reich and the ethnic German community.'⁴³

Authorization to kill

Even if such edicts from the Führer continually led to disputes, they nevertheless regulated the administration's actions while at the same time granting it extreme flexibility. The most classic example is 'Operation T-4', i.e., the murder of mentally handicapped Germans. Since this crime was very significant in the decision-making process that led to the murder of European Jews, the preceding events – even though they are now relatively well known – need to be summarized here.

Various committees predominantly comprising physicians and professors of medicine met in summer 1939, and plans for this project started taking on definite contours by the following autumn. The 'legal basis' for it was a simple, four-line confidential letter from Hitler, written after the fact under pressure from the Minister of Justice. It was neither a command nor an edict; it 'authorized' the killing. Hitler delegated the implementation and monitoring of the new political task to two of his closest personal advisors, Dr Karl Brandt, in charge of health policy, and Reichsleiter Philipp Bouhler, responsible for domestic policy issues. Of course, neither was able to complete his new tasks with the resources at his disposal. They were thus forced to delegate work further, taking advantage of traditionally available institutions, especially the Medical Administration, at that time still located within the Ministry of the Interior. They also created a

new, small special bureaucracy at Tiergartenstrasse 4 in Berlin (hence the code name 'Operation T-4').

Hitler's letter of authorization was vaguely worded and did not place any limitations on the plans of the various committees. Rather, it set free existing planning energy, ambition, and practical imagination. The scope of the 'operation', selection criteria, and long-term goals were decided by those who had planned it. As far as is known, Hitler intervened four times in the 'euthanasia' murders. He authorized the 'operation' in the summer and autumn of 1939; he prevented the promulgation of a completed euthanasia law for interesting, but in this context irrelevant, reasons; he interrupted the murders on 24 August 1941 for pragmatic reasons; and he allowed them to resume a short time later, albeit under the totally different conditions of war and in a more discreet, though soon all the more widespread, form.⁴⁴

Of course, the specialists' arguments and pressure influenced the decision to murder mentally ill Germans, as did Hitler's motives and his willingness in principle – already documented in 1935 – 'to take up and carry out the euthanasia issue' in case of war, but not before.⁴⁵ In any case, it is certain that the views of Hitler and his advisors – the opinions of his personal physician Theo Morell are known – overlapped with those of the specialists. Together, they led to the decision to murder chronic care patients in psychiatric institutions. It is possible to distinguish which portion of the expert advice was conceptual and decisive for the 'Führer authorization'. Operation T-4 was thought out, written down, and justified – down to the last detail – by leading psychiatrists and administrative experts, under the supervision of Max de Crinis.⁴⁶ The individual aspects can be outlined as follows:

1. In July 1939, Hitler's personal physician Theo Morell drafted a memorandum, certainly after consultation with Hitler. It stated:

ultimately this concerns the notion of human rights. . . . There is something right about the notion, but it is wrong as a principle. A subjective right of this kind, with an unrestricted individual sphere, exists no more here than for property. . . . The pressing needs of the community cannot develop from a momentarily favourable situation; instead, they must be put aside for an extended period of time and, in particular, must take into account future options as well. Five thousand idiots at an annual cost of RM 2000 each equals RM 10 million per year. At 5 per cent interest, this corresponds to a capital reserve of 200 million.

Morell concluded that it was also necessary to 'evaluate the resulting availability of domestically grown foodstuffs and a certain reduction in demand for imports'.⁴⁷

2. About thirty leading psychiatrists argued in July 1939 in a similar fashion, albeit from their expert perspective. According to the later testimony of Hans Hefelmann, who had organized the conference in the Reich Chancellery, the group reached the following consensus:

One doctor's suggestion that curable cases be given better treatment than incurable ones was rejected by the others. The doctors also suggested a nurse-patient ratio of one to approximately three or four in serious cases and eight to ten in other cases; thus, in spite of the departures of nursing staff for military service, if euthanasia were administered to the most serious cases, it would ensure a peacetime level of therapeutic care for less severe cases.⁴⁸

3. On 9 October 1939, physicians discussed the questions 'who and how?'. They also set the target number of murders that were to take place by 24 August 1941, marking the end of the first phase of the 'euthanasia' murders. The record of the meeting states that 'the figure [was] yielded by a calculation based on a ratio of 1000: 10:5:1. This means that of 1000 people, 10 require psychiatric treatment, five of these as in-patients. Of these, one patient will be involved in the euthanasia programme.'⁴⁹ According to these calculations, the target was initially to kill 60,000-70,000 chronically ill patients.

Viktor Brack coordinated the departments involved in the murders from Hitler's Chancellery, under the supervision of Brandt and Bouhler. He did not respond to the estimates as though he had strict orders from the Führer to kill as many people as possible. His closest associate, Hans Hefelmann, reported in 1961 on the reaction of coordinating officer Brack, who had long since been executed: 'Brack, who was initially very taken with the task he was given, had reservations after the doctors told him that about 60,000 patients were being considered for the operation; the necessary secrecy⁵⁰ appeared impossible with such a high figure.'⁵¹

On top of this came the well-documented complaints, which went on for years, by the Conference of Mayors (*Gemeindetag*), about the excessively high costs of institutional patients and the number of military hospital beds that the military medical inspector said would be needed in the case of war. When on 3 April 1940 Brack spoke to the assembled mayors in the *Gemeindetag* about the killings, he summarized all the major lines of reasoning that had emerged in the debate.

In notes on Brack's speech that happened to survive, it was written that

in the many psychiatric hospitals in the Reich there are endless numbers of incurable patients of all kinds who are of no use to humanity. They take food away from the other healthy people and often require two or three times the care. The rest of the public must

be protected from them. Since measures are already needed today to preserve healthy people, it is all the more necessary to first eliminate these creatures, even if it is initially only to improve the care of curable patients in mental hospitals. The space thus made available is needed for all sorts of war-essential things: military and other hospitals, auxiliary clinics. Moreover, the operation greatly relieves the municipalities, since for each individual case the future costs of accommodation and care would be eliminated.⁵²

The series of decisions that determined the course of Operation T-4 incorporated pragmatic goals of different kinds: clearing out institutional space for various purposes, reducing the social services budget, assuring the food supply in wartime, releasing medical personnel, better care of the mentally ill regarded as curable. A purely ideological explanation, such as a programmatically necessary 'cleansing of the German national body of everything of inferior worth', did not play any significant role in the actual decisions made. Ideology did, however, remain important in so far as it sufficiently undermined the moral and legal barriers in the minds of the perpetrators, serving as a justification for their murderous acts.

The actual organization of the murders was left to technocrats. They were the ones who determined the concrete course of their so-called 'operation' on the basis of comprehensible considerations of *realpolitik*. It is certain that the 'operation' was not carried out by spineless functionaries. At intermediate and lower levels, there were committed people involved who were convinced of the necessity and rightness of their actions. They did not view themselves as tools, but as active, recognized protagonists.

Notes

- 1 See Heim, *passim*.
- 2 Express letter from Heydrich to the heads of the *Einsatzgruppen* of the security police on the 'Jewish question in the occupied territories', 21 September 1939, printed in FGM, 37ff.
- 3 Quoted in Krausnick, 52.
- 4 IMG, vol. 31, 230ff.
- 5 Pohl, 26.
- 6 Quoted in Krausnick, 53.
- 7 Heydrich, in FGM (my emphasis); on population shifting and the slowing down of evacuations, see also Heydrich's express letter to the heads of the *Einsatzgruppen*, 30 September 1939, reprinted in Pätzold, 241.
- 8 See Krausnick, *Einsatzgruppen*, 65ff.; Broszat, 30f.
- 9 Goebbels' diary, I/3, 609 (entry of 14 October 1939).
- 10 In a slightly different form, this occupation strategy also applied to the division of Yugoslavia in 1941. People classified as 'undesirable' in the annexed area of northern Slovenia were deported to the Belgrade region.
- 11 Muehlon, 142.

- 12 IMG, vol. 30, 95; quoted in Safrian, 88.
 13 Quoted in Pohl, 49.
 14 Quoted in FGM, 44.
 15 Quoted in Aly and Heim, 204.
 16 'New Jewish State in Poland,' *The Times* (24 October 1939).
 17 Dieter Pohl wrote the following about the attempt to create ghettos in the district of Lublin:

Ghettoization was begun in Chelm at the end of October (1940), and soon after, a ghetto was formed in Wisznice. In many cases, district heads tried in vain to set up a ghetto. This is indicated by extant files of the district head of Lublin-Land: 'The building of ghettos is still being hindered by the virtually insurmountable shortage of construction materials.' In Piaski, in particular, ghetto construction dragged on for months for this reason. The German administration also complained that Polish governors did not cooperate in building the ghettos, even though in some cases they, too, wanted to isolate the Jews. Thus comprehensive ghetto construction had not been completed by 1941.

(p. 67)

- 18 My emphasis. It was precisely Hitler's deliberately vague wording that led to both excessive expectations and great concern on the part of the southeastern European Germans – among the Danube-Swabian population in Yugoslavia, for example (Wehler, 68f.). The German Foreign Office thus saw the need to make the following, widely circulated, 'secret' declaration on 13 December 1939:

Regarding resettlement, we have been in contact only with Italy, Soviet Russia, Estonia, and Latvia. Additional resettlements are not urgent and are not under discussion. . . . Announcements in the press are not intended at this time, since we have a compelling interest in keeping debate on the resettlement as minimal as possible and not going into depth.

(reprinted in Loeber, 159f.)

Representatives of the Ethnic German Liaison Office (Vomi) interpreted Hitler's speech with similar reserve (letter from the Vomi [signed by Rimann] 'on the resettlement issue', 18 October 1939; BAK R59/323, 116; see also Ernst von Weizsäcker's memorandum of 3 November 1939, Loeber, 149f.).

- 19 Reprinted in *Der großdeutsche Freiheitskampf* (Berlin, 1942), 67–100.
 20 On the history and structure of this office, see Koehl, *passim*; Broszat, 62ff.; Aly and Heim, 125–87.
 21 Kroeger, 41ff. See also Hehn, 75–87; relevant documents are reprinted in Loeber, 14–78.
 22 Kroeger, 60. Of 750,000 Ukrainians in the Generalgouvernement, 'approx. 11,000 [were] resettled in the Soviet Union' within the scope of the Nazi–Soviet pact. At the same time, roughly 40,000 ethnic Ukrainians emigrated from the Soviet-annexed part of Poland to the German-occupied part of the country (Fritz Arlt, ed. *Die ukrainische Volksgruppe im Deutschen Generalgouvernement Polen* (Krakow, 1940), 32ff.; library of the Herder Institute in Marburg, 32/III/C/121).
 23 Himmler's 'speech to the Bessarabian Germans in the Jahrhunderthalle in Breslau' on 2 March 1941 (my emphasis); BAK, NS/19/4008, p. 5 of the manuscript.
 24 Eisenblätter, 24ff.; Frank diary, 60.
 25 Frank diary, BAK, R52II/174, 34. As an incidental note, the Baltic Germans strongly resisted being settled in Lodz; in February 1940, Himmler said on the subject, 'In this regard it is often necessary to dictate what must be done' (speech of 29 February 1940, in Himmler, *Geheimreden*, 135ff.).
 26 The environs of both Lodz and Sosnowiec had belonged to the Russian part of Poland until 1918. The Jews there were forced to remain in the newly created Polish state and were not allowed to opt to immigrate to Germany, as were the Jews in the formerly Prussian regions ceded to Poland in 1918.
 27 On the unclear boundaries, see Frank diary, 60, 92, 111, 123, 151, 193, 197. On 3 November 1940, the dispute between Frank and Greiser was put aside for the time being; Frank diary, government meeting of 6 November 1940.
 28 Meeting of Frank, Koppe, and others; Frank diary, 262. The city's name was changed on 12 April 1940, not of Hitler's own volition, but 'at the recommendation of Greiser', administrative and party head in the Warthegau (Goebbels diary, I/4, 71, entry of 13 March 1940).
 I have tried to use exclusively the spelling *Lodz*, commonly known and used until 1939, for the Polish city of Łódź. The spelling *Lodsch*, which was used for a short time in the autumn of 1939, has been changed in citations to *Lodz* without further mention. The name *Litzmannstadt* will be used in citations where it so appeared; in cases where the documents are cited not as direct quotes, but paraphrased, *Litzmannstadt* has been replaced by *Lodz*.
 29 RGBI 1939/I, 2077. See Frank's sarcastic commentary on these regulations, 19 December 1941; Frank diary, 313f.
 30 Note on a meeting on 21 September 1939 between Heydrich and office and *Einsatzgruppen* leaders; quoted in Pätzold, 239ff.
 31 Heydrich's note of 29 September 1939 (my emphasis), reprinted in Pätzold, 240.
 32 Report of 9 September 1939 by the chief of the RSHA, appendix 1 on the 'Transport of the ethnic German populations from Latvia and Estonia to Gotenhafen'; reprinted in Loeber, 122ff.
 33 See Burrin, 73ff.
 34 The foreign ministers of Italy (Ciano) and Germany (von Ribbentrop) negotiated this arbitral award on 2 November 1938, settling disputes between Czechoslovakia and Hungary on border and minority issues. The regions on the southern border of Slovakia and the Carpathian Ukraine, which were populated predominantly by Hungarians, were ceded to Hungary. In 1947 the peace treaty of Paris re-established the *status quo ante*.
 35 Germany used this pact to confirm the Brenner Pass as the Italo-German border. The two powers agreed that their expansionist plans should be implemented, with neutrality of interests on both sides, in a southern and a northern 'greater region' (*Grossraum*), respectively, linked by an economic and military 'axis'.
 36 Stuhlpfarrer, 63.
 37 The Ethnic German Liaison Office (Vomi) was founded in 1936 by the NSDAP in order to better integrate ethnic Germans into Nazi policy. With the change in policy in 1939, it became *de facto* one of Himmler's many resettlement offices. In June 1941, the Vomi then officially became a main SS office.
 38 Stuhlpfarrer, 38ff. This was not merely Lorenz's personal opinion, as indicated by the special relationship he had to the SS; Döscher, 116ff.
 39 Draft authorization; BAK, R43/II/1412, 3ff.
 40 'Erlass des Führers und Reichskanzlers über die Aufnahme der Volksdeutschen aus Südtirol in das Gebiet des Deutschen Reiches' (Edict of the Führer and Reich Chancellor on Receiving the Ethnic Germans from the South Tyrol into the Territory of the German Reich) (draft), *ibid.* 15f.

- 41 The draft was minimally revised again on 16 August 1939 after a consultation between Lammers and Himmler. Lammers intended to 'present it for implementation to the Führer as soon as possible' (letter from Lammers to Himmler, 17 August 1939, *ibid.* 17f.). On the history of the edict, see especially Stuhlpfarrer, 246–60; cf. also Broszat, 62ff.; Rebentisch, 163ff.
- 42 Letter from Lammers to Schwerin-Krosigk, 28 September 1939; BAK, R43/II/1412, 45.
- 43 Quoted in *Doc. Occ.*, vol. 5, 176ff. Himmler endeavoured in vain in summer 1940 to have the edict published and to give himself a positive right to carry out 'evacuations'. (See Reich Chancellery memo of 26 June 1940; BAK, R43/II/141, 509f.; Greifelt's draft edict [sent on 19 July 1940], *ibid.* 519ff.; Kleinschmidt's [DUT] memo of 13 July 1940 about a conversation with Greifelt; BAP, 17.02/146). Efforts to gain law-making rights for the RKF also failed initially (DUT memo of 28 August 1940; BAP, 17.02/217). Nevertheless, in addition to resettlement, discrimination against Eastern European slave labourers – varied, but to some extent grounded in law – was later regarded as an RKF activity. This included, for example, the 'classification of Poles and eastern labourers in the Reich, special wage and tax rates, limitation of marriage and sexual relations, residence restrictions, limited allotment of rationed consumer goods' (RKF progress report [end of 1942]; BAK, R49/26, 34).
- 44 See Aly, *Aktion T4*, 168–82. A well-documented example of the hollowness of such 'Führer Directives' is the 'special authorization' that Hitler issued on 19 September 1940 for extralegal abortions; see Aly, 'Medicine', 54–5. On the decision-making process of the 'euthanasia' murders, see also Aly, 'Hinweise', 195–204.
- 45 According to Hitler's autumn 1935 statement to Gerhard Wagner, then Reich Head Physician; cited in Schmuhl, 180ff.
- 46 De Crinis succeeded Karl Bonhoeffer at the Berlin Charité University Hospital, holding the most prominent German department chair, for psychiatry and neurology; at the same time, he worked as a security service agent and consulting psychiatrist for the Wehrmacht. As state secretary in the Reich Education Ministry, he was responsible for medical department appointment policy.
- 47 Quoted in Roth and Aly, 125ff.
- 48 Testimony by Hans Hefelmann; quoted in Aly, 'Progress', 157–8.
- 49 Quoted in Aly, 'Medicine', 37–8.
- 50 On the considerations that led Hitler to keep the operation secret, see Chapter 11, 'An open secret', pp. 243–5.
- 51 Testimony of 30 January 1961 by Hans Hefelmann, 8; Sta. Ansbach, 1 Js 1147/62 (supplementary file).
- 52 Quoted in Aly, *Aktion T4*, 50.

Elements of the decision to carry out the Holocaust

An open secret

Although Hitler had discontinued the murder of German psychiatric patients owing to domestic political considerations, the German leadership could look back positively on this first programme of mass extermination. Until summer 1941, the murder of patients in psychiatric institutions went off almost without a hitch, and the secrecy of the project helped contribute to this. That was the path taken quite deliberately from the very beginnings, as shown in a memorandum on the 'euthanasia question' written by Hitler's personal physician, Theo Morell, in summer 1939.

In the memorandum, Morell investigated, at Hitler's request, whether 'mercy killing' should be legally regulated or practised as an 'official secret'. He based his arguments on a survey conducted in the early 1920s among the overwhelmingly proletarian parents of seriously disabled children. The parents were posed the 'purely hypothetical' question whether they would consent to a 'painless shortening of your child's life'. They answered overwhelmingly in the affirmative. However, Morell did not conclude from this that one might simply begin and carry out the planned crime in a completely public, legally regulated fashion. Rather, he referred to a minority of the parents questioned whom he felt were important. They had said they were unwilling to be made judges over their own children, but would welcome it if doctors would make such a decision. Thus Morell wrote in his report to Hitler:

Many parents express the following: If you had simply done it and said that our child died from some illness. One could take this into account. We should not think that we cannot undertake beneficial measures without the approval of the people, our sovereign.¹

It was reasons like these that led Hitler to prefer an 'officially secret' procedure and later to refuse to publish a law 'on assisted death for the

incurably ill'.² However, this was not really intended to prevent information on the murders from rapidly leaking out. Instead, such official secrecy gave the public and those who indirectly shared in the crime the opportunity to give their tacit consent to government measures. If the relatives did not entirely reject the government offer to 'relieve' the suffering of their severely disabled children or mentally ill wives or husbands, then at least it must have been important to them not to know too much about the circumstances of their deaths. A similar process was also at work among the doctors involved in the bureaucratic preparations, who 'were told nothing about the operation officially; unofficially it was assumed that everyone had somehow already been sufficiently informed',³ as a doctor from a Rhine facility wrote in her diary in winter 1940-41. A secretary from Eichmann's Section IVB4 later testified to the same thing:

I did not know any details of the events in the concentration camps, but I knew that the final solution of the Jewish question consisted of the extermination of the Jews. . . . I had already learned the word 'special treatment' during my time in Berlin. No one ever spoke about it in the office, not even with friends. . . . But everyone who dealt with it knew what the whole thing meant.⁴

This form of 'secret Reich matter', which was actually public, can be understood as an offer to Germans in general, and to the indirect participants in particular, to avoid responsibility and enter into an unconfessed, passive complicity that did not weigh on the conscience.

Aside from a very few, easily controlled exceptions, there was not the least bit of opposition among the many thousands of officials involved in the bureaucratic process of the 'euthanasia operation'. Looked at in this way, it is pointless to ask, 'How much did they know?' The question should be, 'Why did the Germans want to know so little?'

The experience of Operation T-4 remained crucial for the later organizers of the 'final solution of the Jewish question'. It gave them the certainty that systematically planned mass murder, organized according to a division of labour, was essentially possible to achieve with the German government apparatus and the German public. The sermon by Bishop Galen of Münster remained an - if not the - exception to the rule. Until summer 1941, occasional acts of resistance could be dealt with. In March, Brack spoke to the assembled state supreme court presidents and general prosecutors of the Third Reich about the 'euthanasia programme'. He explained that 'in 80 per cent of the cases, the relatives [of those killed] agree; 10 per cent protest, 10 per cent are indifferent'.⁵

Even if the minority of those who protested had been larger, their opposition did not have an effect until two other crises of legitimacy placed the political system under additional strain: the difficulties on the eastern front and the increase in British air raids.

The protagonists were aware of the connections. Thus even after the

sudden cessation of Operation T-4, they could look back on the development of their murder programme as a success. Top German officials, ministers, and leaders had gained the expertise essential to later decisions; the logic of the 'secret Reich matter' lay in the certainty that euphemisms would not be investigated and would not only be gratefully accepted, but even expected as an opportunity for denial and indifference.

Total biologism

The common images of an insane, racist state and a central, or long since determined, plan for extermination correspond to the self-image of the Greater German 'Führer state', but not to reality, which obeyed different laws. The internal logic of the Nazi state developed between the poles of great plans for change and expansion, unstable interim solutions, and limited resources. These were followed by practical constraints, expectations, and the necessity for action - all under the condition of a state-implemented (racist) order of values that was firmly grounded in German society. Most of this does not seem so remote from us that it cannot be described. The event is accessible to analysis, using conventional historiographic methods.

The decision on the 'final solution of the Jewish question' was unquestionably interwoven with the anti-Semitic doctrine of the German state at the time. Goebbels' diary entry for 19 August 1941 is a good example of this: 'I will not rest or repose until we, too, have drawn the final conclusions with regard to Jewry.' And on 20 August, he wrote, 'We must approach this problem without any sentimentality.' On 2 November, 'The Jews are the lice of civilized humanity. They must somehow be exterminated. . . .'⁶

This element was also central to the decisions that led to the Holocaust. Nevertheless, any analysis will miss the mark if it is based only on the explanations offered time and again by Hitler and his Propaganda Minister and if it takes them at face value. For an investigation of the murder of the European Jews, critical reserve is also necessary, given the illusory nature of all ideologies. Furthermore, the processes of decision-making in a dictatorship are, as a rule, murky, especially from an ideological perspective. They must be examined all the more conscientiously to reveal their substantive core.

Nazi ideology gained its effectiveness not from isolated, government-controlled hatred of Jews or the mentally ill, Gypsies or Slavs, but from the totalitarian unity of so-called negative and positive population policies. Zygmunt Bauman has interpreted these mechanisms as an expression of modernity, which to him is a 'garden culture'. He attempts to describe the politics of the totalitarian state using the metaphor of the great gardener, as described by Nazi ideologist Walther Darré, who wishes the garden of

society 'to lift itself above the harsh rule of natural forces', create 'suitable conditions for growing', keep away 'harmful influences', 'tend what needs tending', and 'eliminate the weeds which would deprive the better plants of nutrition, air, light and sun'.⁷

Because the retrospective interpretation of Nazism as a rule follows the perspective of the victim, the obviously negative aspect of racial politics is generally regarded as an absolute. As understandable as this is, such a one-sided view leads historical analysis astray and causes it to almost ignore the 'positive' aspects of Nazi population policies. Thus the following is a brief summary of the closed overall biologist system of the Nazi state.

In it, all people – including the Master Race – were biologically unequal. They were therefore separated on an open scale into those of greater and those of lesser value. The mixing of the one with the other was to be prevented, because those of lesser value were perceived as a threat. The number of people of inferior worth had to be kept as low as possible through state control. Marriage and reproduction among those of superior worth were to be encouraged, according to biological criteria, regardless of any traditional social barriers. Anything serving the interests of those of greater value might and should be done – if necessary, to the disadvantage of the inferior.

What was true for the individual was even more true for the collectives, the races. Races differed more or less in their basic biological characteristics and because the respective share of persons to be classified as of superior or inferior worth fluctuated greatly. Two collectives were seen to be of lesser value overall: the Jews and the Gypsies – although the Jews also counted as a world enemy, the so-called anti-race *per se*.⁸

This was the construct that Heinrich Himmler liked to call the 'socialism of good blood'. It was not the ideology itself that was historically unique, but the fact that it succeeded within a short time in becoming the central principle of a modern state, and apparently achieved this position easily under the specific conditions prevailing in Germany. The restructuring of the entire legal system, basically every administrative act, was guided by this body of rules. Two examples help illustrate this.

- On 18 July 1940, the Reich Ministry of the Interior published formal guidelines that would be used to divide the German population into four categories. The lowest group comprised 'asocial persons' who were to be 'excluded from receiving any assistance', any welfare aid. A step above them was the category that included those Germans classed as 'still acceptable'. A family in this category 'cannot be seen as an asset to the national community [*Volksgemeinschaft*]', but it would probably be 'no serious burden on it' either. While the guidelines expressly provided for the possibility of forcibly sterilizing people in this category, no such directive existed for the 'asocials'. More far-reaching 'measures of negative population policy' – namely, deportation, slave labour, and

extermination – were actually intended for them, though this was not explicitly spelled out in the guidelines.⁹ The two 'lower' groups were followed in this biological hierarchy by the majority of the 'average population'; towering above them were those Germans who – at least theoretically – were considered 'genetically especially valuable', regardless of class or origin, and who stood out through 'professional achievement and social advancement', because of which they were to receive special support.¹⁰

- In 1942, the Reich Security Main Office set up a biological reprieve for Polish or Russian slave labourers arrested for 'prohibited sexual relations' with German women ('*Volksgenosinnen*'), and who were all, at Himmler's wishes, to be 'sent to the gallows'. Now the delinquents were selected for their fitness to be Germanized, on the basis of a special series of questions. It may be that this occurred because of the shortage of labour or as a result of the rapid spread of this sort of 'criminality'; that is not the issue here. Himmler and Heydrich did not handle their system rigidly. What is important is that, in evaluating the slave labourers, the very same 'racial questionnaire' was used that was commonly employed internally to evaluate SS members. The graphic layout of the questionnaire corresponded in all its details with a standardized defect inspection report now familiar in Germany.¹¹ However, the evaluation system differed significantly; along with the defects of the inspected object, it also recorded its merits. Both together were used to calculate an 'overall rating' – universal, sterile, and morally neutral – employing a formula that varied according to racial group affiliation.

Unlike the Germans, Poles, Russians, or Czechs, the Jews were not subject to such an internal selection,¹² as they were classified as generally inferior. Nevertheless, their situation worsened precisely under these conditions of general selection. Thus pressure at the margins of the overall system increased progressively, from the inside out, and was constantly reapplied. 'Emigration of Jews to make more room for Poles', Himmler had said when explaining how he would accomplish the long-overdue resettlement of the ethnic Germans.

The Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood cultivated the basic biologist principle in its purest form. 'Quarantine' camps, train routing plans, and selection bodies characterized the external process. Hardly had the ethnic Germans settlers 'returned home' when specially trained selectors at the Central Immigration Office – Josef Mengele worked in this capacity for a time in 1940 – checked their physical, social, and vocational qualities. They refused naturalization to mentally ill and crippled settlers and those married to 'inferior aliens', distinguishing them with an 'S' for 'special case'. The others were separated into 'A' (*Altreich* or Old Reich) and 'O' (*Ost*, or East) cases, generally in a ratio of one to four. The 'Old Reich cases' had been classified by the

racial examiners as inferior additions to ethnic blood; the RKF resettled them on a case-by-case basis in Germany for the purpose of assimilation. The 'East cases' were considered of sufficiently high value to 'survive the nationality [*Volkstum*] struggle in the newly acquired eastern territories'. The selection experts of the Central Immigration Office assigned 'characteristics' to the top-secret personal dossiers of the 'O cases'. These served as criteria in allocating farms; in practice, therefore, it was a question of money. This is more or less how it went: 'Heinrich V., one of the best carpenters, respectable family'; 'Johann F., negligent farmer, slovenly family, 10 to 15 hectares on a trial basis'; 'Josef G., very capable worker, very industrious, although he has a gammy leg'; 'Georg E., capable wife, somewhat slow, mediocre'; 'August S., shoemaker, small workshop with little land, man weakly, wife bad foot, otherwise respectable family'.¹³

The majority of 'O cases' among the ethnic German peasant families remained in camps in southern Germany anyway. When they were finally 'called away', as it was termed, after a year and a half, they first found themselves in a temporary camp in Lodz; from there, they were supposed to be 'placed' on new (stolen) land in the eastern Polish region of Zamość. The trains made several rounds. Romanian German 'O cases' were exchanged for Lithuanian German 'A cases' – simple labourers:

The transport of these settlers from Lithuania will occur immediately following the deportation of the present internees of the camp; the trains are scheduled to travel from Main-Franconia to Litzmannstadt and from there, empty, to Mecklenburg, to be loaded in Mecklenburg with settlers from Lithuania and then sent on to the now-empty camps in Main-Franconia.¹⁴

New train routing plans were drawn up for settlement in Zamość in eastern Poland, which was to have begun after the harvest but, as usual, was delayed. On 25 January 1943, a freight train left Zamość for Berlin with 1000 young Polish men and women 'without unproductive dependants', as it was put. They were to take the jobs of 'armaments Jews', who were deported to Auschwitz on the same train, along with their 'unproductive' family members. There, the train was loaded with luggage for the ethnic German settlers and sent back to Zamość. At the same time, the ethnic Germans arrived in passenger trains, where they were received by the SS settlement staff and settled in the areas 'evacuated' by Poles and, before that, by Jews. There they were assigned approximately 50-acre farms, each created out of five ('unproductive') Polish peasant farms. From Zamość, the train departed once again for Auschwitz, loaded with 1000 Poles who had been designated by the security police and the racial examiners as particularly 'undesirable' ('selection category IV').¹⁵

Even though 1000 Jews and 1000 Poles were 'deported' to Auschwitz according to this train schedule, their fates even there varied greatly. The

director of one of these transports, an employee of the Central Resettlement Office in Lodz, reported on a discussion with an SS colleague who had received one such transport in Auschwitz:

With reference to fitness for labour deployment, SS Hauptsturmführer Haumeier explained that only able-bodied Poles should be supplied, in order to prevent as far as possible any unnecessary 'strain on the camp and the feeder traffic. Imbeciles, idiots, cripples and sick people must be removed from the camp as quickly as possible through liquidation to relieve pressure on the camp. However, this measure is made more difficult to the extent that, according to RSHA instructions, unlike the measure applied to the Jews, Poles must die a natural death.¹⁶

The train routing plans between Zamość, Berlin, and Auschwitz document the meshing of resettlement and removal, selection and genocide, the intrinsic logic of 'human deployment', and the planning and organizational unity of so-called positive and negative population policy. The support and preferential treatment granted those of 'superior worth' went hand in hand with the marginalization of the 'inferior'.¹⁷ Only within this relationship did total biologism gain the dynamic that led to the murder first of German psychiatric patients and then of European Jews and Gypsies. Operation T-4 was fundamental to the Holocaust not only for the concrete experience it provided, but also because it served as an example: it legitimized the notion of biological 'elimination' as an immanent principle of life for the Master Race itself, making it that much easier for it to be directed outward and transferred to other collectives.

The Heydrich system

Three weeks into the war, on 21 September 1939, Reinhard Heydrich issued his first set of guidelines on the 'Jewish question in the occupied territories'.¹⁸ They were directed to the leaders of the *Einsatzgruppen* of the security police and SD, which were deployed in 1939 and carried out mass executions during the war against Poland, though plainly to a lesser degree than later in the Soviet Union. The guidelines contained three elements that would remain crucial to the later decision-making process culminating in the 'final solution'. Heydrich no longer sought forced Jewish emigration abroad, but instead favoured deportation to the new periphery of the area under German control;¹⁹ at the same time, he divided this 'long-term goal' into 'short-term goals'. Further, he encouraged his colleagues on the ground to offer their ideas and criticize directives from headquarters whenever they deemed this necessary as a result of the concrete difficulties they experienced in practice. The guidelines are a good example of the 'Heydrich system'.

Not only in Jewish policy, but soon also in the entire policy of 'ethnic cleansing', Heydrich regularly distinguished between short-term and long-term goals. He made distinctions between 'steps towards fulfilment of this final goal', which could be realized in the short term, and a medium-term 'overall measure', which demanded 'the most thorough preparation, in both technical and economic respects'. 'As the first preliminary measure', in September 1939, the western Polish provinces intended for annexation were to be 'made free of Jews, or at least, we should aim to create only a few cities of concentration'. In the future *Generalgouvernement*, 'as few concentration points as absolutely necessary [were to] be established' for the Jewish population: at railway junctions, or at least on railway lines, 'to facilitate later measures'.

'With regard to short-term goals', Heydrich demanded 'total utilization of all forces'. The final goal, on the other hand, remained vague and 'top secret'. According to Heydrich, it required 'longer periods'. In this way, the agents of Jewish policy justified every shortcoming and all brutality with the provisional nature of their actions. They acted in the conviction that their improvisations were an element of a 'planned overall measure', an 'ultimate solution', and thus a greater, and soon achievable, design for a new order.

In his guidelines, Heydrich also established a basic principle:

It goes without saying that the impending tasks cannot be set down here in all their details. The following instructions and guidelines at the same time serve the purpose of encouraging the leaders of the *Einsatzgruppen* to think practically.

Heydrich knew how to avoid schematic thinking. Each active participant was to describe his own concrete experiences and thereby help adapt the always-preliminary guidelines to practice. To some extent, the functionaries of the Führer state, even in the SS, cultivated an open, cooperative style of leadership and thus minimized the tension inherent in any administrative body between general instructions and practical application in everyday bureaucratic practice.

Difficulties always arose on the ground, at the widely dispersed grass roots of the resettlement authorities. There, endless compromises were necessary, and ever more comprehensive 'overall solutions' were therefore required. Heydrich's open method of proceeding, with an eye to ongoing corrections, remained typical of the later transition from deportation to systematic murder of the European Jews.

Any planning must remain open to correction, to a certain degree. It is more efficient to mark off the general framework, while at the same time leaving room for practice-oriented suggestions and initiatives 'from the bottom up'. Heydrich and Himmler consciously utilized this modern administrative insight and trained their new SS elite in this way. As early as 1937, the following problems appeared on the final examinations for the

future SS aristocracy: 'How would you go about checking and proving a person has Jewish relations?', 'Put together a Reich report on "Jews in the cattle trade" and make some suggestions for eliminating the evils you describe', and 'How do you envision the solution to the Jewish question?'²⁰

Such approaches within the SS, predicated on flexibility and cooperation, correspond to Raul Hilberg's insight on the entire German bureaucracy at the time:

Thousands of proposals were introduced in memoranda, presented at conferences, and discussed in letters. The subject matter ranged from dissolution of mixed marriages to the deportation of the Jews of Liechtenstein or the construction of some 'quick-working' device for the annihilation of Jewish women and children at Łódź and the surrounding towns of the Warthegau. At times, it was assumed that the moment had come, even if there was no definite word from above. . . . The bureaucratic network of an entire nation was involved in these operations, and its capabilities were being expanded by an atmosphere facilitating initiatives in offices at every level.²¹

The famous letter that Höppner wrote to Eichmann on 16 July 1941 was based on 'discussions' that had taken place – and, it may be assumed, continued to take place – in Posen among representatives of the regional authorities. Thus Höppner began his letter with the following sentence: 'The following solution has been suggested', including, as mentioned above, the use of 'some fast-acting means' to 'finish off' the Jews of the Warthegau who are 'unfit for labour'. Thus it was the lowest ranks of the resettlement apparatus that thought up 'things' which, it was said, 'sometimes [sounded] fantastic'. They did not, for example, pass their suggestions on to the next-highest level of the hierarchy for decision, but instead offered them for discussion, in the spirit of teamwork: 'I would be grateful', Höppner told Eichmann, 'for an opinion at your convenience.'

Such facts qualify the simple concept of the Führer state and of a central decision to exterminate the Jews that was passed down through the chain of command and then carried out, in the Prussian tradition of blind obedience. Instead, the murderous ideas that were developed in Posen, and probably also in Globocnik's circles in Lublin, corresponded to similar considerations and practices at the top levels of the dictatorship. The protagonists at the lower, local level were thoroughly aware of this. They did not formulate their suggestions at random. They knew what options and suggestions had a chance of being carried out at any particular point in time.

How this must often have played out is demonstrated by an exchange of correspondence between Höppner and Krumei in 1943 that is one of the rare ones to have survived. At the time, the two subordinate *Obersturmbannführers* were not permitted to take part in the conference of SS generals in Posen on 4 October 1943 at which Himmler also discussed

'the final solution'. Nevertheless, both soon knew exactly what had been said. Himmler had said:

I wish, here before you, quite openly to mention a very difficult chapter. . . . I am talking about the evacuation of the Jews, the extermination of the Jewish people. It is one of those things that is easily said. 'The Jewish people will be exterminated,' says every Party comrade, 'of course, it's in our programme, elimination of the Jews, extermination, we'll do it.' And then they all come, those worthy 80 million Germans, and each one has his own decent Jew. Of course, the others are swine, but this one is a great Jew. Of all who talk that way, none of them has watched, none of them has gone through it. Most of you know what it means to see 100 bodies lying there, 500 lying there or 1000 lying there. To have got through this and, aside from exceptions due to human weakness, to have remained decent, that has made us tough.²²

On 11 November, Höppner wrote to Krumej:

Enclosed I am sending you the speech by the Reichsführer SS. I am depending on you to use it only for your personal information, as I am not really allowed to pass the speech on. I would even be grateful if you would destroy it when you no longer need it.

Five days later, Krumej responded, 'My sincerest thanks for sending me the document. I will act in accordance with your wishes.'²³

Historians' debate

The present study leaves some questions open; however, the results make it possible to describe certain elements of the decision to murder the European Jews that have not been known until now. It may also be stated that the dynamic that developed out of resettlement policies was an essential factor. The most important new documents, presented in the previous pages, are part of the written legacy of the administrative apparatus set up from the beginning of the war to organize 'ethnic redistribution'. These documents allow us to fill certain gaps in our knowledge of the increasing radicalization of the persecution of the Jews in the years 1939 to 1941, or at least plausibly to bridge them. A range of contentious issues that have existed until now among various historians and historical schools and have dominated the discussion may become less important, while new ones could emerge.

Nevertheless, our knowledge of the Holocaust remains fragmentary. Similarly, it is still difficult consistently to weigh the various factors significant to the decision to exterminate the Jews. The empirical clarification of one uncertainty leaves others open, and often enough makes it necessary

for new questions to be asked. Some may be deciphered with the help of individual studies, based on the theories presented here or with the help of quite different ones.

Although it is certainly no longer possible to explain every dimension of the crime, it is nevertheless still possible to come closer to the historical truth. That is also the reason for this study. Its aim is to make the Holocaust historically comprehensible. This does not mean denying or qualifying it, but rather comprehensively imagining the considerations that ultimately led to its implementation.

Historians have long wondered when the decision was made to murder European Jewry. Some believe it occurred in March 1941, while others insist on certain dates in July, September, or November.²⁴ Arguments and counterarguments can be found for every such assessment. Because probative documents, in black and white, remain rare, and the surviving perpetrators, to the extent they were later asked (and asked sensibly), systematically lied,²⁵ there is considerable room for differences of opinion. Apodictically juxtaposed, each assumption rules out the other. But we come closer to the truth if we understand the various times that must be included in the analysis not as the dates of a single act of decision-making, but as qualitative steps in the course of a broad-based, internally contradictory process of political opinion formation.

This much is certain, according to the sources and findings offered here: there was no voluntaristic 'decision' on the systematic, industrialized murder of the European Jews. There is only the assumption of later analysts that the horrible deed must have been decided upon in a completely extraordinary manner. Typical of this is the opinion of Eberhard Jäckel, who maintains that 'a joint discussion or decision', perhaps even a comparatively longer decision-making process, can be 'ruled out': 'No important decisions in this state were made by a body. At the highest level, Hitler made decisions alone and then announced them.'²⁶

In contrast, the previous chapters demonstrate the extent to which the conventional rules of state bureaucratic procedure applied even to the 'final solution'. Political decisions generally are not made in a day, nor are they carried out in linear fashion; and they are not exclusively positively determined. It remains crucial to the results which options prove suitable or unsuitable in the debate and the test phases of trial and error. Thus the course of political opinion formation – even under the conditions of the Nazi dictatorship – can be viewed as a more or less open process. The transitions between planning, decision-making, and practice were fluid, the boundaries between the participants and interested institutions permeable.

Those who participated in such processes could do this in various, sometimes contradictory, but overall equally supportive ways. They could favour one solution or another, present detailed suggestions for improvement, or simply declare themselves indifferent – a statement whose weight

should not be underestimated. Another possibility was to state that one was neither competent to solve, nor responsible for solving, the tiresome problem, but thought it important that a way finally be found to eliminate it. All these possible behaviours became part of the decision-making process on the 'final solution'; they led to a consensus and, seen in this way, contributed equally to the implementation of the Holocaust. It seems helpful to me to emphasize the differences, the distinctive expediency of the various arguments, rather than heedlessly assuming an overarching, intentional wish for extermination on the part of the participants.

A Führer order was not needed for this; in fact, it would have been counterproductive. Hitler took part in building the consensus, made demands, and let the implementors know that they did not need to conform to any traditional norms; rather, they could carry out any type of 'solution' at all. But he did not give orders. In fact, this was an open decision-making process between the top representatives of the relevant institutions, on the one hand, and their subordinates, on the other. They worked on various plans, wrote up proposals for decisions, submitted them through official channels, and got them back for revision and resubmission.

The ongoing linkage between practice and planning was characteristic of the attempts to deport the Jews right from the start. Even in their first weeks on the job, the bureaucrats in Himmler's 'resettlement' institutions had resorted to mass murder. For their immediate purposes, they had patients in Pomeranian, Polish, and West and East Prussian psychiatric hospitals 'cleared out' to 'accommodate' ethnic Germans. If we add the several thousand mentally ill Jews in German psychiatric facilities who were killed in anticipation of the 'solution of the Jewish question', and the 10,000 to 15,000 German patients in institutions who were deported to the gas chambers of Operation T-4 starting in autumn 1940 to 'free up' space for interim camps for southeastern European and South Tyrolean settlers, then we can safely say that those who had carried out 'ethnic redistribution' at Himmler's behest had had at least 30,000 people killed by July 1941, within the scope of their authority and 'necessities'. They were long familiar with the practice of executing and gassing those they held to be useless, as a means to cope with the bottlenecks that arose in the course of carrying out their tasks.

With the start of the Russian campaign, a second important practice joined the almost two years of practical experience of murder: the mass executions of Soviet prisoners of war, Jews, and suspicious civilians on the eastern front.²⁷

Nevertheless, even though the date makes it seem likely, Göring's request to Heydrich on 31 July 1941 did not simply obey the logic of this practical development. Instead, it followed on the above-mentioned discussion that the two had held on 26 March, about which Heydrich had noted, 'Regarding the solution of the Jewish question, I gave the Reich Marshal a brief report and submitted my proposal to him, which he

approved after making a change with respect to Rosenberg's responsibilities and he ordered its resubmission.' Thus Wolfgang Scheffler falls short of the truth when he writes, 'Hitler's expectations of victory in July 1941 led directly to Göring's order of 31 July 1941 . . .'²⁸ Christopher Browning makes a similar argument.²⁹ In any case, there can be no question of an order – Göring himself used the verb 'charge' (*beauftragen*).

Unlike Scheffler and Browning, Andreas Hillgruber³⁰ and Richard Breitman³¹ – employing differing approaches but concentrating strongly on the persons of Hitler and Himmler, respectively – arrived at the insight that the essential basic decisions about the extermination of European Jewry were made in spring, and that the threshold from deportation to extermination was crossed at that time. But Breitman, in particular, who takes this theory much further than Hillgruber, is wrong to assume that the extermination plans of spring 1941 already corresponded to the later option of murdering the European Jews totally, as quickly as possible, with the help of a specially developed technique of mass annihilation. Both portrayals, however, lack a description of how the plans of spring 1941 differed from the earlier Madagascar Plan, on the one hand, and the later practice of extermination, on the other.

The third position is most pointedly offered by Arno J. Mayer:

Accordingly, the escalation and systematization of the assault on the Jews was an expression not of soaring hubris on the eve of victory, but of bewilderment and fear in the face of possible defeat. Indeed, the decision to exterminate the Jews marked the incipient debacle of the Nazi Behemoth, not its imminent triumph.³²

In contrast, the present study produces a different picture. In connection with the plan of attack against the Soviet Union, and against the backdrop of the self-created 'constraints' of resettlement policy, it was decided in March 1941 at the latest to deport the European Jews 'to the East'. Heydrich's March plan provided for extermination of the Jews through the 'natural' means of hunger, cold, and slave labour – in the northeastern regions to be conquered in the Soviet Union. The deportation itself, 'the foot march', was also to be employed as a means to this end. To this extent, the concrete geographic destination was of secondary importance. Hitler, Göring, Himmler, Heydrich and his closest associates knew this plan in detail and therefore saw no reason to make important 'Jewish policy' decisions over the following months. The plan was an expression of the expectation of victory of early 1941, which seemed to be confirmed in the first few weeks of the Russian campaign. Göring's assignment of 31 July 1941 marked the point at which the deportation plan was originally supposed to begin.

More or less from that day on, the military difficulties on the eastern front began to become apparent. From then on, various departments and offices in the Reich Security Main Office, in Hitler's Chancellery, in Posen,

Lodz, and Warsaw were working on alternative 'solutions'. That, too, occurred step-by-step, accelerated in the same measure that the situation on the eastern front became not only difficult, but hopeless. In other words, Heydrich's plan in spring 1941 was inextricably linked to a successful blitzkrieg against the Soviet Union. Against the backdrop of its defeat, the project was changed to what we describe today as the Holocaust. Thus it is correct to argue using the concepts 'expectation of victory' and 'defeat' – but only when they are understood in their historical context, as frustrated expectations of victory. Not until this situation arose was rapid, uncomplicated extermination designed. This option was preceded by the cumulative failure of all the deportation projects, which was in turn connected with a self-created, cumulative straitjacket.

Even in the perpetrators' own perception, the original 'territorial solution to the Jewish question' differed plainly from the form of the 'final solution' from March 1941 (at the latest), first planned in the form of mass deportations 'to the east' and later manifested in the extermination camps. While wide-ranging discussions on the intention to 'reduce' the Slavic population by many millions were held well into 1944, frequently with minutes kept and guidelines widely circulated, such concrete discussions on the 'final solution of the Jewish question' were the exception after the beginning of 1941.

With the idea of biologically exterminating European Jewry, the regents and police chiefs of the Third Reich went far beyond the methods that seemed to them the most extreme possibilities permitted within the framework of the normal European degree of discrimination and violence.³³ In accordance with this, there emerged a new, incomparably stricter form of secrecy and euphemism than in the years 1939–40. The perpetrators were aware of the singularity of their crime and covered their tracks as best they could.³⁴ Himmler himself issued the maxim that the 'final solution of the Jewish question' should 'never' be spoken of publicly – that it should be a 'never written, never to be written' chapter of our history.³⁵

Projective conflict resolution

The deportation of the European Jews 'to the east' had been conclusively agreed upon since March 1941. Hitler and Göring had delegated the logistical preparations for the undertaking to Himmler and Heydrich. One may well imagine that, once a fundamental decision on the 'Jewish question' had been made and the military prerequisites seemed satisfied by late July, Hitler could indeed have expressed the wish 'not to hear any more on the issue'.³⁶ Given other statements made by Hitler, we can guess the wording he might have used in the winter of 1940–41 to clothe his 'authorization', referred to now and again by Himmler and Heydrich, 'to solve the Jewish question' quickly and ruthlessly immediately following victory over

the Soviet Union.³⁷ A statement by Hitler on 22 July 1941 points the way: 'If there were no more Jews in Europe, nothing would any longer stand in the way of the unity of the European countries. It does not matter where the Jews are sent, whether to Siberia or Madagascar.'³⁸ Six days earlier, in his discussion with Rosenberg, Lammers, Keitel, Göring, and Bormann, Hitler had spoken less guardedly but no more concretely in regard to the Jewish question. Bormann noted the Führer's opinion as follows: 'The motives before the world for our steps must be guided by tactical considerations. All necessary measures – execution, deportation, etc. – shall be taken nevertheless and can be taken nevertheless.'³⁹ And when, in summer 1942, Gauleiter Greiser of the Warthegau pressured Hitler to make a decision on what was to happen to Jews in the regions he administered, Hitler responded that he 'should use his own discretion in dealing with this'.⁴⁰

Hitler's role, if we consider the totality of the documents presented in this book, cannot be described as that of an inexorable giver of orders, but as that of a politician who gave his people free rein, encouraged them to develop the imagination to make the apparently impossible possible, and backed them unconditionally. Early on, a resettlement official in Posen explained the challenge posed him by tasks that he had 'not known so far' in his life. No Führer's orders helped him to 'master even the most difficult situations'; there was only a type of general authorization with which he was to prove himself a ruthless man of action, undisturbed by even the most objectionable reality – that is, 'the Führer's words: to strike from the dictionary of the German people the word "impossible"'. This alone 'made it possible for the individual to solve the problem assigned him'.⁴¹

Raul Hilberg speaks of the 'flow of administrative measures', which at 'the threshold of the killing phase . . . was unchecked', and of a political 'atmosphere facilitating initiatives in offices at every level'.⁴² In his 1993 book, *Die Eichmann-Männer* (Eichmann's Men), Hans Safrian comes to the conclusion that Section VIB4 of the Reich Security Main Office was a 'liaison and coordinating office' that

for one, coordinated the demands made of it for mass deportations, and for another, in the search for placement possibilities, received and checked far-reaching, in some cases murderous proposals from subordinate and lateral offices, passed them on to superiors, and ensured permission to carry out the proposed measures.

In Safrian's view, it was individuals who, 'within the scope of their more or less vague instructions, made decisions, put in place activities for which there were no express orders (as yet), and thus set the entire process in motion and kept it going'.⁴³

My empirical findings confirm Hilberg's and Safrian's overall views. In addition, they allow recognition of the way in which the constraints that

arose from German warmaking, the home-to-the-Reich programme for ethnic Germans, and the associated evacuations and resettlements repeatedly influenced the respective form of the 'solution of the Jewish question' project and led to increasingly radical ideas. From this perspective, it also becomes clear the extent to which the plans of Himmler, Heydrich, and Eichmann were bogged down by conflicting realities just at the time they were supposed to be carried out. The study shows how complete was the dead end into which the men of the Reich Security Main Office and the RKF – often made to appear so all-powerful in post-war literature – had manoeuvred themselves by 1940–41. They had created facts on the ground that they were at no point able to control, despite all the force and criminal energy at their disposal. They had made promises, issued promissory notes that they never paid off. The lords of the 'organized mass migration' had turned into lords of camps for ethnic Germans and Poles, of ghettos and barracks.

The history leading up to the Holocaust can only be adequately treated if it includes the uninterrupted cutbacks in and modification of all resettlement projects and brings home the pressures that increased daily as a result of the home-to-the-Reich programme for ethnic Germans. Even the violent death of the Polish Jews, described euphemistically as 'evacuation', documents the failure of the deportation projects: the Jews of the Warthegau, the Generalgouvernement, and Upper Silesia died where they were – in Chelmino, in Belzec, Sobibór, and Treblinka, in Auschwitz.

Hans Mommsen early on found a workable concept for the type of decision-making process described above, in his theory of a 'system of cumulative radicalization'.⁴⁴ The fact that Mommsen at first assumed a largely isolated policy towards the Jews as his starting point does not detract from it.⁴⁵ The concept, like similar 'functionalist' ideas of Martin Broszat's, takes aim at the assumption of 'intentionalism', of which Eberhard Jäckel is a prominent adherent, that Hitler's omnipotence and will alone led to the Holocaust, and that these sufficiently explain the crime.

The functionalists pursue the insight that the 'Führer state', despite what the contemporary label and the later collective defensive strategy of the Germans involved would lead one to believe, was not monocratically, but polycratically structured. Thus in 1977, Broszat wrote:

It appears to me, however, that no comprehensive order for the extermination existed and that the 'program' for the extermination of the Jews developed through individual operations and gradually attained its institutional and factual character by spring 1942 after the construction of the extermination camps in Poland (between December 1941 and July 1942).⁴⁶

Unlike Broszat, I do not agree that the 'final solution' 'developed' more or less successively. Rather, as my results show, one can discern clear leaps in

development in March, July, and October 1941. However, I agree with Broszat – and some documents in the following chapter indicate this – that the extermination programme was at first experimental, until sometime in May 1942. This point of view strengthens the significance of the consensus achieved by Heydrich at the Wannsee Conference and poses the question whether the machinery of extermination would not have been stopped, or at least slowed, had serious opposition and difficulties in legitimation arisen in the initial weeks and months. This leads to questions about the behaviour of the Germans, in particular. These questions are not the subject of this book, but must be posed in the same measure that we take leave of the exculpatory idea of a 'Führer order.'

The polycratic structure of the National Socialist state cannot be doubted. Yet it should not be misunderstood – as occasionally happens, with unjustified reference to Broszat – as a conglomerate of vanities, jealousies, and intrigues by powerful Nazi figures. It represented real conflicts of interest. A 'Führer order', a 'Führer decision', became necessary when the conflicts between Frank or Greiser, Himmler or Göring had to be settled or mediated. Nevertheless, Franz Neumann was only partially correct when he wrote in *Behemoth* in 1942 that 'the decisions of the Leader are merely the result [of] compromises between' competing interests and authorities.⁴⁷

The concept of 'compromise' needs to be explained. The conflicts of interest between the various power centres of the Third Reich, which were constantly losing or gaining importance and influence, arose out of the tension between differing and generally hypertrophied goals (of conquest), sanitized social utopias, and the notorious scarcity of the materials necessary for these. Even when the representatives of the various institutions pursued conflicting, mutually exclusive interests, they were willing to work together to resolve the conflicts necessarily produced by their divergent strategies – especially the intended speed of their implementation – with the help of theft, slave labour, and extermination. From this emerged the logic of the 'special authorization by the Führer' desired by all the participants and often enough presumed in advance. Until autumn 1941, this was not characterized by a decision preferring one or another variant, nor was it compromise, as Neumann believed; it was an attempt to give equal consideration to contradictory interests, plans, and 'necessities' and to resolve the conflict of purpose in maximalist form, in the sense of a 'final solution'. In other words, the more radical and far-reaching the various plans, resettlement projects, and war aims became, the larger the least common multiple (to put it mathematically) had to become into which all these plans were resolved.

The practice of projective conflict resolution required rapid – very rapid – implementation of ever-expanding plans. Hitler, the top leaders of the Reich, and their advisors and henchmen linked this with the concept of completely new conditions for action in which their discretionary leeway – the space

and raw materials at their disposal – would be so enormous and vast that the German leadership would not need to accept any scarcity or limitations, any conflicts of purpose or compromises. Then, within this framework, the 'Jewish question' would be the first to be 'settled'.

In late summer and autumn of 1941, it quickly became apparent that the fourth project 'for a final solution' would not be implemented either. From this followed a search for some perspective in which as many of the divergent interests as possible could be realized at the same time. Those who had repeatedly postponed the deportation of the dispossessed, ghettoized Jews now openly discussed the possibility of systematic, rapid extermination. They understood mass murder as the simplest way of carrying out the short- and long-term plans that they had been developing and redeveloping for nearly two years, but could never put into practice. The representatives of all other institutions agreed to the new 'solution' because it would not infringe upon their interests, and because they had all long since integrated the disappearance of the Jews solidly into their calculations; they had taken their property, crowded them together, and generally treated them as though they were already gone.

Notes

- 1 Quoted in Aly, 'Medicine', 31.
- 2 The law, including an accompanying decree, was drawn up at the end of 1940 at the initiative of the psychiatrists involved in 'euthanasia', with Heydrich's collaboration. See Roth and Aly. Hitler had refused to have it published; however, the organizational section of the law, which governed the creation of a central institution, was published as a decree on 23 October 1941 in the Reich Legal Bulletin. See Aly, 'Progress', 165ff.
- 3 Quoted in Aly, 'Medicine', 31.
- 4 Testimony of witness Erika Scholz at the trial of Franz Novak, 11 December 1969, quoted in Pätzold and Schwarz, *Auschwitz*, 168.
- 5 Quoted in Aly, 'Medicine', 44. It was certainly not without reason that, on April 1941, a decree made visits by pastors to psychiatric institutions dependent on the express wish of the patients (most of whom were not allowed to make their own decisions), and thus effectively forbade them. (General decree by the Reich Ministry of the Interior on 'Activity by Religious Communities in Public Hospitals and Mental Institutions' of 9 April 1941; RMBLiV 6 [1941], col. 647).
- 6 Goebbels diaries, Reuth, 1660ff., 1695ff. On Goebbels' role, see Jäckel, 114. Despite such martial statements, one should not be deceived about the fact that government anti-Semitism in the Third Reich was a combination of many varied prejudices. It was not only 'right-wing extremist', but also integrated the resentments of conservatives, liberals, and the left, sometimes referring to the Jews' supposed lust for revolution and modernization, sometimes to the unwillingness of Eastern European immigrants to assimilate, and sometimes to 'Jewish capital'.
- 7 Bauman, 92, 113–14.
- 8 This was reflected in the various areas of responsibility in the RSHA: The

- 'solution of the Gypsy plague' was the task of the criminal investigation department (Department V), the 'solution of the Jewish question' was assigned to 'Research on and Control of Adversaries' (Department IV).
- 9 See Aly and Roth, 105ff.
 - 10 Richtlinien für die Beurteilung der Erbgesundheit (Guidelines for the Assessment of Genetic Health), drawn up by the department for 'Health System and Cultivation of the Volk' in the Reich Ministry of the Interior, printed in RMBLiV 5 (1940), column 1519ff. For an interpretation, see Aly and Heim, 163ff. In his famous 'A Plea for the Historicization of National Socialism' (1990, German 1985), Broszat ignored the aspect of general, biologist hierarchization. Only by so doing could he write that the legislation of the Nazi period 'brought with it . . . a series of social policy innovations'; for example, 'improvements in the protection of minors, equalizing the status of white- and blue-collar wage earners'. It is true that we now take many of these laws for granted – but under different conditions. Child benefits, for example, are no longer only for 'genetically healthy Aryan families'. In the history of the genesis of such laws, that which Broszat urges is exactly what should not be done: they should not be isolated from the 'fact that this epoch was in general one of infamy', in order to then simply give them credit for the 'many social, economic and civilizing forces and efforts at modernization' that nevertheless existed (Broszat, 'Plea', 86–7). These forces did exist. Nevertheless, an investigation of the social advances cited by Broszat – for example, the improvement in the legal status of out-of-wedlock children – regularly leads back to Himmler's staff, which was also quite active in this regard. The context of this book involves the flip side, the 'infamy' of the epoch. This, too, can be adequately investigated only if one includes the 'progressive', 'positive' aspects of Nazi demographic and social policy in the analysis.
 - 11 Such a form is reprinted in Aly and Roth, 19.
 - 12 This is true if one ignores the relatively late, and only sporadic, separation of Jews into those fit and those unfit for work, which then also determined the order in which they were murdered. Only the course of the war – that is, the premature end to the 'final solution' – allowed the average chance of survival of a 25-year-old, single Jewish specialized worker to be higher than that of a 40-year-old mother of several children.
 - 13 'Preassignment list [*Vorzuweisungsliste*] for the village community of Sbu [South Bukovina] – 12 – Kornuluncze', undated (1941); BAK, R49/Anh. I/37, 34ff. (There are hundreds of thousands of such files on selections of Germans. However, they were never presented by scholars as part of a total system in which – in contrast to the official ideology of the 'Volksgemeinschaft', or national community – people were atomized to an almost incredible degree, and thus made accessible.)
 - 14 Memo from the Ethnic German Liaison Office, Operational Gau of Main-Franconia, to all camp leaders, 16 June 1942; BAK R59/114, 24.
 - 15 Aly and Heim, 437. See also Krausnick and H.-G. Adler, who called attention early on to these concrete relationships, though he did not undertake a broader investigation.
 - 16 Report by SS Untersturmführer Heinrich Kinna 'on the transport of 644 Poles (from Zamość) to the work camp Auschwitz on 10 December 1942', quoted in *Biuletyn* 13 (1960), 18Ff.
 - 17 Michel Foucault analysed this mechanism as a new technique of power that he called biopower. It consisted of regulating life, the biological processes of the human species, politically:

The [ancient power of] sovereignty . . . caused death or let live. . . . Now a power emerged . . . that consisted, in contrast, of fostering life or allowing death. . . . In Nazi society, there was this extraordinary thing: it is a society which absolutely generalized biopower, but at the same time generalized the sovereign right to kill. The two mechanisms coincide: the classic, archaic one which gave the state the power of life or death over its citizens, and the new mechanism, which is organized around discipline, regulation – in short, the new mechanism of bio-power. So that one can say that the Nazi state allowed the field of a life which it forms, protects, guarantees, and biologically cultivates, and at the same time the sovereign right to kill someone – not only the others, but its own – to become absolutely coexistent.

(Michel Foucault, 'Leben machen und sterben lassen', [1976 speech address], in *Lettre Internationale* 20 [1993], 63, 67)

- 18 Express letter from Heydrich to the heads of the *Einsatzgruppen* of the security police on the 'Jewish question in the occupied territory', 21 September 1939, reprinted in FGM, 37ff.
- 19 Though restricted, the policy of forced emigration of German, Austrian, and Czech Jews continued until autumn 1941. As Peter Witte informs us, the last group emigration was documented as taking place on 15 October 1941. Some 50,000 people were able to save themselves in this way even after 1 September 1939 – many, however, only temporarily; in the course of the war, they would again fall into the clutches of the Germans.
- 20 Note on 20 February 1937 'Re: Tasks for SS-Junkers', quoted in Heim, 53ff.
- 21 Hilberg, 997, 1002.
- 22 Speech by Himmler at SS Gruppenführer meeting in Poznań on 4 October 1943, quoted in IMG, vol. 29, 145.
- 23 Correspondence between Höppner and Krumei, 11–16 September 1943 (emphasis in original); AGK, UWZ/L/196, 12ff.
- 24 For a summary up to 1985, see Jäckel and Rohwer; later, Mayer (1989), Breitman (1991), Safrian (1993), Burrin (1994).
- 25 Eloquent examples of this are the statements made to prosecutors in Bonn by Höppner and Koppe in the 1960s. Neither was ever convicted in the Federal Republic of Germany.
- 26 Jäckel, 105.
- 27 See Browning (*Ordinary Men*), Förster, Friedrich, Heer, Krausnick, Messerschmidt, Streim, Streit, Wilhelm.
- 28 Scheffler, 'Endlösung', 204.
- 29 Browning, *Fateful Months*, 8–38.
- 30 Hillgruber, 'Endlösung', 140; similarly, Krausnick, 59–124.
- 31 Breitman, 145ff. See also S. Friedländer, 30.
- 32 Mayer, 235.
- 33 The same is true of the strategy of a war of extermination against the Soviet Union, which also – deliberately – deviated from the norms of 'normal European warfare', to which the German leadership had heretofore felt itself bound. The 'operations' against Poles by the security police during the war were also, at first, the exception. Internally, they were highly controversial, precisely because they deviated from the rules of 'normal warfare'.
- 34 In this context, Ernst Nolte deserves a more sober appraisal. His attempt to integrate the murder of European Jewry into the thoroughly oppressive continuum of European resettlement and extermination policy in this century, under the chapter heading 'Genocide and the "Final Solution of the Jewish Question"' (Ernst Nolte, *Der europäische Bürgerkrieg 1917–1945. Nationalsozialismus und Bolschewismus* [Frankfurt am Main and Berlin, 1987], 499–517), has a number of arguments in its favour, up to the Madagascar Plan. But this project was not implemented. It is interesting for an analysis of the Holocaust; however, no final historical judgement can be based on it. Discussions on a 'territorial solution of the Jewish question' formed an ephemeral interim stage on the road to increasingly radical decisions that have no parallel in history.
- 35 Speech by Himmler to SS Gruppenführers in Posen (Poznań), 4 October 1943, quoted in IMG, vol. 29, 145 (Himmler used the word *Ruhmesblatt* – a 'glorious chapter').
- 36 In any event, this is exactly what Hitler said when assigning Himmler the task of finding a 'final solution' to the 'South Tyrol problem', which he was finding very annoying.
- 37 I imagine that Hitler's words at the time were analogous to those he used when calling on the responsible Gauleiters, on 25 September 1940, to report within ten years' time that Alsace-Lorraine was 'German, purely German', and saying that he would not ask later 'what methods they had applied in making the region German' (see Chapter 4, 25 September).
- 38 Minutes of a meeting Hitler held with the head of the independent state of Croatia, Kvaternik, on 22 July 1941; ADAP, series D, vol. 13, Anh. III, 838.
- 39 Note by Bormann on the general meeting with Hitler, Rosenberg, Lammers, Keitel, and Göring, 16 July 1941; IMG, vol. 38, 86ff.
- 40 This was, in any event, how Greiser put it in a letter to Himmler, 21 November 1942, quoted in Sta. Bonn, 8Js103/65, note of 10 May 1973, 27.
- 41 Speech by the head of the Litzmannstadt (Lodz) operational unit (*Einsatzstab*) of the Ethnic German Liaison Office, Obersturmbannführer Doppler (undated, winter 1939–40); BAK, R49/20, 11–28, here 15.
- 42 Hilberg, 994f., 1002f.
- 43 Safrian, 11–21.
- 44 Mommsen, 'Radikalisierung'.
- 45 More recently, see Hans Mommsen, 'Umvolkungspläne'.
- 46 Broszat, 'Genesis', 93.
- 47 Neumann, 469, 521–2.