

**Carlo Mattogno**

**The Einsatzgruppen**  
in the  
Occupied Eastern Territories

Genesis, Missions and Actions



Castle Hill Publishers  
P.O. Box 243, Uckfield, TN22 9AW, UK  
December 2018

**HOLOCAUST HANDBOOKS, Volume 39:**

Carlo Mattogno:

*The Einsatzgruppen in the Occupied Eastern Territories:*

*Genesis, Missions and Actions*

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Uckfield, East Sussex: CASTLE HILL PUBLISHERS

PO Box 243, Uckfield, TN22 9AW, UK

Translated from the Italian by Carlos Porter

ISBN10: 1-59148-196-1 (printed edition)

ISBN13: 978-1-59148-196-6 (printed edition)

ISSN: 1529-7748

Published by CASTLE HILL PUBLISHERS

Manufactured in the United States of America and in the UK

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Distribution:

Castle Hill Publishers

PO Box 243

Uckfield, TN22 9AW, UK

<https://shop.codoh.com>

[www.HolocaustHandbooks.com](http://www.HolocaustHandbooks.com)

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Cover Illustrations: Foreground: left and right: mass graves at Busk (see Documents II.1.1.-3.); top: photo taken in late September/early October 1941 at Babi Yar by Johannes Hähle, military photographer of the 637th Propaganda Company of the German Sixth Army (see Document II.4.25a); bottom: air photo of the Babi Yar Memorial Park at Denver, Colorado, USA. Background: clothing littered in the Babi Yar in late September 1941, photo by Hähle (see Document II.4.23).

Note on quoted source material: This volume contains English translations of the original German text of most of the important documents. Transcripts of the original German texts will be contained in the German edition of this book, which is slated to appear in 2019. The text of many cited documents not quoted in the present work can be found in Mattogno/Kues/Graf 2013 (English translation) and the equivalent extended PDF version, which also contains the original German texts.

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## Foreword

Throughout the 19th Century, tsarist Russia was a predominantly agricultural society where many of its mostly orthodox-Christian subjects lived in serfdom to the few landowners of the nobility until the serfs were emancipated in 1861. This system might be described as a mild form of slavery, only that, instead of one ethnic or national group enslaving another, as has been the rule throughout the history of slavery, in this case the majority of the lower class of a people was enslaved by the upper class of that same people.

The abolition of serfdom by Tsar Alexander II did not change the fact, however, that most land was owned by the nobility, so that the peasantry continued to be at the mercy of the nobility to earn an income.

The Jews in tsarist Russia, although in their majority not engaged in agricultural activities, had their own grievances, most notable among them the fact that they were not allowed to settle wherever they wanted, and that they were subjected to a form of restrictive affirmative action in practicing certain professions.

Since the highly urbanized Jews of Russia were on average far more educated than their Christian fellow countrymen, Jews were overrepresented in many intellectual fields, revolutionary activities included. Although Russia's Christian peasantry had more reasons to strive for radical change, they were to no small degree kept in line with the tsarist regime first and foremost by their lack of education, but also by the Russian Orthodox Church, which was to no small degree an extension of tsarist power control. It was also a main driver behind anti-Jewish sentiments among Russia's Christians.

Of course, the history of Jewish-Christian animosities goes all the way back to the years when Christianity was born. During the first years of its existence, with the Jews being a powerful majority in Palestine and the Christians a powerless minority, Jewish persecution of Christians prevailed. The tables were turned when Christianity became the official religion of the Roman empire. Ever since, humanity has had to deal with a series of anti-Jewish measures by Christian rulers and the mob. While the uneducated masses may have been stirred up against the Jews with pseudo-arguments such as "Jews killed our Lord Jesus Christ" – which isn't even true because, strictly speaking, Jesus was killed by the Romans, if we were to take the New Testament's narrative at face value – the Christian clergy had a more-sophisticated approach to this issue, as is evidenced for instance by the Roman Catholic Church's century-long ban of the Talmud for its anti-Christian and anti-Gentile contents, or by Martin Luther's critique of Jewish teachings in this regard in his book *Von den Juden und ihren Lügen* (*On the Jews*

*and Their Lies*). While such anti-Jewish attitudes were socially acceptable in Russia and most of Europe during the 19th Century, they are severely frowned upon today, to say the least, although more-recent studies have to a large degree justified the 2,000-year-old critique of Jewish scripture and its influence on the behavior of some – mostly orthodox and fundamentalist – Jews (see Shahak and Shahak/Mezvinsky).

To what degree this anti-Jewish attitude was socially acceptable back then can be gleaned from the *Antisemitismus-Streit*, an argument among scholars and prominent personalities that erupted onto the public stage in Germany in 1879, although it had been smoldering in less-popular circles many years prior to this and had a tradition going all the way back to Martin Luther.<sup>1</sup> The Jewish newspaper of record, *The New York Times*, commented on this argument in an editorial on 27 February 1880 as follows:

*“The war, which has for some time raged in Germany between the natives and the Jews, seems rather to increase than diminish in intensity. It is something more than a popular prejudice, it is a national passion and the ablest, most dignified, and most learned men have ranged themselves on either side. To us here it seems very strange that such a contest of races can be going on in a land of so much intelligence and intellectual pretension, and in the year 1880, too. The crime of the Jews appears to be comprehended chiefly in their financial prosperity. No sin is as great as success in the eyes of the non-successful. The charge is made that of the 600,000 Israelites in the empire, hardly any engage in agricultural or mercantile pursuits; but that they control trade, rule the money markets, and are eating up the country with their avarice and usury.”*

Societal and financial envy were only a side show of this German debate, however, while at its core was the criticism of Jewish teachings about how to regard and interact with Gentiles, as laid down in Jewish writings such as the *Talmud* and the *Shulchan Aruch*, facts which the *New York Times* carefully hid from its readers.

Fuel into the fire of anti-Jewish sentiments in Germany and in Russia was the publication and analysis – in Russia but also in the German language – of the minutes of the Council of Jews of the Minsk Ghetto (see Brafman), which undergirded the accusations that Jews are inherently hostile toward Gentiles. Since the Russian nobility was heavily influenced by German society and to a large degree related to its nobility, political and ideological discussions circulating in the German public inevitably had an impact in Russian intellectual circles.

Of course, this is also true for anti-tsarist circles, who eagerly picked up the German ideas of socialism and communism. While the German upper classes tried to cut the ground out from under these radical ideas by creating a constitutional monarchy and a parliament with far-reaching powers (after the German unification in 1871), and by implementing social reforms and social welfare,

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<sup>1</sup> A rather comprehensive bibliography of anti-Jewish writings predominantly in Germany from the year 1500 all the way up to 1887 can be found in Frey, pp. 209-219.

Russia seemed to be too far behind with everything to be able to keep up with the modernization pace expected by the radicals.

As a result, the last two decades of the 19th Century as well as the first two decades of the 20th Century were marked by several attempts of political radicals in Russia to overthrow the tsarist regime, starting with the assassination of Tsar Alexander II in 1881, and ending with the successful revolution in 1917.

Considering the backwards, at times even reactionary nature of the tsarist regime and Russian society in general during those years, one should think that the majority of Christian Russians should have had an interest in radical change just as any other disadvantaged group. In each of these attempts at overthrowing the tsarist regime, however, individuals with a Jewish background were vastly overrepresented among those radicals. While Christians identified with their notionally Christian tsars and their rule – or were led to identify with it by way of the Orthodox Church – Jews and other religious groups, as well as marginalized ethnic groups, did not have that allegiance. Jews, being outsiders both by religion and by race – at least they were treated this way, and many Jews saw themselves this way, too – had the highest probability of supporting the most radical changes most vociferously. And so they did.

While there were also non-Jews among those revolutionaries, the Russian mainstream was eager to focus on the Jews as the main drivers behind these events. The results were pogroms against the Jews, most prominently among them the ones triggered by the 1881 assassination of Tsar Alexander II, and by the abortive 1905 revolution. I have described these events in more detail elsewhere, where I also showed that they were the 19th Century's breeding ground for media buzzwords such as "holocaust" "six million" and "extermination" in connection with the persecution of the Jews in Russia (introduction to *Heddesheimer*, pp. 7-37).

It is understandable that media outlets such as the *New York Times* championed a development in Russia that would create something similar there to what existed in the U.S.: a republic with guaranteed civil rights for everyone. The hope that a revolution would do the job can be read between the lines of several *New York Times* articles of those days.

In 1917, the revolution in Russia led to a civil war lasting several years, and it was not clear at all from the outset that the revolutionaries would win this war. While it was raging, readers of the *New York Times* learned how the authors and editors of that newspaper trembled at the thought of the revolution failing. They knew that this time, after so much bloodshed, pogroms against Jews would threaten to wipe them out completely. For instance, in an article of 20 July 1921 on page 2 titled "Begs America Save 6,000,000 in Russia", we read in the subtitle that "Russia's six million Jews are facing extermination by massacre" as the power of "the counter-revolutionary movement is gaining and the Soviet's control is waning."

Of course, at that point everyone not blind to self-evident facts could see that those revolutionary Soviets neither planned to install a republic in the Soviet Union nor to grant civil rights to everyone. In fact, news spread throughout the world about widespread massacres by the Soviets against the former nobility, the Christian clergy, the “bourgeoisie,” the “kulaks” (small independent farmers) and, in fact, anyone standing in their way. But at that point, the *New York Times* and many other similarly minded media outlets in the U.S. had stopped reporting most of the shocking news that should have been fit to print, and instead concealed with deafening silence the horrors unfolding in Russia. By looking away and supporting the perpetrators – millions of dollars were raised with the help of these newspapers to support whatever was going on in Russia at that time – they had become accomplices in the slaughter of millions, most of them Christians by faith.

The terrifying truth about Soviet Russia’s many massacres unfolding during the civil war and in the two decades afterwards, which was plain to see for everyone next door in Europe, foremost in Germany, was to a large degree hidden from the American public for decades. In fact, only the Cold War breaking out after the conclusion of World War II allowed for a more balanced view of what had happened in Russia since 1917.

Who was responsible for these Soviet massacres?

Robert Wilton, the correspondent for the London *Times* during WWI and shortly thereafter, reported for his newspaper about events unfolding in Russia during the revolution. In 1920, while the civil war was still raging, he published a book on *The Last Days of the Romanovs*, in which he laid out the extreme dominance of individuals with Jewish backgrounds in carrying out the revolution, and in manning the leadership of the early Soviet Union. More-recent contributions have since confirmed this observation, although many of them are not available in the English language – one may wonder why.<sup>2</sup>

More convincing for many readers are perhaps statements made by Jews themselves who – confronted with what was going on in Soviet Russia perpetrated to a large degree by individuals with Jewish backgrounds – were not only horrified, but also spoke out in warning as to what that means for Jews in general. The Russian Jewess Sonja Margolina analyzed some of these early voices in her German 1992 book whose title translates to *The End of Lies: Russia and the Jews during the 20th Century*. This book was never translated into English either. In it, Margolina reviewed in detail a book that had appeared in 1924 in Germany under the title *Rußland und die Juden (Russia and the Jews)*. This 1924 book examined the causes of the Russian Jews’ conspicuously above-average participation in the excesses of the 1917 revolution and the tyranny that followed it. The book also contains an appeal by German Jews “To the Jews in all Nations!” where we read (Margolina, p. 58):

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<sup>2</sup> See for instance Weber 1994; Bieberstein 2002; Solschenizyn 2003.

*“The Jewish Bolsheviks’ overeager participation in the subjugation and destruction of Russia is a sin that already bears within itself the seeds of its retribution. For what greater misfortune could happen to a people than to have its own sons engage in excesses? Not only will this be counted against us as an element of our guilt, it will also be held up to us as reproach for an expression of our power, for a striving for Jewish hegemony. Soviet power is equated with Jewish power, and the grim hatred of the Bolsheviks will transform into a hatred of the Jews [...]. All nations and peoples will be swamped by waves of Judeophobia. Never before have such thunderclouds gathered above the heads of the Jewish people. This is the bottom line of the Russian upheaval for us, for the Jewish people.”*

Margolina quotes further from this 1924 anthology (*ibid.*, p. 60):

*“The Russians have never before seen a Jew in power, neither as governor nor as policeman, nor as postal official. There were both good and bad times in those days too, but the Russian people lived and worked, and the fruits of their labors were their own. The Russian name was mighty and threatening. Today the Jews are at every corner and in all levels of power. The Russians see them at the head of the Czarist city, Moscow, and at the head of the metropolis on the River Neva and at the head of the Red Army, the ultimate mechanism of self-destruction. [...] The Russians are now faced with a Jew as judge as well as executioner; they encounter Jews at every step, not Communists who are just as poor as they themselves but who nevertheless give orders and take care of the interests of the Soviet power [...]. It is not surprising that the Russians, in comparing the past to the present, conclude that the present power is Jewish, and so bestial precisely because of that.”*

In the early 1990s, German professor Dr. Ernst Nolte, who specialized in the history of totalitarian ideologies, also pointed out the Jews’ intimate entanglement in Communism (Nolte, pp. 92f.):

*“For readily apparent social reasons, was not the percentage of persons of Jewish extraction particularly great among the participants in the Russian Revolution, different from the percentages of other minorities such as the Latvians? Even at the start of this century Jewish philosophers were still pointing with great pride to this extensive participation of the Jews in Socialist movements. After 1917, when the anti-Bolshevist movement – or propaganda – stressed the topic of the Jewish People’s commissars above all others, this pride was no longer expressed, [...] But it took Auschwitz to turn this topic into a taboo for several decades.*

*It is all the more remarkable that in 1988 the publication Commentary, the voice of right-wing Jews in America, published an article by Jerry Z. Muller who recalls these indisputable facts – though of course they are open to interpretation:*

*‘If Jews were highly visible in the revolution in Russia and Germany, in Hungary they seemed omnipresent. [...] Of the government’s 49 commissars, 31 were of Jewish origin [...]. Rakosi later joked that Garbai (a gentile) was chosen for his post ‘so that there would be someone who could sign the death sentences on Saturdays.’ [...] But the conspicuous role of Jews in the revolution of 1917-19 gave anti-Semitism (which ‘seemed on the wane by 1914’) a whole new impetus. [...]*

*Historians who have focused on the utopian ideals espoused by revolutionary Jews have diverted attention from the fact that these Communists of Jewish origin, no less than their non-Jewish counterparts, were led by their ideals to take part in heinous crimes – against Jews and non-Jews alike.”*

Summarizing what was to follow, U.S. journalist Jerry Muller put the two large historical events of the 20th century into this nutshell:

*“The Trotskies make the revolutions [i.e., the GULag] and the Bronsteins pay the bills [in the Holocaust].”*

Hence, the buzzword “Jewish Bolshevism,” which was later used by the German National Socialists as one reason to persecute Jews, was not a pure figment of the imagination, and we do not have to rely on their sources (such as Kommos 1938) to learn about the veracity of their claims.

The counter-revolutionary forces fighting the Soviets in the years 1917 to 1921 were eventually defeated. The Jews of Russia and their brethren abroad could breathe a sigh of relief – for a while. The more the Soviets stabilized their tyranny in Russia, the more they laid their eyes upon other nations where they planned to carry out similar revolutions on their path to their dream of a “world revolution.” Germany was considered the most-important stepping stone to reach that goal. But Germany, defeated and weak after World War I and in constant civil-war-like turmoil, was putting up a tough fight of resistance against such a bloody revolution. The most radical among the counter-revolutionary forces in Germany were the National Socialists, who tried to cut the ground out from underneath the revolution by making their own top-to-bottom socialist revolution on a national level while at the same time mercilessly combating any Soviet attempt at instigating a foreign-led, Jewish-dominated communist revolution.

On a national level, the National Socialists were sensationally successful in the years of peace, but with this success inevitably came confrontation with other foreign powers, among them first and foremost Stalin’s Soviet Russia, which saw its plans of instigating a revolution in Germany foiled, hence considered war the only option left to conquer Central and Western Europe.

The German-Russian – or rather National-Socialist–Soviet-Communist – Clash of Titans started on 22 June 1941. The present book tries to uncover what subsequently happened to the Jews who lived in, or were deported into, the temporarily German-occupied territories of the Soviet Union. Unlike almost all mainstream authors writing about the topic, Carlo Mattogno is aware *and takes into consideration* that the “information” we have about those events is steeped in Soviet atrocity propaganda; that witness testimony and Soviet forensic expert reports are equally riddled with distortions, exaggerations and inventions; that the Soviets did not shy away from outright forgeries, even blaming their own massacres on the Germans, as in the case of Katyn Forest. With the historical record so contaminated with Soviet mendacity, what can we believe?

Hence, the critically minded scholar – and no other type of scholar should be trusted in these matters – may not take anything at face value; source criticism is absolutely crucial.

\* \* \*

As National-Socialist Germany prepared her invasion of the Soviet Union, she did so as a counter-revolutionary power, as an avenger for Soviet terror past and present, with the intention to wipe out Judeo-Bolshevism once and for all. The reader of this book will read repeatedly that, as the German army moved into one Soviet city after another, the German authorities taking over behind the advancing front found confirmation after confirmation that Jews were indeed the mainstay of Soviet power and terror on many if not all levels. But was that really true? Can we take these claims in German contemporary documents at face value?

In 2001, Russian researcher Nikita Petrov published a paper which addressed the question to what degree Jews were involved in the Soviet Union's most prominent government agency of repression, the NKVD. This was possible because the NKVD itself had kept records on the ethnic affiliation of its employees and associates, and Jews were seen as a separate ethnic group, not as members of a religion. If we look at this data – see the table below – it turns out that up to 1937, Jews filled almost 40% of all the higher positions within the NKVD, while only some 2% to 3% of the Soviet population was Jewish at that time.

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Proportion of Jews in the upper echelons of the NKVD

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	10 Jul. 34	1 Oct. 36	1 Mar. 37	1. Sep. 38	1 Jul. 39	1 Jan. 40	26 Feb. 41
Jews	38.54%	39.09%	37.84%	21.33%	3.92%	3.49%	5.49%

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The drastic decline in the NKVD's Jewish composition was mainly due to the massacres committed among all government officials in the course of the purges carried out by Stalin in the years 1937/38. Because Jews were so extremely overrepresented among those officials, they were also among the main victims of these purges.

It is therefore safe to assume that, when the German army moved into Russia in June 1941, the astounding predominance of Jews in the Soviet state bureaucracy was to a considerable degree a matter of the recent past.

But why, then, did German contemporary reports as quoted in the present book state the opposite?

The first question to ask is always: how could they know? It is a fact that most Soviet officials fled when the Germans arrived. What the Germans found out about the ethnic composition of government personnel may have relied more on witness testimony and hearsay than on official records. At least that is the impression I received from reading these German reports, for they never mention the thorough analysis of employment records.

The next question to ask is: can we trust those witnesses? The answer to this is simple and clear-cut: no, we cannot. Anyone making statements in this regard to the Germans was evidently willing to collaborate with the enemy, and with the

reputation the Germans had as Jew-hating anti-Semites, many witnesses may have anticipated what the Germans wanted to hear. Hence, this is a clear case of confirmation bias. The Germans were probably mostly hearing their own echo rather than independently collected, reliable data. It is also conceivable that claims about Jewish dominance in positions of power contained in these documents were completely unfounded, hence made up in order to “justify” mass executions of Jews.

Does that mean that the Jews in Russia were not the enemy the Germans perceived them as? Not necessarily. If we put ourselves into the Jews’ shoes for a moment, there are mainly two things to consider.

First, although the Soviet terror apparatus was to an astounding degree “Jewish” in nature until 1937, that does not mean that most Jews were involved in that apparatus. In fact, by the time of the Stalinist purges of 1937/38, it must have become clear to everyone in the Soviet Union that literally everyone was a victim of the Soviet or rather Stalinist terror. Even the perpetrators of that terror regime were caught up in a nightmare of horrors which they could not escape, and many of them were eventually swallowed up by this maelstrom they had helped create and maintain. From that point of view, everyone in the Soviet Union needed to be liberated, Jews and Gentiles, perpetrators and victims, government officials and the general populace. Had the Germans moved in with that attitude – to liberate everyone from the Bolshevik nightmare – they might have won the war. But that is not what they did.

Instead, the Germans moved in with the attitude of an eye for an eye. And as Gandhi correctly observed, that attitude merely makes the whole world blind. Even if many of Russia’s Jews were not necessarily hostile to the Germans before the war, once the Germans had assumed a radical, to one degree or another eliminatory anti-Jewish stance when advancing into the Soviet Union, the Jews had little choice but to align themselves with the only power that could and would protect them from the counter-revolutionary, anti-Jewish wrath the Germans were both bringing with them and unleashing among the local non-Jewish populace.

Stalin was smart enough to recognize that he had to unite the peoples of his realm and beyond to win this war. So he reinvented Russian patriotism, resurrected the Orthodox Church, and rallied the Jews around him – only to revert all this again after the war, but that’s beside the point. Hence, even if Stalin’s Russia in 1938 wasn’t more Jewish than Hitler’s Germany at that time, as the German forces started committing massacres against the Jews on Russian territories, Stalin’s Russia once more became the central focus of Jewish support – from within the Soviet Union itself, but also from the U.S. and elsewhere.

While Stalin turned many of his former enemies temporarily into “friends” and sowed discord among the rest of his enemies, Hitler, with his sweeping anti-Jewish stance and racist attitudes toward the Slavs, sowed discord among his potential friends and united his enemies.



Hence, if some Jews weren't already hostile toward the Germans when the war started, most if not all of them became enemies as it progressed. This in turn served as a justification for increasingly severe German measures against the Jews. This way, a vicious, ever-escalating cycle was created that turned the entire conflict into a bloodbath. In a way, therefore, the Germans created, maintained and helped grow an enemy that needed not exist in the first place. It was a self-fulfilling prophecy of sorts.

As noble as the intention was to slay the Bolshevik monster, by applying methods similar to those of the Bolsheviks, *i.e.*, by declaring entire sections of the population as enemies (the nobility and bourgeoisie here, the Jews and Soviets there) – rather than by waging a war merely against ideas – and by perpetrating wholesale slaughters on a scale unprecedented in German history, the National Socialists and with them many millions of loyal German followers turned into a mirror image of the monster they were claiming to fight. It's an oft-repeated tragedy in the history of mankind.

Although these facts can make us understand why things happened as they did, none of it can excuse them.

In this sense, the present book tries to shed light on what exactly happened without trying to justify or excuse. Did the Germans go into Russia with the intention to slaughter all the Jews they got their hands on wholesale? Or was it a reaction to Soviet atrocities and a perception that Jews were primarily responsible for them? What exactly did happen? And how many Jews fell victim to these massacres?

The last question in the above list is probably also the most vexing one. Although Carlo Mattogno has given well-documented estimates in the past about the probable, actual death tolls of certain National-Socialist camps, the reader will be disappointed in this regard with the present book. Although Chapter 5 of Part One deals with this question, it merely makes us realize that it is close to impossible to pinpoint even an approximate figure. As a matter of fact, after having digested this voluminous work, the reader will understand that there are a number of seemingly insurmountable obstacles to determining a death toll. First, the numbers given in German documents are anything but reliable because the data contained in them are, to use Mattogno's words "chaotic and disordered," and the numbers given "almost never coincide with the declared totals" (see p. 271). Many scholars have suspected that the numbers in those documents may be exaggerated, but after reading Mattogno's analysis, one can safely say that they are entirely unreliable, and that anything is possible: exaggeration and understatement.

Next, there is reason to suspect that the German documents do not include all the massacres that have occurred. Most of these suspicions are based on mere witness claims of massacres that are not backed up by documents. Although mere claims by witnesses do not prove that a massacre occurred, if a forensic team finds a mass grave based on such witness testimony, and there is no known Ger-

man document confirming that there has been a massacre, this can mean either that it wasn't documented, or else that this mass grave contains other victims instead, such as those of a Soviet massacre. Mattogno discusses one such case in Subchapter 1.6. of Part Two. Of course, the other extreme is possible, too, namely that mass-execution events reported in German documents may have been invented from whole cloth. That possibility is discussed by Mattogno as well.

Ultimately, the only thing that could settle the question as to whether death-toll figures in German documents are correct would be to do numerous complete and thorough forensic exhumations of all victims found in a mass grave associated with a documented massacre, determine as best as possible the number and identities of the victims, the probable cause and approximate time of death, and the likely perpetrators. That is standard procedure in any other case of mass murder.

As Mattogno documents thoroughly, however, it is in particular Jewish religious authorities who successfully veto that such examinations occur. It is difficult to say whether this intentionally or unintentionally obstructive stance will ever change, or whether non-Jewish government authorities will ever muster enough backbone to do what should have been done a long time ago, no matter what some Jewish personality wishes. For now, all we can do is wait and hope. Of course, as decade after decade passes, this task will not become any easier, since the evidence needed to come to clear conclusions deteriorates steadily.

Mainstream death-toll claims for massacres committed by the *Einsatzgruppen* and associated German units usually vary between just under a million (Hilberg 2003, p. 408) and up to three million (Schwarz, p. 220). For now, little can be said about these figures other than that they are more speculative in nature than based upon hard, confirmable data. Their order of magnitude may be in the correct ballpark, though. If so, these are indeed shocking numbers. But if we compare these figures with the death toll of Soviet atrocities committed since 1917 until the outbreak of the German-Soviet war, we are dealing with "peanuts." Estimates of that Soviet death toll up to 1941 range in the tens of millions, hence a factor ten higher than that of Jews (and non-Jews) presumably killed by Germans in the Soviet Union.

Yet when we go into libraries of the western world, we find more than 100,000 books on the Jewish WWII Holocaust, but only very few works dealing with the Soviet massacres in the years 1917-1941 – and beyond. Why is that?

While mainstream scholars claim that the Jewish Holocaust is one of the best- and most-thoroughly investigated genocides in the history of mankind, or even of *any* major event in our species's history, the Soviet massacres – a series of many genocides and non-genocidal mass murders of far greater magnitude – are hardly researched in a systematic and thorough manner by anyone in the western world. The former Soviet-occupied countries which suffered greatly under Soviet rule, such as the Ukraine and the Baltic countries, have done their share of investiga-

tions since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, but they have garnered little attention in the West. Why?

The answer to these questions can be found when we realize who holds cultural hegemony over the western world. This hegemony evidently results in this one-sided and lopsided historical perspective that is hiding cause and effect, and turns history into an unintelligible black-and-white image of supposed absolute evil versus supposed innocent good. The forces that accomplish this are the same forces which, in the U.S. for many years since 1917, have to a large degree hidden from public view what was going on in the Soviet Union.

\* \* \*

The book you are holding in your hands presents the results of the first-ever revisionist effort to comprehensively investigate the activities of the *Einsatzgruppen* behind the German-Soviet front during World War Two. According to mainstream sources, the murders perpetrated by the *Einsatzgruppen* and other associated German units encompass roughly one third of the Holocaust, quantitatively speaking (give or take a million victims, depending on the source). It is a vast topic in many respects: by the number of claimed events, by the size of the geographic area where these events are said to have occurred, by the amount of source material available, and by the number of – almost exclusively mainstream – studies already published about it. Carlo Mattogno has taken on a huge task.

The original Italian edition of this book was published in 2017. That edition has attracted the attention of a group of hostile commentators who, in August 2018, started to analyze and critique it in a series of blog entries online.<sup>3</sup> At that point in time, the editing efforts of the present English translation of Mattogno's book were well under way. Right after I was informed about these critical blog entries, I informed Carlo Mattogno about them. Since it was obvious that these blog entries had just started and were to be continued, probably for many months to come, reacting to them would have meant suspending the entire project, waiting for the bloggers to finish their critique, then do more research and finally rewrite the book where necessary, first in Italian, then in English. This would have delayed the English edition for a year, if not more. Add to this the volatile nature of blog entries, which can be changed and deleted at a moment's notice. In other words, Carlo Mattogno was not willing to go on a wild-goose chase just to refute some bloggers. If their critique were to be published in a conventional print format where the contents are fixed, then he would consider it. Otherwise, he will not give some hostile critics the power to postpone the publication of his own book *ad indefinitum*.

The reader, on the other hand, is invited to take notice of the arguments of both sides in this debate. When reading about the bloggers' contentions regarding Mattogno's comments on the "Jäger Report," for instance, we notice first of all that the alpha and omega of historiography – source criticism – is something the

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<sup>3</sup> <http://holocaustcontroversies.blogspot.com/>

bloggers evidently don't like at all. All Mattogno does in this regard in the present book is to raise some questions about this document. He does the same with the *Einsatzgruppen's* infamous Incident Reports. Source-critical questions are not illegitimate, as the bloggers suggest, but pivotal. This alone shows the utterly unprofessional, biased approach of these bloggers. The next thing to notice with regard to the "Jäger Report" is that the bloggers accuse Mattogno of claims or mistakes he did, in fact, not make. Just read carefully what Mattogno wrote and what the bloggers claim (provided they haven't changed it by now), and you will realize their skewed perspective. Whether this is due to their incompetence or mendacity may be left for the reader to decide.

In another blog entry, they accuse Mattogno of not having used all the secondary source material available on some aspects of the present study, and to have taken into consideration only a limited number of witness testimonies. Such accusations are inevitable and unreasonable. They are inevitable, because it is physically impossible to cover all existing sources in a book of a reasonable size written by only one author within a finite time span. In addition, quoting all the secondary sources in existence – of which there are thousands – would be a book-inflating exercise which would only annoy the reader without adding much information. At the end of the day, a study such as the present one must be based primarily on primary sources, not on other scholars' opinions.

Furthermore, when it comes to witness testimonies, these accusations are unreasonable as well, because the present book proves with ample examples that many if not most witness testimonies are filled with absurd claims that give rise to the conclusion that we simply cannot rely on them. Adding thousands more of these sometimes absurd and even grotesque statements won't change that conclusion. Such expansion of the data pool can only confirm it.

At the end of the day, it does not matter how many witnesses have claimed that witches ride on broomsticks and have sex with the devil (not necessarily both at once nor in that order). If it can be shown that many of these statements are untrustworthy, we need to seek better, more reliable types of evidence. In our case, as already stated, the type of evidence needed consists of thorough and independent forensic examinations of the mass graves that can be located. Nothing else will do. If such evidence is never developed or presented, the world will have to live for all eternity with critical, skeptical and even denying voices regarding the claimed *Einsatzgruppen* massacres.

Germar Rudolf  
1 November 2018

## Introduction

After the end of the Second World War, the nascent historiographical propaganda, which drew its lifeblood from the trials of the various military tribunals against the defeated Germans, concentrated above all on the “extermination camps” and specifically on the homicidal “gas chambers,” which soon became the focus of what was later defined as the Holocaust.

During their trial of members of the *Einsatzgruppen* (September 1947 to April 1948), however, the Americans had brought to the fore the executions perpetrated by these units in the temporarily German-occupied eastern territories. Although these killings were numerically considerable (the indictment repeated the figure of two million victims mentioned in that of the Nuremberg International Military Tribunal<sup>4</sup>), they did not particularly capture the collective imagination, both for the workaday execution method used – shooting, although more-exotic murder weapons were also claimed as a “corrective,” such as the “gas vans” – as well as for their problematic historical context (the merciless warfare against the Soviet Union). Already in 1951, the French Jewish historian Léon Poliakov, in his compendium *Bréviaire de la Haine*, established the hierarchy of crimes attributed to the Germans by calling the *Einsatzgruppen* shootings “chaotic exterminations” and the institutionalized killings carried out systematically in “gas chambers” “methodical exterminations.”

Precisely because the “gas chambers” captured the imagination in an extraordinary way and made the alleged crime “unique” in some way, they soon assumed absolute dominance in the orthodox Holocaust literature, with the Auschwitz Camp as the center of gravity. Even if, starting with Gerald Reitlinger,<sup>5</sup> issues related to the *Einsatzgruppen* were investigated with increasing depth, the “extermination camps” and their “gas chambers” kept an unchallenged predominance in orthodox Holocaust literature for a long time. Revisionism was born and evolved as a critical re-examination of this central aspect. When the orthodox narrative of Auschwitz, the “symbol of the Holocaust” *per se*, began to falter under the impact of revisionist criticism, the emphasis gradually shifted to the so-called “Action Reinhardt” camps, namely Bełżec, Sobibór and Treblinka, for which specific documentation is notoriously non-existent. Since that edifice also stood on extremely shaky ground (see Mattogno/Kues/Graf 2013), the orthodoxy began concurrently to increasingly emphasize the *Einsatzgruppen*’s activities, for which there is at least abundant and specific documentation. This trend, already

<sup>4</sup> TWC, Vol. IV, p. 53, with explicit reference in footnote 2 to IMT, Vol. I, p. 292.

<sup>5</sup> In his 1953 book *The Final Solution*, Reitlinger devotes two chapters to the *Einsatzgruppen*.

inaugurated at the end of the 1980s, especially by Arno Mayer (1988), and further developed a few years later by Michel Korzec,<sup>6</sup> has more-recently found new vigor thanks to Father Patrick Desbois (2007/2008).

Orthodox Holocaust studies on the *Einsatzgruppen* have grown enormously in recent years. This also resulted from the fact that the proper “extermination camps” are now exhausted as a topic of historiography. The latest book with scientific claims on Auschwitz (apart, for obvious reasons, from the in-house publications of the Auschwitz Museum) is Robert Jan van Pelt’s *The Case for Auschwitz: Evidence from the Irving Trial*, which dates back to 2002. For the “extermination camps,” the focus is now only on mere collections of testimonies such as the one edited by Dariusz Libionki for the Majdanek Museum: *The Belżec Extermination Camp in Survivor Testimonies and Depositions of Polish Witnesses*, which appeared in 2013.

Although it is true that the last orthodox convulsions on the “gas chambers,” published in the anthology *New Studies on National-Socialist Mass Killings with Poison Gas*, dates back only to 2011 (Morsch/Perz), it marked precisely the collapse of this essential aspect of the orthodox Holocaust narrative (see Mattogno 2016b). The research field dealing with the *Einsatzgruppen* is instead broad and partly unexplored, as a result of which we may expect a substantial shift of the holocaustic center of gravity toward this theme.

Although revisionist literature on the Holocaust has become very diverse and abundant for all these reasons over the past two decades, no revisionist study has existed so far specifically dealing with the *Einsatzgruppen*, with the sole exception of two 40-page brochures devoted to the subject by Udo Walendy (1983), which are now quite dated and moreover do not address many central issues.

The work I present here aims to fill this gap by providing the essential elements to orient the reader in this complex topic. Given the vastness of the problems involved, I preferred to deal with the fundamental issues as listed in the Table of Contents. Despite this self-limitation, the work has nevertheless become quite voluminous.

Unlike the “extermination camps” and “gas chambers,” a large and certainly authentic documentation exists that attests to mass executions of Jews by shooting of an enormous magnitude that were carried out by the *Einsatzgruppen* and other associated units in the German-occupied eastern territories, although the exact death toll is difficult to quantify (see Chapter V of Part One). In this regard, therefore, it makes even less sense to label revisionist research efforts as “negationist” in nature, as does the silly stereotype affixed to revisionism by its adversaries. The fundamental problem is whether or not these shootings were carried out on the basis of a governmental extermination order (by Hitler, Himmler or Heydrich), and whether the Jews were shot merely because they were Jews. These two issues are essential conditions for including these executions in the or-

<sup>6</sup> Korzec 1995. The author claimed that, of the 5 million murdered Jews, only “some seven- or eight-hundred thousand were probably gassed.”

thodox Holocaust as it was defined by Michael Shermer and Alex Grobman in their 2002 study *Denying History*:

“When historians talk about the ‘Holocaust’, what they mean on the most general level is that about six million Jews were killed in an intentional and systematic fashion by the Nazis using a number of different means, including gas chambers.”  
(p. XV)

If the killings neither target Jews as such nor were ordered as such from above, they simply did not occur “in an intentional and systematic fashion,” which refers to an extermination order or at least a “decision.” In that case, they would be mere war atrocities in the context of an atrocious war conducted by both sides. Questioning the authenticity of the *Einsatzgruppen*’s reports does not make sense, but the fact that they are authentic does not necessarily mean that their statements are true. On the contrary, their contents at times cause a lot of consternation, and this concerns not just the death-toll figures, but extends to the well-founded suspicion that certain mass executions mentioned in them may have been completely invented. I will divulge the reasons for this in due time during the present study.

Since no certain *documentary* criterion exists that can be used to gauge the veracity of the enormous amount of data and numbers contained in the various *Einsatzgruppen* reports and related documents, I have used the only possible criterion that can provide at least a defensible order of magnitude: the material criterion of the discovery of mass graves and the corpses they contain.

According to orthodox Holocaust historiography, the number of victims of the *Einsatzgruppen* is said to have ranged from a minimum of about 900,000 (Hilberg) to a maximum of about 2,600,000 (Arad). These and other figures are examined in Chapter 5 of Part One. Because the bodies of the victims were buried, in theory it should still be possible to find them in the mass graves. Hence, the material criterion would allow the *corpus delicti* to be discovered in a literal sense.

It is well known, however, that one of the cornerstones of the orthodox Holocaust narrative on the subject of the *Einsatzgruppen* is that, since 1943 at the latest, the Germans are said to have engaged in an institutionalized and systematic activity of locating the mass graves, exhuming the bodies contained in them, and burning the remains of the victims on outdoor fires (the so-called “Aktion 1005”). Given the importance of the topic, I considered it necessary to present it in as much detail as possible. Hence, the entire second part of this work is dedicated to this “Aktion 1005,” meaning the alleged cremation of millions of corpses buried on Soviet territory temporarily occupied by the Germans.

Carlo Mattogno  
September 2016





PART ONE:  
*THE EINSATZGRUPPEN*



## 1. The *Einsatzgruppen*: Structure, Missions and Reports

### 1.1. The *Einsatzgruppen* in the Polish Campaign

The *Einsatzgruppen* that operated in 1941 within the framework of “Operation Barbarossa” had their forerunners in the *Einsatzgruppen* which were deployed in 1939 (Matthäus/Böhler/Mallmann, pp. 2f.):

*“During the Polish campaign, the Einsatzgruppen and their subunits, the Einsatzkommandos (EK), consisted of a force of roughly two thousand members of the German security police (Sicherheitspolizei, Sipo) – a combination of the Criminal Police (Kriminalpolizei, Kripo) and the secret state police (the notorious Geheime Staatspolizei, Gestapo) under the command of Reinhard Heydrich – and the Nazi Party’s (NSDAP) intelligence service (Sicherheitsdienst, or SD, also headed by Heydrich). These Sipo/SD units, subordinated since late September 1939 to the newly created Reich Security Main Office (Reichssicherheitshauptamt, RSHA) with Heydrich at the helm, were established in the planning phase of the war to cooperate closely with the German military in the goal of ‘pacifying’ the occupied Polish territories. Almost immediately they became a deadly tool in the repertoire of Nazi subjugation policies, targeting thousands of real or imagined ‘enemies of the Reich’ (‘Reichsfeinde’) and enforcing the ‘Germanization’ of vast parts of Poland. According to estimates, ten thousand civilians were executed during the fighting. Up to the end of October, the German military, SS, and police units shot an additional sixteen thousand Polish noncombatants, among them an unknown number of Jews.”*

At first, and during the Polish campaign, the Germans deployed a variety of units:

- *Einsatzgruppe I*, based in Vienna: this was commanded by SS *Brigadeführer* Bruno Streckenbach and consisted of 4 *Einsatzkommandos* of 90 men each; their field of action was western Galicia and eastern Slovakia;
- *Einsatzgruppe II*, based in Oppeln (today’s Opole), under the command of SS *Obersturmbannführer* Emanuel Schäfer, with 2 *Einsatzkommandos*;
- *Einsatzgruppe III*, based in Breslau (today’s Wrocław), commanded by SS *Obersturmbannführer* Hans Fischer, with 300 men;
- *Einsatzgruppe IV*, based in Dramburg (today’s Drawsko Pomorskie), commanded by SS *Brigadeführer* Lothar Beutel, with 200-250 men;
- *Einsatzgruppe V*, based in Allenstein (today’s Olsztyn), Prussia, commanded by SS *Standartenführer* Ernst Damzog, initially had 2 *Einsatzkommandos* consisting of 250 men each, to which a third was later added;
- *Einsatzgruppe VI*, based in Frankfurt/Main, led by SS *Oberführer* Erich Naumann, included 2 *Einsatzkommandos*;
- *Einsatzgruppe z.b.V.* (*zur besonderen Verwendung*, for special use), under the command of SS *Obergruppenführer* Udo von Woysch, consisted of 4 battali-

ons of *Ordnungspolizei* (regular German police) and 1 *Sonderkommando* of the Security Police (*Sicherheitspolizei*), with 350 men;

- *Einsatzkommando* 16, formed at Danzig (today's Gdansk) on 12 September 1939 with a strength of 100 men; its command was entrusted to SS *Obergruppenführer* Udo von Woyrsch (*ibid.*, pp. 9-12).

An agreement between the Wehrmacht and Sipo/SD regarding “Guidelines for the Foreign Deployment of the Security Police and the SD,” undated (August 1939), describes the tasks of the *Einsatzgruppen* as follows (*ibid.*, Doc. 1, p. 32):

*“The mission of the Einsatzgruppen and Einsatzkommandos has been determined by agreement with the Army High Command (OKH), as is confirmed in a letter from the Army High Command (6. Abt.-II-Gen-StdH. No. 1299/39 g.Kdos) dated July 31, 1939: ‘The mission of the Security Police Einsatzkommandos is to combat all elements hostile to the Reich and to Germans in enemy territory to the rear of the combat troops.’”*

The collection of documents from which the above data are derived dedicates a special section to the topic of “Persecuting Jews,” consisting of 20 documents (Nos. 42-61; *ibid.*, pp. 89-120), made up, for the most part, of testimonies and interrogations, photographs and quotations from books – there are only five contemporary German documents, only two of which are *Einsatzgruppen* reports.

Document 56 is a daily report by the Chief of the Sipo/SD dated 20 September 1939 from *Einsatzgruppe* VI. These few lines are the **only ones** mentioning Jews: the document calls for the formation of “special commissioners to liquidate businesses whose Jewish owners have fled” and informs us that “a total of 40 Jewish businesses in the city of Posen are closed” (*ibid.*, p. 112).

The express letter from *Einsatzgruppe* z.b.V., Kattowitz, to the Sipo in Berlin, dated 8 November 1939 has as its subject “Jewish population” (*Jüdische Bevölkerung*). It contains a list of six Jewish communities (*Gemeinden*) from the district of Kattowitz, indicating the total number of inhabitants for each of them, as well as the total number of ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*), Jews and the possible presence of a “Jewish council of elders.” The total number of Jews is very small: 1,875 out of a total population of 251,201 persons. The letter states that “the number of Jews is constantly declining as a result of illegal emigration [*Abwanderung*] or the deportations [*Abtransporte*] from here” (*ibid.*, p. 118).

Document 52 is Heydrich’s notorious express letter dated 21 September 1939 (PS-3363) addressed “to the heads of all task forces of the Security Police,” which has as its subject the “Jewish Question in the occupied territory.” In it, Heydrich sets forth his plans, based on the distinction between:

- 1) *the final goal* [Endziel] (*which requires a longer time frame*), and
- 2) *the stages* [Abschnitten] *in the fulfillment of this final goal (which can be carried out in the short term).*”

His directives are delineated in five paragraphs:

*“The first prerequisite for the final goal is initially to concentrate the Jews from rural areas in the larger cities.”*

This is followed by instructions for the formation of a “Jewish council of elders” (“In each Jewish community, a council of Jewish elders is to be established, composed, if possible, of remaining influential individuals and rabbis. The council of elders is to consist of up to 24 male Jews (depending on the size of the Jewish community)"); the necessary measures were taken in close collaboration with the authorities of the local civil and military administration. Paragraph IV addressed the activities of the *Einsatzgruppen* with regard to the Jews (*ibid.*, pp. 104-108):

*“The chiefs of the Einsatzgruppen will report to me on an ongoing basis regarding the following matters:*

*1) Numerical overview of the Jews present in their areas (if possible, broken down into the categories indicated above). Here the numbers of Jews being evacuated [zur Abwanderung gebracht] from the countryside and the numbers of Jews already in the cities are to be stated separately.*

*2) Names of the cities that have been designated as points of concentration [Konzentrierungspunkte].*

*3) The deadlines set for moving [zur Abwanderung] the Jews to the cities.*

*4) Overview of all Jewish-owned branches of industry and enterprises within their areas that are of vital and strategic importance or are relevant to the Four Year Plan.”*

The “final goal” referred to deportation or expulsion, as may be deduced from Document 54, a file memo by RSHA “resettlement” expert SS *Hauptsturmführer* Adolf Eichmann dated 6 October 1939, which refers to a discussion with *Gauleiter* Wagner at Kattowitz “regarding the expulsion of 70,000 to 80,000 Jews from the Kattowitz District” and to a concurrent expulsion of Jews from the town of Mährisch Ostrau (*ibid.*, pp. 109f.).

In June 1939, Walter Stahlecker, the future commandant of *Einsatzgruppe A*, was appointed Commander of the Security Police and the SD at Prague. A file memo dated 16 October informs us that on 12 October, SS *Oberführer* Stahlecker, together with SS *Hauptsturmführer* Eichmann, had traveled from Mährisch Ostrau to Cracow to discuss the “Establishment of an appropriate area for the settlement of Jews” and reports:<sup>7</sup>

*“In addition to the establishment of an appropriate area, the food conditions, housing possibilities, if any, and the transport’s travel route should be clarified with the prospective terminus.”*

This was in relation to the plan for a Jewish reservation in the area of Nisko, in southwestern Poland. The first Jewish transport from Mährisch Ostrau left on the morning of 15 October to build a “transit camp” at Nisko, a locality on the river San, as stated in the related “daily report” from the head of the SD office at Mäh-

<sup>7</sup> YVA, O.53-87, p. 129.

risch Ostrau.<sup>8</sup> The term probably referred to the fact that Nisko was the destination railway station whence the deportees were then distributed within the region.

In conclusion, no German document attributes executions of Jews to the *Einsatzgruppen* in Poland. If the estimate adopted by Matthäus *et al.* – that of 26,000 Polish civilians killed, including an unknown number of Jews – is based on German documents, we are not told which ones they are. As regards the Jews, Szymon Datner presents a thorough set of statistics on executions carried out by the Germans in Poland between 1 September and 25 October 1939, during the first 55 days of the occupation. It lists the number of executions and victims in two columns, showing 12,137 (September) and 4,199 victims (1-25 October), for a total of 16,336 victims (Datner 1967, pp. 110-112). It then provides a breakdown of these victims into twelve voivodats (*ibid.*, pp. 113-117); another table summarizes these data, also reporting the percentage of the 16,336 victims and those of the 714 executions (*ibid.*, p. 118). Jews are mentioned only in the table “*Liczba ofiar*” (number of victims), which refers to executions carried out in the district of Łódź, namely, 2,387 of the 2,393 victims, which are distributed as follows:

- executions in which only Poles died: 1,773 victims
- executions in which only Jews died: 112 victims
- executions in which Poles and Jews died: 502 (*ibid.*, p. 120).

If these figures be accepted, what do they mean? What is the relationship between the activities of the *Einsatzgruppen* in the Polish campaign and those in the Russian campaign? The authors of the document collection cited above only provide a partial answer to these questions. Within the scope of “Operation Barbarossa,” the *Einsatzgruppen* killed “between five and eight hundred thousand civilians, the overwhelming majority of them Jews”; these units moreover “recorded many – though far from all – of these murders and communicated the details back to the RSHA, which compiled extensive reports on German occupation policy in the Soviet Union.” But what made such violence possible? The roots of the violence were derived from the activities of the *Einsatzgruppen* during the Polish campaign, and, more precisely, in the concept of “‘pacifying’ the rear army areas,” implying a sort of complicity on the part of the Wehrmacht (Matthäus/Böhler/Mallmann, pp. 154f.):

“On March 30, 1941, just as he had on August 22, 1939 prior to the attack on Poland, he [Hitler] put forward his views before the assembled senior generals, but this time with even more ominous implications: Bolshevism was an ‘asocial crime’; Germany would ‘have to step back from soldierly comradeship. The communist was not and is not a comrade. This is a fight of annihilation.’ The war was about the ‘destruction of the Bolshevik commissars and the communist intelligentsia’, a task that the Wehrmacht could not accomplish alone and that called for the assistance of Himmler’s forces.”

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<sup>8</sup> YVA, O.53-87, p. 149.

This explains the difference in the *Einsatzgruppen*'s activities during the Polish and the Russian campaign: both were focusing on “pacifying” the areas behind the front, but in Poland, the *Einsatzgruppen* were only fighting Jews, while in the Soviet Union, they were fighting “Judeo-Bolshevism,” which explains why the killings in Poland were very limited, and incomparably greater in the conquered Soviet territories.

This concept found expression in the very first *Einsatzgruppen* reports. *Ereignismeldung* (EM; Incident Report) No. 31 dated 23 July 1941 expresses it as follows (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 166):

*“At least one and a half million Jews live in the Byelorussian settlement area; their sociological structure in the former Polish and former Soviet areas is not uniform. While the Jews in former Poland were officially insignificant and enjoyed no particular protection as Jews, in the Soviet Union they considered themselves part of the ruling class. Polish Jews lived in constant fear of hostile popular demonstrations; wherever they were not clearly in the majority, they considered it advisable to tread carefully and timidly. Soviet Jews, by contrast, had been stiffened up by a quarter century of Jewish-Bolshevist rule, so much so that they very often behaved self-confidently, even arrogantly, even when German troops moved in.”*

In his comment on the “Draft of establishing provisional guidelines for the treatment of Jews in the area of RKO” [*Reichskommissariat* for the East] dated 6 August 1941, Walter Stahlecker, commander of *Einsatzgruppe* A, reiterated (Angrick *et al.*, Doc. 37, p. 92):

*“Leaving the Jews in their previous dwellings and workplaces in the General Government did not result in any serious political trouble. By contrast the Jews that lived in the East or were sent there by the Red rulers considered themselves essential bearers of Bolshevist ideals. Numerous Jews were avowed communist activists. Past experience certainly teaches us that focal points of unrest will remain even long after the military occupation of the Eastern territory. Acts of sabotage and terror will not just be incited and committed by communists who were not arrested during the latest purge. Rather, precisely the Jews will exploit every possibility to stir up trouble. Already the absolutely necessary, rapid pacification of the East requires the quickest possible elimination of disturbances during our constructive work.”*

The fact that the presumed order to exterminate the Jews was issued when the Polish campaign was already over in no way detracts from this conclusion, since the “pacification” was carried out regardless of the enemy, and that Jews are mentioned, not as Jews, but as supporters of Bolshevism.

Even one of the principal witnesses confirming the existence of an extermination order during the *Einsatzgruppen* trial, the Defendant Walter Blume, placed it within the framework of the struggle against Bolshevism:<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Interrogation of W. Blume on 13 January 1949. YVA, O.53-141, p. 55.

*“I have used the wording that is somehow stuck in my memory, that eastern Jewry was the intellectual reservoir of world Bolshevism, and that for this reason, a military victory over Russia would not mean the end of Bolshevism as long as eastern Jewry still existed. This is why Eastern Jewry must be destroyed.”*

In this context, it is important to stress that, in the handling of the “Jewish question,” military necessity overrode ideological and political directives: the end goal of National-Socialist Jewish policy was the deportation or expulsion of European Jews to various regions above the Arctic Circle or at least beyond the Urals, but this policy also had to deal with the politico-ideological character and behavior of the Jews in the various geopolitical areas.

## 1.2. Structure of the *Einsatzgruppen*

As is well known, the *Einsatzgruppen* consisted of four units designated A, B, C and D with a total strength of approximately 3,000 men.

*Einsatzgruppe A*, with a documented strength of between 909 and 990 men (see further below), operated in the area of Army Group North, in the *Reichskommissariat Ostland*. It was commanded by SS *Brigadeführer* Walter Stahlecker (22 June 1941 – 23 March 1942), succeeded by: SS *Brigadeführer* Heinz Jost (29 or 30 March – 2 September 1942), SS *Oberführer* Humbert Achamer-Pifrader (10 September 1942 – 4 September 1943), SS *Oberführer* Friedrich Panzinger (4 September 1943 – May 1944) and SS *Oberführer* Wilhelm Fuchs (May – October 1944). It was organized in four sub-units:

– *Sonderkommando* (or *Einsatzkommando*) 1a: commander SS *Standartenführer* Martin Sandberger (appointed KdS<sup>10</sup> Estland on 3 Dec. 1941), operative area Estonia.

– *Sonderkommando* (or *Einsatzkommando*) 1b: SS *Obersturmbannführer* Erich Ehrlinger, then SS *Obersturmbannführer* Eduard Strauch (from 3 Dec. 1941 until June 1943), followed by SS *Standartenführer* Erich Isselhorst (from 30 June until October 1943), operative area Byelorussia.

On 9 December 1941, Ehrlinger was appointed by Heydrich, representing Himmler, “Commander of the Security Police and the SD for the General District Kiev in the *Reichskommissariat* Ukraine.”<sup>11</sup>

– *Einsatzkommando* 2: SS *Standartenführer* Rudolf Batz (1 June – 4 Nov. 1941), replaced by SS *Obersturmbannführer* Eduard Strauch (4 November – 3 December 1941) and by SS *Sturmbannführer* Erwin Rudolf Lange (from 3 December 1941 until October 1944), appointed KdS Lettland on 3 December 1941; operative area Latvia.

<sup>10</sup> *Kommandeur der Sicherheitspolizei*, commander of security police

<sup>11</sup> NARA, T-175/240, 2729887, Der Reichsführer-SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei im Reichsministerium des Innern, Schnellbrief (express letter) dated 9 December 1941.



- *Einsatzkommando 3*: SS *Standartenführer* Karl Jäger, who then became KdS Litauen; Wilhelm Fuchs (15 September 1943 – 6 May 1944), and finally Hans Joachim Böhme (11 May 1944 – 1 January 1945); operations area Lithuania.

*Einsatzgruppe B* had approximately 665 members; it was commanded by SS *Brigadeführer* Arthur Nebe until the end of October 1941, followed by SS *Brigadeführer* Erich Naumann (beginning of November 1941 – March 1943), SS *Standartenführer* Horst Böhme (12 March – 28 August 1943), SS *Obersturmbannführer* Erich Ehrlinger (28 August 1943 – April 1944), SS *Standartenführer* Heinz Seetzen (28 April 1944 – August 1944) and once again by Horst Böhme (from 12 August 1944). This unit operated in Byelorussia, in the area assigned to the Army Group Central, and was sub-divided into:

- *Sonderkommando 7a*: SS *Standartenführer* Walter Blume (until September 1941), SS *Standartenführer* Eugen Steimle (September – December 1941), SS *Hauptsturmführer* Kurt Matschke (10 December 1941 – 29 February 1942), SS *Obersturmbannführer* Albert Rapp (February 1942 – 28 January 1943), SS *Obersturmbannführer* Helmut Loos (June 1943 – June 1944), SS *Sturmbannführer* Gerhard Bast (June – November 1944).
- *Sonderkommando 7b*: SS *Sturmbannführer* Günther Rausch (until February 1942), SS *Obersturmbannführer* Adolf Ott (mid-February 1942 – January 1943, replaced between July and October 1942 by SS *Sturmbannführer* Josef Auinger), SS *Obersturmbannführer* Karl Rabe (January 1943 – October 1944).
- *Einsatzkommando 8*: SS *Obersturmbannführer* Otto Bradfisch (until 1 April 1942), SS *Obersturmbannführer* Heinz Richter (1 April – September 1942), SS *Standartenführer* Erich Isselhorst (September – November 1942), and finally SS *Obersturmbannführer* Hans Schindhelm (13 November 1942 – October 1943).
- *Einsatzkommando 9*: SS *Obersturmbannführer* Alfred Filbert (until 20 October 1941), SS *Sturmbannführer* Oswald Schäfer (October 1941 – February 1942), SS *Obersturmbannführer* Wilhelm Wiebens (February 1942 – March 1943), SS *Obersturmbannführer* Friedrich Buchardt (January 1943 – March 1944).
- *Vorkommando Moskau* (Advance Unit Moscow): SS *Brigadeführer* Franz Six (until 20 August 1941), SS *Sturmbannführer* Waldemar Klingelhöfer (until December 1941), SS *Sturmbannführer* Erich Körting (September – December 1941). In January 1942 this formation was merged with the *Teiltrupp* (sub-squad) of SS *Obersturmführer* Döring and became *Sonderkommando 7c*; the commanders were SS *Standartenführer* Wilhelm Bock (December 1941 – mid-1942), SS *Hauptsturmführer* Rudolf Schmücker (June – autumn 1942), SS *Sturmbannführer* Wilhelm Bluhm (autumn 1942 – July 1943) and SS *Sturmbannführer* Wilhelm Eckardt (July – December 1943).

Einsatzgruppe C had a strength of 700-820 men and was active in *Reichskommissariat* Ukraine under Army Group South. It was led by SS *Brigadeführer* Otto Rasch (until the beginning of October 1941), followed by SS *Gruppenführer* Max Thomas (October 1941 – 28 August 1943) and by SS *Standartenführer* Horst Böhme (from 6 September 1943 until the end of March 1944). It consisted of:

- *Sonderkommando* 4a: SS *Standartenführer* Paul Blobel (until January 1942), SS *Standartenführer* Erwin Weinmann (13 January – July 1942), SS *Obersturmbannführer* Eugen Karl Steimle (August 1942 – 15 January 1943) and SS *Sturmbannführer* Theodor Christensen (January – end of 1943).
- *Sonderkommando* 4b: SS *Sturmbannführer* Günther Herrmann (until September 1941), SS *Sturmbannführer* Fritz Braune (1 October 1941 – mid-March 1942), SS *Sturmbannführer* Walter Haensch (mid-March – July 1942), SS *Obersturmbannführer* August Meier (July – November 1942), SS *Obersturmbannführer* Friedrich Suhr (November 1942 – August 1943), SS *Sturmbannführer* Walter Krause (August 1943 – January 1944).
- *Einsatzkommando* 5: SS *Brigadeführer* Erwin Schulz (until the end of September 1941), SS *Obersturmbannführer* August Meier (end of September 1941 – January 1942). The unit was dissolved in January 1942.
- *Einsatzkommando* 6: SS *Standartenführer* Erhard Kroeger (until November 1941), SS *Sturmbannführer* Robert Mohr (November 1941 – September 1942), SS *Obersturmbannführer* Ernst Biberstein (September 1942 – May 1943), SS *Obersturmbannführer* Friedrich Suhr (August – November 1943).

Einsatzgruppe D consisted of approximately 600 men and operated in the area of the 11th Army and the Rumanian army (Bessarabia, southern Ukraine, Crimea, Caucasus). It was commanded by SS *Oberführer* Otto Ohlendorf (until June 1942), followed by SS *Oberführer* Walter Bierkamp (July 1942 – July 1943). It consisted of:

- *Sonderkommando* 10a: SS *Standartenführer* Heinz Seetzen (until July 1942), SS *Sturmbannführer* Kurt Christmann (1 August 1942 – July 1943).
- *Sonderkommando* 10b: SS *Sturmbannführer* Alois Persterer (until February 1943), SS *Sturmbannführer* Eduard Jedamzik (until May 1943).
- *Sonderkommando* 11a: SS *Sturmbannführer* Paul Zapp (until July 1942), SS *Sturmbannführer* Gerhard Bast (November – December 1942), SS *Sturmbannführer* Werner Hersmann (December 1942 – May 1943)
- *Sonderkommando* 11b: SS *Obersturmbannführer* Hans Unglaube (until July 1941), SS *Sturmbannführer* Bruno Müller (July – October 1941), SS *Sturmbannführer* Werner Braune (July – October 1941), SS *Sturmbannführer* Paul Schultz (September 1942 – February 1943).
- *Einsatzkommando* 12: SS *Obersturmbannführer* Gustav Noske (until February 1942), SS *Sturmbannführer* Erich Müller (February – October 1942), SS *Obersturmbannführer* Günther Herrmann (October 1942 – March 1943).

With the commencement of Operation Barbarossa, the position of *Höhere SS und Polizeiführer* (Higher SS and Police leader) in Russia was occupied by:

- Russia North and *Ostland*: SS *Gruppenführer* Hans-Adolf Prützmann, later replaced by SS *Obergruppenführer* Friedrich Jeckeln;
- Russia Central: SS *Obergruppenführer* Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski;
- Russia South und Ukraine: SS *Obergruppenführer* Friedrich Jeckeln, later replaced by SS *Gruppenführer* Hans-Adolf Prützmann.

The documents known as the first and second Stahlecker Reports contain two graphs describing the strength of *Einsatzgruppe A* dated 15 October 1941<sup>12</sup> and 1 February 1942<sup>13</sup> (see Documents I.1.1 and I.1.2). The following table places the related data side by side, so they can be compared easily:

	15 October 1941	1 February 1942
Total strength	990	909
Regular police force	133 = 13,4%	134 = 14,8%
Female employees	13 = 1.3%	22 = 2.4%
Emergency food services		53 = 5.8%
Teletypist	3 = 0.8%	9 = 0.9%
Radio operator	8 = 0.8%	23 = 2.5%
Active Waffen-SS	340 = 34.4%	151 = 16.6%
SS reservists		126 = 13.9%
Drivers	172 = 17.4%	185 = 20.3%
Administration	18 = 1.8%	26 = 2.9%
Special envoys		3 = 0.3%
SD	35 = 3.5%	37 = 4.1%
Criminal police	41 = 4.1%	55 = 6.1%
State police	89 = 9.0%	85 = 9.4%.
Interpreters	51 = 5.1%	
Auxiliary police	87 = 8.8%	

It is strange that the strength of this supposed extermination unit would be reduced by 81 persons when there still remained much work to be done; at the same time, they increased the non-combatant forces and forces not directly linked to extermination: Female employees, teletypists, radio operators, drivers.

No less strange is the disappearance of the 51 interpreters, who must have been indispensable, whatever the activities of the *Einsatzgruppe*.

The first Stahlecker Report supplies an “Allocation plan for members of *Einsatzgruppe A* among the *Einsatzkommandos*”<sup>14</sup> (see Document I.1.3.), the data of which is summarized in the following table:

<sup>12</sup> RGVA, 500-4-93, Annex 1a, p. 144, “Gesamtstärke der Einsatzgruppe A.”

<sup>13</sup> RGVA, 500-4-92, p. 183.

<sup>14</sup> RGVA, 500-4-93, Annex 1b, p. 145.

**Table 2**

	E.K. 1a	E.K. 1b	E.K. 2	E.K. 3
Total strength	105	110	170	141
Female employees	1 = 0.9%		4 = 2.4%	1 = 0.1%
Teletypist			4 = 1.8%	
Radio operator	2 = 1.9	1 = 0.9%	2 = 1.2%	1 = 0.7%
SS reservists	25 = 24%	26 = 23.7%	41 = 23.6%	32 = 22.9%
drivers	23 = 22.1%	34 = 30.9%	50 = 29.4%	34 = 24.3%
Administration	3 = 2.9%	2 = 1.8%	4 = 2.4%	1 = 0.7%
SD	8 = 7.8%	3 = 2.7%	8 = 4.8%	10 = 7%
Criminal police	11 = 10.5%	6 = 5.4%	13 = 7.8%	10 = 7%
State police	18 = 16.2%	12 = 11%	26 = 15.6%	29 = 20.6%
Interpreters	14 = 13.7%	6 = 5.4%	18 = 10.8%	8 = 5.6%
Auxiliary police		20 = 18.2%		15 = 10.5%

The total number of men in the four *Einsatzkommandos* was 526. Which tasks were carried out by the remaining 464 is not clear, since the total strength of *Einsatzgruppe A* was 990 men.

According to the Activity Report (*Tätigkeitsbericht*) of *Einsatzgruppe B* of 14 July 1941 relating to the period from 23 June – 13 July 1941, this unit had a strength of 521 men, allocated as follows (Angrick *et al.*, Doc. 19, p. 58):

**Table 3**

	Leader	Subunit leaders	Men	Drivers	Total
Staff	15	11	3	23	52
SK 7a	10	37	15	31	93
SK 7b	11	38	15	27	91
EK 8	13	53	27	48	141
EK 9	15	51	32	46	144
Total	64	190	92	175	521

To the above must be added the second company of *Polizei-Ersatz-Battalion* (Police Substitute Battalion) 9 with 3 officers, 51 non-commissioned officers and 80 soldiers.

A schema relating to the organization of the “Higher SS and Police Leader South” dated 18 August 1941 indicates the strength of the units of *Einsatzgruppe C*: *Einsatzkommando* 4a and 4b consisted of 160 men each, while *Sonderkommando* had 5 and 6,250 men each,<sup>15</sup> a total of 820 men (see Document I.1.4).

*Einsatzgruppe D* consisted of 400-500 men and had approximately 170 vehicles at its disposal (TWC, Vol. IV, p. 205). Ohlendorf declared that the strength of the unit commanded by him amounted to 500 men, 200 of whom were drivers (TWC, Vol. X, p. 1278).

<sup>15</sup> YVA, O.53-131, p. 14.

In addition to the *Einsatzgruppen*, other SS units, some of which were numerically larger, participated in operations in the eastern territories occupied by the Germans.

Starting at the end of July 1941, the three “Higher SS and Police leaders” (“*Höhere SS- und Polizei-Führer*”) each disposed of three police battalions, precisely:

- HSSPF Nord (North): Polizeibataillon 53, 319, 321
- HSSPF Mitte (Center): Polizeibataillon 307, 316, 322
- HSSPF Süd (South): Polizeibataillon 45, 303, 314.

The total strength of this battalion was 8,000-9,000 men (Curilla 2006, pp. 97f.). The *Kommandostab Reichsführer SS* consisted of the following units:

- Begleit-Bataillon Reichsführer SS
- SS-Freiwilligen-Standarte Hamburg
- SS-Flak-Abteilung “Ost”
- SS-Kavallerie Brigade
- 1. SS-Infanterie Brigade
- 2. SS-Infanterie Brigade.

The strength of these units, according to Yehoshua Büchler, was 25,000 soldiers (Büchler, p. 14).

### 1.3. Missions of the *Einsatzgruppen*

The “Fact sheet for the leaders of the *Einsatzgruppen* and *Einsatzkommandos* of the Security Police and SD for Operation ‘Barbarossa,’” drawn up according to the order of the Wehrmacht High Command dated 26 March 1941, lists the missions of the *Einsatzgruppen* as follows:<sup>16</sup>

*“a) Non-combat zone of the Army operational area:*

*Securing objects predetermined prior to commencement of the operation (materials, archives, card files of organizations, units, groups, etc. that are hostile to the Reich or [German] state) as well as particularly important individual persons (leading emigrants, saboteurs, terrorists, etc.). [...]*

*b) Non-combat zone of the Armed Forces operational area*

*Investigation and combating efforts hostile to the [German] State and Reich, insofar as not incorporated into the hostile army, as well as general briefing of the commanders in the non-combat zone of the armed forces operational area as to the political situation.”*

Point 8, headlined “Arrests, Searches and Confiscations” prescribed:

*“Upon every arrest, a form from the issued ‘Arrests’ form book is to be completed with 2 copies. The original copy and 1st carbon copy are to be forwarded to the leader of the Einsatzkommando; he has to send it to the Einsatzgruppe using the*

<sup>16</sup> YVA, O.53-1, pp. 1-5.

*most expeditious method. The carbon copy should remain with the Einsatzkommando, while the 2nd carbon copy should remain in the form book, which is to be given to the leader of the Einsatzkommando once used up.*

*Upon every confiscation, seizure, search, etc., a form taken from the issued 'Searches' form book is to be completed with 2 carbon copies; the procedure is otherwise identical to that followed in connection with arrests.*

*The delivery of confiscated objects is to be certified by the recipient agency on the 2nd carbon copy of the search report. Particular care is to be taken in the proper storage and securing of confiscated objects."*

Point 12, "General Behavior," required impeccable behavior:

*"All members of the Security Police and SD are to be repeatedly instructed in the most emphatic terms, including the threat of severe punishment, to maintain impeccable, disciplined, soldierly conduct. The mission requires the strictest discipline on the part of both leaders and men, both on duty and off duty. Official duties also include the maintenance of health and working strength. Any inordinate use of alcoholic beverages and neglect of duty under the influence of alcohol are to be prevented by immediate intervention. Personal relationships with the non-German population are prohibited; particularly, all contacts with women of other races are to be considered an offense against discipline and German honor."*

Point 15, "War Diary," says:

*"From the very outset of the mission, the leaders of the Einsatzgruppen and Einsatzkommandos are to keep a continual war diary, in which all important incidents and observations which may be of importance and/or interest in the future are to be noted chronologically. Care must be taken to ensure safe storage of all war diaries."*

The various reports drawn up by the *Einsatzgruppen* show that these units had executive and informational responsibilities.

The executive responsibilities were both negative and positive in character. The negative aspect was the capture, identification and elimination of all those who were considered ideological and political enemies or who committed hostile acts against German troops or the populations of the occupied countries, starting with the partisans. However, as stated by the Danish researcher Therkel Stræde, the executive tasks did not initially contemplate mass executions, because (Stræde, p. 27):

*"when the German police forces moved into Soviet territory in June 1941 they did not have a standard procedure for mass executions like this one, although the mass shooting of civilians and POWs had already been exercised during the Polish campaign in 1939. No detailed orders specifying the organizational and technical details of such massacres were handed out, and it is obvious from actual variations in the ways they were carried out that the methodology of mass killing was to a large extent left up to the commanders of the authorities and units to decide."*

The positive aspect consisted of the restoration of the administrative, social and economic structure of regions devastated by the Soviets during their withdrawal or by the combatants.

Ohlendorf, in his deposition at the *Einsatzgruppen* Trial (October 1947), provided a good explanation of what this aspect consisted of (TWC, Vol. IV, pp. 252f.):

*“First, the Einsatzgruppen and Einsatzkommandos never had the task to eliminate groups of the population because they were racially inferior, and even so that was not the main task. It was an additional assignment which, in itself, was foreign to the actual task of the Einsatzgruppen and Einsatzkommandos, because never was such a task of the security police or of the SD for that matter – and never by any means, as it is mentioned in another place in the indictment were they trained for such exterminations and executions.*

*Rather, the general task of the Einsatzgruppen and the Einsatzkommandos was that the security of the army territory in the operational theaters should be guaranteed by them, and within the framework of this security task the execution order was, of course, one of the basic orders. But, in reality, the Einsatzgruppen’s task was a positive one, if I leave out this basic order for exterminations and executions. It must be realized, of course, that a group of about 500 people who, on the average, had charge of an area of 300 to 400 square kilometers, could not terrorize such an area, even if they had wanted to do so. Therefore, if we regard it intelligently these tasks could only be called positive ones, and as such they were developed by myself.*

*The first experiences I collected was when the task was transferred to us by the army to harvest the overdue crop in the Trans[n]istria. The larger number of Kommandos for weeks dealt only with this one task of harvesting in Trans[n]istria; I had given orders for this measure which was the basis of my policy altogether. First, the institution of a self-administration, as it were, in the communities and the communal settlements, and also in the municipalities; secondly, a recognition of private property; thirdly, the payment of wages the population received for each fifth sheaf of the entire harvest. I guaranteed this wage, even to the Rumanian authorities. Fourth, cultural places were restored that is, the population was supported in restoring the cultural centers and they were inspired to take up a new cultural life. It is not for me now to describe or discuss the success which this had with the populations of such places. I can only state that because of these measures the population was on our side, and they themselves reported any disturbances which might happen in these territories. Therefore, by this positive winning over of the population, the security of the territory internally could be guaranteed, and actually, in our territory a partisan resistance movement did not come into existence, but it was formed by external elements and was artificially extended.”*

Such activity is attested to by the very *Einsatzgruppen* reports themselves. For example, as early as EM No. 21 dated 13 July 1941, *Einsatzgruppe* B reported as follows (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 113):

*“Dr. Tumash and his staff are endeavoring, as their most urgent tasks, to secure the food supply of the city population, to reintegrate the able-bodied population into the labor force by way of an employment agency, and to put the rural population back on the land which had migrated into the cities under Bolshevik pressure since 1928.”*

At the beginning of August 1941, *Einsatzgruppe B* was engaged, among other things, in administrative activities and reconstruction measures (*ibid.*, p. 235):

*“In all the localities and cities with which the Einsatzgruppen had any contact, temporary administrations were set up, in some cases by armed-forces units, in other cases by the Einsatzgruppen themselves, with the help of Byelorussian emigrants brought in by the Einsatzgruppen [...]. These administrations concerned themselves primarily with securing the food situation, restoring economic life, registering all livestock, finding shelter for residents whose homes had been destroyed, and even creating ghettos in this context.”*

The reconstruction measures even included a religious aspect. For example, on 6 August 1941, SS *Sturmbannführer* Karl Tschierschky sent the following radio message to the RSHA (Angrick, *et al.*, Doc. 38, p. 95):

*“Einsatzgruppe A, with the consent of Army Group North, has helped supply the occupied former Soviet-Russian territory with Orthodox priests, who are to begin caring for the spiritual needs of the Russian population in the next few days.”*

*Einsatzbefehl* (mission order) No. 10, issued by Heydrich on 16 August 1941, which had as its subject “Handling of ecclesiastical issues in the occupied territories of the Soviet Union,” shows that in this field, the greatest concern of the Germans was political in nature. It was necessary to prevent attempts by the Catholic Church to exert an influence over the occupied territories of the Soviet Union, because this would have reestablished contact with the Vatican. It was not even desired to support the Orthodox Church, but where the population had expressed the desire for religious assistance and a priest was available, “the resumption of ecclesiastical activity” could be tolerated. The “living Church” should be kept under control, because it was not yet clear whether it was an organ of Soviet control. In the Baltic countries, the same principles applied with regard to the Evangelical churches: religious activity could only be permitted if it corresponded to a real desire on the part of the population (*ibid.*, Doc. 42, pp. 101f.). The *Einsatzgruppen* were supposed to deal with this religious obstacle course as well.

The informational tasks were those carried out institutionally by the Security Services and regarded all spheres of life in the occupied territories, *i.e.*, political, economic, social, cultural, racial, religious, commercial matters, etc. These tasks also included the gathering of important documents. This task was referred to in a radio message from the RSHA IV A 1 to the *Einsatzgruppen* on 1 August 1941 with the subject “Procurement of Illustrative Material.” Gestapo Chief Heinrich Müller made the following request (*ibid.*, Doc. 32, p. 86):

*“Ongoing reports on the work of the Einsatzgruppen in the East must be presented to the Führer from now on. Especially interesting illustrative material, such as*



*slides, posters, leaflets and other documents will be needed for this purpose. Insofar as such material becomes available or can be procured, I request that it be forwarded by the fastest means possible."*

Müller's concern shows that perhaps Hitler was not overly interested in mere numbers.

The so-called first Stahlecker Report, that is, the "Overall report up to 15 October 1941,"<sup>17</sup> shows the vastness of the tasks of the *Einsatzgruppen*. This is a 143-page letter with 18 appendices, including two duplicates, for a total of 221 pages. Only a very small part is dedicated to the Jews, and only a very small part relates to executions, that is, the paragraph "Struggle against Jewry"<sup>18</sup> and the synopsis "Overview of the Number of Executions Carried Out until the Present," while the paragraph "Jewish Influence over the Living Areas in the East" deals with historical, economic and historical matters. Among the annexes is a study of the structure of Soviet power in the past, a "Special Report on the GPU in Latvia"<sup>19</sup> and an "Overview of the Chief Agencies of the Estonian Socialist Soviet Republic."<sup>20</sup>

The "Summary Report of 16 October – 31 January 1942" of *Einsatzgruppe A* for the period 16 October 1941 – 31 January 1942 (the second Stahlecker Report), an extremely long report of 228 pages plus 19 appendices, lists the various fields of its activity, corresponding to as many tasks as shown by the index:

- I. General Overview
- II. General Situation in Basic Terms
  - 1.) Report on Morale
  - 2.) Politics and Administration
  - 3.) Propaganda
  - 4.) Cultural Areas
  - 5.) Ethnicity
  - 6.) Public Health
- III. Jews
- IV. Church
- V. Economy and Sustenance
  - 1.) Economic Policy
  - 2.) Food Situation
  - 3.) Agriculture
  - 4.) Industry and Trade
- VI. Resistance Movements

Among the appendices are the following:<sup>21</sup>

<sup>17</sup> "Gesamtbericht bis zum 15. Oktober 1941," GARF, 500-4-93. Extracts from this long document were published as L-180 in IMT, Vol. 37, pp. 670-717, and NCA, Vol. VII, pp. 978-996. The longest extract may be found in Angrick *et al.*, Doc. 70, pp. 161-209.

<sup>18</sup> GARF, 500-4-93, pp. 30-34.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, Appendix 6.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, Appendix 7.

<sup>21</sup> RGVA, 500-4-92, pp. 1-228. A brief extract from the text was produced as Document PS-2273. IMT. Vol. 30, pp. 71-78.

- Ethnicity in Byelorussia
- Religious Denominations in Latvia and Estonia
- Religious Life in Estonia
- Churches in Byelorussia
- Ratio between the Minimum Wage and the Existential Minimum
- Social Insurance in the Reich Commissariat East
- Age Distribution in Latvia
- Livestock in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia
- Types of Crops in Latvia and Estonia
- Carriage of Goods in Latvia
- Number of Persons Employed in Trade and Industry in Latvia.

The multiplicity and complexity of the tasks entrusted to the *Einsatzgruppen* is made obvious by many reports, such as the Activity and Situation Report of *Einsatzgruppe* B for the period of 16-30 September 1942. The subjects dealt with are as follows:

General situation and morale; cultural areas; the cultural life of the Russian population during the Soviet era and today; the cultural care of the population of the Soviet Union; cultural institutions; theater; administrative structure; repertoire; actors' responsibilities; theater of the Soviet ear in the area of the present Army Group Center; a) theater b) film c) musical life d) libraries e) radio f) recital activities g) museums; participation of the Russian population and their reception of the events; economy; trade; labor and social affairs; development and implementation of labor deployment; working morale and performance; procurement of manpower into the Reich; propaganda for the recruitment of Russian manpower for the Reich (Angrick *et al.*, Doc. 156, pp. 433-461).

The handling of these topics was not even sporadic, as shown by the following table, summarizing the data set forth by Ronald Headland in his "Appendix B" (Headland, pp. 223-225), although it only refers to politico-cultural matters. The figures in the columns indicate the number of reports dealing with the related topics.

	EG A	EG B	EG C	EG D
Propaganda	5	10	4	5
Economy	10	9	13	7
Churches	11	8	9	7
Education, Culture, Science	6	2	6	6
Press	4	/	/	/
Agriculture, Food	3	4	14	9
Jews, Jewish Question	4	5	/	6
Ethnic Groups	11	10	27	16

The interests of the *Einsatzgruppen* extended beyond the above to other spheres, such as sports,<sup>22</sup> the prices of consumer goods,<sup>23</sup> food rations,<sup>24</sup> the structure of Soviet schools,<sup>25</sup> with an indication of the subject matter and number of hours required for each class,<sup>26</sup> the registration of farm animals,<sup>27</sup> wages,<sup>28</sup> and the health situation.<sup>29</sup>

The fulfillment of all these tasks, which were informational and, above all, administrative and organizational, required appropriate cultural training. Precisely this was the case of the accused at the *Einsatzgruppen* Trial, as tersely stressed by Judge Michael Angelo Musmanno (Earl, p. 96):

*“Since the twenty-[four] defendants were charged with one million murders, one would expect to see in the dock a band of coarse, untutored barbarians. Instead, one beheld a group of men with a formidable educational background.”*

The cultural training of the defendants was so obvious that it was highlighted by the very first commentators on the trial, such as Anatole Goldstein (Goldstein, pp. 21-23).

Earl notes that “a disproportionate number” of the defendants “were university trained – specifically in the profession of law – and a number of them even held doctoral degrees. Of the fifteen *Einsatzgruppenführer* who worked in Russia between 1941 and 1943, six (40%) had earned doctoral degrees, while all the rest had some university training. These statistics strongly suggest that the leadership corps of the *Einsatzgruppen* comprised men who were neither misfits nor failures; in fact, the opposite is true, as one historian has noted, they were more frequently “of above average intelligence, talent and ambition” (Earl, p. 100); he dedicates an entire paragraph to the topic “Education of the Defendants” and summarized the defendants’ cultural degrees in a table (*ibid.*, pp. 117-122).

The decision, on the part of the RSHA, to recruit personnel with such a high degree of university training is a very strong indication that their primary task did not consist of extermination at all, precisely because that would have required “a band of coarse, untutored barbarians.”

On 1 March 1942, Admiral Canaris and Heydrich signed the “Principles for cooperation between the Security Police and the SD and the Counter-Intelligence

<sup>22</sup> For example, “Sportorganisation Dynamo,” EM No. 74 dated 5 September 1941.

<sup>23</sup> The prices, including those of the black market, are sometimes listed in appropriate tables, as in “Meldung aus den besetzten Ostgebieten” (MbO) No. 34 of 18 December 1942.

<sup>24</sup> Even the food rations are listed in tables, such as, for example, EM No. 150 dated 2 January 1942, EM No. 170 dated 18 February 1942, MbO No. 36 dated 8 January 1943.

<sup>25</sup> For example, “Sowjetisches Schulwesen” (Soviet School System), EM No. 78 dated 9 September 1941; “Schulwesen,” EM No. 88 dated 19 September 1941.

<sup>26</sup> MbO No. 41 dated 12 February 1943.

<sup>27</sup> MbO No. 22 dated 25 September 1942, containing notations of the number of cattle existing in 17 districts under the Soviet government as well as in 1942.

<sup>28</sup> For example, MbO No. 28 dated 6 November 1942.

<sup>29</sup> No. 18 of MbO dated 28 August 1942 contains a detailed set of statistics relating to syphilis and gonorrhea patients in Smolensk between January and June 1942. NARA, T-175/236, p. 16, 2724770.

Agencies of the Armed Forces” which defined their respective powers. Those of the *Einsatzgruppen* are summarized as follows:<sup>30</sup>

*“The task of the Security Police and SD is, as far as a cooperation with the Foreign Office/Counter-Intelligence Agency in the Armed Forces High Command is considered, to investigate and combat all ethnic and political enemies, and to preemptively carry out all measures in order to prevent and fend off their intentions and machinations, as well as to bring to justice the perpetrators while combatting illegal acts.”*

An information report from Heydrich dated 2 March 1942 contains a “Compendium of Mission Orders and other Instructions for Deployment in the East” from 2 July 1941 to 14 February 1942. This is a collection of 15 mission orders and 9 decrees (pp. 263-265). Those mentioning Jews directly or indirectly are:

- Mission Order No. 1 dated 29 June 1941, reporting on self-purging efforts of anti-communist and anti-Jewish groups;
- Mission Order No. 2 dated 1 July 1941, clearing-up actions among Bolsheviks and Jews (in the former Polish territories): “It is a matter of course that the clearing-up actions are to be carried out primarily against the Bolsheviks and Jews” (p. 275).
- Mission Order No. 8 of 17 July 1941, “Guidelines for units of the Chief of the Security Police and Security Service to be assigned to PoW camps,” probably republished in Mission Order No. 14 of 29 October 1941, “Guidelines for units of the Chief of the Security Police and Security Service to be assigned to PoW and transit camps.”

Other directives addressed various tasks of the *Einsatzgruppen*:

- Decree of 23 Aug. 1941, securing of file materials of the agencies;
- Mission Order No. 10 of 16 August 1941, handling of ecclesiastical issues in the occupied areas of the Soviet Union;
- Decree of 1 October 1941, police measures to prevent interventions in the economy;
- Decree of 30 Aug. 1941, spectators during executions (Heydrich ordered “to prevent the gathering of spectators during mass executions, even if this concerns Wehrmacht officers”; p. 307).

A directive of *Sonderkommando 4a* “to all unit leaders of SD field units” dated 19 March 1943 summarized the tasks of the *Einsatzgruppen* as follows:<sup>31</sup>

*“The task of the Security Police and SD is the investigation and combating of enemies of the Reich in the interests of security in the operational area, particularly the security of the troops. Besides the destruction of active adversaries, all those elements which, due to their basic convictions or past history, may become active as enemies under favourable circumstances are to be eradicated as a precautionary measure. The Security Police is carrying out this task corresponding to the general instructions of the Führer with all necessary severity. Harsh and decisive*

<sup>30</sup> YVA, RG O.53-3, p. 219; subsequent page numbers from there, unless noted otherwise.

<sup>31</sup> PS-3012. IMT, Vol. 31, p. 493.

*action is especially necessary in regions threatened by gangs [partisans]. The jurisdiction of the Security Police in the area of operations is based upon the Barbarossa Order. The measures recently taken by the Security Police on a considerable scale are considered by myself to have been necessary for two reasons."*

#### 1.4. Drafting and Reliability of the *Einsatzgruppen* Reports

The question of the origin and probative value of the *Einsatzgruppen* reports was discussed during the related trial held by the Americans after the war. The defense counsel declared (TWC, Vol. IV, p. 96):

*"The principal proof offered by the prosecution in support of counts one and two of the indictment were more than ninety Einsatzgruppen reports. These reports were consolidated reports prepared by a special office of the RSHA in Berlin from the reports of the individual Einsatzgruppen. These top secret reports were distributed to a number of state and Party offices in Germany. Between July 1941 and April 1942 approximately 195 consolidated Einsatzgruppen reports were prepared in Berlin and distributed.*

*The defense alleged that the consolidated reports contained many inaccuracies and even willful exaggerations concerning the number of exterminated people. The defense also claimed that the author of the reports had no first-hand knowledge of the observations contained therein, that his identity was unknown, and therefore the documents constituted inadmissible hearsay evidence."*

Before entering into a more-detailed study of the reliability of the reports, it is advisable to examine the question of how, and where, they were discovered. The reports formed part of a collection of two tons of documents confiscated on 3 September 1945 on the fourth floor of the general headquarters of the Gestapo in Berlin. The documentation was taken to the Berlin Document Center. Given the massive quantity of documents which had been discovered – between 8 and 9 million – it was a long time before the reports were found. Although Ohlendorf mentioned them in his testimony during the Fourth Military Trial at Nuremberg in January 1946, Benjamin Ferencz, the future Chief Prosecutor in the *Einsatzgruppen* Case, was not looking for them in any particular way. He became aware of them between late 1946 and early 1947. The correspondence of the Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality mentioned the *Einsatzgruppen* reports on 15 January 1947, but from other letters it appears that by the beginning of February the reports had still not gained their attention, and did not come into Ferencz's hands before March-April 1947 (Earl, pp. 77f.). In this regard, Hilary Earl stated (*ibid.*, p. 78):

*"Whether the reports were found in late 1946 or early 1947 remains a matter of speculation. Ferencz does recall, however, his excitement when one of the German researchers who worked in his office accidentally discovered twelve binders (Leitz Ordners) filled with top secret daily reports from the eastern front itemizing the carnage of the mobile security and killing units."*

The version of the documents' discovery as recounted by Tom Hofmann is completely different, in that the date, place and office all differ (Hofmann, pp. 117f.):

*“In the spring of 1947 one of Ferencz’s many diligent researchers, Fred Burin, burst excitedly into Ferencz’s office. He had come upon some German files while searching through a Foreign Ministry annex located near the Tempelhof airport. He had found a nearly complete set of secret reports that had been sent by the Gestapo office in Berlin to perhaps a hundred top officials of the Nazi regime. [...] The reports described the daily activities of special SS units nondescriptly called Einsatzgruppen – roughly translated as ‘Special Action Groups.’ They were organized in four units (A, B, C, D) ranging from about 500 to 800 men each. Their secret reports bore an innocuous title, which translated as ‘Report of Events in the Soviet Union.’”*

Another little enigma appears at this point. Before discussing it, a minor explanation is required. The Incident Reports were drawn up in multiple copies, up to a maximum of 77. Every copy bears an indication of its specific number and the total number of copies produced. For example, Report No. 25 (see below) is the twenty-second copy of thirty-four: *“34 Ausfertigungen 22. Ausfertigung.”* Now, Krausnick and Wilhelm declare (Krausnick/Wilhelm, p. 649):

*“From the testimony of Mr. Benjamin Ferencz, Chief Prosecutor at the Einsatzgruppen Trial at Nuremberg, on 9 September 1947, it follows that Ferencz had the originals of the USSR Incident Reports brought from Berlin to Nuremberg for the above-named trial, where the defense attorneys were allowed to examine them [...]. Said originals were subsequently sent to the United States, filmed there, and within the framework of the return of confiscated documents to the Federal Republic of Germany, they were finally transferred to the [German] Federal Archives at Koblenz. There, they may be consulted in Inventory R 58.”*

Headland supplies additional information in this regard (Headland, p. 231):

*“The complete original surviving set of the Operational Situation Reports (Ereignismeldungen UdSSR) and the Reports from the Occupied Eastern Territories (Meldungen aus den besetzten Ostgebieten) is today found in the Bundesarchiv in Koblenz, under Bestand R58, Reichssicherheitshauptamt, Numbers 214-221, and Numbers 697, 698, 222, 223, and 224. A complete set of the Operational Situation Reports is found in the National Archives in Washington, on microfilm as part of the National Archives and Records Service (NARS) Microfilm Publication T175, Records of the Reich Leader of the SS and Chief of the German Police, rolls 233-235. A complete set of the Reports from the Occupied Eastern Territories is found on Microfilm Publication T175, rolls 235-236. Copies of the reports are found in other archives, including the Institut für Zeitgeschichte in Munich.*

*The originals of all the Activity and Situation Reports (Tätigkeits- und Lageberichte der Einsatzgruppen der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD in der UdSSR), with the exception of Report 9, are found in the Political Archives of the Foreign Office in Bonn under the reference: Inland IIg, 431 Russland: SD-Einsatzgruppen, Berichte 1941-1942.”*

It is nevertheless a fact that these same *original* reports with the same number of copies are located in the Russian State War Archive (RGVA), where Jürgen Graf and I saw them and photocopied them in part at the end of the 1990s (see Documents I.1.5. and I.1.5a.).

As regards the rediscovery, it is odd that the binders which contained the Incident Reports on the fourth floor of the headquarters of the Gestapo at Berlin contained copies designated for various offices. At the end of each report, under the heading “*Verteiler*” (distribution list), there is normally an indication of the offices to which the individual copies were to be sent. Starting with EM No. 38 (30 July 1941), there is also an indication as to which copy was sent to each individual office. The most complete list, relating to 55 offices, is in EM No. 128 of 3 November 1941.

The serial number of the copies appears for the first time in EM No. 6 (27 June 1941). The following table is my indication of the EM number, the serial number of the existing copy (*Ausfertigung*, x) and the total number of those distributed (y):

EM	x of y	EM	x of y	EM	x of y	EM	x of y
6:	21 of 23	16:	19 of 30	24:	23 of 33	31:	30 of 40
7:	19 of 23	17:	21 of 32	25:	22 of 34	33:	17 of 41
9:	24 of 25	18:	18 of 32	25:	22 of 34	34:	29 of 41
10:	23 of 25	19:	19 of 32	26:	23 of 34	35:	27 of 43
12:	20 of 24	20:	21 of 32	27:	23 of 36	36:	32 of 43
13:	6 of 30	21:	21 of 32	28:	27 of 36	37:	23 of 45
14:	18 of 30	22:	22 of 30	29:	28 of 36		
15:	18 of 30	23:	21 of 32	30:	27 of 36		

EM No. 38 is Copy 33 of 45; in subsequent Incident Reports, Copy No. 36 prevails, as shown in the following summary:

**Table 6**

Copy #	# of times recurring	EMs in which the copies recur
11	2	44, 120
29	1	48
33	2	38, 45
34	4	39-42
35	3	43, 46, 47
36	71	49-51, 53-93, 95-97, 99-101, 103-119, 121-123, 127
47	1	102
48	1	125
51	46	128-132, 134, 136-144, 146-149, 152, 155, 160, 161, 163, 164, 169, 171-183, 186-188, 190, 192, 193, 195
52	1	145
57	17	133, 150, 153, 154, 156, 157, 159, 162, 165-168, 170, 184, 185, 189, 191, 194
60	1	135

The addressees of the copies of the reports were for the most part offices of the RSHA. The following is a list of those appearing in the table reproduced above:

**Table 7**

Copy No.	Addressee
11	Group II A 1 (Organization of the Security Police and Security Service) /RSHA
29	Group III A (Legislative and Reich Organizational Matters) /RSHA
33	Group IV B 4 (Jewish Matters, Evacuation Matters) /RSHA
34	Group IV E 2 (General Economic Matters, Industrial Counter-Intelligence) /RSHA
35	Group IV B (Sects) /RSHA
36	Higher SS and Police Leader Russia North
47	Group IV A ORR [ <i>Oberregierungsrat</i> ; Senior Civil Servant] Panzinger /RSHA
48	Group IV A 1 – <i>Kriminaldirektor</i> (Head of the Criminal Division) Lindow /RSHA
51	Group IV A 1 – KK ( <i>Kriminalkommissar</i> , Detective Superintendent) Dr. Knobloch /RSHA
52	<i>Belegexemplar</i> (specimen copy)

Every office mentioned in the distribution list should have possessed the complete series of copies of the Incident Reports intended for that office; for this reason, the above-described mixture of such disparate copies in the individual folders found by the Americans (and we do not even know to which office they belonged) is rather odd.



Headland affirms that EM No. 18 of 10 July 1941 contains the name Theodor Paeffgen in the distribution list for the first time, and notes that, comparing the copy number of the individual reports with the corresponding copy number in the distribution list, he found that many of the copies discovered by the Americans were sent to Paeffgen, and that, therefore, it is precisely to him “that we probably owe our knowledge of the reports. He, or his subordinates, obviously neglected to destroy the copies that were sent to him” (*ibid.*, p. 50).

This claim is nevertheless unacceptable, because, as shown by the distribution list of EM No. 38 of 30 July 1941, Paeffgen was supposed to receive the 33rd copy only (“Mission Intelligence Leader – RR Paeffgen (33rd copy)”; Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 209). But, as seen in Table 6, Copy No. 33 only pertains to two reports. Even if senior civil servant Paeffgen is mentioned in EM Nos. 12-17 as the particular addressee of the copy serial number (of EM No. 18, where he appears in the distribution list), it is clear that the majority of the copies of the reports found by the Americans could not have been sent to his office.

No less strange is the fact that almost 9,700 copies were made of these reports, which were supposed to be so secret and so compromising, but the Americans only found 194 out of 195 (report No. 158 is missing in the American collection). We must therefore assume that the SS destroyed the other 9500, approximately, and left only copies of these 194 EMs intact.

I do not wish to state that the Incident Reports currently available are forgeries, but these anomalies certainly deserve resolution.

There is another anomaly which no one appears to have noticed. In addition to the 195 Incident Reports, the documentation of the *Einsatzgruppen* includes 55 “Reports from the Occupied Eastern Territories” (“*Meldungen aus den besetzten Ostgebieten*”) and 11 “Activity and Situation Reports” (“*Tätigkeits- und Lageberichte*”). A total of over 10,000 copies were also made of these reports, each of which was no doubt read by several SS or police officials. Nevertheless, there is no known mention, not a single known comment, on these reports by their intended recipients, starting with Hitler, Himmler and Heydrich, right down to the last National Socialist official involved in the alleged extermination of the Jews. The immense majority of the German documents confiscated by the Allies constitute a dense fabric of reciprocal connections; the 261 *Einsatzgruppen* reports, by contrast, form a body unto itself, with no direct or indirect relationship to other documents, and this, too, should be explained.

There is another problem which orthodox Holocaust historiography has never even mentioned. The “Fact sheet for the leaders of the *Einsatzgruppen* and *Einsatzkommandos* of the Security Police and SD” cited earlier ordered the leaders of the *Einsatzgruppen* to keep a war diary.

The diaries of various units of the SS and Police are still in existence, but where are those of the *Einsatzgruppen*? As far as I know, there are no references to them in documents or testimony.

In the affidavit of 24 April 1947 (NO-2890), Ohlendorf gave a detailed account of the origin of the reports (TWC, Vol. IV, p. 94):

*“The reports of the Einsatzgruppen went to the armies or army groups and to the Chief of the Security Police and SD. Normally weekly or bi-weekly reports were sent to the Chief of the Security Police and SD by radio and written reports were sent to Berlin approximately every month. The army groups or armies were kept currently informed about the security in their area and other current problems. The reports to Berlin went to the Chief of the Security Police and SD in the Reich Security Main Office. After the creation of the command (headquarters) staff of the Chief of the Security Police and SD in about May 1942, this (staff) prepared the subsequent reports. The command staff consisted basically of Gruppenfuehrer (SS Major General) Mueller, chief of office IV, and Obersturmbannfuehrer (SS Lieutenant Colonel) Nosske, group chief in office IV, to whom specialists of offices III, IV, and VI were available for coordinating the composition of the reports. Questions which had to do with the personnel of the group and with garrisons went to office I. Administrative questions and matters concerning equipment were taken care of by office II. Information concerning the spheres of life (SD) went to office III. The chief of office IV received reports on the general security situation, including Jews and Communists. Information about the unoccupied Russian areas went to office VI.”*

Other defendants in the *Einsatzgruppen* trial supplied other important details in this regard. For instance, Heinz Hermann Schubert, former SS *Obersturmfuehrer* and member of *Einsatzgruppe D*, declared in his affidavit dated 4 February 1947 (NO-2716; *ibid.*, p. 98):

*“The Einsatzgruppe reported in two ways to the Reich Security Main Office, once through radio, then in writing. The radio reports were kept strictly secret and, apart from Ohlendorf, his deputy Standartenfuehrer Willy Seibert and the head telegraphist Fritsch, nobody, with the exception of the radio personnel, was allowed to enter the radio station. This is the reason why only the above-mentioned persons had knowledge of the exact contents of these radio reports. The reports were dictated directly to Fritsch by Ohlendorf or Seibert. After the report had been sent off by Fritsch, I received it for filing. In cases in which numbers of executions were reported a space was left open, so that I never knew the total amount of persons killed. The written reports were sent to Berlin by courier. These reports contained exact details and descriptions of the places in which the actions had taken place, the course of the operations, losses, number of places destroyed and persons killed, arrest of agents, reports on interrogations, reports on the civilian sector, etc.*

*When Ohlendorf was absent from the staff of the Einsatzgruppe, no reports were sent to Berlin.”*

Ex SS *Sturmbannfuehrer* Kurt Lindow supplied other information in this regard in his affidavit dated 21 July 1947 (NO-4327; *ibid.*, pp. 99f.):

*“3. In October 1941, till about middle of 1942, I first was deputy chief and later on chief of subdepartment IV A 1. This subdepartment dealt with communism, war*

crimes, and enemy propaganda; moreover, it handled the reports of the various *Einsatzgruppen* until the command staff was set up in 1942. The *Einsatzgruppen* in the East regularly sent their reports to Berlin by wireless or by letter. The reports indicated the various locations of the *Gruppen* and the most important events during the period under survey. I read most of these reports and passed them on to inspektor Dr. Knobloch of the criminal police who made them up into a compilation which at first was published daily under the title 'Operational Situation Reports U.S.S.R..' These reports were stencilled and I corrected them; afterwards they were mimeographed and distributed. The originals of the reports which were sent to the Reich Security Main Office were mostly signed by the commander of the *Einsatzgruppe* or his deputy.

4. The reports 'Operational Situation Reports U.S.S.R.', nos. 114, 115, 118, 121, 122, 128, 138, 141, 142, 144, 159, as shown to me, are photostats of the original reports drawn up by Dr. Knobloch in subdepartment IV A 1 of which I was the chief. I recognize them as such by the red bordering, discernible on the photostat, by their size, the types, and partial bordering. I identify the handwritten initials appearing on the various reports as those of persons employed with the Reich Security Main Office, but considering that 6 years have elapsed since, I cannot remember the full names of these persons whose handwritten initials appear on the documents. From the contents of the handwritten notes I conclude that these were made by Dr. Knobloch, and moreover I notice that various parts of the above-mentioned reports are extracted from the original reports of the *Einsatzgruppen* to the Reich Security Main Office.

5. On the strength of my position as deputy chief and, later on, chief of subdepartment IV A 1, I consider myself a competent witness, able to confirm that the 'Operational Situation Reports U.S.S.R.' which were published by the chief of the security police and the security service under file mark IV A 1 were compiled entirely from the original reports of the *Einsatzgruppen* reaching my subdepartment by wireless or by letter."

When the German army occupied a territory, an *Einsatzkommando* or *Sonderkommando* arrived from the *Einsatzgruppe* in charge, which was subdivided into *Teilkommandos* (sub-units or partial units). A task was assigned to each *Teilkommando*, which, when the task was completed, drew up a report, which was sent to the head of the *Teilkommando*. The heads of the *Teilkommandos* summarized them and transmitted them to the head of the *Einsatzkommando* or *Sonderkommando*. The reports were forwarded by courier or radio to the head of the *Kommando*. These were then discussed, compiled and drawn up in more detailed reports. This task was carried out by the personnel of the *Kommando* (generally, the head, his substitute and a few officials from the police and SD), each of whom concerned himself with one specific aspect of the activities of the *Einsatzgruppen*. The reports drawn up by the *Kommando* were then transmitted to the headquarters of the *Einsatzgruppe*. Here, other specifically appointed officers analyzed them and made new rough drafts of them. The final drafting of the reports was performed with the participation of the various heads of the SD, as well

as the heads of the *Einsatzgruppen*. The reports, signed by the head of the *Einsatzgruppe* or his deputy, were then sent to Berlin.

Headland concludes:

*“Thus the reports to this point were the result of several steps in a series in which a number of people – the men carrying out the operations, their leaders, various officials in the Kommandos, and those on the staff of the Einsatzgruppen headquarters – all came to bear on the content of the reports. The Kommando leaders and ultimately the Einsatzgruppen leaders exercised control over the reports, either by writing, reading, editing, approving, or signing them before forwarding them to Berlin.”*

The RSHA did not receive reports through this channel alone. The commanders of the Security Police and Security Service were unable to control the flow of information relating to their area of competence, and many reports reached Berlin through other channels, such as the reports of the Higher SS and Police leader (Headland, pp. 37-39).

Further along, Headland returns to the matter, summarizing it as follows (*ibid.*, p. 166):

*“It will be recalled that generally the leader of the subunits of the Kommandos would summarize the reports sent to him by his subordinates. This draft would then be sent to the leader of the Einsatzkommando or Sonderkommando, who would then compile a more comprehensive report from the reports of the various subunits. From the Einsatzkommando staff this report would then be sent to the headquarters of the Einsatzgruppe, where it would be combined with others and used as part of a further summary report drafted at Einsatzgruppe headquarters. These reports were then sent by the Einsatzgruppe to the RSHA. We have also seen that reports often bypassed the Einsatzgruppe headquarters and were sent directly to Berlin.”*

The directives for the collection of information and the drafting of reports were issued by Heydrich by means of Circular Decree of 3 July 1941 with the subject “Operation Barbarossa – here: Command Staff and Mission Intelligence Leader of the Reich Security Main Office.”

The mission intelligence leader was responsible for optimizing garrisons and operational direction of travel of *Einsatzgruppen* and *Einsatzkommandos*, in addition to all the informational technical links; another duty was to control the informational traffic between the RSHA and the *Einsatzgruppen* and vice versa. In particular, at the Berlin headquarters of the RSHA, the mission intelligence leader was entrusted with the task of:

*“issuing all reports and documents received from the Einsatzgruppen A to D, including their commands, following completion of fact-checking and compilation, without delay and without exception.”*

His office was therefore operational day and night. Teletypes, radio messages, or others arriving after 20:30 at night had to be presented without delay. Every day by 9:30 in the morning, the report compiled the day before, previously submitted

to the personal attention of SS *Brigadeführer* Heinrich Müller, had to be delivered to this same person in his capacity as head of the Gestapo, in addition to copies to the following offices:

- a) *Head of the Security Police and SD = 1 copy*
- b) *Adjutancy of the Security Police and SD = 1 copy*
- c) *Kommando Staff at Office IV = 2 copies*
- d) *Office head I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII = 7 copies*
- e) *Main Office = 1 copy*
- f) *II D, II D 1, II D 2, II D 3 = 4 copies*
- g) *Reserve = 5 1 copy, Sa. 21 copies.*"

The post of mission intelligence leader was entrusted to the previously mentioned SS *Hauptsturmführer Regierungsrat* Dr. Paeffgen (Angrick *et al.*, Doc. 15, pp. 49f.). The list of 21 addressees constituted the distribution list mentioned earlier.

On 21 October 1941, Müller issued a decree with the subject "Operation Barbarossa – Incorporation of the Mission Intelligence Leader into the Command Staff," which amended the Circular Decree of 3 July. The office of the Mission Intelligence Leader was abolished on July 26. Its tasks were reassigned to the Command Staff of Office IV, which was responsible for "both the technical and material evaluation of the reports from the *Einsatzgruppen* and squads deployed in Operation Barbarossa." There then followed the third and last decree (*ibid.*, Doc. 73, p. 213):

*"From this time forward, all incoming reports and documents received from Einsatzgruppen A to D are to be forwarded to the Command Staff from the Main Office (special entry point) by way of the Office Head IV after the completion of factual marking and compilation. Reports received during the night [are to be forwarded] at the start of the following working day."*

During the *Einsatzgruppen* Trial, there was lengthy discussion of the essential question of the true and proper drafting of the Incident Reports and other reports (Activity Reports and *Meldungen*) by the RSHA. Dr. Willi Heim, defending Paul Blobel, formulated the discussion in these terms: The documents may be classified as either "signed" or as "anonymous." In the first case, the document is "authentic" if it really originates from the signatory; in the contrary case, it is "false." But if it is not possible to ascertain who the signatory is, we cannot say whether the document is "authentic" or "false." Heim did not deny that the documents in question were "authentic," in the sense that they undoubtedly originated from the RSHA, but this did not necessarily imply that they were also the truth. All the defendants declared under oath that the reports were "highly unreliable, inaccurate and faulty, and that not only with regard to figures, but also with regard to the contents and the actual wording." This depended upon the compilation process of the reports, and therefore it was necessary to examine two crucial questions (TWC, Vol. IV, pp. 105f.):

*“How were the ‘Situation Reports U.S.S.R.’ and the ‘Operational situation reports’ of the Reich Security Main Office drafted? And the additional question: What sources of mistakes were thus provided and what effect did they have?”*

Incident Reports and Activity Reports were drafted in Department IV A 1 of the RSHA (Office IV constituted the *Geheime Staatspolizei* (Gestapo) and was directed by SS *Gruppenführer* Heinrich Müller), which concerned itself with “Communism, Marxism and accessory organizations, war crimes, illegal and enemy propaganda.” Until the end of April 1942, this section was the center into which flowed the reports from the *Einsatzgruppen*. Officials assigned to their processing included the head of the department, Kurt Lindow, and two of his colleagues, SS *Hauptsturmführer* Günther Knobloch and Rudolf Fumy. The *Einsatzgruppen* reports referred to the scope of tasks of Department III (*Deutsche Lebensgebiete*), which concerned itself with administrative, racial, cultural and economic matters, for which Office IV, which specialized in executive tasks, did not possess the necessary competence. Office IV was therefore called upon to deal with matters with which it was not familiar, leading to inexactitude and error. Department IV A 1 moreover had extremely limited personnel, who did not even possess the technical tools to clarify dubious cases.

Another source of error was the insufficiency of communications media. The *Einsatzgruppen* were often more than 1000 km from Berlin, rendering the transmission of information difficult, not so much due to the distance in itself, but rather because the forwarding of teletypes and written reports depended upon the contingencies of the communications equipment, which worked at highly variable rates of speed, resulting in the irregular arrival of reports, leading to distortions and misunderstandings. Under such circumstances, there was the possibility that the same information might arrive by teletype or by courier; various reports with succeeding dates were registered before reports drawn up previously, which took longer to arrive at the analytical center of Department IV A 1. In dubious cases, it was considered preferable to repeat the same figures or simply use the highest ones.

The conditions under which the reports were drawn up were so unsatisfactory that in April 1942 a radical change was made in their compilation. The personnel of Department IV A 1 worked under Heydrich’s orders, and were therefore highly interested in presenting the most favorable picture of the situation possible, and in evading the risk of unpleasant consequences in the contrary case. After all, Russia was far away, and no one could verify the correctness of the data appearing in the reports. The problem of unreliable reports increased as the war dragged on, as Himmler himself lamented in his speech at Posen on 4 October 1943 (TWC, Vol. IV, pp. 108f.):

*“I now come to a fourth virtue which is very scarce in Germany – truthfulness. One of the major evils, which developed during the war, is untruthfulness in reports, statements, and information, which subordinate offices send to their superior offices in civilian life, in the state, Party, and armed forces. Reports or state-*

*ments are the base for every decision. The truth is that in many branches one can assume in the course of this war that 95 out of 100 reports are plain lies or only half true or half correct.”*

The fundamental problem therefore remained, i.e., the fact that the original documents originating from the *Einsatzgruppen* which were used by Department IV A 1 in drawing up the reports were no longer available, and that, therefore, no one could ascertain the degree of reliability of the reports (*ibid.*, p. 109):

*“The statements made hitherto were concerned only with the working conditions which existed in suboffice IV A 1. If the unsatisfactory conditions which prevailed there were already enough to cause this office to turn out piece work and incomplete results only, the sources of deficiency were further extended by the so-called report or information channel from subordinate to superior offices. We established – suboffice IV A 1 received the reports directly from the *Einsatzgruppen*. However, these reports were again only a summary of that which the individual detachments reported in writing, orally, or by teletype; added to this were other sources which, in case of measures to be taken by other, independently working units, or in case of cooperation of several units, were supplied. There is no doubt that the evaluation of the reports collected by the *Einsatzgruppen* was handled differently and was subject, to a great extent, to the attitude of the group chief and his departmental assistants. But this had taken place once already in a similar manner in most of the *Einsatz-* or *Sonderkommandos*, because it was not expedient to have the reports sent directly from the *Teilkommando* to the *Einsatzgruppe*, which might have resulted from a particularly difficult task or from special conditions of the area of operations.*

*It was a rule to send the reports of the *Teilkommandos* first to the *Kommando* chiefs. He based his activity report to the *Einsatzgruppen* on the reports received by him, or he had them drafted by his assistant [*Sachbearbeiter*], according to the distribution of task which was in force in his detachment. If the exhibits submitted by the prosecution were identical with the above-mentioned original reports and if they perhaps even bore the signature of the *Kommando* chief concerned, then objection against their correctness would have little hope to be successful; then the fact that the author of the document would have lied either when drafting the document or now in the trial because he is not brave enough to state the truth would be established.*

*The defense too – its interest in the establishing of the unrestricted truth is just as great as that of any other party in the trial – regrets that it is not possible to submit the original reports of the *Einsatzgruppen* and *Einsatz* or *Sonderkommandos* as documentary evidence.”*

Headland notes that, according to the above-mentioned Rudolf Fumy, the reports drawn up by Department IV A 1 contained “errors, distortions, and omissions of various kinds”; these errors, in the words of this German official, “should not be considered an exact description of the actual events and that they can be taken as a literal repetition of the original reports in a very limited scope only.” Department personnel were insufficient to concern themselves with the constantly in-

creasing quantities of material, and this fact resulted in an increasing superficiality of the work. Moreover, Heinrich Müller played an important role in preparing the reports, accentuating or eliminating material in the reports depending on whether it was favorable or unfavorable to the other bodies of the Reich (Headland, p. 167).

This situation also had repercussions on the statistics relating to executions. During the *Einsatzgruppen* Trial, Ohlendorf declared that the figure of 90,000 persons executed by himself, as mentioned in various interrogations, was approximate, and that 15-20% of them resulted from double counting. Indeed, he went even further, stating that he was amazed that he could remember the figure in question, since he had no record of the numbers of executed persons, adding (TWC, Vol. IV, p. 256):

*"I must now state solemnly that in the Reich Security Main Office, Heydrich, Mueller, and Streckenbach, and all the others who knew about these matters, intentionally exaggerated and invented the numbers of Einsatzgruppen A, B, and C. In the case of B, I mean the period of Nebe especially. I am convinced that these figures, which, if I add the numbers in the documents, are not even half of what the prosecution charges me with, are exaggerated by about twice as much."*

Dr. Rudolf Aschenauer, Ohlendorf's defense counsel, noted that EM No. 89 dated 20 September 1941 attributed the execution of 8,890 Jews and Communists between 19 August and 25 August to *Einsatzgruppe D*, positioned at Kikerino; the same date appears in EM No. 95 dated 26 September 1941, but in reference to Nikolayev as its position, commenting:

*"It is my opinion that from the operational situation reports, not a single sentence can be identified with a sentence of an original report from the Einsatzgruppen and the Einsatzkommandos, but on the contrary, as becomes evident from these two reports, the operational situation reports are made up from the original reports, and they are full of mistakes and are not compiled with the viewpoint of passing on accurate figure reports."* (*ibid.*)

Another striking example of this laxity may be found in EM No. 106 dated 7 October 1941, where *Einsatzgruppe C* reported that at Kiev "the liquidation of approximately 35,000 Jews on 29 and 30 September 41 made an equivalent number of houses available" ...then, in the same EM, that "*Sonderkommando 4a* executed 33,771 Jews on 29 and 30 September [1941]" (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, pp. 640, 642).

A repetition of identical figures also appears in two other reports. EM No. 152 of 7 January 1942 says:<sup>32</sup>

*"420 persons were court-martialled and shot in Vilnius on 22 December 41. 385 of them were Jews, the rest Poles guilty of participation in Communist activities."*

EM No. 154 of 12 January notes:<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> NARA, T-175/234, p. 9 (2723314).

<sup>33</sup> NARA, T-175/234, p. 28 (2723583).



*“402 persons were court-martialled and shot in Vilnius on 22 Decembr 41. 385 of them were Jews, the rest Poles.”*

Headland supplies additional examples of errors and repetitions (Headland, p. 169). EM No. 86 of 17 September 1941 attributes 6,584 victims to SK 7a (“Bolsheviks, Jews and asocial elements”; Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 477) to *Sonderkommando* 7a, while EM No. 80 of 11 September states: “The execution total of SK 4a thus reached 7,152 persons on 24 August 41” (*ibid.*, p. 444).

EM No. 19 of 11 July 1941 announced the killing of 600 Jews at Tarnopol (Ternopol; *ibid.*, p. 104); this is repeated in EM No. 47 of 9 August (*ibid.*, p. 264).

EM No. 165 of 6 February 1942 says: “The last 38 Jews and Gypsies were executed on 1 February 42 in Loknya”;<sup>34</sup> this communication also appears in EM No. 181 of 16 March: “38 Jews and 1 gypsy were shot in Loknya.”<sup>35</sup>

Aschenauer moreover notes that EM No. 117 of 18 October 1941 gives a total figure of 40,699 persons executed by 15 October by *Einsatzgruppe* D, (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 696), but EM No. 129 of 5 November supplies a total of 31,767 (*ibid.*, p. 753).

In Ohlendorf’s cross-examination, he was asked to supply a minimum figure of persons shot by *Einsatzgruppe* D, since he considered the figure of 90,000 previously mentioned by him to have been exaggerated. The defendant replied:<sup>36</sup>

*“In my direct examination I have already said that I cannot give any definite figure, and that even the testimony in my affidavit shows that in reality I could not name any figure. Therefore, I have named a figure which has been reported ‘approximately.’ The knowledge which I have gained by this day through the documents and which I have gained through conversations with my men, make me reserve the right to name any figure and strengthen this reservation. Therefore, I am not in a position to give you a minimum figure, either. In my direct examination I have said that the numbers which appear in the documents are at least exaggerated by one-half, but I must repeat that I never knew any definite figure and, therefore, cannot give you any such figure.”*

In his appeal for clemency, submitted by Defense Counsel Rudolf Aschenauer, Ohlendorf asserted that the victims of the *Einsatzgruppen* did not amount to one million, as claimed by the prosecution, but 450,000 (Earl, p. 268). This does not diminish the horror of the crime, but is undoubtedly of value in terms of historiography.

Headland recognizes that “there is also evidence to suggest that some of the *Einsatzkommando* and *Einsatzgruppen* leaders deliberately exaggerated the numbers of persons shot for their own self-aggrandizement” (Headland, pp. 97, 102). He also supplies some important data in this regard.

<sup>34</sup> NARA, T-175/234, p. 11/2723799.

<sup>35</sup> NARA, T-175/235, p. 7/2723987.

<sup>36</sup> TWC, Vol. IV, pp. 257-258, and 270.

A number of documents indicate that the total number of victims as of 2 February 1942 for the area of *Einsatzgruppe A* was 163,003. But the “Summary Report of 16 October – 31 January 1942,” in its statistical summary of executions, supplies a total of 229,052 Jews killed. He also notes that “when we add up the totals that are given in this report by area, we get a total of 274,605 persons killed, including the pogroms in Lithuania” (*ibid.*, p. 103).

Headland states that the “Summary Report until 15 October 1941” (the first Stahlecker Report) mentions a total of 81,171 persons killed in Lithuania. The document in question explicitly declares that “the total number of liquidated Jews amounts to 71,105,” a figure to which the 5,000 pogrom victims should be added, so that the total should be 76,105 (L-180, IMT, Vol. 37, p. 688). But the summary of executions supplies the figure of 80,311 Jews and 860 Communists, a total of exactly 81,171 (*ibid.*, p. 702).

Headland informs us that this figure also contains approximately 42,000 persons killed by the *Einsatzkommando* at Siauliai before *Einsatzkommando 3* reached the area on 2 October 1941 (Headland, table on p. 98). The Jäger Report lists 100,332 victims by 15 October 1941, plus 3,050 over the period from 28 September to 17 October. Given the lengthy period of time over which the executions were carried out and the order of magnitude of the total figures, the figure for the period 15-17 October can hardly be considered important, since the total figure amounts to 103,382 victims. To this should be added the 4,000 Jewish victims of pogroms carried out by Lithuanians, *i.e.*, a total of 106,798. This figure does not include the approximately 42,000 victims mentioned above, which brings the grand total to more than 145,000. How are we to reconcile this figure with Stahlecker’s figure of 81,171?

Headland admits that

*“the claim that the numbers were exaggerated would also seem to have some basis in fact. Sources other than those used at the trial suggest that numbers were altered to produce a more favorable picture. Some historians have quite readily accepted that exaggerations took place in order to prevent [sic; read: convey] an impressive picture of the Kommando’s activities.”* (Headland, p. 173)

The “Summary Report from 16 October 1941 to 31 January 1942,” also known as the second Stahlecker Report, devotes an entire paragraph to Latvia. Based on the 1935 census, there were only 93,479 Jews in the country.<sup>37</sup> An undated set of statistics, entitled “*Juden in Lettland 1940*” (“Jews in Latvia 1940”) provides a detailed report on the Jewish population of the country: 93,904 persons, 44,122 of them in the city of Riga, 7,552 in the county of Liepaja (Libava), 17,763 in Daugavpils County.<sup>38</sup> Stahlecker informs us that,

*“when the German troops moved in, there were still 70,000 Jews in Latvia. The rest had fled with the Bolsheviks. The remaining Jews were highly active as sabo-*

<sup>37</sup> RGVA, 500-4-92, p. 57.

<sup>38</sup> LVVA, P-1026-1-3, p. 213.

*teurs and arsonists. The Jews set so many fires in Daugavpils that a large part of the city was destroyed.”*

The report then says that 30,000 Jews had been executed by October 1941:

*“The remaining Jews who were still indispensable in terms of economic life, were confined to ghettos, set up in Riga, Daugavpils and Liepaja.”*

Approximately 2,500 Jews were shot at Riga, approximately 950 at Daugavpils and approximately 300 at Liepaja, a total of 3,750. Other executions took place after October 1941: 11,034 Jews were shot at Daugavpils on 9 November, 27,800 at Riga at the beginning of December and 2,350 at Liepaja in mid-December, a total of 41,184.<sup>39</sup>

According to the summary table of executions, which extends to 1 February 1942, 35,338 Jews were shot in Latvia, plus 5,500 killed “in pogroms.” But this figure is listed in the columns for “Lithuania” and “Latvia,” and therefore refers to these two countries.<sup>40</sup> The Jäger Report attributes 4,000 victims to the pogrom in Lithuania (see Chapter 4), therefore 1,500 regard Latvia, and the number of Jews killed according to this report was 36,738. Now, if 30,000 Jews were shot by the month of October, and another 41,184 were killed in the two following months, for a total of 71,184, why does the summary table of executions report them as numbering 35,238 (+ 1,500)? On the other hand, since there were 3,750 Jews in the ghettos, there were not 70,000 Jews in Latvia, upon the arrival of German troops, but (71,184 + 3,750 =) 74,934.

The Jews killed in Lithuania, according to the summary table of executions, amounted to 136,421, plus some fraction of those 5,500 killed in the pogrom – according to the Jäger Report, 4,000 persons, for a total of 140,421. The total figure of Jews executed according to this report is some 135,352, but this includes 9,606 Latvian Jews from Daugavpils, so that for Lithuania the figure of (135,352 – 9,606 =) 125,746 should apply. Adding these 9,606 to the total for Latvia, we obtain (35,238 + 1,500 + 9,606 =) 46,344, a figure which does not square with that of 71,184.

The report in question contains another obvious error. On 11 November 1941, “The commander of the security police and SD Latvia, Office Daugavpils,” informed the local District Commissioner: “On 9 November 1941, 1,134 Jews were executed in Daugavpils.”<sup>41</sup> Therefore, if 17,763 Jews lived in the county of Daugavpils in 1940, 9,606 of whom were shot in August 1941, and 950 were in the ghetto on 1 February 1942, it is not possible for there to have been 11,034 victims on 9 November, because in that case the total number would have been greater than the initial figure: 9,606 + 950 + 11,034 = 21,590. The correct figure should therefore be 1,134. This is confirmed by the letter from the General Commissioner in Riga to the Reich Commissioner for the *Ostland* (*Reichskommissar für das Ostland*) dated 20 October 1941, according to which “there are 2,185 Jews in the

<sup>39</sup> RGVA, 500-4-92, pp. 58f.

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*, p. 184.

<sup>41</sup> LVVA, P-132-30-14, p. 33.

county of Daugavpils”;<sup>42</sup> subtracting the 950 detainees in the ghetto, there were 1,235 remaining persons, a figure compatible with the execution of 1,134.

As regards Liepaja, the figure of 2,350 does not correspond to the figure stated in War Diary No. 1 of the SS and Police Garrison Leader Liepaja (*Kriegstagebuch Nr. 1 des SS- und Polizeistandortführers Libau*) and other documents: 2,749 (see Part Two, Chapter 7).

It follows that  $(1,134 + 27,800 + 2,749 =)$  31,683 Jews were shot in Latvia during the months of November and December 1941, making 61,683 Jews, if we add the 30,000 shot at the end of October; but even this figure contradicts the figure 35,238 (+1,500) in the summary table. What is more, even the figure of 27,800 Jews shot at Riga is contradictory and unsupported by evidence (see Chapter 4).

The number of Jews shot in “Lithuania,” according to the Stahlecker Report, as stated above, was 136,421 (without the pogrom). This figure is taken from a communication from the “Commander of the Security Police and SD, Kaunas” (in German: Kauen, Kovno or Kowno) addressed “to Group A – Riga” dated 8 February 1942, which explicitly states that the figure in question – 136,421 – represented the number of executions carried out “by *Einsatzkommando 3*” starting on 1 February 1942. The total number of victims is given as 138,272, which includes 1,851 non-Jews.<sup>43</sup> The Jäger Report, the source of this figure, reports a total of 133,346 persons shot (without the pogrom), 131,656 of whom were Jews and 1,960 were non-Jews. The total number of Jewish victims includes 3,031 Jews from Byelorussia, 9,012 Latvian Jews (from Daugavpils) and 4,934 Jews from the Reich, for a total of 16,977 non-Lithuanian Jews, not included in the statistics for Lithuania; the correct figure should therefore be  $(136,421 - 16,977 =)$  119,444.

As regards the reliability of the figures for these executions, there is another, more-specific problem, which no one has ever bothered with: how did they perform the counts and register the victims? The documents report interminable series of figures, but do not explain how they were established. The ordinary practice of the *Einsatzkommandos*, when they reached a locality, was to set up a ghetto or Jewish district, require the Jewish population to wear a distinctive sign, and register them by name. The resulting lists would have constituted a valid support for the executions, because they would have made it possible to establish not only the exact numbers of persons shot but the names of all persons who may have escaped execution as well. But no such use of the lists in question was ever attested to by any document. As an alternative, it would have been necessary to appoint an officer or non-commissioned officer responsible for counting the victims and annotating the numbers in an appropriate register (as fantasized about in the stories concerning “Aktion 1005” where counting the exhumed and cremated bodies is mentioned; see Part Two of this study). However, not even this is supported by

<sup>42</sup> GARF, 7445-2-145, p. 46.

<sup>43</sup> RGVA, 500-1-25/1, p. 170.

documentary evidence. Ohlendorf, in this regard, explicitly declared (TWC, Vol. IV, p. 256):

*“I did not keep a register of these figures.”*

Since the *Einsatzgruppen* reports often dwell at length on absolutely insignificant matters, the fact that the aspects mentioned above were never mentioned can only mean that they never existed.

Hence one might argue that the victim figures, except for the most insignificant ones, were not the results of a real count, but mere approximate guesses, sometimes rounded up, to give an impression, such as, for example, the figure for the number of victims at Babi Yar: 33,771!

But there is also the problem of willful exaggerations, as noted by Headland (as quoted here on p. 59). It is obvious that the heads of the *Einsatzgruppen*, on all levels, wished to give their superiors the impression of being hyper-active in all realms, including executions.

There is another important matter with regard to which the reports are very reticent. On 22 January 1942, von dem Bach-Zelewski stated, in a report to the SS, that the temperature had fallen to -42°C for two days.<sup>44</sup>

EM No. 170 of 18 February 1942 dwells at length on Leningrad and supplies the following information (Mallmann 2014 *et al.*, p. 161):

*“In the course of January there began a veritable mass die-off among the civilian population. In particular, towards the end of the day, the bodies were brought out of the houses on hand-sleds to the cemeteries, where they were simply thrown into the snow, due to the impossibility of digging graves in the hard-frozen ground.”*

EM No. 189 of 3 April 1942, *Einsatzgruppe A* mentions a temperature of -45°C (*ibid.*, p. 256), while EM No. 195 from *Einsatzgruppe B* of 24 April 1942 speaks of -48°C in Smolensk (*ibid.*, p. 327). On 6 February 1942, the same source mentioned that “the ground in Byelorussia was frozen solid to a depth of 2 metres,” as a result of which, we may suppose, it was impossible to dig mass graves. The winter of 1942 was particularly harsh, and the soil remained frozen solid for months. On the other hand, the executions listed in the reports would have required the excavation – which would never have been easy – of numerous mass graves. How were they dug – and filled in again afterwards? Were these difficulties, which would inevitably have influenced the number of executions, really unworthy of mention in the reports?

## 1.5. *Einsatzgruppen* “Justifications” for Killing Jews

Headland notes that

*“the Einsatzgruppen reporters for the most part did not simply record the killings, but felt the need to use euphemisms in their reports to cover up the act of murder.”*

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<sup>44</sup> TNA, HW 16-53.

*In the same way they also gave ‘reasons’ for their actions in order to justify them.”* (Headland, p. 72)

The importance of the problem is obvious: If Hitler, in the summer of 1941, had ordered the extermination of the Soviet Jews, as Jews, what need did the commanders of the *Einsatzgruppen* have to justify their individual killings?

Headland claims that this was done based on two fundamental ideas (*ibid.*):

*“The first was the fact that in presenting justifications for their deeds, the Einsatzgruppen leaders believed they were thereby providing themselves with a ‘legal’ basis for the killings. While they may have believed that it was correct to annihilate the Jews, such a belief certainly had no foundation in law. With an eye to the future, and for their activities, the Einsatzgruppen constantly depicted the executions as reprisals against so-called criminal acts of Jews, partisans, and others. This protection was therefore outward-looking, a means of the defense against external scrutiny.”*

One might object that, for convinced National Socialists, like the heads of the *Einsatzgruppen*, any *Führerbefehl* was sufficient source of “legality,” and that, at a time when they were convinced that the collapse of the Soviet Union was not far off, they were unlikely to have been so far-seeing as to create alibis for themselves in any future trial brought against them by the Allies. In addition, the majority of the reports were intended for offices and departments of the RSHA. This interpretation is therefore unsustainable.

Headland’s reasoning is also logically unfounded, since it presupposes as fact that the Jews were killed “as Jews,” and not, as constantly stated in the reports, “as reprisals against so-called criminal acts of Jews, partisans, and others.” Headland therefore presupposes that these explanations are false, and then uses the alleged falsity of the explanations to prove that they are false, and to explain why they are false!

The second idea, Headland continues, was more subtle: a sort of self-justification to render the onerous reality of the killings acceptable (*ibid.*, pp. 72f.). Such an explanation reminds us to some extent of Raul Hilberg’s claim that “psychological justifications were an essential part of the killing operations” (Hilberg 2003, Vol. I, p. 341).

This may be valid for the material executors of the killings, but it certainly does not apply to the compilers of the final reports, who were simple office-bound bureaucrats in Department IV A 1 of the RSHA, working only with pencils and typewriters. They had no reason to “justify themselves.”

Krausnick’s conjecture that the above-mentioned justifications were imposed by Heydrich upon the commanders of the *Einsatzgruppen* as a sort of “convention of speech” (*Sprachregelung*; Headland, p. 74), quite apart from contradicting Headland’s explanations, has no basis in documentary fact. As regards the various locutions used in referring to the killings, one may speak of “euphemisms” in the sense of an ordinary bureaucratic language. Since the original reports have not survived, we do not even know whether this practice was adopted by the

heads of the *Einsatzgruppen* or by the compilers of the final reports in the Gestapo.

Headland himself notes that, in the improbable event that the alleged “camouflaging and justifications” had really achieved their purpose, it does not explain why they were not adopted in all the reports; moreover, alongside “camouflage terms” such as “special treatment” or “rendered harmless,” the reports also use crude and ordinary terms such as “shoot, liquidate, or annihilate.” In view of this simple fact, Headland has no answer except the trite chorus of the “irrationality” of National Socialism (*ibid.*, p. 77):

*“This question provides an example of the inexplicable and irrational quality inherent in much National Socialist thinking and methodology.”*

Thus is the irrationality of orthodox Holocaust historiography “explained” by blaming it on the alleged “irrationality” of the National Socialists.

Hilberg lists 25 terms and locutions used in the reports to refer to executions, some of which are very explicit, as Headland admits, such as “*hingerichtet*” (put to death, executed), “*exekutiert*” (executed), “*ausgemerzt*” (eradicated), “*liquidiert*” (liquidated), “*erledigt*” (finished off; Hilberg 2003, Vol. I, p. 338). Now, if “conventions of speech” really existed, it would necessarily have been adopted by the compilers of the reports of Department IV A 1, which would have applied the system uniformly to the reports redacted by themselves, always utilizing the same pre-established terms.

On the other hand, the true significance of the “camouflage” terms may sometimes only be seen from the context; when this is not explicit, the meaning should not be taken for granted. This is true in particular for “*Sonderbehandlung*” (special treatment), “*Sonderaktion*” (special operation) and “*Umsiedlung*” (resettlement). For example, EM No. 156 of 16 January 1942 mentions “special treatment” (Mallmann 2014 *et al.*, p. 89):

*“The evangelical-Lutheran church is attempting to obtain special treatment from German authorities, which should manifest itself in the form of governmental support of a financial nature in particular.”*

No. 6 of the “Reports from the Occupied Eastern Territories” (5 June 1942) refers to a “special operation” in which “2500 cubic metres of firewood, among other things, were distributed to needy persons.”<sup>45</sup> No. 50 (16 April 1943) says:<sup>46</sup>

*“A certain quantity of manpower was obtained by means of police special operations.”*

A message intercepted by the British on 15 August 1941 mentioned a “student special operation” which consisted of allocating 30,000 RM to the students.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>45</sup> NARA, T-175/235, p. 21, 2724466.

<sup>46</sup> NARA, T-175/236, p. III, 2725806.

<sup>47</sup> TNA, HW 16-6, Summary of messages intercepted between 15 and 31 August 1941. ZIP/MSGP.28/12.9.41, p. 6.

“*Umsiedlung*” is sometimes clearly used as a synonym for execution, while on other occasions it means what it translates to: resettlement;<sup>48</sup> in some cases it seems to be distinct from execution, as in this example:<sup>49</sup>

*“As a result of the measures taken by Einsatzkommando 6, the towns of Gorlovka and Makeyevka are now free of Jews. Some of them, remaining in Stalino, will be resettled as soon as the weather permits it. A total of 493 persons were executed here (including 80 political activists, 44 saboteurs and looters and 369 Jews).”*

Here, by contrast, we appear to have the inexplicable use of the “camouflage” term “resettled” and the undisguised word “executed” in the same context.

The same is true of the term “evacuation.” For example, the “Activity Report of the SS and Police Garrison Leader Liepaja” of 29 December 1941, notes:<sup>50</sup>

*“2,749 Jews were evacuated in the period from 14 to 17 December 41.”*

The reference is to the executions at Liepaja (see Part Two, Chapter 7); but just a few pages before, the report informs us:<sup>51</sup>

*“100 Gypsies were evacuated from the city of Liepaja on 5 December 41.”*

War Diary No. 1 of the SS and Police Garrison Leader Liepaja, which covers the period from 20 September 1941 to 30 November 1943, lists all the executions of Jews and non-Jews carried out at Liepaja during this period, but these 100 Gypsies are not mentioned (see Krausnick/Wilhelm, pp. 571-574).

An “Annex of All Administrative Orders of the Commander” in the rear of Army Group Center of 1 August 1941 says:<sup>52</sup>

*“Jews have been evacuated from numerous municipalities. [...] The Jewish evacuations resulted in numerous Jews of all ages and both genders wandering across the countryside from village to village and from city to city.”*

In some cases the execution was the consequence of a scheduled evacuation that proved unfeasible, as in the report from Kriminalrat Schmidt (*Reichssicherheitsdienst, Gruppe Geheime Feldpolizei, Sicherungsgruppe Ost*) of 12 January 1942:

*“227 Jews lived in the village of Strihawka[?]. The large number of Jews is attributed to the fact that there was a large GPU camp in the area. Since the Jews represented a great danger to the installation, I filed an application with the district commissioner to evacuate them. As a result of especially difficult circumstances, evacuation proved impossible. The Jews were therefore executed on 10 Jan. 1942 between 8.30 and 10.30 hrs.”*

The mass grave was excavated with explosives due to the frost.<sup>53</sup> Of course, this raises the question of how those graves were later filled in.

<sup>48</sup> See Subchapter 3.5 and Part Two, Subchapter 8.6.

<sup>49</sup> EM No. 177 of 6 March 1942. Mallmann 2014 *et al.*, p. 195.

<sup>50</sup> LVVA, P-83-1-25, p. 50.

<sup>51</sup> *ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>52</sup> LVVA, P-70-5-23, p. 24.

<sup>53</sup> YVA, O.53-6, pp. 20f.



There is another problem. Some documents appear to testify to the existence of an order to exterminate the Jews. For example, in the “Summary Report of 16 October – 31 January 1942,” *Einsatzgruppe A* reports:<sup>54</sup>

*“According to the basic orders, the systematic cleansing operation in the East included the elimination of Jewry as completely as possible. With the exception of Byelorussia, this objective was largely achieved through the execution of 229,052 Jews so far (see Annex).”*

The “Summary Report until 15 October 1941” of *Einsatzgruppe A* mentions the “carrying out of basic orders” (“*Durchführung grundsätzlicher Befehle*”).<sup>55</sup>

What these “basic orders” were, and where and by whom they were issued, remains unknown. But if they really existed, it would have made no sense to justify the various executions, as it would have been more than sufficient to indicate (as in other documents) that the victims were “treated as per orders.”

The existence of “basic orders” does not in any case resolve the question raised in the preceding paragraphs, because we still do not know whether they regarded Jews as Jews or as supporters of Bolshevism. These hypotheses are excluded explicitly by the first report, since at the end it contains a paragraph titled “The Jews from the Reich,” which refers to the deportation of 20,000 Jews from the Reich to Riga who were not subjected to any policy of extermination.

There is another possibility that does not appear ever to have been taken into consideration by orthodox Holocaust historiography, and that is a diversification of the orders to the individual *Einsatzgruppen* based on the theaters of operation in which they operated. This could explain the occasional differences in methods followed, which may not necessarily be attributable to the differing rates of speed of advance of the units of the army to which the *Einsatzgruppen* were linked.

The *Einsatzgruppen* reports moreover present aspects which clash not only with Headland’s interpretation as presented above, but with the general statistics of the shootings as well. There are frequent reports of shootings of minuscule groups of Jews, sometimes a single individual, usually with a plethora of explanations and wealth of detail. The following are a few examples.

EM No. 20 of 12 July 1941, *Einsatzgruppe C*:

*“150 Ukrainians were found murdered in Stryi. By way of initiated investigations it was possible to arrest 12 Communists sharing responsibility for the murders. They consisted of 11 Jews and 1 Ukrainian, who were shot with the participation of the entire population of Stryi.”* (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 109)

EM No. 24 of 16 July 1941, *Einsatzgruppe A*:

A report of a case of arson at Daugavpils (*ibid.*, p. 128):

*“The Jews were decisively involved in the arson cases. 5 Jews were caught in the act during the first 3 days and instantly shot.”*

<sup>54</sup> RGVA, 500-4-92 (PS-2273), p. 56.

<sup>55</sup> L-180. IMT, Vol. 37, p. 689.

EM No. 36 of 28 July 1941, Einsatzgruppe B:

*“12 Jewesses were also shot who could be proven to have been active as Communist Party agitators already during the Polish campaign.” (ibid., p. 195)*

EM No. 47 of 9 August 1941, Einsatzgruppe C:

*“2 Jewish Communists who had attempted to lure smaller detachments into an ambush were also finished off.” (ibid., p. 265)*

EM No. 67 of 29 August 1941, Einsatzgruppe B:

*“11 Jews were executed in the villages of Szuchari [Sukhari] and Yasna. Some of them had been guilty of sniping, others of engaging in Communist agitation. Among the liquidated Jews was one Communist party official who is said to have been a commissar.” (ibid., p. 376)*

One Jewess was shot “for sabotage,” as well as 8 male Jews, “for attempting to intimidate the population through the spreading of false rumors.”

*“A Jewess who treacherously persuaded a German soldier to open a door, detonating an explosive charge which tore his lower arm off, was arrested after an investigation conducted by the Einsatzkommando. The Jewess was then publicly hanged.”*

*“Another 10 Jews from Minsk, who spread anti-German propaganda among the population until the end, were also shot.” (ibid.)*

EM No. 73 of 14 September 1941, Einsatzgruppe B:

1 male Jew “who had destroyed a cable installation of the German army” was shot (*ibid.*, p. 403).

EM No. 92 of 2 September 1941, Einsatzgruppe B:

*“In Novozybkov, an elderly Jew and a former NKVD militia man, who had been in constant contact with the partisans and had transmitted messages to them, were treated accordingly, in improvised fashion.”*

*“Further a half-Jew was transferred from the POW camp in Minsk, who, as a long-time party member, had been a Politruk and political divisional commander in the Russian army. He was liquidated together with 3 other Jews, who had worked actively in the NKVD under Bolshevik rule and who refused to wear the insignia prescribed for Jews. In Minsk, a Jewess who had worked as an interpreter with the Field Commander’s Office and who had pretended to be a Pole in order to be appointed to that position, was shot.” (ibid., p. 545)*

EM No. 131 of 10 November 1941, Einsatzgruppe A:

*“On 20 October 1941, the Jew Max Wulfson was arrested in his dwelling in Riga. Wulfson was under heavy suspicion of having acted as a contact man for Karl Kühndorff, a teacher who had emigrated from Germany in 1933 and who was in contact with Soviet Russian and English agents.” (ibid., p. 767)*

*“During the arrest of a Jew from Liepaja, large quantities of strychnine, enough to poison over 1,000 people, were found in his dwelling. The poison had been in the hands of the Jew for quite some time. He gave unbelievable explanations as to the origins of the poison. He was executed.” (ibid., p. 768)*

EM No. 133 of 14 November 1941, Einsatzgruppe B:

*“On the same day [16 October 1941] the Jews Stanislaus Bonski and Tolja Ahonim as former NKVD-agents, and the Jews Simon Alexandrovich, Schuster Peiser and Michael Sakei were liquidated for possession of explosives. On the same day, the Jewess Cadine Orlov was executed for failure to wear the Jewish identifying mark and for refusing to move to the ghetto. On 18 October 1941, the Jews Lova Wasmann, Ferna Birkman, Jakob Saravo, Abraham Linden, Abraham Baraniche, Salomon Katzman and Behr Katzmann as well as the Jewess Fenia Leikina were liquidated for refusing to wear the Jewish identifying mark and for distributing anti-German agitation propaganda. On 20 October 1941, the Jew Stanilov Naum and the Jewish married couple Alär were liquidated for concealing themselves outside the ghetto in Mogilev. On 14 October 1941, the Jew Isaak Pyaskin, who had been a political collaborator of the Red Army and was found on the forward advance road towards Vyazma under suspicious circumstances, was shot by the advance unit of EK 9. On 17 October 1941, the Jew Maria Spirina was shot by the advance unit of EK 9 for serving as a gunwoman. On 21 October 1941, the Jew Joel Lyubavin was shot after being found in a Russian bunker in possession of a firearm not far from Vyazma.”*

*“On 17 October 1941, the Jew Samuel Goffmann was shot for carrying a false identity document for the purpose of concealing the fact that he was a Jew. [...] 2 Jewesses were liquidated for setting fire to two houses in Bobruisk during an aerial attack during the night of 13 October 1941.” (ibid., p. 788)*

EM No. 146 of 15 December 1941, Einsatzgruppe B:

*“The Jew Elia Lapitzki and the Russians Ivan Matveyev, Nikolai Stepanenko, Gregory Skobilev and Semen Agafonov were shot for membership in a partisan group and/or for acting as informants for partisans. The Jew Bruck, residing in Bychikha, was proven to have supplied the partisans with several pigs. He was handed over to the Wehrmacht at their request and publicly hanged.”*

*“In connection with Rishin’s arrest [Rishin was a Russian arsonist], 7 Jews were arrested and convicted of partisan activities. All 8 persons were hanged.” (ibid., p. 883)*

The following persons were also shot:

*“A Jew, who had been a member of the Communist Party and NKVD agent since 1920, and had attempted to set fire to the village of Zavodeyki[?] near Mogilev using gasoline; 8 Jews and Jewesses, who had concealed themselves outside the ghetto in Mogilev; [...] 9 Jews who had considerably terrorised the population of Mogilev through price-gouging; [...] In Vyazma, a Jew who had belonged to the Communist Party since 1928 and had been active in agitation activities; [...] the*

*Jew Naikhin, his wife and another 3 Jews who had made derogatory remarks about the German armed forces.” (ibid., p. 886)*

EM No. 148 of 19 December 1941, Einsatzgruppe B:

*“2 Jews and 2 Russians guilty of repeated acts of looting, [...] were court-martialled and shot.” (ibid., p. 888)*

In this context the presumed legal and psychological justifications make no sense, either because the executions took place “after a court-martial” (“*standrechtlich*”) or in an improvised manner (“*behelfsgemäß*”) and were considered legal by the persons carrying out the executions, or due to the insignificant number of persons concerned, required no “auto-justification.”

The case of Kodyma moreover shows that the motivations for the shootings carried out by the *Einsatzgruppen* cannot be reduced to simplistic patterns. The report from *Einsatzgruppe D* to the Army High Command 11/Ic of 4 August 1941 contains an appendix with the subject “Meetings of Jews in Kodyma” by *Sonderkommando 10a*. A Ukrainian woman had reported that a clandestine meeting of approximately 50 Jews had taken place at Kodyma to coordinate attacks against individual German soldiers. Investigations confirmed the allegation, and the Jewish quarter was surrounded by approximately 400 soldiers, with orders to arrest all Jews over the age of 15. Due to resistance from the Jews, it was necessary to have recourse to arms in some cases. At the end of the operation, approximately 400 persons were arrested, all males. The interrogators ascertained that approximately 98 of them had participated in the clandestine meeting or had committed acts of insubordination or were members of the [local] Jewish “intelligence” [organization]. 100 persons were Ukrainians or Russian and were of advanced age, as a result of which they were released.

*“The remaining approximately 175 persons, without exception Jews, could not be proven guilty of participation. They were transferred to the armed forces prisoner of war camp as hostages, while the above-mentioned 98 persons were shot after taking their personal data.” (Angrick 2013 et al., Doc. 35, pp. 88f.)*

In other cases, in which shooting should have been inevitable, the outcome was otherwise. For example, a “letter (No. 989) by the head of the Ukrainian district administration of Kamianka to the village eldest and the police chief of Stepanivka date 29 July 1942” states that the district commissioner of Krivoy Rog, Hans Frick, was in possession of information according to which four Jews were hiding in the district and ordered (*ibid.*, Doc. 139, pp. 336f.):

*“The Jews must be arrested and brought to the labor camp of the city of Verkhnedneprovsk. All prisoners of war who are without work and without documents and are just loafing around in the villages, should be sent there too.”*

The numbers are another jarring element in the general context of statistics. The reports laconically mention thousands and tens of thousands of executions but then dedicate many lines to dealing with individual cases of Jews mentioned by name.

It is obvious that these facts do not square with the hypothesis of an order to exterminate Jews as Jews. The reports clearly show, by contrast, that the general motivation for the killings was the fact that the Jews were considered by the Germans to be hardcore supporters of Bolshevism and the partisans. Thus, for example, in EM No. 127 of 31 October 1941, *Einsatzgruppe C* states this line of reasoning quite clearly:

*“Already today it can be stated without hesitation that the Jew has acted in the service of Bolshevism without exception.*

*“As a result, the necessity arose for the Security Police of special measures against Jewry,”*

precisely because the Jews were considered “the true carriers of Bolshevism” (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, pp. 740f.).

EM No. 124 of 25 October 1941 reports a specific application of this principle (*ibid.*, p. 732):

*“The Krupski region may therefore be considered free of Jews. The complete liquidation of the Jews in the localities mentioned was necessary to deprive the numerous partisans and parachute infiltrators of all the support that they had been accustomed to receive precisely from the Jews.”*

Another contrived accusation against the *Einsatzgruppen* as well as – and even more so – against the police battalions and the Command Staff SS, which were more directly involved in the struggle against the partisans, is that the SS used the struggle against the Bolsheviks as a cover to conceal the real object: *i.e.*, the massacre of the Jews.

It may be appropriate at this point to include a brief *excursus* on Himmler’s annotation dated 18 December 1941 in his diary, an orthodox interpretation of which is provided by Christopher Browning (Browning 2004, p. 410):

*“On December 18 Himmler met with Hitler. The cryptic remark in Himmler’s appointment book stated simply: ‘Jewish question/to be exterminated as partisans’ (Judenfrage/als Partisanen auszurotten). Most likely, they discussed how the killing of the Jews was to be justified and what were the rules for speaking about it.”*

The editors of Himmler’s *Dienstkalender* (service calendar), which includes a transcript of the annotation, comment (Witte *et al.*, p. 294):

*“This was obviously a follow-up discussion of Hitler’s speech on the Reichs- und Gauleitertagung on 12 December and Himmler’s meeting with Hitler, Bouhler and Brack on 14 December 1941 [...]. The broad expression ‘Jewish Question’ indicates that Himmler was taking note of Hitler’s justification for the murder of the European Jews as a whole [...].”*

The editors refer to the well-known article by Christian Gerlach on Hitler’s presumed decision to exterminate all the European Jews, where he examines this document (Gerlach 1998, pp. 780f.):

*“Himmler and Hitler met on the afternoon of December 18, 1941. In regard to the first topic discussed, Himmler recorded, ‘Jewish question / to be exterminated as*

*partisans.* There can be no doubt that what Himmler wrote down after the vertical line represented the results of the conversation. But what did the brief notation mean? Linguistically, the statement is an order. The term ‘partisans’ may at first glance seem to suggest the situation in the Soviet Union, but the execution of Soviet Jews had been decided some time ago and was already under way. Further, at that point there was not yet a significant number of Jewish partisans in the occupied Soviet territories. These considerations suggest that Himmler’s notation meant something else – that it referred to potential partisans and to the supposed ‘Jewish threat.’ It is significant that Himmler’s note lists the topic of conversation not as ‘Jews in the east’ or as ‘Soviet Jews’ but rather as the all-encompassing ‘Jewish question.’ By itself, Himmler’s notation is difficult to interpret unambiguously, but there is some justification for interpreting Hitler’s statement in a global sense.”

The annotation of 18 December 1941 should be placed in correlation with the presumed “decision to ‘exterminate the Jews in Europe,’” which, according to Gerlach, “must have been made after December 7 and before December 14, 1941” (*ibid.*, p. 784). Specifically, the meaning of the annotation is thought to be as follows (*ibid.*, pp. 786f.):

“Hitler viewed the Jews as opponents, revolutionaries, saboteurs, spies, ‘partisans’ in his own backyard – an area that now, in light of the expected United States attack, included all of Europe. That was what Hitler had meant by his remark, recorded by Himmler on December 18, 1941, ‘to be exterminated as partisans.’”

The explanation is obviously a bit forced. The reference to partisans, in this context, would only make sense in relation to the Jews of the East: only these could be killed *in the quality of* (als), not as *like* (wie) partisans to justify the killings. But the motivations adopted in the *Einsatzgruppen* reports, as set forth above, also continued to be highly variegated and only refer to a minimum extent to killings of Jews in the capacity of partisans. Are we to believe that no one paid any attention to this alleged *Führerbefehl* ?

Ulrich Herbert, in his critique of Gerlach’s conjectures – to which I shall return in the next chapter – also examined the annotation of 18 December 1941, noting that the German historian first presupposes the existence of a “Führer decision,” and then adduces the annotation as *proof* of its existence, but “that is methodically problematic.” Without the conjectural context created by Gerlach, the precise meaning of the annotation remains rather unclear (Herbert, p. 69).

In the “Monologue” at the *Führerhauptquartier*, the *Reichsführer* SS (Himmler) is invited to lunch by Hitler on December 14th, to lunch on the 17th, and to lunch once again on the 18th, but at table Hitler did not speak of any *Judenfrage* (Jewish question) or of partisans (Jochmann, pp. 152-156).

The original text of the annotation is of no assistance in clarifying the matter (see Document I.1.6).

The term *Judenfrage* is separated from “to be exterminated as partisans” by a dash, and it is unclear whether this expression is an order or a conclusion linked

to the preceding term. Holocaust historians presuppose that the text implies “Jewish question. [The Führer has ordered that] the Jews are to be exterminated as partisans,” but this is dubious at the very least, precisely because we do not know the topic of the discussion between Hitler and Himmler.

In reference to the memorandum of 16 July 1941, according to which Stalin’s order on partisan warfare gave the Germans the opportunity to kill “whatever opposes us” (see next chapter), we can also imagine a more general directive according to which it was considered necessary to “exterminate” all adversaries “as partisans,” whether they were Jews or non-Jews.

Returning to the theory of the anti-partisan struggle being utilized by the Germans as a pretext to cover up the extermination of the Jews, Yehoshua Büchler, one of its principal supporters, says (Büchler, p. 14):

*“The war against the partisans was utilized by Hitler not only as a mask for mass murder, but also as a way to build a broad consensus of all the Nazi forces operating in the occupied areas in regard to the murder of Jews. The Jews were portrayed by the Nazis as partisans or potential partisans, both as a group and as individuals. This conceptual integration of Jews and partisans was quickly internalized by a receptive SS and by German army soldiers, and provided the mass murder of the Jews with the legitimization of a ‘war against the partisans.’ All branches of the German state took part in the anti-partisan warfare, including the SS, police, army, civilian administration, local collaborators and parts of the armed forces of Germany’s allies.”*

It is still a fact that War Diary No. 1 of the Command Staff SS, which covers the period from 16 June to 31 December 1941 and which condenses the reports from all the subordinate units, only reports on partisan activities and does not even mention the term “Jude” (facsimile in Baade, pp. 13-101).

It is also true that the subordinate units drew up their own reports, which speak of killings of Jews, but the context is not the one imagined by Büchler.

The first known report from the 1st SS [Infantry] Brigade, the “Activity Report for the time 27 July 41/12.00 o’clock – 30 July 41/12.00 o’clock,” dated 30 July 1941, contains the first reference to any killing of Jews:

*“Furthermore, approximately 800 Jews and Jewesses aged 16 to 60 years were shot by the end of the reporting period for aiding and abetting Bolshevism and Bolsheviek partisans.” (ibid., p. 106)*

The report provides an exact description of the brigade’s mission for the period in question:

*“Arrest and/or destruction of:*

- a) what remains of the 124th Soviet Rifle Division;*
- b) armed gangs;*
- c) partisans;*
- d) persons guilty of aiding and abetting the bolshevist system;”*

The report also declares that “the overall operation was led by SS *Obergruppenführer* and Police General Jeckeln” (*ibid.*, p. 105).

The Activity Report for the period 3-6 August 1941, drawn up on 6 August (“Number 1”), reports a “cleansing operation” in the areas of Ostrog, Gritsev and Kunyov-Radogoshch with the following justification:

*“Especially the Jews have encouraged Bolshevistic gangs in these localities.”*

As a result of this operation, 1,384 Jews and 1 Soviet soldier were shot; the Jews consisted of “men” and “women,” *i.e.*, no children were killed (*ibid.*, p. 108).

The “Activity Report” for 6-10 August states with regard to Korosten:

*“The Jews encouraging the gangs were shot. 2 Jews were publicly hanged in Zhitomir, for having 1,000 murders on their conscience, at least in part.”* (*ibid.*, p. 110)

The “Activity Report” for the same period, relating to “Number 3,” announces, in particular, the general tasks of the brigade (*ibid.*, p. 111):

*“Aggregated order for the 1st SS Brigade during the reporting period was: prevent hostile gangs from threatening Highway North in the regions of Zhitomir – Fasova – Yemilchino – Zwiahel; mop up scattered military units and gangs in the indicated area, and secure the extreme left wing of the 17th Army Corps in the vicinity of Yemilchino and west of it.”*

In this context, anti-Jewish actions were also carried out. “232 Jews guilty of encouraging bolshevist gangs” were shot at Chernyakhov on 1 August; “9 bolshevist Jews” were shot the same day at Mal-Goroschki (*ibid.*, p. 114); “3 bolshevist Jews” were shot in other localities on 9 August; “59 Jews were shot” in the area of Chernyakhov-Zhitomir-Bolyarka-Vilsk, while “36 bolshevist Jews” were shot in other localities, all on the same day, 9 August (*ibid.*, p. 115).

The “Activity Report” for the period 17-20 August 1941 reports the “aggregated order 1st SS Brigade” (*ibid.*, p. 116):

- a) prevent hostile gangs from threatening the Highway North in the Sokolov – Krayevshchina – Belka – Zwiahel region,*
- b) mop-up scattered military units and gangs in the indicated area,*
- c) particularly, secure the Zwiahel-Korosten supply road,*
- d) secure the left flank of the 17th Army Corps.”*

No Jews were killed.

According to the surviving reports – which contain many gaps – the number of Jews shot as of 26 November 1941 amounted to approximately 6,500.

The activity of the 2nd SS Infantry Brigade is known solely through a few reports. The “Activity Report” for the period 7-14 November 1941 contains only one single reference to Jews (*ibid.*, p. 197):

*“Party officials and Jews put themselves in a better situation regarding food supplies, since most of them are sitting at the source. The attitude of the population towards the Jews has become much more hostile over the past few days.”*



The “Activity Report” for 21–28 November (*ibid.*, pp. 205–214) and the “Partisan News and Instruction Sheet No. 11 (reporting period 22–28 Nov. 41)” (*ibid.*, pp. 215f.) speak only of partisan activity, without any reference to Jews.

Police Battalion 322, as mentioned above, was under the jurisdiction of the Higher SS and Police leader Center, which was active in the Białystok area from the beginning of June to mid-July 1941; on 18 July, it was transferred to Baranovichi, and on 7 September it was moved to Mogilev. On 25 May 1942, it arrived at Kattowitz.

The war diary of Police Battalion 322 extends from 10 June 1941 to 26 May 1942.<sup>56</sup> It records various anti-Jewish actions, most of which involved numerically insignificant numbers. On 8 July 1941, the battalion shot 12 Jews and 4 Poles “for denying the possession of looted property” (p. 33). 22 more persons, including one woman, were shot on 8 July at Białystok. The victims were said to have been “looters, fugitives, and almost exclusively Jews” (p. 35). From 6 to 17 July, still at Białystok, “105 civilians and soldiers of the Red Army (prisoners) were shot for looting or attempting to escape. Among them were 94 Jews” (p. 40). 36 Communists were captured and shot in the Białowicza area on 2 August. “Among these 36 were 5 Jews, 6 women, including one Jewess.” Furthermore “2 arrested Jews were shot for attempting to escape” (p. 56). On 9 August, the 3rd company of the battalion “is taking all the male Jews between the ages of 16 and 45 in Białowieża and is carrying out the evacuation of all other Jews out of Białowieża.” These Jews were shot the next day; the victims were “77 Jews aged 16 to 45” (p. 63). From the context we may deduce that the other Jews were really evacuated. On 15 August, the 3rd company conducted a “Jewish operation” at Mrowka Mala:

*“259 women and 162 children were resettled to Kobrin. All male Jews aged 16 to 65 (282 people) were shot, and 1 Pole for looting.”* (p. 65)

On 31 August, the 7th and 8th company arrested 700 Jews including 64 women, and shut them up in the local prison. The next day, 914 Jews, including those arrested the day before, were shot (p. 76). On 1 September, the battalion shot 64 Jews, “because during the raid they were found not to be wearing the Jewish star” (p. 78).

On 16 September, at Knyazevka, 1 Jew, 89 Russians and 1 Communist were shot “for supporting the partisans” (p. 90). At Barsuki on 22 September, the battalion shot 5 Jews and 3 Jewesses (p. 98). On 25 September, at Knyazhitsy, 13 Jews, 27 Jewesses, and 11 children were found among the population. “Of these, 13 Jews and 19 Jewesses were executed in collaboration with the SD” (p. 104). 8 Jewesses and the 11 children were left alive. On 2 October 1941, the 7th, 8th and 9th companies participated in a “Jewish operation” in the ghetto, together with the Staff of the Higher SS and Police leader Center as well as the Ukrainian auxiliary police. 2,208 Jews were captured and 65 killed on the spot. On 13 October, these Jews were shot; the 7th Company shot 378 of them, while the 9th shot 545

<sup>56</sup> YVA, RG O.53-127, pp. 1-254; subsequent page number from there unless stated otherwise.

(pp. 110f.). On 7 October, the battalion shot “3 Jews and 4 Jewesses for supporting partisans” (p. 115), and two days later, “4 Jewesses for Communist machinations.” On 11 October, 6 Jews were killed “for Communist propaganda” (p. 116); the next day, another 8 were shot, together with 4 communists, “for supporting partisans” (p. 119). On 13 October, the battalion shot “7 Jews and 1 Jewess and 9 Russian [members of the] ‘Wander’ movement” (p. 121). On 26 October, 2 Jews were killed “for sedition” (p. 130); the next day, “another 7 Russian soldiers and 2 Jews” were shot “while attempting to escape” (p. 130). On 6 November “2 Jewish tramps arrested by the 8th Company in the vicinity of Yanovo found to be wearing parts of Russian uniforms under their civilian clothing were shot while trying to escape” (p. 139).

The next execution dates to a bit over a month afterwards: On 8 January 1942, a Jew was killed on the road through Orsha (p. 181). Almost a month after that, on 3 February, “in Gnezdovo, a non-local Jewess was arrested and court-martialled and shot for Communist activity and for failure to wear the Jewish star” (p. 192).

On 27 February, the battalion carried out 8 executions (p. 202):

*“5 Jews were court-martialled and shot for sedition against the measures of the German armed forces and the spreading of troubling rumors in Yanovo (approximately 21 km southeast of Smolensk). 3 Jewesses were arrested 5 km west of Smolensk on the road to Vitebsk and shot for leaving the Smolensk Ghetto without permission as well as for failure to wear the star of David.”*

Finally, on 2 March 1942, “4 Jewesses were arrested on the road Smolensk-Vitebsk about 5 km west of Smolensk. They were court-martialled and shot for leaving the Smolensk Ghetto without permission and for failure to wear the star of David” (p. 202).

Also, the battalion shot Jews “aged 15 to 65 years” and transferred Jewish women and children to other localities (see also Part Two, Subchapter 8.6.).

War Diary No. 3 of the 1st Company of the Reserve Police Battalion 13 covers the period from 31 July 1941 to 31 December 1942. For this long period, only three executions are recorded: on 4 August 1941, “67 Jews were shot”;<sup>57</sup> on 14 October there was an execution probably involving 137 Jews. This annotation, like the entire war diary, is densely written with a fountain pen and is difficult to read. Finally, on 26 November 1941, 61 Jews were shot from Wysokie Litewskie.<sup>58</sup>

According to Edward B. Westermann, Police Battalion 310, “believed that theirs was the task to ‘cleanse’ the East of threatening ‘infidels’ (Ostmenschen, Jews, Communists) in the name of their own ‘holy’ ideology” (Westermann, p. 63).

The battalion was transferred to Lvov on 4 August 1941, whence it was transferred to the front, south of Leningrad, on 21 February 1942. Towards mid-July it

<sup>57</sup> YVA, O.53-15, pp. 30-230, here p. 35.

<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*, p. 221.

was stationed at Daugavpils, in Latvia. On 9 July, Himmler ordered the merger of Battalions 305, 306 and 310 into Police Regiment 15, and Battalion 310 took over the name of the 3rd Battalion, 5th Regiment. On 21 August 1942, Regiment 15 was sent to Kobrin in Byelorussia.

The war diary for this battalion has survived. It covers the period from 1 October 1940 to 24 November 1942.<sup>59</sup> Up until this time, starting on 4 August 1941, the battalion was only deployed in two anti-Jewish operations: the evacuation of the Brest Ghetto (October 1942) and executions at Pinsk (November 1942), in which the 10th Company participated (see Chapter 5).

The executions of Jews involved with the partisans were subsequently carried out not as a simple “pretext,” but for the active support made available to the partisan movement by the Jews.

Jürgen Förster cites a few of the Situation Reports of the “Commandant in Byelorussia of the Armed Services Commander Ostland” and commander of the 707th Infantry Division, General Gustav Freiherr von Bechtolsheim, who referred to this matter as follows:

*“Since, then and now, they [the Jews] make common cause with the Communists and partisans, the complete extermination of this alien element is being carried out’ (Monthly Report of October 1 – November 19, 1941).*

*‘The measures introduced against the Jews, as bearers of the Bolshevist idea and as leaders of the Partisan Movement, have shown tangible results. The confining of the Jews in ghettos and the liquidation of Jews convicted of partisan activity and fomenting agitation are to be continued; these are most effective in furthering the pacification of the country’ (Monthly Report of November 1 – November 30, 1941).”*

Notwithstanding the concentration of the Jews in the ghettos,

*“we repeatedly receive reports which show that Jews make common cause with partisans, and that considerable numbers are even armed and belong to the partisan bands. Jews are also continually involved in acts of sabotage’ (Report of January 8, 1942).”*

The Situation Report of February 1-15, 1942 clearly states that, “without a single exception, Jews and partisans are an identical concept” (Förster, pp. 30f.).

A letter from the General Commissioner for Byelorussia Wilhelm Kube to Reich Commissioner for the Ostland Hinrich Lohse, which has as its subject “Combatting partisans and Jewish operation in the General District Byelorussia,” is particularly explicit in this regard:<sup>60</sup>

*“In all clashes with partisans in Byelorussia, it has been found that Jewry is the principal supporter of the partisan movement, both in former Poland and in the former Soviet part of the General District, together with the Polish resistance movement in the East and the Red Army in Moscow. As a result, the handling of Jewry in Byelorussia, in view of the threat to the entire economy, represents a*

<sup>59</sup> YVA, RG O.53-12.2, pp. 70-415.

<sup>60</sup> PS-3428. IMT, Vol. 32, p. 280. Original text in: YVA, O.53-132, p. 98.

*prominently political issue which must consequently be tackled based, not on economic considerations, but on political ones. In detailed meetings with SS Brigadeführer Zenner and the magnificently hard-working leader of the SD, SS Obersturmbannführer Dr. jur. Strauch, we have liquidated approximately 55,000 Jews in Byelorussia during the last 10 weeks.”*

In this context belongs for instance Operation Swamp Fever (*Sumpffieber*) as carried out on Himmler’s order from 21 August to 21 September 1942 for the purpose of annihilating the partisan bands in the General District of Byelorussia. The outcome, according to the conclusive report of the Higher SS and Police leader for the East of 6 November 1942, was this: 389 “armed bandits” killed in battle; death sentences followed by the shooting of 1,274 suspects; “8,350 Jews executed”; evacuation of 1,217 persons (PS-1113, p. 5). The Jews were found to be supporters of and collaborators with the partisans.

## 1.6. The Historical Value of the *Einsatzgruppen* Trial

Headland stressed that the military trials of exponents of the National Socialist regime, in addition to pursuing legal objectives, permitted the gathering of an enormous amount of information. Whatever one’s opinion of these trials, it is a fact that, as a result of the trials, a great many documents were very rapidly discovered and examined, and that this has contributed “immeasurably” to our knowledge of the National Socialist regime (Headland, p. 177).

This is also the limitation of such trials, as noted by Earl (Earl, p. 186):

*“After all, criminal trials are adversarial, and testimony is most frequently given in an attempt to establish legal exculpation [or incrimination], not to document historical truth. By their very nature, criminal trials can act as strong impediments to the attainment of historical truth, when by excluding or altering historical facts a defendant can demonstrate innocence or a prosecutor guilt.”*

It should be stressed that all the documents exhibited in these trials were prosecution documents, since the documents were screened solely for the following purpose (Hofmann, p. 112):

*“The Berlin branch staff was divided into different teams; their instructions were to locate and study all official Nazi records that might contain incriminating information needed by the twelve new subsequent trials being prepared. The documents, which were in German, would be summarized in English, and the Staff Evidence Analyses (SEAs) would be distributed to all lawyers in Nuremberg dealing with related prosecutions. If it was considered very important evidence, the original would also be sent.”*

This practice inevitably gave rise to a unilateral and tendentious view of the facts on the one hand, while depriving the defense of true defense documents.

As regards the case under discussion, 30 days before trial, the defense attorneys “received copies of every document the prosecution intended to use in evi-

dence. They had ample time to prepare for trial” (*ibid.*, p. 124). Thus, all the documents available to them were, exclusively and precisely, prosecution documents.

This tendentiousness is reflected in the very interpretation of the documents, including a distortion of their real meaning. Thus, for example, as recalled by Hofmann,

“when defendants insisted that they knew nothing about the murderous plans of the EG, Ferencz introduced a September 21, 1939 order from the chief of the security police, Reinhard Heydrich, to all EG units describing in detail how Jews were to be rounded up for annihilation. Among many other such revelations, Ferencz’s staff produced the July 31, 1941 instruction from Reich Marshal Hermann Göring, who had ordered the security police to carry out ‘a complete solution of the Jewish question.’” (*Ibid.*, pp. 130f.)

Ferencz probably did not even realize that the intended *Einsatzgruppen* recipients of the *Schnellbrief* dated 21 September 1939 (PS-3363) were those involved in the Polish campaign, and not those in the Russian campaign; and, if he did understand it, he acted in bad faith, because the document contains no reference to “annihilation.” During the trial, he declared (TWC, Vol. IV, p. 667):<sup>61</sup>

“The initial steps for the ‘final solution’ of the Jewish problem, that is, the extermination of the Jews, were taken shortly after the invasion of Poland. On 21 September 1939, Heydrich directed as follows: [...]”

This interpretation, as I have explained above, is quite fallacious. On the second document, Ferencz asserted (*ibid.*, p. 667):

“On 31 July 1941, Heydrich was ordered by Goering to bring about the ‘final solution’ of the Jewish question in the German sphere of influence in Europe. Following the issuance of this directive, the wholesale slaughter of the Jews began.”

This is a blatant distortion, upon which I shall focus in the next chapter.

If it is true, as stated by Alfred Streim, that the statements of Otto Ohlendorf and the other defendants relating to the “*Führerbefehl*” are false, since they formed part of a defense strategy (see Subchapter 2.7., p. 131), it is easy to understand that the trial testimonies do not possess the intrinsic characteristics of veracity, and may be historically misleading.

Where the documents are concerned, there is no doubt that those introduced at trial do possess probative value. For this reason, the prosecution summation was unusually short, lasting hardly two days (8 & 9 April 1948).

It is also true that the presentation of these documents – extrapolations regarding the executions – while legitimate from the legal point of view, inevitably altered the historical perspective, since it depicted the *Einsatzgruppen* as units having as their sole and exclusive task the extermination of Jews as such. The following are a few examples of such a procedure:<sup>62</sup>

<sup>61</sup> The document was introduced into evidence as EC-307-I, TWC, Vol. IV, pp. 118-123.

<sup>62</sup> NMT, Case IX, transcript, 8 April 1948, pp. 6657f.

*“A Teilkommando of Sonderkommando 4a, operating in Poltawa, reported as of 23 November 1941:*

*‘Altogether 1,538 Jews were shot.’ (NO-3405).*

*Einsatzgruppe D operating near Simferopol communicated:*

*‘During the period covered by the report 2,010 people were shot.’ (NO-3225).*

*An Einsatz unit, operating in the Ukraine, communicated that in Rakow:*

*‘1,500 jews were shot.’ (3876-PS).*

*A report on activities in Minsk during March 1942 reads:*

*‘In the course of the greater action against Jews, 3,412 Jews were shot.’ (NO-2662).”*

Ohlendorf’s protest against this distortion was given short shrift (Earl, p. 213):

*“During his direct testimony, Musmanno asked him whether or not it was true that the task of the Einsatzgruppen was to execute groups of people because they were racially inferior. Ohlendorf appeared incredulous at the suggestion. Jews were killed, he conceded, not because they were Jews, but because they were enemies of the Reich.”*

Notwithstanding the volume of the documents examined, from the historiographic point of view, the trial was characterized by great shortcomings. The first regarded the very topics constituting the specific object of debate, as noted by Earl (*ibid.*, p. 180):

*“Who committed genocide, how it was carried out, when it was decided upon as a policy, and who made the decision are the issues that are at the heart of this trial. In spite of this focus, definitive answers to these questions are impossible to ascertain. More than half a century after the conclusion of this trial, historians still only agree on one issue: that the mass killing of Soviet Jews by units of the Einsatzgruppen beginning in the summer of 1941 marks a watershed in Nazi racial policy towards Europe’s Jews. Beyond that, there is non consensus.”*

But even the number of defendants – and consequently the related selection from among all the former members of the *Einsatzgruppen* at the Allies’ disposal – depended upon purely contingent factors, which have nothing to do with the requirements of justice (Hofmann, p. 120):

*“The total number of mass killers to be tried depended upon finances and furniture. No Nuremberg tribunal could try more than 24 defendants in the same trial. The reason was that there were only 24 seats in the dock. Historians may not believe it, but it’s true.”*

The 24 defendants were:

1. Heinz Jost, commander, *Einsatzgruppe A*
2. Erich Naumann, commander, *Einsatzgruppe B*
3. Otto Rasch, commander, *Einsatzgruppe C*
4. Otto Ohlendorf, commander, *Einsatzgruppe D*
5. Adolf Ott, commanding officer of *Sonderkommando 7b* of EG B

6. Eduard Strauch, commanding officer of *Einsatzkommando 2* of EG A
7. Emil Haussmann, commanding officer of *Einsatzkommando 12* of EG D
8. Ernst Biberstein, commanding officer of *Einsatzkommando 6* of EG C
9. Erwin Schulz, commanding officer of *Einsatzkommando 5* of EG C
10. Eugen Steimle, commanding officer of *Sonderkommando 7a* of EG B
11. Franz Six, commanding officer of *Vorkommando Moscow* of EG B
12. Gustav Nosske, commanding officer of *Sonderkommando 12* of EG D
13. Heinz Schubert, officer in *Einsatzgruppe D*
14. Lothar Fendler, deputy chief of *Sonderkommando 4b* of EG C
15. Martin Sandberger, deputy chief of *Einsatzgruppe D*
16. Matthias Graf, officer in *Einsatzkommando 6* of EG D
17. Paul Blobel, commanding officer of *Sonderkommando 4a* of EG C
18. Waldemar Klingelhöfer, officer of *Sonderkommando 7b* of EG B
19. Waldemar von Radetzky, deputy chief of *Sonderkommando 4b* of EG C
20. Walter Blume, commanding officer of *Sonderkommando 7a* of EG B
21. Walter Haensch, commanding officer of *Sonderkommando 4b* of EG B
22. Werner Braune, commanding officer of *Sonderkommando 11 b* of EG D
23. Willi Seibert, deputy chief of *Einsatzgruppe D*
24. Felix Rühl, officer of *Sonderkommando 10b* of EG D.

The greatest criticism that can be raised against the Tribunal was no doubt that of completely neglecting the question of “Aktion 1005,” the presumed operation consisting of the exhumation and cremation of the bodies of those who fell victim to the *Einsatzgruppen* and other units of the SS and Police, to which Part Two of the present study is devoted. Incredibly, although the supposed author of the operation was right there, *i.e.*, Blobel, the chief of counsel for the prosecution, Telford Taylor, not only never interrogated him on the topic of the exterminations in any specific way, but relied on the fanciful declarations of Rudolf Höss instead of asking the defendant directly concerned: Blobel. In the indictment, Taylor stated:<sup>63</sup>

*“Although forming no part of the charges in the indictment, the systematic attempts to destroy the graves of the slain as described in official German documents are interesting in that they shed some light on the mental attitude of the executioners. Did they regard the executions as culpable acts, ocular evidence of which should be destroyed? The defendant Blobel in his affidavit, signed June 18, 1947, stated that in June 1942 he was entrusted by Gruppenfuehrer Mueller with the task of removing the traces of the executions carried out by Einsatzgruppen in the East. He leaves nothing to the imagination: [”<sup>64</sup>...]*

*So intent was Blobel, evidently in obedience to orders, to wipe out the incriminating evidence of the killings, that he even tried to destroy the corpses by means of dynamite. Rudolf Hoess, Commandant of the Auschwitz Concentration Camp,*

<sup>63</sup> NMT, Case IX, transcript, 8 April 1948, p. 6741.

<sup>64</sup> This omitted part will be quoted and discussed in Section 4.2.12 of Part Two (p. 502).

*who supervised these experimentations, stated that the dynamiting method was not successful: [65...]*"

This type of behavior is an indication of the "mental attitude" of the prosecutors and judges. This is also made apparent by the heated exchange between Defendant Ohlendorf and the representatives of the prosecution as to the legality of the executions. Ohlendorf declared that the exterminations in the East were the consequence of a total war aimed at the annihilation of an ideological enemy (TWC, Vol. IV, p. 355).

In response to James E. Heath, a consultant for prosecution counsel, who criticised him for killing children, Ohlendorf raised the topic of the Allied population bombings. His accuser asked indignantly whether he wished to establish a moral equivalency between the deliberate killings of children by the *Einsatzgruppen* and those of the Allies; the defendant replied (*ibid.*, p. 357):

*"I cannot imagine that those planes which systematically covered a city that was [not<sup>65</sup>] a fortified city, square meter for square meter, with incendiaries and explosive bombs and again with phosphorus bombs, and this done from block to block, and then as I have seen it in Dresden likewise the squares where the civilian population had fled to – that these men could possibly hope not to kill any civilian population, and no children. And when you then read the announcements of the Allied leaders on this – and we are quite willing to submit them as document – you will read that these killings were accepted quite knowingly because one believed that only through this terror, as it was described, the people could be demoralized and under such blows the military power of the Germans would then also break down."*

Ohlendorf then drew his accusers' attention to the American atomic bombs dropped on Japan, establishing a strategic parallel with Hitler's conduct in the war in the East. The Führer wished to weaken the enemy's ability to resist through the adoption of draconian measures, just like the American government where Japan was concerned, or, in the words of Henry L. Stimson, Secretary of War from 1940-1945 (*ibid.*, pp. 360f.):

*"To extract a genuine surrender from the emperor of Japan and his military advisers, a tremendous shock must be administered which should carry convincing proof of our power to destroy the Empire. Such an effective shock would save more lives, both American and Japanese, than it would cost."*

Telford Taylor, in his closing statement, claimed that the atomic bomb was a weapon like any other, just more powerful, and that its use was in no way prohibited (*ibid.*, p. 381):

*"The atomic bomb, therefore, is neither more nor less legal than ordinary bombs; under the laws of war, the question is not as to the character or explosive capacity of the bomb, but how it is used. It is sad but true that the destruction of an ene-*

<sup>65</sup> This is followed by two fragments from Rudolf Höss's "Notes" on Blobel.

<sup>66</sup> I have added the negation, which is missing in the original, contrary to all logic.



*my's power of resistance by air attacks against urban industrial centers has become an accepted part of modern warfare."*

But this is precisely the problem, how it was used: on two cities, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, causing the deaths of tens of thousands of persons, including those same children, who – if they had been Jewish – would have caused an outpouring of tears of indignation from the American prosecutor, but who left that same American prosecutor quite indifferent when they were Japanese or German; in the latter case, it would have been merely “an incident, a grave incident to be sure, but an unavoidable corollary of battle action” (*ibid.*, p. 467).

In his reading of the indictment, Taylor stated:<sup>67</sup>

*“It was argued in behalf of the defendants that there was no normal distinction between shooting civilians with rifles and killing them by means of atomic bombs. There is no doubt that the invention of the atomic bomb, when used, was not aimed at non-combatants. Like any aerial bomb employed during the war, it was dropped to overcome military resistance.”*

But the executions of Jews, from the German point of view, were also carried out “to overcome military resistance” – the resistance of the Soviet Union, depriving Bolshevism of its life-giving humus and support to the partisans.

There is no point in compiling a whole moral classification of the various crimes committed by the Germans and by the Allies, just as it makes no sense to balance the one against the other; but one cannot refrain from stigmatizing the hypocritical moralism of the Anglo-Americans: their absurd pretense of fighting Hitler’s dictatorship – in favor of Democracy and Justice – while allying themselves with an even worse tyranny, their claim to be fighting against a criminal regime while standing side by side with an even more-criminal regime, their ambition to wage war for the liberation of Europe leaving half of Europe under Stalin’s yoke at the end of the war.

It is furthermore well known that the first concentration camps were built by the English in 1901, to be used against the Boers; it is less well known that the Americans almost immediately followed their example. As a consequence of the Spanish-American War (1898), the Americans occupied the Philippines; on 4 February 1899, the Filipinos rebelled, and another war broke out. The rebels used guerrilla tactics against the Americans, and in 1902, the Americans responded with “cruelty, including scorched earth tactics, torture, and internment of non-combatants in concentration camps” (Tucker, Vol. 1, p. 969).

The fact that the United States should build itself up into the proud scourge of Hitlerian racism is typical of Soviet propagandistic shamelessness, since the Americans were profoundly pervaded by racism against Afro-Americans – a racism systematically professed even inside the army (Tischauer, p. 101):

*“The army, navy, army air force, marines, and coast guard did nothing to change their long-held racist structure or attitudes during the war. Every military unit*

<sup>67</sup> NMT, Case IX, transcript, 8 April 1948, p. 6723.

*remained segregated, black soldiers continued to serve only in transportation and construction units, and they faced racist hostility and hate in their training camps and in military bases throughout the entire war. Of the one million African Americans who served in the military during the four years of war, not one served in an integrated unit."*

The true politico-ideological nature of the Allied military trials was admirably summarized by Maurice Bardèche (Bardèche, pp. 17-19):

*"The true basis for the Nuremberg Trial, the one which no one has ever dared to point out, is, I suspect, not fear: it is the spectacle of the ruins, it is the panic of the victors. It is necessary that the others be in the wrong. It is necessary, for if, by chance, they had not been monsters, how would the victors bear the weight of all those destroyed cities, and those thousands of phosphorus bombs? It is the horror, it is the despair of the victors which is the true motive for the trial. They have veiled their faces before what they were forced to do and, to give themselves courage, they transformed their massacres into a crusade. They invented a posteriori a right to massacre in the name of respect for humanity. Being killers, they promoted themselves to policemen. [...]*

*To excuse the crimes committed in conducting the war, it was absolutely necessary to discover some even more serious ones on the other side. It was absolutely necessary that the English and American bombers appeared like the sword of the Lord. The Allies did not have a choice. If they did not solemnly affirm, if they did not prove by any means whatever that they had been the saviors of humanity, they were nothing more than murderers. If, one day, men ceased believing in the German monstrosity, would they not demand an accounting for the devastated cities?"*

To believe that such trials could result in "justice" or "historical truth" is an epic delusion.