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NAZI CRIMES AND GERMAN REACTIONS

An analysis of reactions and attitudes within the German resistance to the persecution of Jews in German-controlled lands, 1933-1944, with a focus on the writings of Carl Goerdeler, Ulrich von Hassell and Helmuth von Moltke.

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August, 1999
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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is broadly concerned with how individuals within German society, the German Resistance to Hitler and the German military reacted to persecution of Jews in Germany before the start of the Second World War and also to reports of German atrocities within German-controlled areas of Europe during the conflict. It contends that there were individuals in Germany that did not ignore these terrible crimes and indeed acted in an attempt to overthrow Hitler's regime in order to put a stop to them.

The specific focus of this study is an examination of the personal sentiments contained in the writings of Carl Goerdeler, Ulrich von Hassell and Helmuth von Moltke and the recorded reactions to the various and intensifying stages of Nazi persecution of Jews within German-controlled territory. These particular individuals were chosen, as a significant portion of their writings, in the form of diary entries, letters and memoranda have been published and offer a glimpse of personal sentiments and thoughts unaltered by the censors of the Nazi regime. In addition, this study examines the reactions of two German officers, Johannes Blaskowitz and Rudolf-Christoph von Gersdorff, to German atrocities committed in German-occupied Eastern Europe. Their reactions to and courageous protests against Nazi crimes are also a significant part of the overall context of German reactions to Nazi crimes.

In the course of this thesis, it is argued that individuals involved in the German Resistance to Hitler, and in particular the five individuals mentioned above, accepted neither the Nazi regime's conception, nor its persecution of Jews. Goerdeler, Hassell und Moltke expressed shame and outrage when confronted by the Nazi persecution of Jews and by reports of German atrocities in occupied territory. Blaskowitz and Gersdorff protested against these crimes and, it is argued, tried to get fellow officers to follow their example. It is also argued, that for these and other Germans, Nazi atrocities were a significant motivation for taking part in resistance efforts. This study does not form an overall picture of the reactions and attitude of the German society as a whole to these crimes. However, it attempts to provide a balanced view of the motivations of resistance and the possibilities for resistance during the Nazi era, and as well of those individuals whose courage, principles and sacrifice should not be forgotten.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette thèse touche, de façon générale, la manière dont les individus, à l'intérieur de la societé allemande, la résistance et l'armée allemande ont réagi à la persécution des juifs, en Allemagne, avant le début de la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale. Elle touche aussi la manière dont ceux-ci ont réagi aux rumeurs et rapports concernant les atrocités infligées à l'intérieur des territoires européens, controlés par l'Allemagne, durant le conflit. On soutient qu'il y avait des individus, en Allemagne, qui n'ignoraient point ces crimes terribles et qui ont, en fait, essayé de renverser le régime hitlérien, de manière à y mettre fin.

L'intérêt de cette étude est d'étudier, plus particulièrement, les sentiments personnels retrouvés dans les écrits de Carl Goerdeler, Ulrich von Hassell et Helmuth von Moltke, ainsi que leurs réactions aux différents stades de la persécution nazie envers les Juifs vivant l'intérieur des territoires controlés par l'Allemagne. Ces individus, en particulier, ont été choisis, car une partie importante de leurs écrits, tels des journaux, des lettres, et des souvenirs, ont été publiés. Ces derniers offrent un aperçu de leurs sentiments et pensées; ceux-ci, n'ayant pas été censurés par le régime nazi. De plus, cette étude examine les réactions de deux officiers allemands, Johannes Blaskowitz et Rudolf-Christoph von Gersdorff, face aux atrocités commises par les Allemands dans les territoires occupées de l'Europe de l'est. Leurs réactions ainsi que leurs courageuses protestations envers les crimes nazis font aussi partie du contexte entourant les réactions allemandes face aux crimes nazis.

À l'intérieur de cette thèse, nous démentrons que les individus impliqués dans la résistance allemande contre Hitler, et en particulier les cinq individus mentionnés ci-haut, n'ont accepté ni la conception du régime nazi, ni la persécution des Juifs. Goerdeler, Hassell et Moltke ont exprimé de la honte et de l'outrage lorsque confronté par la persécution nazie envers les Juifs ainsi que par les rapports des atrocités allemandes en territoires occupés. Blaskowitz et Gersdorff ont protesté contre ces crimes et il est démontré qu'ils ont essayé d'influencer d'autres officiers à suivre leur exemple. On prétend aussi, que pour eux ainsi que pour d'autres allemands, les atrocités nazies ont été une motivation significative à prendre part aux efforts de résistance. Cette étude ne peint pas un portrait complet des réactions et de l'attitude de la societé allemande, en général, face à ces crimes. Par-contre, celle-ci tente d'apporter un point de vue équilibré des motivations et possibilités de résistance durant l'ère nazi, ainsi que de ces individus, dont le courage et les sacrifices ne doivent pas être oubliés.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to my advisor Peter Hoffmann for his continued support and patience over the course of my studies at McGill and in the writing of this thesis. His teaching inspired in me a greater interest in the history of the German Resistance and also motivated me to write my thesis about this particular area in what is a very broad field.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to Professor John Conway, who originally sparked my interest in Germany and its history several years ago at the University of British Columbia. His encouragement was very important to me and was also a significant factor in my decision to go to graduate school.

A special note of thanks to the librarians at McLennan/Redpath, McGill. In particular, I would like to thank the staff at Interlibrary Loans, McGill, which was always friendly, helpful and a source of great assistance. As well, I would like to thank Mr. Michael Kaufmann of the Weiße-Rose-Stiftung in Munich for his time and suggestions regarding potential sources for this thesis.

Finally, I also owe a great debt of gratitude to my mother, Mrs. Ambrosia Magas, whose tremendous support has encouraged and enabled me to continue my studies. Many thanks also to friends and roommates past and present—in particular Peter Hoaken in Montréal and Kelly White in Vancouver. Over the past two years, Peter has been a good friend and when necessary, has provided me with shelter from the Montréal cold and plenty of coffee. Although I am far from home, Kelly has not forgotten me. I am very thankful for her continued and much needed moral support and her "help" in my decision to come to Montréal in the first place.

INTRODUCTION

In the fifty-five years since Claus *Graf* von Stauffenberg attempted to kill Hitler on 20 July 1944, a tremendous amount of literature has been published about the German resistance to Hitler. This literature includes numerous histories, biographies, collections of documents, letters and diaries. The works by Peter Hoffmann,[1] Annedore Leber,[2] Gerhard Ritter,[3] Hans Rothfels[4] and Eberhard Zeller[5] investigate and explain the personalities in the resistance, their motives, plans and coup attempts in great detail. Hoffmann's third English edition of his History of the German Resistance 1933-1945 provides a comprehensive study of the German opposition to Hitler. Hoffmann examines the various individuals and groups that composed the resistance and focuses on the resistance movement within the German military forces. He sheds light on the chain of events and the attempts to assassinate Hitler culminating in Stauffenberg's 1944 attempt and the People's Court trials that followed. Hoffmann also investigates the historical actors involved and traces their plans for a coup, their political planning and their attempts at making foreign contacts. Annedore Leber provides biographies and photos of the various individuals involved in opposing Hitler's regime, as well as documents relating to Hitler's consolidation of power in Germany, the persecution and mass-killing of Jews in Nazi-occupied Eastern Europe and excerpts from the letters and diaries of resistance personalities. Gerhard Ritter has written the standard account on Carl Goerdeler and has published much relevant documentation relating to Goerdeler's activities in his part in the struggle against the Nazi regime. Hans Rothfels published a

short, yet informative study, which came out just after the end of the Second World War,[6] and numerous other works and articles on the German resistance to Hitler. Eberhard Zeller has also richly contributed to the understanding of the German resistance, its personalities and their attempts to overthrow Hitler's regime with his book The Flame of Freedom.

These works emphasise the courage of those individuals who listened to their conscience and acted against the Nazi regime. The price for this action was execution, but as a leading figure in the resistance stated before his suicide:

> *Wenn einst Gott Abraham verheißen hat, er werde Sodom nicht verderben, wenn auch nur zehn Gerechte darin seien, so hoffe ich, daß Gott auch Deutschland um unsertwillen nicht verderben wird. Niemand von uns kann über seinen Tod Klage führen. Wer in unseren Kreis getreten ist, hat damit das Nessushemd angezogen. Der sittliche Wert eines Menschen beginnt erst dort, wo er bereit ist, für seine Überzeugung sein Leben hinzugeben.*[7]

This readiness to sacrifice one's life was not indicative of some last-minute effort to provide an alibi for Germans after the war; rather, it was intended to save Germany from the catastrophe of total defeat she was approaching. Realistic or not, the hopes and motivations of the resisters stemmed from their Christian faith and a desire to end the suffering in Europe, suffering that resulted from Hitler's disastrous and belligerent policy. The desire to save Germany from catastrophe emerged not from the Nazi concept of nationalism but from a patriotic love for Germany. These authors have also touched upon other motivations, such as the persecution of the Jews, for those individuals in the German resistance to act against the Nazi regime.

Peter Hoffmann has also contributed two essays on the topic of the persecution of Jews as a motive for resistance against the National-Socialist regime.[8] These essays

provide a wealth of background information, source material and insight regarding the motives of many of the leading figures in the German resistance to Hitler. Hoffmann explains the context of certain statements of some resistance figures, for example, Carl Goerdeler and the brothers, Berthold and Claus von Stauffenberg, which have been interpreted by some historians as anti-Semitic.[9] Hoffmann examines the evidence and presents a strong case that these persons, and several other leading figures in the German resistance, were primarily motivated to resist Hitler's regime to attempt to overthrow the Nazi regime in order to stop the German mass murder of Jews and other victims.

Some historians see these issues differently. Both at the time and today, some people have found it difficult to separate those who opposed Hitler from other Germans who actively supported him, or simply did nothing in order to survive in a dangerous time. In a memorandum written on 25 July 1944, shortly after Stauffenberg's failed attempt to kill Hitler, the British historian John Wheeler-Bennett wrote:

> The *Gestapo* and the SS have done us an appreciable service in removing a selection of those who would undoubtedly have posed as 'good' Germans after the war, while preparing for a third World War. [...] It is to our advantage therefore that the purge should continue, since the killing of Germans by Germans will save us from future embarrassments of many kinds.[10]

Wheeler-Bennett stated that those who took part in resistance to the Nazi regime had done so merely to pose as "'good' Germans" after the war. Wheeler-Bennett saw the purpose of the war as the destruction of German militarism: "To have negotiated with any German Government—and particularly one which had come into existence as a result of a military revolt—would have been to abandon our declared aim of destroying German militarism."[11] To Wheeler-Bennett, all Germans were alike and had to be defeated, in order to wipe out German military potential once and for all. Although the resisters had

courageously resisted the regime, the destruction of Germany was a "necessary conclusion to the evil glory of the Third Reich," which had been caused by the German people's "blind, abject [and] unreasoning devotion to Adolf Hitler."[12]

If all Germans were evil and had some character flaw, which made them wage war against their neighbours, then the history of the first half of the twentieth century would be considerably easier to explain. This would be a ridiculous argument. However there are individuals who, with the aid of sweeping statements, see the entire German people as interchangeable with SS men or others that committed crimes in the name of Nazi Germany. Daniel Goldhagen, the author of Hitler's Willing Executioners,[13] asserts that it "strains credulity beyond the breaking point" to imagine that "ordinary Danes or Italians" could have acted as the Germans did.[14] Moreover, in examining the murderous actions of members of a German killing squad that belonged to the *Ordnungspolizei*, Goldhagen contends that his conclusions regarding these individuals could and "must be, generalised to *the German people in general*" [15]: Goldhagen assumes that other Germans typically would have killed innocent civilians if put in a position where they could have. He contends that "[w]hat these ordinary Germans did could have been expected of other ordinary Germans."[16] It must be emphasised that although there were many Germans who committed atrocities during the Second World War, there were also many Austrians, Latvians, Lithuanians, Poles and Ukrainians who actively participated in the murder of Jews. This is not an excuse for Germans who committed these crimes. However, *humans*, not just Germans, are capable of such gruesome crimes.

As Germans, the individuals involved in the resistance against Hitler were no exception to Goldhagen's blanket statements. Goldhagen declares in his book that

> [t]he pre-genocidal eliminationist measures of the 1930s, the stripping of Jews' citizenship and rights, their immiseration, the violence that Germans perpetrated against them, the regime's incarceration of them in concentration camps and the hounding of them to emigrate from Germany—the sum of these radical measures did not incense, or produce substantial opposition among those who would eventually form the major resistance groups. Indeed, in the view of the foremost expert on the subject, Christof Dipper, the Gestapo's evaluation of the captured July 20 conspirators (based on the conspirators' own statements during interrogation), accurately depicts them as having fundamentally shared the regime's conception of the Jews, even if they differed on how the Jews ought to have been treated.[17]

In other words, according to Goldhagen and his perception of the view of his "foremost expert" on the history of the German resistance, those who tried to overthrow the Nazi regime and sacrificed their lives trying to assassinate Hitler were not only indifferent to this regime's persecution of Jews, but also shared the virulent and violent anti-Semitic Nazi ideology towards Jews. Goldhagen continues his appraisal of the motives of the German resistance by stating that: "By and large, those in the opposition and resistance to the Nazis were not moved to opposition by a principled disapproval of the elimination of the Jews from German society" and that within the resistance, there was a "glaring absence of significant protest or privately expressed dissent, especially principled dissent, with respect to the treatment and eventual genocidal slaughter of the Jews [...]."[18]

Goldhagen's assertion here that the German resistance was opportunistic, that it lacked "principled dissent", is echoed in a work by Theodore Hamerow, entitled On the Road to the Wolf's Lair: German Resistance to Hitler. Hamerow asserts that from the point of view of the Allies, the German resistance to Hitler was too little, too late. Hamerow declares:

> As long as the German armed forces dominated the Continent, the resistance had seemed almost non-existent. But now that the defeat

> of the Third Reich appeared imminent, there were suddenly urgent messages about the need to deliberate and compromise, to negotiate a just settlement, to establish fair boundaries, and to make territorial arrangements promoting a free and peace-loving Germany.[19]

This idea that the resistance attempted to kill Hitler as a "last-minute attempt to escape the consequences of Hitler's reckless foreign policy"[20] requires scrutiny. There were individuals, for example Carl Goerdeler, who made proposals to remove Hitler and gave clear warnings to Allied governments of Hitler's belligerent intentions *before* the war. These warnings were ignored. Hamerow's view seems to fail to recognise the difficulties posed to potential resisters within a police state, and particularly within one's own state.

It is not the intention of the author to recount the history of the German resistance to Hitler; the scholars and authors mentioned at the start have ably done that already. The individual deeds and plans of the resistance are not the focus of this thesis. This thesis seeks a better understanding of how different people within German society reacted to Nazi crimes and to what extent these crimes motivated them to resist the regime. This thesis proposes to examine the reactions of individuals within the German resistance to Nazi atrocities and argues that these atrocities were a significant motivation for their efforts to overthrow the Nazi regime. The individuals referred to are: Ulrich von Hassell, Helmuth *Graf* von Moltke and Carl Goerdeler. In addition, the reactions of two German officers to German atrocities will be examined. These officers are Johannes Blaskowitz and Rudolf-Christoph von Gersdorff. As well, the reactions of others; German officers, ordinary citizens and officials inside and outside Germany will be examined to provide a broader picture of the reactions to Nazi crimes.

It is easy to speak very broadly of "Nazi crimes". The crimes committed by Nazi

Germany were not just broad, but also of an organised and complex nature. It naturally follows that there can be no simple explanation. To make things more clear, a brief outline is given of the primary crimes relevant to this thesis. This analysis focuses upon crimes committed by German forces in the German-occupied territory in Eastern Europe, except in the case of the *Kristallnacht* pogrom. Of course, there were crimes committed by Germans elsewhere in Europe, but the magnitude and the nature of the killing in the East, especially once extermination camps began to operate in occupied Poland, warrant a closer analysis.

To better understand the action or inaction of individuals when faced with Nazi crimes, it is necessary to consider the nature of the society in which Germans lived. One must consider to what extent resistance was possible. This consideration is not meant as an alibi for those Germans who did not act. A description of the repressive nature of the Nazi state is given in order to add some insight both as to why people acted (or did not act) and the extent to which it was possible for ordinary Germans to resist Hitler's regime. Clearly not enough Germans listened to their conscience and resisted the Nazi regime. Rather, the point here is to illustrate that any form of resistance in this society was not only very difficult, but was also incredibly dangerous and required a strength of character that indeed few possessed.

General reactions to Nazi crimes are also considered. These reactions are taken from foreigners and Germans, to provide some balance for the reactions from the resistance and the German military forces. Some of the general reactions are taken from the reports on the mood of the German public compiled by the *Sicherheitsdienst*; others from the comments of foreign diplomats and correspondents. The purpose is to provide reactions

from different aspects of German society, from ordinary Germans to resisters and officers in the German military.

There is a special focus placed upon the reactions of individuals in the resistance and the German military forces. The personal sentiments of the selected individuals from the resistance, as recorded in their writings, have survived the war and provide evidence as to their views of Nazi crimes. The focus on the sentiments and reactions of these individuals (Hassell, Moltke, Goerdeler, Blaskowitz and Gersdorff) will help to answer the charges of Goldhagen and Hamerow and to shed light on the persecution of the Jews as a significant motivation for resisting Hitler's regime. The reactions and sentiments of senior officers are important, as they were in near proximity to German atrocities. Some crimes were even committed within their jurisdiction as commanders. Moreover, senior officers were in a more powerful position than the average German citizen to actually stop these atrocities, as they had authority and the power of military command.

To put these reactions to the Nazi persecution of Jews into a larger context, it is also necessary to consider attitudes abroad towards the persecution of Jews and the Jewish refugee problem. Therefore, the attitude of the United States and Britain towards Jewish immigration in the 1930s and during the war years will also be touched upon.

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[7] Henning von Tresckow on 20 July 1944 in his last conversation with Fabian von Schlabrendorff on the Eastern Front, F. von Schlabrendorff, Offiziere gegen Hitler, (Zürich 1951) cited in Leber and Moltke, Für und wider, Berlin und Frankfurt a/M, Mosaik-Verlag 1962, S. 209.
[8] P. Hoffmann, "The German Resistance, The Jews, and Daniel Goldhagen," in F.H. Littell, ed., Hyping the Holocaust: Scholars Answer Goldhagen, (Merion Station, Pennsylvania: Merion Westfield Press International, 1997), p. 75-88 and "The Persecution of the Jews as a Motive for Resistance Against National Socialism," in Andrew Chandler, ed., The Moral Imperative: New Essays on the Ethics of Resistance in National Socialist Germany 1933-1945, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998), p. 73-104.
[9] Hoffmann, "The Persecution of the Jews as a Motive for Resistance," pp. 84-89 (Goerdeler), 90-91 (C. and B. von Stauffenberg).
[10] J. Wheeler-Bennett, Memorandum 25 July 1944, Public Records Office, FO 371 / 39062, C9896, p. 1 cited in T. Hamerow, On the Road to the Wolf's Lair: German Resistance to Hitler, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 357.
[11] J. Wheeler-Bennett, The Nemesis of Power: The German Army in Politics 1918-1945, (London: The Macmillan Press, 1980), p. 692.
[12] Ibid., p. 693.
[13] D. Goldhagen, Hitler's Willing Executioners, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996).
[14] Ibid., p. 408.
[15] Ibid., p. 402.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid., pp. 114-16.
[18] Ibid., pp. 115-116.
[19] Hamerow, Road to the Wolf's Lair, p. 338.
[20] Ibid.

CHAPTER ONE

An Outline of Nazi Crimes

The horrifying magnitude of the crimes committed by Nazi Germany during the Second World War is difficult to describe justly with mere words. In fact, when news of these crimes became known to people both inside and outside Germany, the reactions often included incredulity at the magnitude of these crimes, or even at the crimes themselves. It seems that many people were not psychologically prepared to comprehend such atrocities. This point is not meant to give any credibility to those who deny the Holocaust; rather, to show that some people found it easier to question the validity of reports of Nazi crimes than having to come to terms with crimes of such inhuman and unprecedented proportions.

Speaking broadly of "Nazi crimes" is too vague. It is necessary to outline and to give some background on these crimes. This analysis will focus upon three different, yet related groups of Nazi crimes, which are relevant for this paper. These are: *Kristallnacht*, the Nazi "euthanasia programme" and then the development of systematic mass murder in German-occupied territory. This "development" began with the mass shootings perpetrated by the *Einsatzgruppen* and was then expanded to the killing "on an assembly-line basis"[1] in Nazi death camps. These particular crimes were chosen in part in order to impose a timeline on the analysis and to give it a structure in which to place the various reactions from different aspects of German society. The Nazi-organised pogrom known as *Kristallnacht* was chosen as a starting point, as it marked the intensification and

radicalisation of the Nazi persecution of the Jews that had begun shortly after Hitler rose to power.

i.) *Kristallnacht*:

Kristallnacht occurred on the night of 9/10 November 1938. On 7 November 1938, a seventeen-year old Jewish-German refugee by the name of Herschel Grynszpan shot Ernst vom Rath, the legation secretary of the German embassy in Paris.[2] Grynszpan had intended to assassinate the German ambassador to France in order to protest against the deportation and maltreatment of his parents, who were among 10,000 Jews being driven from Germany into Poland.[3] The Minister of Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels used the occasion of 9 November 1938 to deliver a "rabble-rousing speech" to Party and SS leaders gathered together in Munich to commemorate the attempted *Putsch* of 1923.[4] At either Hitler's initiation or at least with his approval, Goebbels announced the murder of vom Rath and advised that "spontaneous" anti-Jewish riots should not be discouraged.[5] On the evening of 9/10 November 1938, *Sturmabteilung* (SA) men burned and vandalised synagogues, sacked Jewish shops and beat, terrorised and killed Jews all over Germany.[6] That evening, guidelines for the "spontaneous" rioting had been sent out by telephone and teletype machines to all *Gestapo* (Secret State Police) offices. The police were ordered "not to disturb the actions against synagogues," to prevent "looting and other excesses" and to ensure "that surrounding buildings were not damaged when burning synagogues."[7] When the pogrom was over, ninety-one Jews had been killed and 35,000 arrested.[8] Damage to Jewish property included the destruction of 815 shops and 171 homes and, in addition, 191 synagogues were torched during this pogrom.[9] In

financial terms, damages reached approximately 25 million marks, of which broken glass accounted for over 5 million.[10]The Nazi regime, in an incredibly insulting gesture, fined German Jews collectively one billion marks in "restitution" for the destruction wreaked during the pogrom.[11] This appalling orgy of violence against Jews and their property, across Germany, signified to the world that the persecution of Jews was not merely a National-Socialist "revolutionary excess" or that Hitler would "settle down, temper the zeal of his supporters and revert to more normal methods of government" after he consolidated his power.[12] However, the Nazi regime at this time had been in power for nearly six years and *Kristallnacht* showed the world that the Nazi persecution of the Jews was only increasing in intensity and scale.

ii.) The "Euthanasia Programme":

The origins of the Nazi 'euthanasia programme' are to be found in the law of 14 July 1933 entitled: 'Law for the Prevention of Offspring with Hereditary Diseases'.[13] This law declared that any individual "suffering from a hereditary disease can be sterilised if medical knowledge indicates that his offspring will suffer from severe hereditary physical or mental damage."[14] This law defined a person suffering from a hereditary disease ("*Erbkrank im Sinne dieses Gesetzes ist, wer an einer der folgenden Krankheiten leidet:*")[15], as anyone suffering from: "congenital feeblemindedness, schizophrenia, manic-depressive psychosis, hereditary epilepsy, hereditary St. Vitus' dance, hereditary blindness, hereditary deafness, severe hereditary deformity and severe alcoholism."[16] It must also be noted that at the same time in the United States, sterilisation was also being carried out on "inmates of mental institutions, persons convicted more than once of sex

crimes, those deemed to be feeble-minded by IQ tests, 'moral degenerate persons', and epileptics."[17] Moreover, by the 1930s, more than half of the states in America had passed laws that authorised the sterilisation on these individuals.[18]

While eugenics and the practice of sterilisation were not only to be found in Germany, the 'euthanasia programme' was different. In 1935, Hitler stated his intention that if war came, he would

> take up the euthanasia question and [...] implement it. Such a problem could be dealt with more smoothly and easily in war time, since any open resistance which was to be expected from the Churches would not count for as much amongst the general effects of the war as otherwise.[19]

The war would provide cover for the war against Jews and other groups that Nazi racial ideology aimed to exterminate. Joseph Goebbels wrote in his diary about this "fight to the death" between Jews and Aryans on 27 March 1942.[20] Goebbels wrote that the war provided "opportunities" that were not available in times of peace--that is, opportunities to exterminate the Jews:

> *Die Juden würden, wenn wir uns ihrer nicht erwehren würden, uns vernichten. Es ist ein Kampf auf Leben und Tod zwischen der arischen Rasse und dem jüdischen Bazillus. Keine andere Regierung und kein anderes Regime könnte die Kraft aufbringen, diese Frage generell zu lösen. Auch hier ist der Führer der unentwegte Vorkämpfer und Wortführer einer radikalen Lösung, die nach Lage der Dinge geboten ist und deshalb unausweichlich erscheint. Gott sei Dank haben wir jetzt während des Krieges eine ganze Reihe von Möglichkeiten, die uns im Frieden verwehrt wären. Die müssen wir ausnutzen.*[21]

When war came, Hitler signed the authorisation for the 'euthanasia programme'. Signed in October 1939, but backdated to 1 September 1939, the text of this document is as follows:

> *Reichsleiter Bouhler und Dr. med. Brandt sind unter Verantwortung beauftragt, die Befugnisse namentlich zu bestimmender Ärzte so zu erweitern, daß nach menschlichem Ermessen unheilbar Kranken bei kritischer Beurteilung ihres Krankheitszustandes der Gnadentod gewahrt werden kann.*[22]

This programme, also known as 'T-4', derived from the address of the building in Berlin in which the programme's central office was housed (Tiergartenstraße 4), began in the fall of 1939. The victims were killed in six 'killing centres': Grafeneck, Brandenburg, Hartheim, Sonnenstein, Bernburg and Hadamar.[23] The victims were killed at first by lethal injection and then in gas chambers, using carbon monoxide gas.[24] In order to maintain the secrecy of the programme and to make the tracing of patients by their families more difficult, victims were moved through transit centres before they reached one of the six killing institutions.[25] These institutions had victim registration offices, which sent out false "condolence letters" to the families of victims, complete with a falsified cause and date of death.[26] The programme was supposed to be secret, but suspicions were aroused amongst the population by the news of the sudden death of large numbers of handicapped or sick relatives, not to mention the smoke and the smell of the crematoria of the killing centres.[27] As knowledge of the 'euthanasia programme' spread, the matter "was brought to a head" by the public condemnation of Nazi euthanasia by Bishop Clemens von Galen of Münster in a sermon on 3 August 1941.[28] Hitler ordered the programme stopped on 28 August 1941, however the 'euthanasia programme' continued, in the extermination camps in the East, until the end of the war.[29] Between 1939 and 1942, 70, 273 people were killed in this program--by 1945, it is estimated that a total of 275, 000 people were murdered.[30]

iii.) The *Einsatzgruppen* and the "Final Solution":

In September 1939, German armies swept into Poland, triggering the cataclysmic conflict of the Second World War. Following closely on the heels of the *Wehrmacht* were mobile killing units, known as the *Einsatzgruppen*. These units were originally formed to deal with security, intelligence and political policing tasks during the occupation of Austria in March 1938.[31] In Poland, the *Einsatzgruppen* were charged with the task of the "suppression of all anti-*Reich* and anti-German elements in rear of the fighting troops."[32] Looking back on the activities of these units, Reinhard Heydrich, head of the *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD) in a document dated 2 July 1940, stated about the *Einsatzgruppen*, that

> [a]s a result of their preparatory work they were able through arrests, confiscations and safeguarding of important political material, systematically to deal heavy blows to those world movements hostile to the *Reich* directed by the *emigré*, freemason, Jewish and politically hostile ecclesiastical camp, and also by the Second and Third International.[33]

These units fell under the overall umbrella of the *Schutzstaffel* (SS), headed by Heinrich Himmler, but were, more specifically, a part of the SD headed by Reinhard Heydrich.[34] To put Heydrich's description of the activities of the *Einsatzgruppen* cited above in plain language, in Poland, the *Einsatzgruppen* were a tool of Hitler's racial and colonisation policy--their task was to murder Jews, members of the clergy and the Polish intelligentsia.[35] As a notice written by Martin Bormann on 2 October 1940, then SS-Lieutenant-General and Head of the *Reich* Chancellery, there was to be only one master in Poland, the German: "*Für die Polen dürfe es nur* ***einen*** *Herren geben, und das sei der Deutsche.*"[36] The *Einsatzgruppen* would continue and intensify their murderous tasks during the German invasion of Russia. After the invasion began on 22 June 1941, the

Einsatzgruppen followed the rapidly-advancing German armies, with orders to exterminate all Jews and Soviet political commissars with whom they came in contact. The *Einsatzgruppen* were in fact four groups--A, B, C and D--and had a total strength of about 3,000 men. However, the number of men in these units was increased by the addition of Lithuanians, Ukrainians and Romanians who helped in the killing operations. The *Einsatzgruppen* moved in the rear areas of the army groups and were furnished with gasoline, rations and quarters by the German army. The *Einsatzgruppen* operated in German-occupied Poland and Russia and engaged in many, many killing actions. The most gruesome of the very numerous massacres committed by the *Einsatzgruppen* occurred at Babi Yar in the Ukraine, between 28 and 30 September 1941. One killing unit, *Einsatzgruppe* D, murdered over 30,000 Jews during this two-day period.[37] By the Spring of 1943, the *Einsatzgruppen* killed over one million Jews and tens of thousands of Soviet political commissars, partisans, Roma and other victims.[38]

However, following the German invasion of Russia on 22 June 1941 and the expansion and intensification of the conflict, Nazi mass murder also expanded. As the German army advanced eastward, more and more Jews came under German rule. The expansion of mass murder was manifested by the creation of death camps. One of the first steps in the development of these camps occurred on 31 July 1941, when *Reichsmarschall* Hermann Göring, commander of the *Luftwaffe*, charged Reinhard Heydrich, head of the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* (RSHA), with the "task of carrying out the 'final solution' of the Jewish question"[39] in German-occupied territory:

> To complete the task that was assigned to you on 24 January 1939, which dealt with the solution of the Jewish problem by emigration and evacuation in the most suitable way, I hereby charge you with making all necessary preparations with regard to organisational,

> technical and financial matters for bringing about a complete solution of the Jewish question within the German sphere of influence in Europe.
>
> Wherever other governmental agencies are involved, these are to co-operate with you.[40]

In order to organise and co-ordinate the "Final Solution" of the "Jewish question" in German-controlled territory, a conference was held on 20 January 1942 at Wannsee, a lake just to the west of Berlin.[41] The conference was chaired by SS-Lieutenant-General[42] Heydrich and was attended by officials representing the various Party, economic, legal and diplomatic ministries and offices of the Nazi regime.[43] In his work, The Destruction of the European Jews, Raul Hilberg provides a list of those present, including:[44]

> *Gauleiter* Dr. Meyer (East Ministry)
> *Reichsamtsleiter* Dr. Leibbrandt (East Ministry)
> *Staatssekretär* Dr. Stuckart (Interior Ministry)
> *Staatssekretär* Neumann (Office of the Four-Year Plan)
> *Staatssekretär* Dr. Freisler (Justice Ministry)
> *Staatssekretär* Dr. Bühler (*Generalgouvernement*)
> *Unterstaatssekretär* Luther (Foreign Office)
> SS-Senior-Colonel[45] Klopfer (Party Chancellery)
> *Ministerialdirektor* Kritzinger (Reich Chancellery)
> SS-Lieutenant-General Hofmann (RuSHA[46])
> SS-Major-General[47] Müller (RSHA IV, i.e. Gestapo[48])
> SS-Lieutenant-Colonel[49] Eichmann (RSHA IV-B4, i.e. Gestapo, Evacuations and Jews[50])
> SS-Senior-Colonel Dr. Schöngarth (BdS[51] *Generalgouvernement*)
> SS-Major[52] Dr. Lange (KdS[53] Latvia, deputising for BdS Ostland)

At this meeting, these men laid the administrative groundwork for the projected extermination of all Jews in German-controlled areas of Europe and established that the control of and the responsibility for this mammoth undertaking, all over Continental Europe, would lie with Himmler's SS: "The supervision of the final solution of the Jewish question was, regardless of geographical boundaries, centralised in the hands of

the *Reichsführer* SS and Chief of the German police."[54] The conference also discussed how Jews would be selected for deportation to extermination camps, where Jewish communities were located in Europe and how this projected extermination would be financed.[55]

During this meeting there was no explicit mention of the killing of Jews, however Heydrich stated that Jews would "be conscripted for labour" and that "undoubtedly a large number of them will drop out through natural elimination."[56] Although the language used was vague and euphemistic, the fact that these officials were discussing the plans to murder European Jewry was clear, as Heydrich continued:

> The remainder who survive--and they will certainly be those who have the greatest powers of endurance--will have to be dealt with accordingly. For, if released, they would, as a natural selection of the fittest, form a germ cell from which the Jewish race could build itself up again.[57]

The fact that Heydrich wished to keep the "Jewish race" from "building itself up again" also strongly suggests that the intention here was to kill all Jews that were under German control.

Other statements made by both Hitler and Himmler clearly and ominously threatened the murder of the European Jews. On the sixth anniversary of his being appointed Chancellor of Germany, Hitler "predicted" that

> should the international Jewry of finance (*Finanzjudentum*) succeed, both within and beyond Europe, in plunging mankind into yet another world war, then the result will not be a Bolshevisation of the earth and the victory of Jewry, but the annihilation (*Vernichtung*) of the Jewish race in Europe.[58]

Hitler repeated these words in a speech on 30 September 1942, once the mass murder of Jews was well under way in German-occupied territory.[59] Heinrich Himmler also spoke

publicly about the extermination of Jews. Speaking on 9 June 1942 at the state funeral for Heydrich, Himmler held forth on future tasks for Germany, one of which was "the settlement and migrations of peoples in Europe."[60] Regarding the place of Europe's Jews in these arrangements, Himmler added that "[t]he migration of the Jews will be dealt with for certain in a year: then none will wander again. Because now the slate must be made quite clean."[61] Rudolf Höss, the commandant at the extermination camp Auschwitz, clearly explained after the war at Nuremberg that "[t]he 'final solution' of the Jewish question meant the complete extermination of all Jews in Europe."[62] It is clear, that in Nazi terminology, the euphemistic phrase "dealing with the Jews" meant killing them.

While the murderous work of the *Einsatzgruppen* continued, it is clear that in order to undertake the killing of the Jewish population of Europe (approximately 9.5 million people in 1933),[63] a more "efficient" means of killing would have to be employed. Jews from all over occupied Europe were deported by rail to six killing centres in occupied Poland. These killing centres were situated to provide access to rail lines and also "with a view to seclusion."[64] They were, with years of operation and minimum number of victims in parentheses: Chelmno (December 1941-September 1942, June-July 1944; 152,000), Belzec (March-December 1942; 600,000), Sobibor (April-June 1942, October 1942-October 1943; 250,000), Treblinka (July 1942-October 1943; 900,000), Majdanek (September 1942-September 1943, November 1943; 50,000) and Auschwitz-Birkenau (February 1942-November 1944; 1,100,000).[65]

These killing centres appeared from 1941 to 1942, during a time of great expansion of the Nazi concentration camp system.[66] Raul Hilberg asserted that this point was of great importance, as "it ensured that the construction and operation of the killing centres could

proceed smoothly and unobtrusively."[67] The first death camp to be operational was Chelmno in late 1941, and carbon monoxide (CO) was used as the killing agent.[68] The victims were loaded into the back of specially-designed trucks that pumped exhaust into the rear compartment.[69] Later, using a method pioneered during the "euthanasia programme", the gas chambers were disguised as showers and used bottled CO gas to kill their victims.[70] Indeed, the "killers who learned their trade in the euthanasia killing centres of Brandenburg, Grafeneck, Hartheim, Sonnenstein, Bernburg and Hadamar also staffed the killing centres at Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka."[71] By the late summer of 1942, the camps Sobibor, Treblinka and Belzec used diesel motors to produce the CO gas for the gas chambers.[72]By the beginning of 1943, hydrogen cyanide gas (Zyklon B) was being used to kill Jews at the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp system, which was equipped with a more technologically-advanced killing apparatus than the previously mentioned death camps.[73] Among its macabre "improvements" were large, subterranean gas chambers, into which 2,000 people could be packed.[74] As well, electric elevators served this murderous process by bringing bodies up to the ground level crematoria.[75]

This terrible system killed quickly and efficiently. Hilberg summed up this efficiency by stating that a person "would step off a train in the morning, and in the evening, his corpse was burned and his clothes were packed away for shipment to Germany."[76]

[1]R. Hilberg, The Destruction of the European Jews, vol. 1, revised and definitive edition, (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1985), p. 863.
[2] J. Taylor and W. Shaw, The Penguin Dictionary of the Third Reich, Revised Edition, (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1997), p. 67; J. Noakes and G. Pridham, eds., Documents of Nazism, 1919-1945, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1974), pp. 472-73; H. Krausnick, et al., Anatomy of the SS State, (London: Collins, 1968), 39-40.
[3]Ibid.
[4]Krausnick, SS State, p. 40.
[5]Taylor and Shaw, Dictionary of the Third Reich, p. 67; Noakes and Pridham, Documents, p. 472.
[6]Taylor and Shaw, Dictionary of the Third Reich, p. 67; Hoffmann, German Resistance to Hitler, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 39.
[7]Hoffmann, German Resistance, p.39; Taylor and Shaw, Dictionary of the Third Reich, p. 67; Noakes and Pridham, Documents, p. 473.
[8] M. Gilbert, Atlas of the Holocaust, (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1988), p. 27.
[9]Ibid.
[10]Ibid.
[11]Taylor and Shaw, Dictionary of the Third Reich, p. 67.
[12]P.E. Lapide, Three Popes and the Jews, (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1967), p. 118.
[13]*Reichsgesetzblatt* (hereafter "RGBl."), *Teil I, 25. Juli 1933*, S. 529-31
[14]Ibid., S. 529.
[15]Ibid.
[16]Ibid.
[17]G.E. Allen, "The Misuse of Biological Hierarchies: The American Eugenics Movement, 1900-1940," in History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences, *Publicazioni della Stazione Zoologica di Napoli*, Section II, 5, No. 2, (1983), p. 122, cited in H. Friedlander, The Origins of Nazi Genocide: From Euthanasia to the Final Solution, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), p. 8.
[18]Ibid.
[19]J.S. Conway, Nazi Persecution of the Churches, (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1968), p. 267.
[20]E. Fröhlich, ed., Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels. Teil II: Diktate 1941-1945, Band 6: Oktober-Dezember 1942. K.G. Saur Verlag, München 1996, S. 561.
[21]Ibid.; see also Tagebücher..Band 7: Januar-März 1943, S. 595, entry for 20 March 1943.
[22]Copy of document on front page, Friedlander, Origins of Nazi Genocide.
[23]Ibid., p. 109.
[24]Ibid., pp. 86-87.
[25]Ibid., p. 108.
[26]Ibid., pp. 104-06.
[27]Ibid., pp. 106-07.
[28]Conway, Nazi Persecution of the Churches, p. 271.
[29]Ibid., p. 272.
[30]Friedlander, Origins of Nazi Genocide, pp. 109-10.
[31]H. Krausnick and H.-H. Wilhelm, Die Truppe des Weltanschauungskrieges: Die Einsatzgruppen der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD 1938-1942, (Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, Stuttgart 1981), S. 17.
[32]Krausnick, et al., SS State, p. 177.
[33]Ibid., p. 178.
[34]Krausnick and Wilhelm, Truppe des Weltanschauungskrieges, S. 21.
[35]Ibid., S. 32.
[36]Ibid., S. 33.
[37]United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Historical Atlas of the Holocaust, (Washington: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 1996), pp. 50-51.
[38]Ibid., p. 51.
[39]Noakes and Pridham, Documents, p. 486.

[40]Ibid.
[41]Ibid., p. 489.
[42]Hoffmann, History of the German Resistance, p. 767, "Ranks: Approximate Equivalents".
[43] "Summary of the 'final solution' conference (30 copies), of January 20, 1942, NG-2586-E" cited in R. Hilberg, Destruction of the European Jews, p. 404.
[44]Ibid.
[45]Hoffmann, History of the German Resistance, p. 767.
[46]RuSHA--*Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt.* The SS Central Office for Race and Settlement. This organisation controlled the "racial purity" of the SS and was responsible for organising the settlement of German-occupied eastern territory. (Krausnick, et al., SS State, p. 562.)
[47]Ibid.
[48]Hilberg, Destruction of the European Jews, pp. 282-83.
[49]Hoffmann, History of the German Resistance, p. 767.
[50]Hilberg, Destruction of the European Jews, p. 282-83.
[51]BdS--*Befehlshaber der Sicherheitspolizei.* Commander of the Security Police. (Krausnick, et al., SS State, p. 542.)
[52]Hoffmann, History of the German Resistance, p. 767.
[53]KdS--*Kommandeur der Sicherheitspolizei.* Commander of the Security Police. (Krausnick, et al., SS State, p. 552.
[54]Noakes and Pridham, Documents, p. 489.
[55]Ibid.
[56]Ibid.
[57]Ibid.
[58]M. Domarus, Hitler: Speeches and Proclamations 1932-1945, vol. 3., (Wauconda: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, Inc., 1997), p. 1449.
[59] "Hitler speech, September 30, 1942, German press" cited in Hilberg, Destruction of European Jews, p. 407.
[60] United States National Archives, Washington, DC, T-175, Roll 90, Frame 2664, cited in P. Padfield, Himmler: Reichsführer-SS, (London: Macmillan, 1990), p. 385.
[61]Ibid.
[62]Noakes and Pridham, Documents, p. 490.
[63] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Historical Atlas of the Holocaust, (Washington: Macmillan Publishing USA, 1996), p. 221.
[64]Hilberg, Destruction of European Jews, p. 875.
[65]Hilberg, Destruction of European Jews, pp. 893-94; H. Friedlander, The Origins of Nazi Genocide: From Euthanasia to the Final Solution, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), p. 287.
[66]Hilberg, Destruction of European Jews, p. 871.
[67]Ibid.
[68]Ibid.
[69]Ibid.
[70]Ibid., pp. 872, 878.
[71]Friedländer, Origins of Nazi Genocide, p. 22.
[72]Hilberg, Destruction of the European Jews, p. 878.
[73]Ibid., pp. 883-85.
[74]Ibid., pp. 883-84.
[75]Ibid.
[76]Ibid., p. 863.

CHAPTER TWO

The "Art of the Possible": Nonconformity in Nazi Society

When speaking of "ordinary Germans" and their reactions to Nazi crimes, one must consider the nature of the society in which they lived. This consideration does not provide an alibi for the fact that far too few Germans listened to their conscience and acted against the Nazi regime, nor does it serve to deny that "on the whole, at all times from 1933 to 1945 the majority of German voters, indeed of the entire population, supported the government, albeit with varying degrees of willingness."[1] Acts of disobedience or non-compliance in a totalitarian society, let alone the participation in a conspiracy to overthrow the regime, require both a courage and commitment that few possess. In this context it is important to note that non-conformist behaviour under such a regime was limited not only physically, by the security organisations of the regime (like the Secret State Police, hereafter *Geheime Staatspolizei—Gestapo*), but also *psychologically*. In any repressive society, the constant threat of severe punishment, for example imprisonment, beatings or even death, for disobeying a law, effectively deters many from risking such behaviour. In Nazi society, what was the nature of these laws and this punishment?

Three decrees in February and March 1933 criminalised even seemingly innocuous comments about the Nazi regime. The first decree, titled 'Decree of the *Reich* President against Treason toward the German People and against High Treasonous Machinations' declared that anyone communicating statements of fact to foreign governments could be

imprisoned.[2] Whether or not these statements were true, or if the governments in question already knew of the information, was not an issue.[3]

Another such decree of 21 March 1933 was entitled "Decree of the *Reich* President for Defence against Insidious Attacks against the Government of the National Resurgence".[4] This decree declared that anyone who made statements that were factually untrue would be punished with up to two year's imprisonment, if these statements were injurious to the reputation or prestige of Germany.[5] Moreover, if the deed (*die Tat*) was committed with the intention of causing "unrest or terror" among the German population or with the intention of "causing political difficulties for the German *Reich* abroad," it would be punished with no less than three years' or possibly life imprisonment.[6] The decree also ominously stated that "in particularly serious cases, the death penalty may be imposed."[7] Similarly, the 'Law against Insidious Attacks on the State and the Party and for the Protection of Party Uniforms' of 20 December 1934 carried the penalty of imprisonment for those who made comments deemed to be injurious to the state, Party or leading figures of the state or Party.[8] This law also demanded the death penalty in "particularly severe cases" and even if the deed was committed abroad, the person could still be charged under this law.[9] Thus this presidential decree and law made certain acts and/or *statements* criminal offences. The corresponding punishments for such offences ranged from three years in prison to, in "serious" cases, life imprisonment or the death penalty.

A third decree, also dated 21 March 1933, was entitled: "Decree of the *Reich* Government for the Formation of Special Courts."[10] This decree established 'special courts' in every superior-court district and granted these courts jurisdiction over the cases arising from the 'Decree of the *Reich* President for the Protection of the *Volk* and State'

('Reichstag Fire Decree' of 28 February 1933) and the 'Insidiousness Decree'.[11] This 'Reichstag Fire Decree' had already suspended basic freedoms, including freedom of speech and the press, freedom of assembly and association, protection against search and seizure in the home, freedom of property and freedom of communication, which included mail, telephone and telegraphs.[12] These 'special courts' were also given the authority to hold the accused in custody for an unlimited amount of time and could even give decisions "without the presentation of evidence."[13] Moreover, the 'special courts' could proceed to judge cases that were outside of their jurisdiction, that is, unless the cases belonged to the jurisdiction of the *Reich* Supreme Court or a higher superior court.[14] It must also be noted that against the decisions of the "special courts" there could be no appeals.[15] Thus, based on these decrees, anyone who made a derogatory statement about or criticised the Party or its personalities could be very severely punished.

The existence of these decrees also provided a basis for denunciations. When something as innocuous as a comment or a joke becomes a criminal offence, one must be very careful about what one says--and of course to whom such a comment is made. The secret police of a totalitarian regime need not place an undercover agent in every office, school or apartment building in order to intimidate the population into submission. If the average person feels or believes that the secret police organisation is ubiquitous and fears severe punishment for disobedience, then the terror is all the more effective. When faced with "the mere possibility of a knock on the door at five o'clock in the morning and two leather-coated figures standing outside saying, 'Come with us,'"[16] the vast majority of people in any society would probably choose the option of "minding their own business" over "resisting the regime".

In National-Socialist Germany the phrase "resisting the regime" did not only refer to attempts to overthrow the regime.[17] Resistance ranged from attempting to overthrow the regime to ordinary, everyday actions like refusing to give the "Heil Hitler!" greeting. The *Gestapo* did not limit itself to the investigation and the thwarting of coup attempts. The *Gestapo* attempted to stamp out any and all potentially anti-Nazi behaviour within German society. In the words of Robert Gellately, the *Gestapo* "did not only attempt to search out and destroy serious threats to the regime; it also endeavoured to suppress all non-compliance by the population at large."[18]

The psychological intimidation of the German population by the *Gestapo* is an important point. Gellately also argued that although many Germans felt that *Gestapo* agents or informers were always close at hand, the number of agents or officials in the *Gestapo* was actually rather small: "Given the small number of officials in the *Gestapo*, their distribution had to be thin on the ground."[19] The number of *Gestapo* staff members is estimated to have been approximately 40, 000 in 1943.[20] The *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD) was smaller, with approximately 3,000 salaried and 30,000 part-time employees.[21]

It must be noted that much of the work of the *Gestapo* was of an administrative nature; that is, not every *Gestapo* employee was an undercover agent listening in on people.[22] And while informers played an important role in gathering information for the *Gestapo*, their small numbers did not allow them to watch every person or to attain a seemingly all-pervasive presence in German society. The only effective way for the *Gestapo* to monitor and control the actions and comments of the German population would be with the collaboration of the population itself.

Gellately contends that popular participation through denunciations, by providing the Gestapo with information, was the "key link in the three-way interaction between the police, people, and policy in Nazi Germany."[22] Did the atmosphere in German society at this time reflect this interaction between the *Gestapo* and the people? The atmosphere of suspicion and fear in German society due to the possibility of being denounced by a fellow citizen, neighbour or even a friend was real. Sometimes people denounced others, often falsely, in order to settle old scores or for other "blatant personal motives," such as resentment, personal gain or jealousy.[23] Students even denounced professors, as Ulrich von Hassell recorded in a diary entry of 29 May 1941. In this entry, Hassell recounted the story of how a friend of his, Ferdinand Sauerbruch had been denounced.[24] Sauerbruch was a professor of surgery and at his first lecture after the sinking of the German battleship *Bismarck* (24-27 May 1941), had made "a few remarks in honour of the dead, and had concluded with the words: 'Long live Germany and the Führer!'"[25] That afternoon, the *Gestapo* called him--apparently he had been denounced by a student for putting the word 'Germany' before the word 'Führer'.[26] Although Hassell recorded no nasty repercussions from this episode, such a denunciation, although absurd and unimaginable for one living in Canada today, shows the atmosphere in which people in Nazi Germany lived.

This atmosphere was astutely described by William Shirer, an American journalist and broadcaster who worked in Berlin for the American Columbia Broadcasting System from late August 1934 to December 1940.[27] In December 1939, Shirer wrote that "[m]any long prison sentences [were] being meted out to Germans who listen[ed] to foreign radio stations."[28] "Yet," he added, "many continue to listen to them."[29] Apparently, so many

Germans listened to foreign broadcasts, that official warnings against this practice were issued. One such warning concluded: "No mercy will be shown the idiotic criminals who listen to the lies of the enemy."[30] Shirer described the tense atmosphere created by the possibility of being denounced among Germans in his recounting of an afternoon spent with a family listening to the forbidden broadcasts of the six p.m. BBC news. The family was very apprehensive and above all careful when they tuned into the broadcast. The mother explained

> that besides the porter, who is the official Nazi spy for the apartment house, they had just learned that a Jewish tenant in return for receiving clothing ration cards (Jews get food cards, but no clothing cards) had turned informer for the house, and they had to be very careful. They played the radio so low I could hardly catch the news, and one of the daughters kept watch by the front door.[31]

Shirer recounted two even more telling stories during a journey on the train from Munich to Lausanne, on 4 February 1940:

> 1. In Germany it is a serious penal offence to listen to a foreign radio station. The other day the mother of a German airman received word from the Luftwaffe that her son was missing and must be presumed dead. A couple of days later the BBC in London, which broadcasts weekly a list of German prisoners, announced that her son had been captured. Next day she received *eight* letters from friends and acquaintances telling her they had heard her son was safe as a prisoner in England. Then the story takes a nasty turn. The mother denounced all eight to the police for listening to an English broadcast, and they were arrested.
> (When I tried to recount this story on the radio, the Nazi censor cut it out on the ground that American listeners would not understand the heroism of the woman in denouncing her eight friends!)[32]

The second story that Shirer confided to his diary is lighter, but equally informative about the fears and considerations of ordinary German citizens:

> 2. The parents of a U-boat officer were officially informed of their son's death. The boat was overdue and had been given up by the German Admiralty as lost. The parents arranged a church funeral. On the morning of the service the butcher called and wanted a few words with the head of the house in private. Next came the grocer. Finally friends started swarming in. They had all heard the BBC announce that the son was among those taken prisoner from the U-boat. But how to call off the funeral without letting the authorities know that someone in the confidence of the family had listened to a foreign station? If the parents wouldn't tell, perhaps they themselves would be arrested. A family council was held. It was decided to go through with the funeral. After it was over, the mourners gathered in the parents' home, were told the truth if they already didn't know it, and everyone celebrated with champagne.[33]

Although it is difficult to ascertain the exact motives of the mother in the first story for denouncing her friends, one can clearly see from both of these stories that there was an acute sense of fear among ordinary Germans that even friends or acquaintances might denounce them for engaging in "illegal" activities, like listening to foreign radio broadcasts. In addition, the danger did not merely lie in being denounced for an offence that one actually committed. One could be denounced for simply *knowing* about such an offence, committed by someone else, and not reporting what one knew.

Class and social differences were reflected in denunciations. That is, often "denouncers belonged to the same milieu as the denounced" and those in higher social positions seemed to make derogatory comments about the regime within a closed group of people they knew rather than in public.[34] The atmosphere of suspicion, mistrust and denunciation that was prevalent in civilian society did not seem to affect the German Army and the officer corps:

> The Army and its officer corps, however, were largely immune to Gestapo surveillance and penetration and to the influence of the Nazi Party. The social fabric of the Army officer corps and its code of ethics left little room for informers, even if such persons had not tended naturally rather to congregate in police organisations.[35]

With respect to class differences, Gellately asserts that incautious statements made by prominent individuals were sometimes overlooked. Gellately cites the example of Peter Bielenberg, a Hamburg lawyer and a senior official in a factory, who had driven the wife of one of his office clerks to the hospital, as she was ill.[37] When Bielenberg had gone to collect her, he had noticed a framed Nazi slogan hanging on the wall, which stated: "*Der Führer hat immer recht.*"[38] Bielenberg had asked the woman, "However could you frame and hang up such rubbish?"[39] However, the office clerk made no mention of this incautious comment to the *Gestapo*, that is, until after Bielenberg had been arrested after the 20 July 1944 assassination attempt.[40] This example, although isolated, suggested a reluctance, or at least a hesitation, to report on the infelicitous or incautious comments of "one's 'betters'."[41] Criticisms of the Nazi regime, valid or not, had been criminalised and could be used against the person who made them. In National-Socialist German society, one's comments had to be carefully guarded, lest they were overheard and reported to the *Gestapo*, either the next day or years after the fact. Non-conformity in Nazi society was not easy and certainly could also be dangerous. To actually take part in resistance and to *act* against the regime not only meant graver risks, but also required uncommon courage, strength of character and extreme caution.

[1]Hoffmann, German Resistance, p. 51.
[2]RGBl. I, 1933, S. 85-87.
[3]Ibid.
[4]Ibid., S. 135.
[5]Ibid.
[6]Ibid.
[7]Ibid.
[8]Ibid., I, 1934, S. 1269.
[9]Ibid., S. 1270,
[10]Ibid., I, S. 136-38.
[11]Ibid., S. 137.
[12]Hoffmann, German Resistance, p. 20.
[13]RGBl. I, 1933, S. 137.
[14]Ibid.
[15]Ibid.
[16]Hoffmann, German Resistance, p. 30.
[17]Here, the concepts of "resisting the regime", "opposition" and "resistance" should not be interpreted as meaning exclusively the desire to topple Hitler's. Opposition could be, and indeed was, manifested through everyday, or by comparison with an assassination attempt, relatively mundane forms of behaviour (see examples cited below, also in Ibid., p. 55).
[18]R. Gellately, "Surveillance and Disobedience: Aspects of the Political Policing of Nazi Germany," in F.R. Nicosia and L.D. Stokes, eds., Germans against Nazism: Nonconformity, Opposition, and Resistance in the Third Reich, (Oxford: Berg Publishers Ltd., 1990), p. 15.
[19]Ibid., p. 18.
[20]H. Rothfels, "Zur Wiederkehr des 20. Juli 1944" in VfZ XVII (1969).
[21]Testimony of Otto Ohlendorf in Trial of the War Criminals, Nuremberg: International Military Tribunal, 14 November 1945 – 1 October 1946, Vol. XX, p. 329.
[22]Nicosia and Stokes, Germans against Nazism, p. 18.
[23]R. Gellately, The Gestapo and German Society: Enforcing Racial Policy 1933-1945, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 136.
[24]Gellately, Gestapo, p. 142-43, 145.
[25]U. von Hassell, The von Hassell Diaries 1938-1944, (Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1947), p. 197.
[26]Ibid., pp. 197, 394.
[27]Ibid., p. 197.
[28]W. Shirer, Berlin Diary, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1942), pp. 12, 474.
[29]Ibid., p. 211; Hoffmann, German Resistance, p. 40.
[30]Ibid.
[31]Ibid.
[32]Ibid.
[33]Ibid., pp. 231-32.
[34]Ibid., p. 232.
[35]Gellately, Gestapo, p. 144.
[36]Hoffmann, German Resistance, pp. 72-73.
[37]Gellately, Gestapo, p. 145; C. Bielenberg, The Past is Myself, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1972), pp. 11, 235.
[38]Bielenberg, The Past is Myself, p. 235.
[39]Ibid.
[40]Gellately, Gestapo, p. 145.
[41]Ibid.

CHAPTER THREE

General Reactions to *Kristallnacht* and the "Euthanasia Programme"

It is impossible to determine accurately an "overall" appraisal of public opinion in Nazi Germany, and thus one cannot give a description of how the entire German people reacted to Nazi crimes. However, it is possible to examine the written records of some of the reactions in the diaries and letters that have survived the war. There are also other ways of gauging reactions within German society to Nazi crimes. After experience of both Hitler and Mussolini, Ernst Freiherr von Weizsäcker wrote that "dictators are often more sensitive to public opinion than monarchs or presidents of republics." In an attempt to monitor the "public mood" within Nazi Germany, the SD compiled the *Stimmungsberichte*, published by Heinz Boberach under the title *Meldungen aus dem Reich*.[1]

In using these reports, however, one must be cautious. Given the repressive nature of Nazi society, such reports must be read critically, as people were not likely to express freely critical or disapproving opinions about the regime or its crimes. In addition, although the reports were edited by academics, lawyers, doctors and other professionals, the data on which the reports were based came from a network of informers across Germany.[2] They were neither social scientists nor professionals, and they were graded in terms of reliability: from "reliable Party members" down to "unreliable collaborators" and "ex-convicts".[3] However, these caveats notwithstanding, the reports do contain some interesting information relevant to this discussion.

What were the reactions to the pogrom of 9/10 November 1938?

i.) *Kristallnacht:*

If Joseph Goebbels truly wished to believe that the violent and chaotic pogrom of 9 November 1938 was a "spontaneous" demonstration against Jews in Germany, or in the words of a Nazi supporter, the boiling over of the "National Soul", then the reactions to this orgy of violence must have been very disappointing to him. Within Germany and abroad, reactions to *Kristallnacht* included shock and disgust. An anonymous letter, addressed to Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels, expressed not only these reactions, but also a sense of shame to be German:

> One could weep, one must be ashamed to be a German, part of an Aryan-*Edelvolk*, a civilised nation guilty of such a cultural disgrace. Later generations will compare these atrocities with the times of the witch-trials. And nobody dares to say a word against them, though 85 per cent of the population is angry as never before. Poor Germany, wake up properly before it is too late![4]

Walking through streets of Berlin, surrounded by the aftermath of the destruction of *Kristallnacht*, Prelate Bernhard Lichtenberg asked himself how such vandalism was possible "*in einem geordneten Staat.*"[5] In his mind there was only one thing that could help the Jews: prayer.[6] In a sermon, Lichtenberg stated: "Outside [this Church], a synagogue is burning--and a synagogue too, is a house of God."[7] Almost three years later, Lichtenberg was arrested after protesting against the contents of an anti-Jewish leaflet.[8] Lichtenberg drafted an announcement, which he intended to read within his parish during a service. This draft was found upon his arrest on 23 October 1941.[9] It read:

> Announcement
> An anonymous inflammatory pamphlet against the Jews is being distributed to houses in Berlin. In it, it is claimed that any German whoever, supposedly out of false sentimentality, supports Jews—be it merely through obligingness—betrays his people. Do not be misled by this unchristian thought, but act according to the strict word of Jesus Christ: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.[10]

The Nazi regime had abolished law and order, Lichtenberg urged his parishioners to obey the rules of Jesus Christ. Lichtenberg received a two-year sentence for his "crime".[11] He served it, but was not released at the end of it. He died on 3 November 1943 *en route* to the concentration camp at Dachau.[12]

On 16 November 1938, a report from the British chargé d'affaires in Berlin, George Ogilvie-Forbes, a week after the pogrom stated that "inarticulate though the masses may have been, I have not met a single German of whatever class who in varying measure does not, to say the least, disapprove of what has happened."[13] Forbes doubted that even the "outspoken condemnation of professed National Socialists or of senior officers in the army will have any influence over the insensate gang in present control of Nazi Germany."[14] Forbes continued to say that "[t]he present position of the Jews is indeed tragic," and ominously warned that "[t]he Jews of Germany are, indeed, not a national but a world problem, which, if neglected, contains the seeds of a terrible vengeance."[15]

The American consul in Leipzig, David Buffum, wrote a report on the events of *Kristallnacht* that contained similar sentiments as those present in the above letter. Regarding the alleged "spontaneity" of the riots trumpeted in the Nazi press, Buffum wrote:

> So far as a very high percentage of the German populace is concerned, a state of popular indignation that would spontaneously lead to such excesses, can be considered as nonexistent. On the contrary, in viewing the ruins and attendant measures employed,

> all of the local crowds observed were obviously benumbed over what had happened and aghast over the unprecedented fury of Nazi acts that had been or were taking place with bewildering rapidity throughout their city.[16]

However, to balance the reports of the shame of Germans in the aftermath of *Kristallnacht* there was also condemnation of the pogrom because of its material destruction and the "hooligan character of the 'action' perpetrated by 'gutter elements'."[17] A report from the SD reflects this sentiment:

> The actions against the Jews in November were very badly received. Criticism varied in accordance with the attitude of the individual. Business circles pointed to the damage which had arisen through the actions, others criticised the legal measures, and the bourgeoisie, just freed from anxiety about war, pointed to the dangerous effects which could arise abroad. When then the reaction abroad expressed itself in vile inflammatory campaigns and boycott measures, these liberal-pacifist circles agreed with foreign opinion and labeled the measures taken as 'barbaric' and 'uncivilised'. From a basic liberal attitude, many believed they had to stand up openly for the Jews. The destruction of the synagogues was declared to be irresponsible. People stood up for the 'poor repressed Jews'."[18]

This report highlights views that were present in German society, but not necessarily widely held. While it is clear that some Germans were callous and indifferent to the sufferings of Jews, many Germans felt shame as a result of this pogrom out of sympathy for the plight of the Jews. Some people worried about property damage, disorderly conduct and how Germany appeared to other nations more than about the appalling attack on Jews on *Kristallnacht*. Yet one cannot jump to the conclusion that these people would have supported the killing of Jews. *Kristallnacht* was however a clear signal to the world that the persecution of Jews in Germany was not a temporary revolutionary sideeffect. The persecution of Jews was increasing and becoming more violent. A large number of Germans realised this; others, as the report above points out, apparently did not.

ii) The "Euthanasia Programme":

With respect to reactions to the Nazi "euthanasia programme", the strongest and perhaps most influential condemnations came from the churches. There were reactions from the public as well, however. Not only did the ill or handicapped relatives of Germans mysteriously die in large numbers, but also the smoke and the smell from the crematoria in killing centres raised suspicions.[19] Moreover in the towns where killing centres were situated, citizens noticed the regular arrival of "patients", but also noted that "they are never seen again, nor can they be visited."[20] Heinrich Himmler was aware of this suspicion and unrest among the German population with respect to the "euthanasia programme". In December 1940, in a letter to Viktor Brack, the man directing the day-to-day operation of the programme,[21] Himmler stated:

> I hear that there is considerable disturbance about the hospital at Grafeneck. People recognise the grey buses of the SS [that transported the patients] and believe they know what is going on when they see the chimney of the crematorium burning continuously. What is happening there should be a secret, but it is no longer so; so the worst suspicions have been aroused. In my view it will be necessary to end this use of the institution and at the same time to institute some propaganda in a clever and capable way of showing films about mental or hereditary illnesses in that region.[22]

In addition, an SD report written in January 1942 (after the official programme was stopped) suggested that the killing of the mentally-ill or the feeble-minded was widely known within German society.[23] The report was about the reception in German society of such a propaganda film discussing and advocating the killing of the "incurably ill". One person asked about the film called it "very interesting" and then added "*aber da geht es*

genauso darin zu wie in den Irrenanstalten, wo sie jetzt die Tollen alle kaputt machen."[24] Some people that were asked about this film, expressed the belief that euthanasia was acceptable "in particularly severe cases" provided that a committee of doctors verified the patient's condition.[25] However, the most common response noted was one of mistrust, that is, once started, where would euthanasia be stopped: "*Über diese Sache kann man denken, wie man will, aber wer gibt eine Garantie dafür, daß damit kein Mißbrauch getrieben wird.*"[26]Another response to the question of euthanasia was one that sprang from Christian conscience, that is, that only God had the right to give and take life: "*Es wird auch immer wieder erklärt, daß das Leben, das Gott verschenkt habe, auch nur wieder von Gott genommen werden könne und dürfe.*"[27]

This sentiment echoed that of German bishops who protested against the Nazi "euthanasia programme" in their sermons. In March 1940, Bishop Konrad Preysing of Berlin condemned euthanasia in similar terms, that is, every person had a right to live, regardless of whether they were ill or weak: "No justification and no excuse can be found for taking away the life of the weak or the ill for any sort of economic or eugenic reasons [...]. The church will protect the right of every individual to life."[28] In July 1941, Bishop Theophil Wurm of Württemberg wrote to the Minister of the Interior, Wilhelm Frick, and declared that Christians would not condone the practice of euthanasia and charged the regime to uphold the "merciful and humane handling of suffering fellow men."[29] However, the matter of Nazi euthanasia was brought to head by Bishop Clemens August von Galen of Münster in his sermon of 3 August 1941.[30] In this sermon, he attacked the "murder of innocent persons and the disregard of the sanctity of human life" that the "euthanasia programme" embodied.[31] Galen attacked the "terrible doctrine, which

excuses the murder of innocent people, which gives express license to kill unemployable invalids, cripples, incurables, and the seniles."[32] Galen also spoke out against the secret transportation of patients to unknown destinations, the "deliberate flouting of Catholic doctrine" through the cremation of the victims of euthanasia and the "deception of relatives by means of false death certificates."[33] Galen emphasised the fears of the people regarding how far euthanasia would be extended. What about the "sick and senile" or "badly-wounded soldiers"?[34] Would they also be killed, since they were no longer productive?[35] Copies of this sermon were distributed throughout Germany, "often by hand and at great personal risk; they were [even] smuggled to soldiers at the front."[36] Hans Scholl, one of the leading members of the student resistance group, the White Rose, found inspiration in a copy of this sermon.[37]

On 28 August 1941, Hitler ordered a halt to the "euthanasia programme" within Germany.[38] The programme would continue, however, on a smaller scale within Nazi extermination camps in Poland.[39] The outcry against Nazi euthanasia, on the one hand, showed that Germans were capable of resisting Nazi criminality. However, it is not clear, whether this protest was the deciding factor for Hitler to stop the "euthanasia programme" within Germany. It is possible that Hitler acquiesced to public pressure—as in the Rosenstraße incident.[40] Clearly, Hitler could have had Galen and Wurm arrested, and perhaps hanged or shot, but he did not. In fact, on 13 August 1941, *Reichsleiter* and Secretary to the Führer Martin Bormann, declared that Galen deserved the death sentence.[41] Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels contended that support for the regime in Münster and Westphalia would be lost if "so popular a figure as Bishop Galen were to be treated with the severity he deserved."[42] The question of punishing Galen

seemed to be one of timing—Goebbels felt that it was not time for a major clash with the Church.[43] Rather, the Church would be dealt with after the war was won, "when it would be comparatively easy to confiscate the Churches' material possessions, to break their resistance, and to rid themselves of the Bishop of Münster."[44] Hitler referred briefly yet threateningly to Galen, in a speech delivered in a Munich beer-hall on 8 November 1941:

> Should anyone here really be hoping to break our unity, it does not matter where he comes from or to which camp he belongs, then I will--and you know my methods--keep my eye on him for a while.
>
> This is just a time of probation. But then comes the moment when I will attack like lightning and remove the danger as quickly as possible. And then no disguise will protect him, not even the disguise of religion.[45]

Although the exact effect that this protest had on Hitler is not clear, the protest shines out as an appeal to human decency and compassion in a time when these qualities were very much in question.

[1]H. Boberach, Meldungen aus dem Reich 1938-1945: Die geheimen Lageberichte des Sicherheitsdienstes der SS, (Pawlak Verlag, Herrsching 1984), 17 *Bd.*; H. Boberach, ed., Meldungen aus dem Reich: Auswahl aus den geheimen Lageberichten des Sicherheitsdienstes der SS 1939-1944, (Hermann Luchterhand Verlag GmbH, Neuwied and Berlin 1965).
[2]Boberach, Meldungen aus dem Reich: Auswahl, S. XII, XIV-XV.
[3]Ibid.
[4]Letter cited in I. Kershaw, "Antisemitismus und Volksmeinung. Reaktionen auf die Judenverfolgung," in M. Broszat and E. Fröhlich, eds., Bayern in der N-S Zeit II. Herrschaft und Gesellschaft im Konflikt, (Munich-Vienna, 1979), p. 332.
[5]L. Poliakov and J. Wulf, eds., Das dritte Reich und die Juden: Dokumente und Aufsätze, (arani Verlags-GmbH, Berlin-Grunewald 1955), S. 433.
[6]Ibid.
[7]A. Erb, Bernhard Lichtenberg: Domprobst von St.Hedwig zu Berlin, (Berlin: Morus Verlag, 1949), S. 43 cited in S. Friedländer, Pius XII and the Third Reich: A Documentation, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), p. 91.
[8] Leber, Conscience in Revolt, p. 161-62.
[9] Ibid., p. 162.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.
[13]E.L. Woodward and R. Butler, eds., Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939, Third Series, III (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1950), p. 277, No. 313.
[14]Ibid.
[15]Ibid.
[16]Noakes and Pridham, Documents, p. 473.
[17]I. Kershaw, Popular Opinion and Political Dissent in the Third Reich: Bavaria 1933-1945, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), p. 269.
[18]Document printed in O.D. Kulka, "Public Opinion in National-Socialist Germany and the 'Jewish Question'," in Zion, XL (1975), No. 3/4. p. 286. (The article is written in Hebrew, but the documents are printed in German).
[19]Friedländer, Origins of Nazi Genocide, pp. 106-07.
[20]Ibid., p. 107.
[21]Ibid., p. 40.
[22]Nuremberg Document NO-018 cited in Conway, Persecution of the Churches, p. 271.
[23]Boberach, Meldungen aus dem Reich, S. 3175-76.
[24]Ibid., S. 3176.
[25]Ibid., S. 3175.
[26]Ibid., S. 3176.
[27]Ibid., S. 3175.
[28]Conway, Persecution of the Churches, p. 270.
[29]Ibid.
[30]Ibid., p. 271.
[31]Ibid., p. 280.
[32]Scholl, The White Rose, pp. 19-20.
[33]Conway, Persecution of the Churches, p. 280.
[34]Ibid.
[35]Ibid.
[36]Ibid.
[37]Scholl, The White Rose, p. 20.
[38]Conway, Persecution of the Churches, p. 271.
[39]Friedländer, Origins of Nazi Genocide, p. 85.
[40] One example of the Nazi regime acquiescing to public pressure was the Rosenstraße incident, in March 1943, in Berlin. (Stoltzfus, N. "Widerstand des Herzens: Der Protest in der Rosenstraße und die deutsch-jüdische Mischehe," in Geschichte und Gesellschaft 21 (1995), S. 218-247). In Berlin, at the beginning of 1943, German non-Jews assembled in protest against the arrest and the pending deportation of their Jewish

spouses and relatives. The majority of those protesting were women—there were 600 at any given time on the street. At the end of the protest, approximately 6,000 people (in total) had taken part. The protesters stayed in the street, all day and night, for a week. At the end of the week, Joseph Goebbels ordered that the between 1,700 and 2,000 spouses of mixed marriages and relatives be released. The protest in the Rosenstraße "convinced the National-Socialist leadership that the deportation of these Jews would possibly lead to social unrest and discussion and discovery of the "Final Solution", which may have placed this programme into jeopardy." (Ibid., S. 218.)

[41]Conway, Persecution of the Churches, p. 281.

[42]Ibid., p. 282.

[43]Ibid.

[44]Ibid.

[45]Ibid.

CHAPTER FOUR

Reactions to the "Final Solution"

i.) Reactions among civilians:

Although Nazi mass killing in the occupied Eastern territories was supposed to be a secret, information about such a large undertaking was bound to get out to the German public. As Heinz Boberach asserts, certain aspects of Nazi mass murder did leak out:

> *Viele wiedergegebene Äußerungen bewiesen, daß die Bevölkerung of erstaunlich gut über Staatsgeheimnisse unterrichtet war, z.B. über den Termin für die Vorbereitungen zu Rußlandfeldzug 1941, oder das Prinzip der V-Waffen 1943, unterrichtet aber auch über die Ermordung von Juden in Polen.*[1]

Yet what did the German population know about the extermination camps and gassings occurring in the East? The SD reports provide no information on this point, although there was one report, dated 19 April 1943, that referred to the mass shootings of Jews and Poles. At this time, Nazi propaganda was trying to reap the maximum benefit from the discovery of the recent discovery of the mass graves of approximately 15,000 Polish officers, allegedly killed by Soviet troops. The SD report stated that "a large portion of the German population finds it 'noteworthy' or 'hypocritical' that German propaganda had recently become sympathetic to the plight of Poles."[2] One person asked about this matter replied: "We Germans have no right to get excited about these Soviet atrocities, when Germans had killed many more Jews and Poles."[3] However it is difficult to say with certainty what Germans knew, and in particular to what extent they believed and truly understood the information they received about these crimes. Information about Nazi mass murder in the East could reach German society through soldiers, who on leave

from the front, or through letters and conversations could have recounted what they had seen. Ian Kershaw asserts that the gassing was not widely known in Germany, but he does cite two cases in which people were arrested and sent to prison for openly making comments on the mass murder of Jews and derogatory comments about Hitler.[4] In one case, a man was indicted for calling Hitler in September 1944 a "mass-murderer who had Jews loaded into a wagon and exterminated by gas."[5] Lawrence Stokes contends that it is likely that some reports on Nazi extermination camps reached Germany, however he also asserts that such reports were probably not believed.[6] In a diary entry from 27 December 1944, a Berlin journalist named Ursula von Kardorff recounted just such a scenario:

> I read surreptitiously in the lavatory at the Kochstrasse a copy of the *Journal de Genève*, which Bärchen slipped to me. There was a horrifying article by two Czechs, who escaped from a concentration camp in the east. They say the Jews there are systematically gassed. They are taken into a big wash-room, ostensibly to have a bath, and gas is then pumped in through hidden valves until they are all dead. The corpses are burned. The article was seriously written and did not sound like atrocity propaganda. Is one bound to believe such a ghastly story? It simply cannot be true! Surely even the most brutal fanatics could not be so absolutely bestial![7]

Yet with the deportation of Jews from all over Germany, one must have asked: "Where are they all being sent to?" Kardorff wrote on 3 March 1943 about the deportation of Jews from Berlin, and how men, women and children were dragged by SS men from their homes and put onto trucks.[8] She recounted that a crowd had gathered in the process, and that people shouted to the SS men: "Why don't you leave the old women alone? Why don't you go to the front, where you belong?"[9] Berlin had been hit heavily by an Allied air raid the day before, and Kardorff wrote that "[e]veryone in Berlin is saying that the raid was a reprisal for the deportation of the Jews."[10] However, it appears that Germans,

living with the daily hardships of total war, including the frequent heavy Allied air raids, could not fathom the true, horrifying fate that awaited the Jews that were deported from all over Europe. Today, we are quite aware that millions of Jews were brutally treated and exterminated in German-occupied Europe during the Second World War. Yet it is still difficult, if at all possible, to understand fully how or why human beings could commit such crimes against other human beings. It cannot be simply assumed, based on our knowledge of the grisly facts of this period, that those persons living in Germany *at that time* could have, or should have known the true nature of the fate of the deported Jews.

There were Germans who were neither indifferent to nor unaware of the persecution of the Jews. In October 1941, Prelate Bernhard Lichtenberg, at evening prayer in the cathedral, prayed aloud for victims of Nazi persecution. The order of the victims he prayed for is significant: The Jews and the poor inmates in concentration camps, especially his fellow priests and bishops: "*Lasset uns nun beten für die Juden und für die armen Gefangenen in den Konzentrationslagern, vor allem für meine Amtsbrüder.*"[11] Lichtenberg was denounced by two students in the cathedral, and was later tried under the 'insidious attacks' law and imprisoned.[12] Lichtenberg's view that "one should love his fellow man" and his attempt to remind others of their Christian duty to do so landed him in prison.

Since the information is not complete, it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions about the German population and their knowledge of and reactions to Nazi mass murder. Some Germans, like Ulrich von Hassell and Helmuth von Moltke, to be examined later, heard about and sought information on Nazi mass murder through their work and

connections in the German Army and government. One must remember that what Germans may have heard through isolated stories, rumours or foreign broadcasts was unprecedented. Therefore, it was not always easy to fully comprehend the appalling dimensions of the crimes being committed.

Information about the terrible crimes being committed in the East did, however, trickle back to Germany. A group of German students and intellectuals heard about mass shootings in Poland and decided to inform others about it, in an attempt to inspire resistance to the regime. The White Rose was a resistance group students and intellectuals, for the most part, from the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich.[13] This group also comprised students from other cities—that is, students from Ulm, Stuttgart, Freiburg and Saarbrücken were also involved.[14] The White Rose also had ties to students in Hamburg and Berlin; however, these ties were of a more personal and informal nature, rather than of an organisational nature.[15] The group was centred on Hans Scholl, a medical student, and his sister Sophie, who joined her brother at the University of Munich in 1942, to study philosophy.[16] The Scholls' anti-Nazi sentiments seemed to have been influenced by their father, a marked anti-Nazi.[17] The Scholls were joined by new friends of Hans, Alexander Schmorell and Christoph Probst, and influenced by the sermon condemning the Nazi euthanasia by Bishop von Galen of Münster, they began to distribute anti-Nazi leaflets under the heading "The White Rose."[18] The quality of their leaflets improved with the influence and guidance of Sophie's philosophy professor Kurt Huber, and in June 1942, the White Rose printed and distributed a leaflet condemning the mass murder of Jews in German-occupied Poland.[19] The leaflets were sent to select addresses—that is, predominantly to the addresses of academics, in an attempt to

mobilise the intellectual élite.[20] The addressees were mainly writers, professors, school directors, booksellers and doctors from Munich and the surrounding area.[21] It was hoped that these recipients of the leaflets would copy them and help to spread them further.[22]

From July to November 1942, Hans Scholl and Schmorell served on the Eastern Front as medical aides [*Sanitäter*], where they saw first-hand the miseries suffered by those under German rule.[23] In November 1942, Hans Scholl returned to Munich to continue his studies and the distribution of leaflets.[24] By January 1943, with the addition of Willi Graf, the White Rose was distributing leaflets on a much wider scale; Schmorell deposited leaflets in the mail in Salzburg, Linz and Vienna; Sophie Scholl posted leaflets in Augsburg and Stuttgart and Hans Scholl, with the help of Schmorell scattered leaflets in the streets of Munich and scrawled anti-Hitler graffiti at the University and in many other places in Munich.[25] In their leaflets they predicted Germany's defeat in the war, condemned the mass killing of Jews and called for a rising of the people "against 'National-Socialist gangsterism'."[26] The Scholls and the other students of the White Rose movement were, as Ulrich von Hassell wrote on 25 March 1943, "courageous and upright martyrs."[27] Their goal was clearly to inspire others to listen to their conscience and to join them in the resistance to the regime.

At about 11 a.m. on 18 February 1943, the janitor Jakob Schmidt observed Hans and Sophie Scholl distributing leaflets in the Atrium of the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität—and sealed all of the exits.[28] The University Registrar, Haeffner, called the *Gestapo*, and the Scholls were promptly arrested.[29] Willi Graf and his sister Anneliese were arrested that same evening; Probst was arrested two days later in Innsbruck, after the *Gestapo* found his draft for a leaflet when they arrested Hans Scholl.[30] On 22

February 1943, the Scholls and Probst were tried in the People's Court, sentenced to death and executed on the same day.[31] On 19 April 1943, Professor Huber, Schmorell and Graf were tried and sentenced to death.[32]

The series of four leaflets entitled "Leaflets of the White Rose" was prepared in the summer and fall of 1942 and all were issued that same year, before the Allied landings in North Africa on 8 November 1942.[33] In these leaflets, the students of the White Rose denounced the criminal nature of Hitler's regime and the senseless bloodletting of the war: "*Nichts ist eines Kulturvolkes unwürdiger, als sich ohne Widerstand von einer verantwortungslosen und dunklen Trieben ergebenen Herrscherclique 'regieren' zu lassen.*"[34] Moreover, the White Rose appealed to the conscience of their fellow Germans to recognise the treachery and evil that Hitler embodied: "Every word that comes from Hitler's mouth is a lie. When he says peace, he means war, and when he blasphemously uses the name of the Almighty, he means the power of evil, the fallen angel, Satan."[35] Almost a year and a half into the German campaign against Russia, the White Rose emphasised the utter frivolousness with which young German lives were being sacrificed for Hitler's "Final Victory":

> Neither Hitler nor Goebbels can have counted the dead. In Russia, thousands are lost daily. It is the time of the harvest, and the reaper cuts into the ripe grain with wide strokes. Mourning takes up her abode in the country cottages, and there is no one to dry the tears of the mothers. Yet Hitler feeds with lies those people whose most precious belongings he has stolen and whom he has driven to a meaningless death.[36]

Furthermore, the second leaflet of the White Rose condemned the murder of Jews by German forces in Poland: "We want to cite the fact that since the conquest of Poland *three hundred thousand* Jews have been murdered in this country in the most bestial way.

Here we see the most frightful crime against human dignity, a crime that is unparalleled in the whole of history."[37] In addition to informing Germans of such horrible crimes, the White Rose also attempted to shock Germans out of apathy and "slumber": "Why do the German people behave so apathetically in the face of all these abominable crimes, crimes so unworthy of the human race?"[38] The leaflet implored Germans to awaken and to "protest wherever and whenever [they] can against this clique of criminals."[39] By not attempting to resist, the German people tolerated this evil "government" and its crimes, and thereby also shared "a sense of *complicity* in guilt" for them.[40] The White Rose urged Germans "to root out this brown horde" and stated that the holiest duty of every German [was] to destroy these beasts."[41]

Yet under the repressive National-Socialist regime, how could such resistance be possible? The White Rose, in issuing these leaflets, was trying to inspire others to rise up in opposition as they did. For example, their last leaflet was variably entitled: "*Kommilitonen! Kommilitonen!*" and "*Deutsche Studenten!*"[42] They called out to their fellow students, and urged them to help in the distribution of these leaflets: "Please make as many copies as possible of this leaflet and distribute them."[43] However, the White Rose went even farther than that. In their third leaflet, the resisters conceded the difficulties of resisting such a totalitarian system. They stated that it was still *possible*, with the combined effort of many: "It can be done only by the co-operation of many convinced, energetic people—people who are agreed as to the means they must use to attain their goal."[44]

It is difficult to state the exact number of those involved in the White Rose resistance movement with certainty; forty-nine defendants faced the People's Court in eight trials.[45]

Of course, for ordinary Germans, the means of resistance were very limited. Unlike military resisters, who had access to weapons and trained soldiers to fight the regime, on the face of it, the ordinary citizen seemed to be seriously disadvantaged. The students of the White Rose wished to inspire what it saw as the only viable option available: "*passive resistance*".[46] However, by "passive resistance" the White Rose meant "[*s*]*abotage* in armament plants and war industries, sabotage at all gatherings, rallies, public ceremonies, and organisations of the national Socialist Party."[47] These students wished to paralyse the German war machine, which, to them, served "solely to shore up and perpetuate the National Socialist Party and its dictatorship."[48] Moreover, the White Rose urged Germans to sabotage any and all aspects of German society that served the regime—in any way that they could. The resisters called for the sabotage of the universities, technical schools, research institutes and newspapers, and urged Germans not to contribute to money or metal drives.[49] And again, they urged Germans to join them and to try to *recruit* others to their cause, for the arch enemy of Germany was not Bolshevism or the Jews; rather, the White Rose declared that "[t]he defeat of the Nazis must *unconditionally* be the first order of business."[50] Unfortunately for the White Rose, and indeed for Germany, they were arrested, tried and executed before they could spur others to rise in defiance of the Nazi regime.

ii.) Reactions within the German military:

As previously stated, the senior officers in the German military were in a unique position in German society to stop atrocities. These officers commanded troops and had access to weapons, therefore possessing a power that others in German society, especially

ordinary citizens, did not. With regard to mass shootings committed by the *Einsatzgruppen*, these killing units operated in the rear areas of army groups. The German army furnished them with quarters, gasoline; food rations and, insofar as necessary, radio communications.[51] As stated above, the *Einsatzgruppen* committed atrocities in rear areas. These crimes occurred "at the front", far from the eyes of ordinary Germans and within the purview of German officers and soldiers. Although German Army generals "had complete authority in the combat zone,"[52] this authority was removed in the spring of 1940, when Hitler removed SS and police units from the control of the Army.[53] Through this order, the Army was forced "to stand aloof" from these atrocities.[54]

In this context, Christian Streit mentions *Generalmajor* Eduard Wagner, the Quartermaster General of the German Army as a key figure. [55] As Quartermaster General, Wagner was not only responsible for the supply and reinforcement of the German Army, but also the administration of the occupied territory and further for the "treatment and supplying of prisoners of war in the field."[56] Streit states that it appeared that Wagner and Chief of the General Staff Franz Halder[57] attempted to avoid conflicts with the SS over jurisdiction in occupied territory, "as had arisen in Poland."[58] In a letter to his wife dated 20 September 1941, Wagner related a feeling of relief that "political matters" in the East were no longer his concern: "*Froh bin ich, daß wir diesmal mit den ganzen politischen Dingen nichts zu tun haben. Im Westen ging's noch, hier aber, wo so viel[e] weltanschauliche Fragen eine Rolle spielen, bin ich heilfroh!*"[59]

Further guidelines outlining jurisdiction in the administration of occupied territory in Eastern Europe, which "took QuMGeneral Wagner's suggestions into consideration",

were established by the Head of the OKW, *Generalfeldmarschall* Wilhelm Keitel[60] on 13 March 1941.[61] The restriction of *Wehrmacht* jurisdiction was set out three months later in the "Commissar Order":

> *Im Operationsgebiet des Heeres erhält der Reichsführer SS zur Vorbereitung der politischen Verwaltung Sonderaufgaben im Auftrage des Führers, die sich aus dem endgültig auszutragenden Kampf zweier entgegengesetzter politischer Systeme ergeben. Im Rahmen dieser Aufgaben handelt der Reichsführer SS selbständig und in eigener Verantwortung [...]. Näheres regelt das OKH mit dem Reichsführer SS unmittelbar.*[62]

With this order, the jurisdiction of the *Wehrmacht* in occupied Eastern Europe was significantly restricted—as Streit contends, "without determined resistance on the part of the OKH."[63]

Conversely, officers in the field had no part in the setting of such guidelines. One must pause here to consider briefly the potential courses of action a German officer or soldier could have taken in an attempt to put a stop to atrocities. Taking part in the conspiracy to overthrow Hitler's regime was certainly one way. This course was no easy step, and brought along both difficult decisions and grave danger. Such a conspiracy required very good organisation—so simple task in wartime under a totalitarian regime. As well, the participation of several persons made communication and co-ordination on the one hand difficult, and discovery of the conspiracy by the *Gestapo*, on the other hand, easier. An attempt to stop atrocities, "at the source", so to speak, was also no simple proposition. Theoretically, an Army officer could have lodged a protest against the atrocity with the officer in command of the SS unit committing a massacre, in an attempt to bring the atrocity to a halt. Yet the chances that a person commanding troops to execute civilians

would be swayed by such a protest are minimal. It is highly likely that this form of protest would either be ignored or met with ridicule.[64]

An officer attempting to stop a massacre by the use of force faced a potential confrontation with the SS and police units carrying it out. These SS units, like their Army counterparts, were well armed. Acting alone was out of the question. This scenario required the action of several Army officers and soldiers—the motivation and co-ordination of which, as mentioned above, would be difficult in wartime conditions. The dangers of such a proposition were also grave. A stand by Army officers against atrocities, leading to a deadly confrontation between SS and Army personnel at the front, would be looked upon by the Nazi regime as a "mutiny". Moreover, the decision to openly rebel, for a German soldier, was extremely difficult.[65] This, in part, illustrates the difficulty that every potential isolated action against Nazi crimes faced: Hitler's regime.

Of course, one could think of further scenarios—yet this is all merely speculation. In wartime, the requirements of battle are considerable. Perhaps "standing aloof" from these atrocities and worrying about the next battle made it easier for some German officers to deal psychologically with these crimes. Nevertheless, some officers listened to their conscience and protested against atrocities committed in German-occupied territory and attempted to set an example for other German officers.

a.) Johannes Albrecht Blaskowitz

Widespread killing actions by the *Einsatzgruppen* within the jurisdiction of German general officers did not go wholly unnoticed and unchallenged. Sadly, there were not many among the generals that had the fortitude to protest against such disgusting and

dishonourable conduct by "soldiers". One man who did possess such fortitude was General Johannes Blaskowitz. It is necessary to give some background here, as his upbringing and education were important influences on the formation of his character. Johannes Albrecht Blaskowitz was born on 10 July 1883 in Paterswalde; a small village approximately 40 kilometres east of Königsberg, in what was at that time the German territory of East Prussia.[66] Blaskowitz did not come from a family with a tradition of military service; his father was a Lutheran minister.[67] Blaskowitz attended the Central Cadet Academy at Gross Lichterfelde near Berlin from 1897 to 1901.[68] In the words of Blaskowitz's biographer, Richard Giziowski, this academy was "the most important and recognised Army cadet school in Imperial Germany."[69] This prestigious academy also produced a remarkable number of future high-ranking officers in the German Army, including Field Marshal and commander-in-chief of the German Army Walter von Brauchitsch, Field Marshals Fedor von Bock, Ernst Busch, Günther von Kluge, Erwin von Witzleben and Colonel-Generals Nikolaus von Falkenhorst, Hermann Hoth, Adolf Strauss, Paul Hausser (*Waffen-SS*)[70] and Kurt von Hammerstein-Equord.[71]

During the Great War, Blaskowitz served as a captain and survived the war as a highly decorated soldier.[72] Blaskowitz fought in the bloody battles on the Western Front, and as well in northern Italy, Serbia and in Russia, returning to France after the collapse of Russia at the end of 1917.[73] He was an officer in the *Reichswehr* during the Weimar Republic, and was promoted to the rank of major on 1 January 1922.[74] During the political turmoil of the Weimar period, Blaskowitz described himself as detached from political life; in short he followed the non-political path of the soldier—"not interested in politics and [...] happily content to be a soldier."[75] By 1932, the Weimar government was

plagued and threatened by the growth in the strength of the Communists and their arch-enemies, the Nazis.[76] The economic crisis of the 1930s, which led to mass unemployment, strikes and widespread poverty, only gave the extremists impetus in their desire to topple German democracy. In appraising the political atmosphere of this time, Peter Hoffmann comments that "no longer did it seem to be a question of whether democratic or extremist forces were going to take control, but only whether the extremists in power would be the Nazis or the Communists."[77]

Blaskowitz's view of the political situation within Germany at the beginning of the 1930s was captured in a letter dated 21 August 1932, from the young German soldier Helmuth Stieff to his wife. Characterised as bright and industrious, Stieff "had a deep and lively sense of responsibility as a German and as an officer."[78] In his letter, Stieff related that Colonel Blaskowitz[79] hoped the Nazis would remain "decent".[80] However, Blaskowitz appeared to be confident that the Army and the Police would restore order in German society if the Nazis got out of control:

> *Man hofft, daß die Nazi vernünftig bleiben. Ob sie es aber tun werden, ist zweifelhaft, und das Verhältnis zwischen Regierung und Nazi ist sehr gespannt. Falls die Nazi aber Dummheiten machen, wird ihnen mit aller Gewalt entgegengetreten werden, und man wird selbst vor blutigsten Auseinandersetzungen nicht zurückschrecken. Insbesondere glaubt man, daß Polizei und Reichswehr absolut in der Lage sein werden, allein mit den Brüdern fertig zu werden.*[81]

Blaskowitz believed in the non-political role of the soldier—a soldier's duty was to serve his country in the field. Blaskowitz's belief in the honour of the German officer corps was reflected in his protests against Nazi crimes in the coming war.

Blaskowitz commanded the Eighth Army during the Polish campaign.[82] In October 1939, after the campaign, Blaskowitz became *Oberost* (Commander-in-Chief in the

East).[83] The fate Poland would meet under Nazi occupation became clear very quickly. An Englishman by the name of Sir Malcolm Noel Christie travelled through Poland at this time and described what he saw there:

> Hate and murder. Plunder of property and treasure. SS, *Gestapo* and *Parteigenossen* all busy enriching selves. In *Rumpfpolen* Poles literally becoming slaves of feudal Nazis. Girls and women used for concubines *en masse*. Country laid waste.[84]

Helmuth Stieff visited Colonel-General Blaskowitz in Poland on 21 November 1939, and in a letter to his wife he described the situation:

> There is a high degree of shameful actions and looting, murder, organised and without regrets, that is being executed by our very own people. The things that I have seen done by Germans to the Polish are so incredible that I cannot call these people anything but evil and inhuman. Germany does not deserve to be called by its name. Germans have begun to be sub-human. I am ashamed to belong to the German race.[85]

Blaskowitz was deeply troubled by the atrocities being committed by Germans in Poland and told Stieff so, as Stieff related in his letter: "I have spent almost an hour with Blaskowitz. He poured his heart out to me and told me about his concern and worries. He felt deeply about the situation."[86] Blaskowitz saw the daily violation of basic human rights and indeed humanity.[87] In fact, Blaskowitz urged Stieff to bring the matter of these crimes being committed against the Polish population by German forces to the attention of the *Oberkommando des Heeres.*[88]

On 16 November 1939, approximately three weeks into his tenure as *Oberost*, Blaskowitz submitted a memorandum to his Commander-in-Chief, Field-Marshal Walther von Brauchitsch, which conveyed his "extreme alarm" about illegal shootings and his concerns about maintaining the discipline of his troops under these conditions.[89] Brauchitsch's adjutant, Major Curt Siewert, passed this memorandum to Hitler's Army

adjutant, Major Gerhard Engel, who submitted it to Hitler.[90] Hitler received the memorandum, but instead of replying to Blaskowitz, he exploded at Blaskowitz's protest.[91] Hitler ridiculed what he regarded as the "childish ideas" of the Army leadership and stated that a war could not be conducted with "Salvation Army" methods."[92] Yet Blaskowitz remained in command. For this protest, he would not be removed. At least, not yet.

Blaskowitz lodged another formal protest against SS atrocities in Poland. He wrote a second memorandum, which reached Hitler on 27 November 1939.[93] Blaskowitz stated that his troops referred to the SS police units as "execution detachments" ("*als Executionskommando arbeitenden Einsatzgruppen*") and he contended that the only evident task of the police units was "to spread terror amongst the population."[94] In summation Blaskowitz wrote:

> *daß die Verhältnisse im besetzten Gebiet dringend einer baldigen Neuordnung bedürfen. Der augenblickliche Zustand treibt einer Entwicklung entgegen, die einen militärischen Unruheherd herbeiführt und die Ausnützung des Landes zugunsten der Truppe und der Wehrwirtschaft unmöglich macht. Mit Gewaltmaßnahmen allein ist die Sicherheit und Ruhe des Landes nicht herzustellen. Es liegt sowohl im Interesse der Wehrmacht wie auch der Zivilverwaltung, wenn in Polen eine leidliche Ordnung herrscht, die Bevölkerung mit den nötigsten Lebens- und Bedarfsmitteln versorgt wird und die Wirtschaft bald in Gang kommt.*[95]

It was clear to Blaskowitz that atrocities would make it more difficult to rule the conquered population. The brutal German treatment of civilians and prisoners of war only bred bitter resentment against the Germans in the Soviet population and increased the Soviet will to fight. In a memorandum written on 6 February 1940, Blaskowitz referred to the attitudes of his own soldiers. The atrocities committed by the SS "disgusted and repelled his men" and each soldier asked how such things could possibly

go unpunished.[96] Blaskowitz raised his voice in protest, but the Army High Command did not listen. In late 1939, Major Helmuth Groscurth, an intelligence officer in Army High Command,[97] asked the same question that was likely to be in Blaskowitz's mind: "Why does nobody interfere with these ongoing conditions?"[98] Field-Marshal Walther von Brauchitsch, the highest-ranking soldier in the German Army, did nothing about these protests. Unfortunately, Brauchitsch appears not to have possessed the strength of character required in this situation. He was unwilling to take a firm stand against Hitler and to risk potential dismissal. This is evident from Field Marshal Erhard Milch's description of Brauchitsch's character:

> He did not have a strong character. He did not speak up—he was the silent type. He didn't press his own ideas with Hitler. He told Hitler what he thought and Hitler would contradict him: he would try again very politely, and then when he got the impression that Hitler would not follow his ideas, he dropped it.[99]

In addition, both Brauchitsch and Halder had accepted Hitler's splitting of the SS and police units from Army authority in the spring of 1940. One could argue that if the two most senior officers had taken a stand against that action, they might have been able to keep the police units under Army control and thereby preserve some authority to stop the crimes. However, that argument assumes that the two of them might have been willing to take that step. It is clear from the inaction of Brauchitsch and Halder that they were willing neither to take a stand against Hitler nor to listen to their conscience and the voices of officers like Blaskowitz. After Blaskowitz's courageous protests, he was relieved of his command (as *Oberost*) and posted on the Western Front as commander of the Ninth Army.[100] The crimes in the East continued.

b.) Other reactions:

Other officers also found these atrocities disgraceful. On 10 September 1939, Chief of the General Staff Franz Halder noted in his diary that SS men had "herded Jews into a church and massacred them."[101] However, this is the only diary entry from Halder that explicitly mentions the killing of Jews. This seems strange considering how frequently these atrocities seemed to be occurring. On 18 September 1939 General Wilhelm List, commanding the Fourteenth Army, issued an order prohibiting looting, rape, the burning of synagogues and the shooting of Jews.[102] In September 1939, the head of the *Abwehr* (German military intelligence), Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, commented on the chaos, destruction and misery surrounding him in Warsaw: "*Das ist ja furchtbar! Daran werden noch unsere Kindeskinder zu tragen haben.*"[103] On a visit to the *Führerzug* on 12 September 1939, Canaris protested against the "projected shooting and extermination measures that were being directed particularly against the Polish intelligentsia, nobility and clergy."[104] Major-General Erwin Lahousen, a major and head of Section II (Sabotage) in the *Abwehr* at this time,[105] confirmed in his testimony at Nuremberg after the war that Canaris had condemned the shootings in Poland on 12 September 1939, and added that Canaris had also warned that "[s]omeday the world will make the Armed Forces, under whose eyes these events have occurred, also responsible for these events."[106] In a memorandum dated 2 February 1940, General Wilhelm Ulex protested atrocities committed by the SS.[107] In this protest, General Ulex spoke of the "incomprehensible lack of human and moral sensibilities so that one can really speak of a 'bestialising' [*Vertierung*]."[108] However, with the onset of the German campaign in Russia on 22 June 1941, "these events" would only increase in number and intensity.

c.) Reactions to the "Commissar Order" ("*Kommissarbefehl*"):

The "Commissar Order", dated 6 June 1941 was issued under the guise of providing "General instructions on the Treatment of Political Commissars."[109] In plain language, this order required that Soviet political commissars, when captured by the *Wehrmacht*, be summarily executed. The order asserted that "Political Commissars have initiated barbaric, Asiatic methods of warfare."[110] "Consequently," it continued, "they will be dealt with *immediately* and with maximum severity. As a matter of principle they will be shot at once whether captured *during operations or otherwise showing resistance.*"[111] Such an order contravened international law and the rules of warfare, yet the order simply stated that such protection, in the case of political commissars, did not apply.[112] Moreover, this order stipulated that in the zone of communications, commissars "apprehended for acting in a suspicious manner would be handed over to the *Einsatzgruppen* or the *Einsatzkommandos* of the SD."[113] In other words, those commissars would also face certain death at the hands of the SD.

By June 1941, the *Einsatzgruppen* had been busy murdering Jews and Poles for just over a year and a half. Now the murder of Soviet political commissars, in other words, a category of Russian prisoners of war, had been "legalised". While there are no conclusive figures for the number of people murdered directly as a result of the "Commissar Order", there are more complete estimates as to "The Fate of Soviet Prisoners of War" in German captivity.[114] Alexander Dallin gives figures, as of 1 May 1944, showing that out of a (minimum) total of 5,160,000 Soviet prisoners of war, approximately 3,222,000 either had been exterminated, had died or disappeared in transit or had not been accounted

for.[115] By war's end, Dallin lists the total number of captured Soviet prisoners of war to be approximately 5,754,000 (just over 58 percent of whom were captured in 1941).[116] Christian Streit provides more exact figures—3,350,639 Russian prisoners of war had fallen into German hands as of 20 December 1941.[117] By 1 February 1942, the number of Soviet prisoners of war remaining in German captivity was 1,020,531.[118] Given that the German campaign against the Soviet Union only began on 22 June 1941, these figures are even more staggering.

For some senior German officers, perhaps it was easy enough to detach themselves from the crimes being committed around them. They had a war to win; perhaps they felt it was none of their business. Or perhaps an officer could soothe his troubled conscience by entertaining the explanation that harsh measures were needed to check the harassment by partisans. There are examples, however, of officers who saw what was happening all too clearly. They felt that these illegal "happenings" were a stain to the honour of the German officer corps and that of Germany as a nation, and therefore had to be stopped.

d.) Rudolf-Christoph *Freiherr* von Gersdorff

General Blaskowitz was among the few senior officers in the German army to make a courageous protest against *Einsatzgruppen* killings. Another was Colonel Rudolf-Christoph *Freiherr* von Gersdorff.[119] Gersdorff was born on 27 March 1905 in Lüben, Silesia.[120] His father, Major-General Ernst *Freiherr* von Gersdorff, was in Gersdorff's words, "an excellent soldier."[121] Gersdorff's mother, born *Gräfin* zu Dohna-Schlodien, came from one of the oldest German noble families.[122] His upbringing was spartan—Gersdorff stated that his parents impressed two principles upon him: "modesty" and

"composure".[123] There was a long-standing military tradition in the Gersdorff family—Karl Friedrich Wilhelm von Gersdorff (1746-1829) was a Lieutenant-General, Chief of the General Staff and a friend of Napoleon.[124] Another ancestor, Lieutenant-General Hermann Konstantin von Gersdorff (1809-1870), was commanding general of the Eleventh Army Corps and fell at Sedan—in his honour, the Fusilier Regiment (No. 80) stationed in Wiesbaden and Bad Homburg was given the name "von Gersdorff".[125]

Gersdorff decided at an early age that he would become a soldier.[126] A belief in the sense of privilege, tradition and responsibility belonging to his class existed in his family. This sense of tradition was passed on to him by his forebears: "*Mein Großvater Gersdorff hatte einmal meinem Vater gesagt, es sei nicht etwa die Pflicht, sondern das Vorrecht des Adels, für sein Vaterland zu kämpfen und zu sterben.*"[127] Similar to other nobles active in the German opposition to Hitler, Gersdorff believed in both the privilege and responsibility of the class in German society to which he belonged. He also adhered to a sense of old military tradition; that is, not only was a soldier supposed to be ready to sacrifice his life at any time, but also that there existed rules and principles in warfare. In Gersdorff's opinion, a soldier was not a barbarian; rather, he fought with honour and decency.

Gersdorff wrote that the murder of Generals von Schleicher and von Bredow in the course of the Nazi purge of 30 June 1934 was "a clear signal for those in the Army of the coming danger" posed by Hitler's regime.[128] On the day following the events of *Kristallnacht* in November 1938, Gersdorff stated to his fellow soldiers that the "apparently NSDAP-organised anti-Semitic action" brought "shame to the German people."[129] He added that he was "ashamed, that such a thing would be possible in the

Fatherland."[130] Gersdorff met Hitler on 15 March 1939 at a dinner at the *Reich* Chancellery for young officers of the War Academy.[131] According to Gersdorff, Hitler was "helpless" in conversation and after hastily slurping his vegetable soup, quickly left the company of the young officers.[132] Gersdorff was left the impression of Hitler as "a repugnant boor": "*Der ganze Eindruck, den ich von Hitler empfangen hatte, war der eines widerlichen, aufgeschwemmten Proleten.*"[133] On the one hand, this impression of Hitler reflects the disdain that members of the German nobility held for less-refined people of lower classes. On the other hand, this comment also illustrates that Gersdorff could not be counted among the masses of Germans intoxicated by the personality of the "*Führer*".[134]

In the Second World War, Gersdorff served as Intelligence Officer for Army Group Centre from April 1941 to February 1944, holding the rank of colonel.[135] He became Chief of Staff to LXXXII Corps in February 1944 and was posted to Seventh Army at the end of July of that year.[136] Known for "his clarity of mind, sureness of judgement, chivalrous attitude, great courage and solid, upright character,"[137] Gersdorff displayed such qualities in his protest against the mass shootings of Jews in the German-occupied Eastern Europe.

The incident that stirred Gersdorff to protest occurred at Borissov, in the early morning hours of 20 October 1941.[138] Members of *Einsatzgruppe* B (including a Latvian SS unit) began shooting Jews near this small town, where the headquarters of Army Group Centre was situated.[139] The commander of this *Einsatzgruppe* was SS-Major-General Arthur Nebe,[140] Director of the *Reich* Criminal Police Office and on the side of the opposition to Hitler since 1938.[141] Another SS officer, however, ordered these

shootings at Borissov, in Nebe's absence. According to Gersdorff, Nebe "usually coped with his murderous assignments by reporting that the victims had been executed when, in fact, they had not."[142] Approximately 6,500 Jews were murdered on this day[143]—they were forced by SS men to dig pits, to strip off their clothing. They were then machine-gunned into the pits by these SS troops.[144]

A friend, Captain von der Heydebrand und Lasa, informed Gersdorff of this massacre.[145] Upon returning to the front, Heydebrand paid Gersdorff a visit. On the way to the front, his plane temporarily landed at Borissov.[146] With a "chalk-white face" and "a shaky voice" Heydebrand explained to Gersdorff, that while on the airfield, he had heard pistol and machine-gun fire.[147] When his plane took off again, he witnessed the gruesome murders through the window of the airplane: "*Beim Weiterfliegen habe er kurz nach dem Start aus geringer Höhe eine grauenhafte Hinrichtungsorgie beobachtet. SS-Leute hätten dort offenbar Tausende von Menschen bestialisch ermordet.*"[148]

Gersdorff immediately ("*in fieberhafter Eile*") informed Lieutenant-Colonel Henning von Tresckow, the senior operations officer for Army Group Centre, and Field-Marshal Fedor von Bock, the Commander-in-Chief of Army Group Centre.[149] Nebe was also immediately informed by headquarters and "fully surprised" by the information, flew directly to Borissov.[150] Nebe, however, arrived too late: the killing had already been done.[151] Field-Marshal Bock immediately demanded Kube, the civil commissioner in Minsk, that the SS officer responsible for this crime by delivered to him for court-martial.[152] This however, did not happen: "D*ie Auslieferung des schuldigen SS-Mannes wurde rundheraus abgelehnt.*"[153] Kube was not interested in this protest—and the Reichssicherheitshauptamt (RSHA) supported him in this position. Furious, Gersdorff

stated that such support left the Army Group powerless to bring those responsible for these atrocities to justice.[154] Gersdorff did not just lodge a protest over the 'Borissov situation', but on 9 December 1941, he wrote his protest directly into the war diary for Army Group Centre in the following words:

> *Bei allen längeren Gesprächen mit Offizieren wurde ich nach den Judenerschießungen gefragt. Ich habe den Eindruck gewonnen, daß die Erschießungen der Juden, der Gefangenen und auch der Kommissare fast allgemein im Offizierkorps abgelehnt werden; die Erschießungen der Kommissare vor allem auch deswegen, weil dadurch der Feindwiderstand besonders gestärkt wird.* ***Die Erschießungen werden als eine Verletzung der Ehre der deutschen Armee, insonderheit des deutschen Offizierkorps betrachtet.***[155]

In his protest against these shootings, it is significant not only that he was courageous enough to write it in the war diary, but also that he mentioned the Jews first in listing the victims of Nazi killings.

A lone colonel could not hope to stop such atrocities on his own, however by placing an outspoken condemnation of atrocities in clear view of the many other officers who would read his protest, it was possible to inspire others to follow his example. Moreover, by stating in plain language the disgrace that these actions caused the German officer corps, perhaps those officers reading the diary would be forced to think of their own experience of seeing such murders. Gersdorff saw the murder of Jews and others as a stain on the honour of the German Army and especially on that of the officer corps, the men who were supposed to be the leaders in this army. From a purely military point of view, the barbaric German measures against enemy prisoners and the occupied population were extremely counterproductive. German atrocities ensured that enemy soldiers would resist even more fiercely rather than surrender. Among the occupied

population, the frequent German atrocities and only served to increase the ranks of the partisans. Gersdorff chose to protest against these crimes, and went even further: he chose to play an active role in the conspiracy to kill Hitler.[156]

Unfortunately, there were many more instances where German officers failed to act or simply turned a blind eye to the crimes being committed in their midst. In a position of authority, one is faced with a choice: to act or to deny responsibility. Perhaps officers could soothe their conscience by thinking that these measures were really intended to neutralise "partisans". One could also refer to mass shootings as "political matters", as Colonel-General Ernst Busch did. Busch, commander of the Sixteenth Army[157] in Army Group North, attempted to remove himself from any moral responsibility to stop atrocities occurring in the area under his authority. In Kovno, during the fall of 1941,[158] Busch heard the rattle of machine gun fire from a "shooting detachment" through his hotel window.[159] At dinner, when informed by a subordinate that "another massacre" was beginning, Busch excused himself from any responsibility to get involved in the matter. Busch replied to his subordinate: "*Ja, da kann ich nichts dagegen tun; das sind* ***politische Auseinandersetzungen, die uns nicht interessieren****, das heißt, sie interessieren uns schon, aber wir dürfen nichts unternehmen, diese Dinge gehen uns nicht an* [emphasis mine]."[160] In Busch's opinion, the killings were a "political" matter; his primary concern was the war. Such an attitude is difficult to understand: to turn a blind eye to such disgraceful activities, which besmirched not just the honour of the German Army and that of the officer corps, but the honour of Germany as a nation. It is possible that high-ranking officers feared severe punishment for taking a stand against the regime and

disobeying orders. However when put to the test, the majority of the senior officers in the German Army did nothing.

In the context of the "Commissar Order", Gersdorff and Tresckow visited Field-Marshal Bock and Tresckow urged him to go to Hitler and to make a united protest (with Field-Marshals von Rundstedt and von Leeb) against this criminal order.[161] Bock replied: "*Da schmeißt er* [Hitler] *mich raus.*"[162] Tresckow's answer to Bock sums up one of the main points of this section: "*Dann hast Du* [Tresckow and Bock were related, hence the familiar form of address] *wenigstens eine guten Abgang vor der Geschichte gehabt.*"[163] Similarly, Brauchitsch stated, probably in reference to his supplementary order to the "Commissar Order" that he could do no more to have it rescinded.[164] At least if one honestly tried to act, and had no success, the fact remains that one had done one's best. Unfortunately, this could not be said for many officers, in particular Bock and Brauchitsch.

Generals are trained as soldiers, and as soldiers they are supposed to be willing to sacrifice their lives for the integrity and honour of their country. However it is highly unlikely that an officer of general rank would be shot for the "offence" of protesting a criminal order or policy. As Peter Hoffmann states, "no cases are known in which commanders who protested against such crimes suffered anything worse than removal from their command."[165] Moreover, as Christopher Browning notes, "in the past forty-five years no defence attorney has been able to document a single case in which refusal to obey an order to kill unarmed civilians resulted in the allegedly inevitable dire punishment."[166] For his courageous protest, Johannes Blaskowitz had been relieved of his command (*Oberost*) and demoted. Before the war, Ludwig Beck, who had been Chief of

the General Staff from 1935 until 19 August 1938, resigned in protest against Hitler's plan to invade Czechoslovakia.[167] However, in wartime, resignation was not an option, as Hitler did not permit resignations. Sadly, too few senior officers, aware of atrocities committed in their midst, were able to summon up the courage to take a stand against these crimes.

Another example of a man who saw these crimes and made a conscious decision to resist the regime was Axel *Freiherr* von dem Bussche. In the summer of 1942 Captain von dem Bussche, adjutant of 23 Reserve Battalion, was sent with elements of the Replacement Army to Russia to form part of the occupation force there.[168] On 5 October 1942, Bussche happened to witness the mass shooting of approximately five thousand Jews, on an airfield at Dubno, Ukraine.[169] Similar to other mass killings mentioned earlier in this thesis, SS men (this time Ukrainians) forced the men, women and children to strip and then to lie face down on top of other victims, some of them still living, in a pit.[170] The victims were then killed by a shot in the nape of the neck; the whole murderous process being calmly and efficiently carried out by SS men.[171] Peter Hoffmann writes that Bussche had heard of such atrocities before and that he understood that this "was no isolated incident."[172] The fact that these SS men were acting in an orderly fashion clearly signified to Bussche that these men were "acting under orders"—moreover "from the highest quarter."[173]

On that day, on that field, Bussche faced a choice—and a difficult one at that. Hoffmann states that Bussche's first impulse was to invoke the emergency paragraph in the German code of common law, that "laid down the right of self-defence in emergency 'to defend oneself or another from unlawful attack'."[174] The men, women and children

were unlikely to be partisans and thus Bussche felt that it was highly unlikely that their execution was in any way lawful.[175] Bussche also thought, much later, about another course of action. The answer that Christianity provided—that Bussche should have stripped himself and joined the victims in the pit—was an action to show all present that they were all, "first and foremost human beings."[176] Hoffmann believes that Bussche would definitely not have been shot by the SS men, and that perhaps his unorthodox action might have jolted other officers and senior commanders into a concerted effort to stop these outrages.[177] Both courses of action, as Hoffmann states, would have either been ignored or would have earned Bussche ridicule and a trip "to a lunatic asylum or a concentration camp."[178] The fact remains that an isolated act of defiance committed by Bussche or any other officer or soldier, successful or not on that occasion, would have had little effect on similar mass killings occurring elsewhere in German-held territory.[179] In order to stop this mass murder, Bussche felt that the only effective means was "[r]emoval of the supreme mass murderer": Hitler.[180] For this reason, Bussche decided to take an active role in the resistance to Hitler and if necessary to sacrifice his own life in an attack to assassinate Hitler.[181]

The significance of the reactions to Nazi atrocities within the German Army lies in the fact that unlike the average German citizen, senior officers were in a better position to stop mass killings in German-occupied Eastern Europe. These crimes occurred in their midst, within areas over which they were in command. As a source of resistance to the regime, the generals were potentially a very powerful group, as they had access to weapons and were in command of troops. While individual officers, like Blaskowitz and Gersdorff made formal and courageous protests against Nazi mass killings, to put a stop

to the atrocities it would have required more united action by senior officers and commanders. Unfortunately there were not enough men with the character and principles of Blaskowitz, Gersdorff and Bussche in the German Army.

iii.) Reactions within the German Resistance to Hitler

This section deals with the reactions of leading figures in the German opposition to Hitler to Nazi atrocities, which were recorded in diaries, letters and memoranda. Three of these figures will be examined: Ulrich von Hassell, Helmuth James von Moltke and Carl Friedrich Goerdeler. The crimes committed by Nazi Germany deeply affected these men, to the extent that they understood the magnitude of them. The crimes formed part of their motivation to resist actively Hitler's criminal regime.

a) Ulrich von Hassell

Ulrich von Hassell (1881-1944) was a career diplomat.[182] He served in the Great War and was severely wounded on 8 September 1914, during the Battle of the Marne (in fact, he had been shot in the heart and the bullet was never removed).[183] In 1919, Hassell returned to the Foreign Service and served Germany as a diplomat in Western and South-Eastern Europe.[184] Hassell worked as a counsellor (*Botschaftsrat*) in the German embassy in Rome from 1919 to 1921; as Consul General in Barcelona from 1921 to 1926; as minister (*Gesandter*) in Copenhagen from 1926 to 1930; as minister in Belgrade from 1930 to 1932 and as ambassador in Rome from 1932 to 1938.[185] Hassell was recalled from his post as German ambassador in Rome on 17 February 1938 and was officially retired on 10 February 1943.[186] During the years from 1940 to 1944, Hassell served on the Board of

Directors of the *Mitteleuropäischer Wirtschaftstag* (1940-1943) and he worked in the *Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung* in Berlin (1943-1944).[187] At this time, Hassell was also one of the leading figures in the German opposition to Hitler.[188] Hassell was arrested by the *Gestapo* on 29 July 1944, in the aftermath of the failed 20 July 1944 assassination attempt on Hitler.[189] He was sentenced to death by the People's Court on 8 September 1944, and was subsequently executed in the Berlin-Plötzensee prison.[190]

Hassell's diary spans the years 1938 to 1944, and therefore contains reactions to Nazi acts of violence and killings committed immediately prior to and during the Second World War. What is striking in Hassell's case is the number of references to the plight and persecution of Jews; in his diary there are 43 such references.[191] Similar to many other Germans, Hassell felt deeply ashamed of the violent events of *Kristallnacht*. It must be noted that this shame did not stem from a hatred of disorder and destruction. Hassell expressed his sympathy for the unjust abuse and suffering of fellow human beings at the hands of the criminal Nazi regime. In the aftermath of the pogrom, on 25 November 1938, Ulrich von Hassell wrote in his diary:

> Under crushing emotions evoked by the vile persecution of the Jews after the murder of vom Rath. Not since the World War have we lost so much credit in the world. *But my chief concern is not with the effects abroad, not with what kind of foreign political reaction we may expect*—at least not for the moment. *I am most deeply troubled about the effect on our national life, which is dominated ever more inexorably by a system capable of such things* [italics mine].[192]

Hassell was horrified at the "devilish barbarity" with which his fellow Germans treated Jews during this pogrom.[193] This sense of shame and horror was also present when Hassell recorded his reactions to the news of the mass murder of Jews in Poland in October 1939. Germany was being led by "criminal adventurers" and the conduct of the

war in Poland was "a disgrace that ha[d] sullied the German name."[194] After hearing more news of atrocities, Hassell wrote that when soldiers used "their revolvers to shoot down a group of Jews into a synagogue one is filled with shame."[195] What was even more insulting to Hassell was the fact that the light sentences that the perpetrators were given for their crimes were set aside.[196]

However, as the war continued in the East, so did the atrocities. When writing about the terrible conditions in Poland on 8 October 1940, Hassell added that "*es ist ein schwacher Trost, daß immer häufiger junge Offiziere, Beamte oder SS-Leute versuchen, der Tätigkeit im besetzten Gebiet zu entkommen, 'weil sie sich schämen, Deutsche zu sein'.*"[197] Hassell referred to the war in the East as a "return to savagery", and wrote of the report of a young officer, who received the command to execute 350 civilians driven into a barn.[198]At first, the officer hesitated and was reminded, "*was auf Gehorsamverweigerung stehe,*" and then took ten minutes to think about it.[199] He obeyed the order and killed the people, and as a result, when he was later lightly wounded, he refused to return to the front.[200]

Hassell realised that the Jews "were being systematically exterminated" and had no doubt, that "if this system was victorious, both Germany and Europe w[ould] experience terrible times."[201] Yet the terrible times seemed to already be upon Germany and particularly those countries she conquered: "*Angewidertheit aller anständigen Menschen über die schamlosen [Maßnahmen], im Osten gegen Juden und Gefangene.*"[202]

The shame that Hassell felt strengthened his resolve to resist and be rid of Hitler's criminal regime. Murder, mistreatment and brutal reprisals seemed to be everyday occurrences. With this regime in power, things could only get worse and were getting

worse: "*Wie sehr die geistige und sittliche Verwahrlosung zunimmt, bemerkt man täglich.*"[203] Hassell worked actively in the resistance to Hitler in order to stop the murder and the moral degeneration that Hitler and the Nazis had begun in Germany. Hassell's efforts to achieve this goal and to put an end to Hitler's criminal regime cost him his life.

b) Helmuth James Count von Moltke

Helmuth James von Moltke (1907-1945) was the great grandnephew of Field-Marshal Helmuth von Moltke (the Elder).[204] Trained as a lawyer in Germany, he also read for and passed the English bar exams—a testament to his sharp mind and capacity for hard work.[205] During the war, he served in the Foreign Division of the *Abwehr* as legal adviser to the *OKW* (Armed Forces High Command).[206] He was a devout Christian (Protestant) and was one of the founding elements of a group of German resisters, the 'Kreisau Circle', which derived its name from his Silesian estate.[207] He was a leading figure in the German resistance and was arrested on 19 January 1944.[208] He was tried in the aftermath of the failed 20 July 1944 coup attempt, convicted and executed on 23 January 1945.[209]

The letters written by Moltke to his wife Freya provide the reader with some of his reactions to Nazi crimes. The news of German atrocities perpetrated upon Jews and Soviet prisoners or war seemed to have profoundly disturbed Moltke. On 26 August 1941, Moltke wrote:

> The news from the East is terrible again. Our losses are obviously very, very heavy. But that could be borne if we were not burdened with hecatombs of corpses. Again and again one hears reports that in transports of prisoners or Jews only 20% arrive, that there is starvation in the prisoner-of-war camps [...] that our own people are breaking down from exhaustion. What will happen when the nation as a whole realises that this war is lost, and lost differently from the last one? With a blood-guilt that cannot be atoned for in

> our lifetime and can never by forgotten, with an economy that is completely ruined? Will men arise capable of distilling contrition and penance from this punishment, and so, gradually, new strength to live? Or will everything go under in chaos?[210]

This letter shows Moltke's sadness at the terrible loss of life in the war and the sinister and shameful treatment of Jews. At this time, the extent of Nazi crimes was not clear to Moltke.

Similar to many other people, both inside and outside of Germany, Moltke initially met stories of Nazi mass killing with disbelief. In his 10 October 1942 letter to Freya, Moltke describes a luncheon with a man who gave him "an authentic report on the 'SS blast-furnace'" in Poland.[211] Moltke declared that he had not to that point believed such stories, but the man with whom he spoke assured him that it was true: "6,000 people a day [were] 'processed' in this furnace."[212]

Moltke attempted to inform the British Government of German atrocities against Jews. In a letter to Lionel Curtis, a friend and Fellow of All Souls College at Oxford, Moltke tried to communicate news of Nazi mass murder.[213] However, this letter, dated 25 March 1943, never reached Curtis, as the Swede to whom it was entrusted felt that it was too dangerous to forward.[214] In the letter, Moltke stated his belief

> that at least 9tenths of the population do not know that we have killed hundreds of thousands of jews [*sic*]. They go on believing that they just have been segregated and lead an existence pretty much like the one they led, only farther to the east, where they came from. Perhaps with a little more squalor but without air raids. If you told these people what has really happened they would answer: you are just a victim of British propaganda; remember what ridiculous things they said about our behaviour in Belgium in 1914/18.[215]

Moltke added that he did not know the exact number of camps, or of their inmates.[216] He believed that there were sixteen concentration camps "with their own cremation apparatus" and that he had been informed that a large camp was being built in Upper Silesia that would possibly be killing three to four thousand people per month.[217] This letter indicates the difficulty Germans had in appreciating the true monstrous magnitude of the murder of the Jews, when information on these crimes filtered into German society.

In this letter to Curtis, Moltke also mentioned one of the key difficulties facing the German Resistance: communication. Moltke wrote to Curtis:

> Lack of communication. That is the worst. Can you imagine what it is like if you
>
> a. cannot use the telephone
> b. cannot use the post
> c. cannot send a messenger, because you probably have no one to send and, if you have, you cannot give him a written message as the police sometimes search people in trains etc. for documents.
> d. cannot even speak with those with whom you are completely d'accord, because the secret police have methods of questioning where they first break the will but leave the intelligence awake, thereby inducing the victim to speak out all he knows: therefore you must limit information to those who absolutely need it.
> e. cannot even rely on a rumour or a whispering campaign to spread information as there is so effective a ban on communications of all kinds that a whispering campaign started in Munich may never reach Augsburg. There is only one way of communicating news and that is the London wireless, as that is listened to by many people who belong to the opposition proper and by many disaffected Party Members.[218]

This excerpt of Moltke's 1943 letter to Curtis sums up the difficulties, which the Resistance within Germany faced and the need for outside assistance to help circumvent Nazi controls over the German society. Yet in spite of these difficulties, Moltke still tried to work against the regime.

Moltke tried to halt legislation aimed directed against Jews. On 8 November 1941, Moltke explained to Freya how he had attacked a Nazi decree, "against 24 men," that called for the expatriation of Jews that lived abroad, including Jews who were deported.[219] This particular decree was the Eleventh Decree under the *Reich* Citizenship Law of September 1935, which made Jews abroad stateless and allowed for the confiscation and expropriation of their property in the *Reich*.[220] Although Moltke was not able to stop the law (it came into force on 25 November 1941),[221] he wrote optimistically to Freya on 13 November that he "was actually able to throw a spanner into the works, obstructing a bit, at least, of the persecution of the Jews."[222]

Although Moltke found it initially difficult to believe the reports of Nazi atrocities that he had heard, he grew increasingly disturbed not just at the bloodletting at the front, but also by the reports of Nazi mass murder. He made an effort to halt anti-Jewish legislation, unfortunately without success. The point is that he made this effort. He also endeavoured to inform the British government, through a letter to his friend Lionel Curtis, of the crimes being committed in his and every German's name. Like Hassell, he was a leading figure in the opposition to Hitler and was executed for his convictions and his plans for a new Germany.

c) Carl Friederich Goerdeler

Carl Friedrich Goerdeler (1884-1945), the leading civilian figure in the German resistance to Hitler, was very active in German politics, serving as *Reich* Prices Commissioner from 1931 to 1932 and again from 1934 to 1935.[223] At the municipal political level, Goerdeler served as *Oberbürgermeister* of Leipzig between May 1930 and

his resignation in November 1936.[224] After his retirement, Goerdeler travelled extensively between 1937 and 1939, meeting foreign statesmen and giving lectures abroad, warning of the "dangers of National Socialism."[225] Goerdeler played a leading role in the civilian opposition to Hitler. However, just before the 20 July 1944 assassination attempt, an order for his arrest was issued. [226] Goerdeler went underground and managed to elude arrest for just over three weeks.[227] The Nazi regime offered the enormous reward of one million RM for information leading to his arrest, and on 12 August 1944, a woman named Helene Schwärzel recognised and denounced him.[228] The *Gestapo* was informed and he was arrested shortly thereafter.[229] Goerdeler was sentenced to death by the People's Court on 8 September 1944 and was executed on 2 February 1945 in Plötzensee prison.[230]

Goerdeler saw the Nazi regime as the embodiment of "lawlessness and moral disintegration" and worked to replace it with a government "based upon the rule of law."[231] There is a great deal of evidence that shows that Goerdeler was not only concerned about the plight of Jews in the face of mounting persecution from the Nazi regime, but also that he actively worked to protect Jews and induce others to do so as well.

Examples of Goerdeler's adherence to his principles and human decency in the face of Nazi idelogy can first be seen shortly after Hitler's ascension to power on 30 January 1933. One can cite the fact that in the spring of 1933, shortly after Hitler's ascension to power, Goerdeler personally protected Jewish shop-owners in Leipzig from the looting of "plundering" *Sturmabteilung* (SA) men.[232] A man by the name of Hermann Scharfir, living at this time in Leipzig, told of how he was arrested by SA men and imprisoned in

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At their next meeting, held on 11 September 1938 in Zurich, Switzerland, Goerdeler commented to Young on the "deterioration of conditions in Germany":

> Germany is now dominated by some 100,000 of its worst elements, men of low character, lacking in any moral sense, and recognising no law but their own. The guiding policy is brute force on the principle that Might is Right.[252]

Goerdeler expected that if Germany invaded Czechoslovakia, France would honour her alliance obligations to this nation and attack Germany.[253] Moreover, he believed that Poland would also come to the aid of Czechoslovakia and strive to conquer East Prussia. Goerdeler added "Poland would effect retribution by treating the German people in her conquered territory in a manner similar to the treatment that has been meted out by the Government of this people to the Jews."[254] At another meeting less than two months later, on 6-7 November 1938, Goerdeler made an even more ominous and unfortunately correct prediction to Young. That is, he foresaw a "great increase in the persecution of Jews and Christians" three days before the massive Nazi pogrom of 9 November 1938 against Jews all over Germany.[255] Goerdeler stated that he believed "that 95 per of the German people in their hearts and souls" were opposed to the "gangster methods" of the Nazi government: the "suppressing of liberty, and the persecution of the Jews."[256] Moreover, Goerdeler was "greatly perturbed" at the lack of a strong diplomatic reaction in democratic nations against the Nazi persecution of Jews:

> There is not yet in evidence any strong reaction throughout the democracies, in the Press, the Church, and in Parliament, against the barbaric, sadistic and cruel persecution of 10,000 Polish Jews in Germany. These poor creatures are driven like wild animals, with machine guns behind them, over the Rhine into Switzerland and over the Polish frontier. Ten thousand of these people are in despair. Never, since the persecution of the Christians by the Roman Emperors, have Christians [Jews?] been so persecuted as is now happening in Germany.[257]

Goerdeler gave the further warning that if the democratic nations did not go on the "moral offensive" against these atrocities, or at least protest in some way against them, Hitler would perceive this inaction as a sign of weakness and perpetrate even more horrible deeds. Goerdeler asserted that the Nazi Minister of Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, was trying use propaganda in order to "keep the voice of England, America, and France silent during the next phase of blackmail and cruelty," which would inspire Hitler to believe that "the democracies would still remain silent," even "if something worse happened."[258] Moreover, such inaction and silence could be perceived by Nazi leaders as meaning that the Allies would have no objection to an increase in the violent actions against Jews, and perhaps even to mass killing. In a diary entry of December 1942, Goebbels wrote that the Western democracies protested against Nazi persecution of Jews less than he had expected.[259] He even believed that the Americans and the British were "happy" that Germany was "cleaning out the Jewish rabble" ["*daß wir mit dem Judengesindel aufräumen*"].[260] Determined protest from Allied governments might not have stopped or prevented Nazi mass killing. The fact is we will never know.

On 4 December 1938, at the fourth meeting between Goerdeler and Young, Goerdeler re-emphasised that "Germany [was] controlled by 100,000 of its worst elements, men who recognise[d] no moral or human law."[261] He gave yet another clear warning to Young that the persecution of Jews would only continue "with even greater ferocity" and that Hitler should not be viewed by the democracies as a "bulwark against Bolshevism": Hitler's goal was "the ultimate destruction of Jews, Christianity, Capitalism."[262] Goerdeler stated that within Germany, there was "deep disapproval of the persecution of

the Jews" and that Germans resented the shameful way that Nazi leaders capitalised financially on this persecution, by seizing and stealing Jewish property.[263]

At the beginning of 1941, that is, before the Nazi "Final Solution" was fully underway, Goerdeler wrote a memorandum entitled "The Aim".[264] In this memorandum, Goerdeler addressed the position of Jews in the world and the persecution under which they suffered. Goerdeler saw the necessity of a restructuring of this position, in order to avoid unjust and inhuman treatment of the Jews.[265] Goerdeler also stated that Jews "belonged to another race" and proposed the founding of a Jewish state—the location of which would not be Palestine; rather, in part of Canada or South America.[266] Goerdeler wrote that the Jew would be "a citizen of his Jewish state" and, in Germany, would have the same rights "as every other foreign national."[267] Moreover, Jews would be considered as foreign nationals if they had not lived "within the borders of the German Empire before 1 July 1871" or if their "ancestors had not lived within the borders of the German Empire before 1 July 1871."[268] However, Jews who had fought for Germany, and their direct descendants, would be considered German citizens.[269]

Hoffmann writes that "after years of injustices and cruelties committed by German authorities against German and non-German Jews," Goerdeler's suggestion "to deprive naturalised German Jews of their citizenship, appears shockingly insensitive."[270] Hoffmann contends, however, that "Goerdeler's motive was to secure the Jews' status permanently against persecution."[271] Goerdeler's suggestion was "a desperate attempt to appease the murderers and to wrest the murder weapons from their hands."[272]

Goerdeler suggested the creation of a Jewish state—not to rid Germany and Europe of Jews; rather, to guarantee Jews not only civil rights and freedoms, which they did not

have in Nazi Germany, but also a freedom from persecution. Moreover, in this memorandum, Goerdeler acknowledged the terrible injustice of the destruction and expropriation of Jewish property:

> *In den vergangenen Jahren ist zweifellos ein Unrecht durch Enteignung, Zerstörung usw. jüdischen Besitzes und Lebens in Deutschland großgezogen, das wir vor unserem Gewissen und der Geschichte* ***nicht*** *verantworten können.*[273]

The evidence cited here in this thesis so far supports the position, that Goerdeler sought to improve the situation faced by Jews. Whether in his position as *Oberbürgermeister* of Leipzig, or through his meetings with A.P. Young, Goerdeler used his influence to protect Jews, to resist and obstruct Nazi anti-Semitic policies and to warn the British government of both the increasing persecution of the Jews and the growing danger to world peace that the Nazi regime stood for. Goerdeler did not merely recognise the injustices and the crimes perpetrated against Jewish life in Germany, but also sought to improve the situation of the Jews—he sought "*den Weg zur Heilung*".[274]

There is still more evidence that shows that Goerdeler was aware and appalled at the persecution of European Jews. Once this persecution had intensified to the mass-murder of Jews in German-occupied territory, Goerdeler expressed his disgust at these shameful deeds in various documents, and particularly in writing to German generals. In a document from 1942, published by H. Krausnick in 1965, in the Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte, Goerdeler expressed his disgust and shame at the way a group of Jews were treated in Leipzig, in the early 1942. In this short document published under the title of "*Goerdeler und die Deportation der Leipziger Juden*," Goerdeler described the deportation of Jews from Leipzig on 19 and 27 January 1942.[275] The Jews had to hand over their wool clothing and were transported in open lorries (in temperatures between

-15 and -20°C) about eighteen kilometres, from Leipzig to Delitzsch (north of Leipzig, very near to the border between Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt).[276] From Delitzsch, these people were transported in cattle-wagons "to the East."[277] Goerdeler wondered how many had frozen to death along the way, or later, died from pneumonia or starvation. Goerdeler also described the horror of parents watching their children freezing and starving to death before their very eyes: he wondered how "*ein deutscher Mann, der überhaupt noch Gefühl im Herzen hat, annehmen kann, daß solche Ungeheuerlichkeiten sich nicht an unserem Volke rächen müssen.*"[278] Goerdeler compared the persecution of Jews in Germany to that of the Christians under Diocletian: "*Vielleicht ist die Christenverfolgung unter Diocletian ähnlich gewesen,*" and predicted that these deeds ensured that a "horrible revenge" would be inflicted upon the German people.[279]

Goerdeler also tried to bring general officers into the conspiracy against Hitler in order to help strengthen its chances of success in overthrowing Hitler. Goerdeler primarily used military arguments in stressing the need for action, however he also referred to German atrocities. In a letter to General Olbricht, head of the *Allgemeines Heeresamt* (General Army Office) dated 17 May 1943, Goerdeler brought up the recent German military disasters at Stalingrad and in North Africa to emphasise the "*unfähige gewissenlose Führung*" of Hitler, and stated that "*bei rechter Führung wären beide Opfertragödien vermieden und damit eine günstigere militärische und politische Lage hergestellt.*"[280] However, Goerdeler also referred to the "*laufend ungeheure Verbrechen an Unschuldigen*" on the Eastern front.[281]

Goerdeler rejected the National-Socialist regime and its murderous racial policies, as he felt that they had "overthrown God with their racial madness."[282] Goerdeler tried to

spread information about the persecution of Jews in Germany to foreign governments in order to persuade them to refuse to deal with Germany on vital issues until the persecution stopped. Goerdeler also tried to influence senior officers, who were in a position both to help the resistance and to stop such atrocities. He made numerous attempts to warn foreign governments of the threat that Hitler posed to European peace and to Jews and Christianity. Thus, it must be repeated that Goerdeler, by conveying his views and warnings to Young, took grave risks to his person and his family, as in doing so, he was guilty under this National-Socialist German decree of making such "insidious attacks against the government of the National Resurgence." Furthermore, by communicating his warnings about Hitler to Young, Goerdeler was committing treason, which was also punishable by death. Yet none of Goerdeler's warnings were heeded or actively dealt with by the British government. Unlike Goerdeler, the British government was free from Nazi oppression and had every opportunity to criticise Hitler's regime and the persecution of Jews in Germany. Goerdeler expressed his shame and disgust at Nazi crimes and was fully aware that these crimes would carry terrible consequences for both a post-war Germany and her future generations.

Persons within the German Resistance to Hitler were deeply ashamed of the crimes committed by German forces and were motivated to stop these crimes by removing Hitler and his regime of gangsters. The courageous efforts of the three individuals discussed above, stemmed from their conscience, sense of human decency and the Christian faith. Hitler's regime sought to destroy these Christian beliefs and human decency. The fundamental rejection of the Nazi regime was reflected not just in the actions of resisters, but also in the statements they gave in *Gestapo* interrogations and before the People's

Court. For example, Peter Graf Yorck von Wartenburg, a leading resister, explained his view of National-Socialist ideology during his trial before the People's Court in the following way: "Mr. President! I have already stated that in view of the development that had been taken by the National Socialist [*sic*] ideology, I did—" (at this point, Yorck was interrupted by the President of the proceedings, Roland Freisler).[283] Freisler finished Yorck's sentence with the words: "—did not agree! To state it exactly, you told him: 'Regarding the Jewish question, the extermination of the Jews did not suit you; the National Socialist concept of justice did not suit you.'"[284] Yorck's own words before the People's Court expressed this point more emphatically than Freisler's mocking interjection. For Yorck, the Nazi extermination of the Jews had brought about "an internal break with National Socialism" ("*daß die* ***über Recht und Gesetz hinausgehenden Ausrottungsmaßnahmen gegen das Judentum*** *bei ihm einen innerlichen Bruch mit dem Nationalsozialismus herbeigeführt hätten*").[285] Yorck's clear rejection of National-Socialist ideology is shown in his dignified statements to the blustery Freisler; he spoke from his heart and his conscience. These candid statements, which could not have helped his case, explain the basic motivation for his participation in the conspiracy to overthrow Hitler. Moreover, the records of the *Gestapo* investigations of the resisters arrested in the wake of the failure of the 20 July 1944 plot bring out the rejection of the Nazi persecution of the Jews. From Goerdeler's statement of government, the *Gestapo* report dated 16 October 1944 noted this condemnation of the inhumanity of the Nazi persecution of Jews: "*Die* ***Judenverfolgung,*** *die sich* ***in den unmenschlichsten und unbarmherzigsten, tief beschämenden und gar nicht wiedergutzumachenden Formen*** *vollzogen hat, ist sofort eingestellt.*"[286] It is also important to note that in these

Gestapo reports, the conspirators did not just condemn the atrocities committed against Jews; rather, they rejected the National-Socialist anti-Semitic ideology as a whole. That is, with respect to the "Jewish question", the conspirators desired a new Germany in which Jews would have the same rights "as every German":

> *Die ganze innere Fremdheit, die die Männer des reaktionären Verschwörerkreises gegenüber den Ideen des Nationalsozialismus kennzeichnete, kommt vor allem in der* ***Stellung zur Judenfrage*** *zum Ausdruck.[...], stehen sie stur auf dem* ***Standpunkt des liberalen Denkens, das den Juden grundsätzlich die gleiche Stellung zuerkennen will wie jedem Deutschen.***[287]

[1] Boberach, Meldungen aus dem Reich, S. 25.
[2] Ibid., S. 5242.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Kershaw, Popular Opinion, pp. 366-67.
[5] Ibid., p. 367.
[6] L.D. Stokes, Doctoral Dissertation, The Sicherheitsdienst (SD) of the *Reichsführer* SS and German Public Opinion, September 1939-June 1941, (Johns Hopkins, 1972), pp. 185-86.
[7] U. von Kardorff, Diary of a Nightmare: Berlin 1942-1945, (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1965), p. 158.
[8] Ibid., p. 35.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid., p. 36.
[11] Poliakov and Wulf, Das dritte Reich, S. 432.
[12] Ibid., S. 432-33.
[13] A "second complex" of this group, the "Hamburg Branch of the White Rose" was inspired by the leaflets of the Munich group and was active in the spring and summer of 1943. Thirty-two members of this group were imprisoned in the fall of 1943; eight of whom were executed (I. Scholl, The White Rose: Munich 1942-1943, Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1983, pp. 68-69, 71-72).
[14] H. Mehringer, Widerstand und Emigration: Das NS-Regime und seine Gegner, (Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, München 1997), S. 186.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid., pp. 22, 31.
[17] Taylor and Shaw, Dictionary of the Third Reich, p. 303.
[18] Scholl, White Rose, pp. 20-21; Ibid.
[19] Taylor and Shaw, Dictionary of the Third Reich, p. 303.
[20] Mehringer, Widerstand und Emigration, S. 184.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Scholl, White Rose, pp. 121-22.
[24] Ibid., pp. 303-04.
[25] Ibid., p. 304.
[26] Scholl, White Rose, p. 122.
[27] U. von Hassell, The von Hassell Diaries 1938-1944, (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1947), p. 296. This information is not in the revised 1988 German edition.
[28] M. Schneider and W. Süß, Keine Volksgenossen: Der Widerstand der Weißen Rose / The White Rose, (Rektoratskollegium der Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, München 1993), S. 69.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Scholl, White Rose, p. 114.
[32] Ibid., p. 119.
[33] Ibid., p. 73 fn.
[34] "Faksimiledruck der Flugblätter der Weissen Rose," Flugblatt I, Zz. 1-3, mit freundlicher Genehmigung der Weiße-Rose-Stiftung (Kontaktperson: Hr. Michael Kaufmann), Denkstätte der Weißen Rose, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Geschwister-Scholl-Platz 1, München (no date).Ibid., p. 73.
[35] Scholl, White Rose, p. 85.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid., p. 78; "Flugblätter," II, Zz. 35-40.
[38] Scholl, White Rose, p. 78; "Flugblätter," II, Zz. 54-56.
[39] Scholl, White Rose, p. 79.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid.; "Flugblätter," II, Zz. 82-85.
[42] Scholl, White Rose, p. 73; "Flugblätter," VI.
[43] Ibid., p. 80.
[44] Ibid., p. 82: "Flugblätter," III, Zz. 44-46.
[45] Mehringer, Widerstand und Emigration, S. 186. In addition to those persons already mentioned, there were others actively involved: Traute Lafrenz, Gisela Schertling, Katharina Schüddekopf, Hubert

Furtwängler, Ottmar Hammerstein, Wolf Jaeger, Jürgen Wittgenstein, among others. Students involved from Ulm included Susanne and Hans Hirzel, as well as Franz Joseph Müller. (Ibid, S. 186, Fn. 31).
[46]Scholl, White Rose, p. 82.
[47]Ibid., p. 83.
[48]Ibid.
[49]Ibid.
[50]Ibid., p. 82.
[51]Hilberg, Destruction of the European Jews, p. 284.
[52]Davidson, Trial of the Germans, p. 560, fn *.
[53]Graml, "Die deutsche Militäropposition," S. 423.
[54]Hoffmann, History of the German Resistance, p. 263.
[55] C. Streit, Keine Kameraden: Die Wehrmacht und die sowjetischen Kriegsgefangenen 1941-1945, (Verlag J.H.W. Dietz Nachf., Bonn 1991), S. 309, Fn. 13.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Franz Halder was the successor to Ludwig Beck as Chief of the General Staff. Beck resigned on 27 August 1938 (P. Hoffmann, "Ludwig Beck: Loyalty and Resistance," in Central European History XIV, 1981, p. 332).
[58] Streit, Keine Kameraden, S. 31.
[59] Elisabeth Wagner, Hrsg., Der Generalquartiermeister, München 1963, S. 201 cited in Ibid., S. 309, Fn. 15.
[60] Keitel was Head of the OKW from 2 April 1938 until the end of the war. He was promoted to *Generalfeldmarschall* in 1940 (Ibid., S. 309, Fn. 11).
[61] Ibid., S. 31.
[62] Ibid. For reactions to the "Commissar Order", please see below—Chapter Four, Section i.), c.).
[63] Streit, Keine Kameraden, S. 31.
[64] See below p. 74 regarding the mass shooting of Jews witnessed by Axel von dem Bussche and the comments from Hoffmann (Hoffmann, History of the German Resistance, p. 325).
[65] "Mutiny and revolution are words not to be found in a German officer's dictionary." Franz Halder in "Protokoll aus der Verhandlung Halder [vor der] Spruchkammer X München [15.-21. September 1948]," mimeographed [Munich, 1948], in the possession of Peter Hoffmann, cited in Hoffmann, "Ludwig Beck," p. 348.
[66]R. Giziowski, The Enigma of General Blaskowitz, (London: Leo Cooper, 1997), p. 15.
[67]Ibid., p. 18.
[68]Ibid., p. 21.
[69]Ibid.
[70]Krausnick, SS-State, pp. 585-86.
[71]Giziowski, General Blaskowitz, pp. 24-25.
[72]Ibid., p. 46—Blaskowitz received the following decorations from individual states of Imperial Germany: from Prussia, the Order of the Red Eagle Third Class with Swords, Wound Medal in Black; from Bavaria, Bavarian Military Service Order Fourth Class with Swords; from Baden, Order of the Golden Lion with the Knight's Cross; from Brunswick, War Service Cross; and from Oldenburg, Cross of Friederich-August First Class. From the Austro-Hungarian Empire Blaskowitz received the Military Service Cross Third Class and from the Ottoman Empire he received the Order of the Iron Halfmoon. Reichswehrministerium, Heerespersonalamt, ed. Rangliste des deutschen Reichsheeres nach dem Stande vom 1. Mai 1930. (Berlin: E.G. Mittler und Sohn, n.d.). S. 111 cited in Ibid., p. 58, fn 49.
[73]Ibid., pp. 37, 47-48.
[74]Ibid., p. 69.
[75]Blaskowitz Interrogation Report, 5 June 1945, First Canadian Army Intelligence Periodical No. 4, Vol. 10, p. 655, File 215C1.023, Record Group 24, Public Archives of Canada, cited in Ibid., p. 73.
[76]Hoffmann, German Resistance, p. 12.
[77]Ibid.
[78]Zeller, Flame of Freedom, p. 216. Colonel Helmuth Stieff served as the General Staff Officer I of the Fourth Army, then advancing on Moscow, from 21 September 1941 until October 1942, when he became head of the Organisation Department of the Army High Command. On 30 January 1944, Stieff was promoted to the rank of Major-General, the youngest officer in the German Army to have risen to the rank

of General (at the age of 43). (Ibid.)
[79]H. Rothfels, ed., "Ausgewählte Briefe von Generalmajor Helmuth Stieff," in Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte [hereafter VfZ] , 2 (1954), S. 296; Hoffmann, History of the German Resistance, "Ranks: Approximate Equivalents," p. 767.
[80]Rothfels, "Ausgewählte Briefe," S. 296-97.
[81]Ibid.
[82]Giziowski, General Blaskowitz, p. 120.
[83]Ibid., p. 159.
[84]Ibid., p. 163.
[85]Rothfels, "Ausgewählte Briefe," S. 298.
[86]Ibid.
[87]Krausnick and Wilhelm, Truppe des Weltanschauungskrieges, S. 97.
[88]Ibid., S. 97.
[89]G. Engel, Heeresadjutant bei Hitler: 1938-1943, Aufzeichnungen des Major Engel, (Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, Stuttgart 1974), S. 196 cited in Giziowski, General Blaskowitz, p. 173.
[90]Ibid.
[91]Ibid.
[92]H. Groscurth, Tagebücher eines Abwehroffiziers 1938-1940: Mit weiteren Dokumenten zur Militäropposition gegen Hitler, Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, Stuttgart 1970), S. 427.
[93]Giziowski, General Blaskowitz, p. 176.
[94]Groscurth, Tagebücher, S. 426.
[95]Ibid., S. 426-27; Krausnick und Wilhelm, Truppe des Weltanschauungskrieges, S. 97-98.
[96]Ibid., S. 426, fn 230.
[97] "Since August 1939 Major (later Lieutenant-Colonel) Groscurth had been working in *OKH* as liaison officer from *Ausland/Abwehr* of *OKW*" (Hoffmann, History of the German Resistance, p. 128).
[98]Krausnick and Wilhelm, Truppe des Weltanschauungskrieges, S. 98.
[99]Milch Interview, 24 September 1971, T-1, John Toland Papers, Series 2, "Adolf Hitler", Franklin Delano Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, NY, cited in Giziowski. General Blaskowitz, p. 170.
[100] Graml, "Die deutsche Militäropposition," S. 427, fn. 231.
[101]C. Burdick and H.-A. Jacobsen, The Halder War Diary 1939-1942, Novato: Presidio Press, 1988), pp. 52-53.
[102]Hilberg, Destruction of the European Jews, p. 126.
[103] H. Höhne, Canaris: Patriot im Zwielicht, C. Bertelsmann Verlag GmbH, München 1976), S. 346.
[104]Trial of the Major War Criminals, Vol. XI, pp. 23-24; Höhne, Canaris, S. 348.
[105]Hoffmann, History of the German Resistance, p. 256. Lahousen was promoted to the rank of Major-General on 1 January 1945 (W. Keilig, Das deutsche Heer 1939-1945: Gliederung—Einsatz—Stellenbesetzung, Verlag Hans-Henning Podzun, Bad Nauheim 1956, 211/ 190).
[106]Trial of the Major War Criminals, Vol. XI, p. 24; Höhne, Canaris, S. 348. Canaris' biographer Heinz Höhne states, however, that the recollection of Lahousen sounds harder than Canaris' criticism at the time. Höhne adds that Canaris' formulation of his protest "must have been so vague", that *Generaloberst* Wilhelm Keitel (Head of the OKW) asked an Army liason officer, *Oberstleutnant* Nikolaus von Vormann, who happened to also be present: "*Was wollte der Mann eigentlich?*" (Höhne, Canaris, S. 349).
[107]Davidson, Trial of the Germans, p. 572.
[108]Cited in Ibid.
[109]Krausnick, SS State, p. 532.
[110]Ibid.
[111]Ibid.
[112]Ibid., p. 533.
[113]Krausnick, SS State, p. 534.
[114] A. Dallin, German Rule in Russia 1941-1945: A Study of Occupation Policies, (New York: Octagon Books, 1980), p. 427.
[115]Ibid. The total Dallin provides is 1,308,000. This includes 67,000 prisoners listed as having escaped. No separate separate figure for the number of Soviet POWs "Exterminated" in German captivity are given.
[116] Ibid. The yearly breakdown (rounded), is as follows: 1941: 3,355,000; 1942: 1,653,000; 1943: 565,000; 1944: 147,000; 1945: 34,000 (Ibid.).

[117] Kriegstagebuch OKW, I, S. 1106 cited in Streit, Keine Kameraden, S. 128, Fn. 2. This number included released, deceased and escaped prisoners (Ibid., S. 356, Fn. 2).
[118] Ibid., S. 357, Fn. 5. After subtracting the number of escapees and the "numerically slight" number of prisoners released, Streit states that just over two million either had been shot or had died by 1 February 1942 (Ibid.).
[119]Hoffmann, History of the German Resistance, p. 266.
[120]R.-C. *Freiherr* von Gersdorff, Soldat im Untergang, (Verlag Ullstein GmbH, Frankfurt/M-Berlin-Vienna 1977), S. 14.
[121]Ibid.
[122]Ibid.
[123]Ibid., S. 17.
[124]Ibid., S. 14.
[125]Ibid.
[126]Ibid., S. 18.
[127]Ibid.
[128]Ibid., S. 55.
[129]Ibid., S. 65.
[130]Ibid., S. 65-66.
[131]Ibid., S. 66.
[132]Ibid., S. 66-67.
[133] Ibid., S. 67.
[134]Ibid.
[135]Hoffmann, History of the German Resistance, p. 266.
[136]Ibid. Gersdorff reached the army command post of LXXXIV Corps, then positioned approximately six km northeast of Avranches, in the late afternoon of 29 July 1944 (Gersdorff, Soldat, S. 152-53).
[137]Hoffmann, History of the German Resistance, p. 266.
[138]Krausnick and Wilhelm, Truppe des Weltanschauungskrieges, S. 576; Graml, "Die deutsche Militäropposition," S. 441; Hoffmann, History of the German Resistance, p. 268; Gersdorff, Soldat, S. 98.
[139]Graml, "Die deutsche Militäropposition," S. 441.
[140]Zeller, Flame of Freedom, pp. 157-58.
[141]Hoffmann, History of the German Resistance, p. 268.
[142]Zeller, Flame of Freedom, p. 158.
[143]Krausnick and Wilhelm, Truppe des Weltanschauungskrieges, S. 576.
[144]Gersdorff, Soldat, S. 98.
[145]Ibid., S. 97. This is Gersdorff's recollection. Peter Hoffmann states that Hans von Hardenberg informed Gersdorff of the killings, after his aircraft had flown low over the site and he had witnessed the shootings (Hoffmann, History of the German Resistance, p. 268). Hermann Graml states that it was Heinrich von Lehndorff-Steinort who had witnessed the massacre from the aircraft (Graml, "Die deutsche Militäropposition," S. 441-42).
[146]Gersdorff, Soldat, S. 97.
[147]Ibid.
[148]Ibid.
[149]Ibid.; Hoffmann, History of the German Resistance, p. 264.
[150]Gersdorff, Soldat, S. 97.
[151]Ibid.
[152]Ibid., S. 98.
[153]Ibid.
[154]Ibid.
[155]Ibid., S. 99.
[156]Hoffmann, History of the German Resistance, p. 273-74.
[157]Ibid., p. 269.
[158]Ibid.
[159]Graml, "Die deutsche Militäropposition," S. 443.
[160]Ibid.
[161]Ibid., S. 433.

[162]Ibid.
[163]Ibid.
[164]Ibid., S. 433-34.
[165]Hoffmann, History of the German Resistance, p. 269.
[166] H. Jäger, Verbrechen unter totalitärer Herrschaft, (Frankfurt, 1982), S. 81-82, 95-122, 158-60 cited in C. Browning, Ordinary Men, (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1992), p. 170.
[167]E. Stockhorst, Fünftausend Köpfe: Wer war was im Dritten Reich, (*blick + bild Verlag*, Velbert und Kettwig 1967), S. 47.
[168]Hoffmann, History of the German Resistance, p. 324.
[169]Ibid.
[170]Ibid.
[171]Ibid.
[172]Ibid.
[173]Ibid.
[174]Ibid.
[175]Ibid.
[176]Ibid., pp. 324-25.
[177]Ibid., p. 325.
[178]Ibid.
[179]Ibid., p. 324.
[180]Ibid., pp. 324-25.
[181]Ibid., p. 325.
[182]U. von Hassell, The von Hassell Diaries. (Westport: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1971), p. ix.
[183] U. von Hassell, Die Hassell-Tagebücher 1938-1944. (Siedler Verlag, Berlin 1988), S. 19.
[184]Hassell, Diaries, p. ix.
[185]Hassell, Tagebücher, S. 19; Hassell, Diaries, p. x.
[186]Hassell, Tagebücher, S. 19.
[187]Ibid.
[188]Hassell, Diaries, p. x.
[189]Hassell, Tagebücher, S. 19.
[190]Ibid.
[191] Hoffmann, "The German Resistance, The Jews, and Daniel Goldhagen," p. 77; P. Hoffmann, "The Persecution of the Jews as a Motive for Resistance," p. 77. Some of Hassell's most intense reactions to Nazi atrocities can be found in Hassell, Tagebücher, in the following places: S. 62-63 (25. November 1938), 63 (27. November 1938), 67 (20. Dezember 1938), 130 (19. Oktober 1939), 152 (25. Dezember 1939), 152-53 (30. Dezember 1939), 157 (11. Januar 1940), 167-68 (14.-17. Februar 1940), 211 (8. Oktober 1940), 265 (18. August 1941), 280 (1. November 1941), 286 (30. November 1941), 299 (15. Februar 1942), 338 (20. Dezember 1942—s. auch Fn. 119), 339-340 (20. Dezember 1942—s. auch Fn. 121), 365 (15. Mai 1943).
[192]Hassell, Diaries, p. 14.
[193]Ibid., p. 15.
[194]Ibid., p. 79.
[195]Ibid.
[196]Ibid.
[197]Hassell, Tagebücher, S. 211.
[198]Ibid., S. 265.
[199]Ibid.
[200]Ibid.
[201]Ibid., S. 211.
[202]Ibid., S. 280.
[203]Ibid.
[204]H.J. von Moltke, Letters to Freya, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990), p. 4.
[205]Ibid., pp. 10-12.
[206]Ibid., p. 12.
[207]Ibid., p. 22. The name 'Kreisau Circle' was given to the group by *Gestapo* interrogators in their

investigations after the failed 20 July 1944 coup attempt (Ibid., p. 13).
[208]Ibid., p. 20.
[209] Ibid., p. 21.
[210]Ibid., p. 56.
[211]Ibid., p. 252.
[212]Ibid.
[213]Ibid., pp.285, 11.
[214]Ibid., p. 18.
[215]Ibid., p. 285.
[216]Ibid., p. 286.
[217]Ibid.
[218] Ibid., p. 284.
[219]Ibid., pp. 179-80
[220]Ibid., p. 180 fn 1.
[221]Ibid., p. 180 fn 1.
[222]Ibid., p. 183.
[223]Krause, Testament, S. 12; H. Kinder and W. Hilgemann, The Penguin Atlas of World History, Volume II: From the French Revolution to the Present, (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1978), p. 193.
[224]F. Krause, Goerdelers politisches Testament, (Verlag Friedrich Krause, New York 1945), S. 9; Ritter, Carl Goerdeler, S. 82.
[225]Ritter, Carl Goerdeler, S. 151-52.
[226]Ibid., S. 404.
[227]Ibid.
[228]I. Marßolek, Die Denunziantin: Helene Schwärzel 1944-47. (Edition Temmen, Bremen 1993), S. 33.
[229]Ibid.
[230]Ritter, Carl Goerdeler, S. 417.
[231]Zeller, Flame of Freedom, p. 60.
[232] Ritter, Carl Goerdeler, S. 64.
[233] M. Meyer-Krahmer, Carl Goerdeler und sein Weg in den Widerstand: Eine Reise in die Welt meines Vaters, Herder-Taschenbuch Verlag, Freiburg im Bresigau 1989, S. 73.
[234] Ibid.
[235] Ibid.
[236] Ibid.
[237]Ritter, Carl Goerdeler, S. 82. The exact date of Goerdeler's retirement (25 November 1936) is quoted from Hoffmann, "The Persecution of the Jews as a Motive for Resistance," p. 87.
[238]Hoffmann, History of the German Resistance, p. 825 (This is the source from which the author has Haake's first name).
[239]Ritter, Carl Goerdeler, S. 82.
[240]Ibid.
[241]Ibid.
[242] Hoffmann, "The Persecution of the Jews as a Motive for Resistance," p. 87.
[243]Ritter, Carl Goerdeler, S. 82.
[244]A.P. Young, The 'X' Documents, (London: Andre Deutsch, 1974), p. 25.
[245]Ibid., pp. 50-59, 75-84, 113-24, 131-40, 150-56, 173-81.
[246] RGBl. I, 1933, S. 35-41, 83, 85-87, 135-136; RGBl. I 1934, S. 1269-71: vgl. "Verordnung des Reichspräsidenten zur Abwehr heimtückischer Angriffe gegen die Regierung der nationalen Erhebung. Vom 21. März 1933," RGBl. I 1933, S. 135; "Gesetz gegen heimtückische Angriffe auf Staat und Partei und zum Schutz der Parteiuniformen. Vom 20. Dezember 1934," RGBl. I 1934, S. 1269-71.
[247] Young, The 'X' Documents, p. 52.
[248] Hoffmann, History of the German Resistance, pp. 49-50.
[249] Young, 'X' Documents, p. 52.
[250] Ibid., p. 59.
[251] Ibid., pp. 52, 59.
[252] Ibid., p. 78.
[253] Hoffmann, "Ludwig Beck," p. 336.

[254] Young, 'X' Documents, pp. 83-84.
[255] Ibid., p. 136.
[256] Ibid., p. 139.
[257] Ibid.
[258] Ibid., p. 140.
[259] Fröhlich, Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels. Teil II: Diktate 1941-1945, Band 6: Oktober-Dezember 1942, S. 438.
[260] Young, 'X' Documents, p. 140.
[261] Ibid., p. 152.
[262] Ibid., p. 153.
[263] Ibid., p. 160.
[264] W. *Ritter* von Schramm, "Das Ziel", in Beck und Goerdeler: Gemeinschaftsdokumente für den Frieden 1941-1944, (Gotthold Müller Verlag, Munich 1965), S. 81-166. Please see also Hoffmann, "The Persecution of the Jews as a Motive for Resistance," p. 86.
[265] Ibid., S. 105-106.
[266] Ibid.
[267] Schramm, Beck und Goerdeler, S. 106.
[268] Hoffmann, "The Persecution of the Jews as a Motive for Resistance," p. 86.
[269] Schramm, Beck und Goerdeler, S. 106.
[270] Hoffmann, "The Persecution of the Jews as a Motive for Resistance," p. 86.
[271] Ibid.
[272] Ibid.
[273] Schramm, Beck und Goerdeler, S. 107.
[274] Ibid.
[275] H. Krausnick, "Goerdeler und die Deportation der Leipziger Juden (Dokumentation.)", VfZ 3 (1965), S. 338-39.
[276] Ibid., S. 338; Hammond Atlas of the World, (Maplewood: Hammond Incorporated, 1993), p. 72.
[277] Ibid.
[278] Ibid.
[279] Ibid., S. 338-39.
[280] 'Dr Goerdeler and General Olbricht: Ein Dokument zur Vorgeschichte des Attentats vom 20. Juli 1944', Die Wandlung 1 (1945-46), S. 173; Ritter, Carl Goerdeler, (Handschrift), zw. S. 352/53.
[281] Die Wandlung, S. 174.
[282] [Carl Goerdeler], "Gedanken eines zum Tode Verurteilten über die deutsche Zukunft," typescript, [Berlin Sept. 1944], Bundesarchiv Koblenz, Nl Goerdeler 26, p. 25 as quoted by Hoffmann, "The Persecution of the Jews as a Motive for Resistance," p. 86.
[283] E. Zimmermann and H.-A. Jacobsen, eds., Germans against Hitler: July 20, 1944, (Bonn: Press and Information Office of the Federal Government of Germany, 1964), p. 199.
[284] Ibid.
[285] Ibid.; H.-A. Jacobsen, ed., "Spiegelbild einer Verschwörung": Die Opposition gegen Hitler und der Staatsstreich vom 20. Juli 1944 in der SD-Berichterstattung. Geheime Dokumente aus dem ehemaligen Reichssicherheitshauptamt, 1. Band, (Seewald Verlag, Stuttgart 1984), S. 449-50 quoted by P. Hoffmann, "The Persecution of the Jews as a Motive for Resistance," p. 74 (endnote 4).
[286] Jacobsen, Spiegelbild, S. 450.
[287] Ibid., S. 471.

CHAPTER FIVE

Reactions Abroad to the Persecution of Jews

Before concluding this paper, a few comments must be made on external attitudes towards Jewish immigration. Jews were being persecuted and murdered in Nazi-occupied Europe, yet those who might have been able to escape, had nowhere to go. The Vatican encountered this problem in its effort to help Jews escape Nazi persecution. As a tiny state with no military power to back up its policies, it was difficult for the Vatican to effectively stop Nazi atrocities. The power of the Vatican lay in its potential spiritual influence on Christians.

In his article about the wartime efforts of apostolic delegate Angelo Roncalli to save the lives of Jews and to alleviate the sufferings of other victims, Peter Hoffmann states that "[i]n its numerous efforts to relieve suffering and to save lives, particularly the lives of Jews, the Vatican preferred diplomatic methods to public statements of condemnation."[1] On the other hand Carlo Falconi, in his work The Silence of Pius XII, criticises Pius XII for "his disconcerting silence about the Nazi crimes."[2] Falconi attributes this alleged silence to Pius XII's appraisal of the "psychological unreadiness of German Catholics," his fear of the spread of atheistic Communism from the Soviet Union and his "blind trust in diplomacy."[3]Saul Friedländer writes in Pius XII and the Third Reich that Pius XII did not speak out in condemnation of Nazi crimes, as the Pope felt "that he could not condemn the German atrocities without condemning Bolshevik atrocities" and "that it was to avoid still greater evils that he was not abandoning his

restraint."[4] Jews who survived or were lucky enough to escape the Holocaust felt that the diplomatic approach was the correct one. Dr. Marcus Melchior, the Chief Rabbi of Denmark, stated after the war that he believed it was "an error to think that Pius XII could have had any influence whatsoever on the brain of a madman. If the Pope had spoken out, Hitler would have probably massacred more than six million Jews and perhaps ten times ten million Catholics, if he had had the power to do so."[5]

With respect to this point, a memorandum dated 8 October 1942, the Vatican gave a muted criticism of "religious conditions" in the German territory of the Warthegau in Poland by stating that the "Holy See, acting in fulfillment of the obligations of its office would find itself compelled to emerge from the attitude of reserve which it has so far maintained, and this it would do, however reluctantly."[6] Point Three of a telegram from German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop to the German ambassador at the Vatican, Diego von Bergen, threatened that

> should the Vatican, for its part, threaten to undertake or perhaps carry out, a political or propaganda campaign against Germany, the Government of the Reich would naturally be compelled to react accordingly. For this purpose, the Reich Government would lack neither effective material nor the possibility of taking concrete measures against the Catholic Church. The Reich Government hopes that the need to apply such measures will not arise; rather, that the Vatican will be convinced that it is in the interests of both sides alike to avoid any aggravation or sharpening of tension in German-Vatican relations.[7]

In his Christmas message of 1942, Pope Pius XII did condemn the murder of Jews—devoted to the "*Hunderttausende, die, persönlich schuldlos, bisweilen nur um ihrer Volkszugehörigkeit oder Abstammung willen dem Tode geweiht oder einer fortschreitenden Verelendung preisgegeben sind.*"[8] The Pope continued, and made his point more clear: "*Die Kirche würde sich selber untreu, hörte auf, Mutter zu sein, wollte*

sie taub bleiben gegenüber dem Notruf ihrer Kinder, der aus allen Schichten der Menschheit an ihr Ohr dringt."[9] Not only did the Nazis forbid the printing of this message in Germany, but also closed or punished any printers ("*auf andere Weise*") caught printing it.

The Vatican, through its representatives and particularly through the efforts of Angelo Roncalli, was able to save Jews. Here are two examples. The Holy See was successful in postponing the deportations in Slovakia for just over a year (March 1943 until September 1944), when deportations were re-initiated by German authorities.[10] This postponement allowed for the survival of a significant number of Slovakian Jews. Moreover, in the summer of 1944, Roncalli and the Vatican had helped to save Hungarian Jews through the issuing of false baptismal certificates.[11] This action subordinated Church principles to the greater purpose of humanity: saving lives. Roncalli was credited with saving thousands of Jews in Hungary.[12]

Yet in trying to save Jews from Nazi extermination, the Vatican had a major problem--"no country was willing to accept Jewish immigrants quickly, unbureaucratically and in great numbers."[13] In a letter dated 20 January 1943 from Chaim Barlas, the director of the Jewish Agency for Palestine immigration department,[14] to Fr Arthur Hughes, the chargé d'affaires of the apostolic delegation in Cairo,[15] Barlas outlined this problem:

> The actual position with regard to the possibilities of emigration is that the Jews in Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland are not allowed to leave the country. On the other hand there is no objection to Jews leaving Holland, Belgium and the Balkan countries. The position in France in still undefinite [*sic*].[16]

However, once the Jews were extracted from Nazi-occupied Europe, where could they go? Barlas hoped that the Holy See would agree "to approach the German government

with a view to grant the exit permission for those Jewish immigrants, who have the opportunity of immigrating into the Holy Land (as the Jewish agency for Palestine had at their disposal approximately 5,000 immigration certificates)."[17] Moreover, Barlas suggested that the Pope might declare on the radio "that rendering help to persecuted Jews is considered by the Church as a good deed."[18] Barlas hoped that such an address by the Pope would "strengthen the feelings of those Catholics, who, [...], render help to Jews doomed to starvation in the occupied territories of Europe."[19]

Reports of the Nazi mass killing of Jews reached the United States as early as July 1941—Jewish newspapers in New York wrote that the Nazis had killed "hundreds of Jews" in Minsk, Brest Litovsk and Lvov.[20] In May 1942, the Jewish Labour Bund in Poland sent a report of "verified massacres to the Polish government in London, which brought it to the attention of the British and American governments.[21] This report concluded that Germany had set out to "annihilate all the Jews in Europe" and that "millions of Polish Jews faced imminent death."[22] In June, the BBC broadcast the report, stating that 700,000 Polish Jews had been murdered and that an extermination plan was under way.[23] By the summer of 1942, the flow of news about Nazi mass murder "flooded the American Jewish Press"; other newspapers published the information more slowly.[24] The stories were initially received by the Jewish leadership, the American government and the mass media with confusion and disbelief. The stories seemed so incredible--people seemed to be "psychologically unschooled for this new era of carnage."[25]

However, between the summer of 1942 and January 1944 the United States government did precious little to help European Jews. The only response from the American government during the summer of 1942 was a statement by President Franklin

Roosevelt made in conjunction with a mass demonstration in New York against Nazi mass murder. On 21 July 1942, 20, 000 people gathered at Madison Square Gardens in New York to protest the Nazi atrocities.[26] The main speakers were Rabbi Stephen Wise, Governor Herbert Lehman, Mayor Fiorello La Guardia, the Methodist bishop Francis McConnell and the president of the American Federation of Labour, William Green.[27] President Roosevelt sent a message, in which he stated that the American people "will hold the perpetrators of these crimes to strict accountability in a day of reckoning, which will surely come."[28] British Prime Minister Winston Churchill also sent a message saying that "the Jews were Hitler's first victims."[29] In November 1942, the State Department officially confirmed the reports that Nazi Germany was carrying out a policy of extermination of the Jews and authorised Jewish organisations to make the news public.[30] On 17 December 1942, Britain, the United States, the Soviet Union and the governments-in-exile of eight occupied countries issued a joint statement, the Allied War Crimes Declaration, condemning the Nazi extermination of Jews and pledging to bring the perpetrators to justice.[31]

However, aside from these statements, the Western Allied governments were reluctant to make stronger statements or take stronger measures against Nazi Germany. Both the United States and Britain were reluctant to accept Jews. This reluctance to accept Jewish immigration to Palestine was also reflected in a 1943 memorandum from the British Ambassador to the State Department in Washington: "There is a possibility that the Germans or their satellites may change over from the policy of extermination to one of extrusion and aim as they did before the war at embarrassing other countries by flooding them with alien immigrants."[32] Richard Breitman writes that "on both sides of the

Atlantic, some civil servants in the respective Foreign Ministries failed."[33] Breitman states that no action on the part of the Allies "could have stopped the Holocaust," however, the British and American Foreign Ministries had apparently decided to behave as though the Allied Declaration of 17 December 1942 did not mean anything.[34] Worse still, it was as though this declaration had somehow been a mistake; that "one had to correct it."[35]

This embarrassment and reluctance to accept Jewish refugees on the part of the United States and Britain was attacked by Hitler in a speech in 1939:

> I would like to say the following on the Jewish question: it is truly a shaming display when we see today the entire democratic world filled with tears of pity at the plight of the poor, tortured Jewish people, while remaining hardheaded and obstinate in view of what is therefore its obvious duty to help.[36]

Hitler also challenged the Western democracies to "explain why they [were] suddenly taking refuge with all sorts of pretences just in order to deny asylum to these people."[37]

Such reluctance to sternly protest Nazi atrocities could be and indeed was construed as a tacit approval of such policies. In December 1942, Joseph Goebbels wrote in his diary in response to the Western protests against Nazi atrocities:

> *Die Frage der Judenverfolgungen in Europa wird von den Engländern und Amerikanern bevorzugt und in größtem Stil behandelt. Allerdings geschieht das hin und wieder nicht mit der Tonstärke, die man eigentlich erwartet hätte. Im Grunde genommen sind, glaube ich, sowohl die Engländer wie die Amerikaner froh darüber, daß wir mit dem Judengesindel aufräumen.*[38]

In mid-1942, General Sikorski, the leader of the Polish government-in-exile, urged President Roosevelt to retaliate against Germany for her crimes by bombing German cities.[39] Roosevelt declined, stating that the Allies had not yet attained full air strength

and that Germany might respond with "an even higher level of terror."[40] In this case, Roosevelt's explanation, insofar as it was a military one, was entirely reasonable. In the summer of 1942, the tide had not turned against the German Army and the United States had yet to land in North Africa. Rather than diverting limited military resources to engage in rescue operations, it can be argued that the better policy would have been to engage the German Army and defeat it as soon as possible.

Early in 1943, the State Department suppressed information regarding the murder of Jews in Europe. On 21 January 1943, a cable (482) was received from the US Minister Leland Harrison in Bern, outlining "mass executions of Jews in Poland" and stating that "urgent assistance was needed."[41] The information was to be given to Rabbi Stephen Wise, if Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles so determined.[42] Welles then forwarded this information to Jewish organisations, instructing them to make it public.[43] The response to this cable, Cable 354, of 10 February 1943, was written by State Department officials and read as follows:

> Your 482, January 21
> In the future we would suggest that you do not accept reports submitted to you to be transmitted to private persons in the United States unless such action is advisable because of extraordinary circumstances. Such private messages circumvent neutral countries' censorship and it is felt that by sending them we risk the possibility that steps would necessarily be taken by the neutral countries to curtail or forbid our means of communication for confidential official matter[s].[44]

This cable made no mention of the content of the first one, information on the killing of Jews, and therefore its request to avoid the transmission of such reports "to private persons" does not seem out of the ordinary. This shows an attempt by "certain State Department officials" (their names are not mentioned) to stop the US government from

receiving further information about Nazi crimes from the source of the previous information. Overall, no positive steps "reasonably calculated" to save any Jews were taken until the creation of the War Refugee Board in January 1944.[45] Moreover, Assistant Secretary of State Breckinridge Long, the person in charge of refugee policy, actually reduced immigration quotas and made the immigration application process for Jewish refugees slower.[46] His argument for making the process slower, when the Jews of Europe had no time to wait, was that these refugees coming from Nazi-occupied Europe would pose a threat to American security."[47] On this restriction of immigration, an American official commented: "If anyone were to attempt to work out a set of restrictions specifically designed to prevent Jewish refugees from entering this country it is difficult to conceive of how more effective restrictions could have been imposed than have already been imposed on grounds of 'security'."[48]

The Bermuda Conference of April 1943 was called in order for Britain and the United States "to explore the whole refugee problem."[49] Yet the American Secretary of State, Breckinridge Long, sent delegates that could only be regarded as the "second team"—without exception, these politicians had no experience in the area of refugees.[50] Randolph E. Paul, the general counsel to the Treasury Department, accused the State Department of calling this conference only to "make it appear that positive action could be expected."[51] This seemed to be the case, as Democratic Senator William Langer (North Dakota) stated in an address to the Senate on 6 October 1943:

> As yet we have had no report from the Bermuda Refugee Conference. With the best good will in the world and with all altitude that could and should be accorded to diplomatic negotiations in time of war, I may be permitted to voice the bitter suspicion that the absence of a report indicates only one thing–the lack of action.[52]

Langer continued by declaring that "[w]e should remember the Jewish slaughterhouse of Europe and ask what is being done--and I emphasise the word 'done'--to get some of these suffering human beings out of the slaughter."[53] Yet the months passed, and still nothing was done. On 20 December 1943, Democratic Representative Emmanuel Cellar of New York asserted that "the benefits to be derived from the Bermuda Conference like those of the previous Evian Conference [of July 1938] can fit into a tiny capsule."[54] As time passed, and the Western Allies continued to do nothing, the extermination camps were working at 'full capacity'.

By January 1944, pressure from the Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, Jr. and the desire to avoid political problems in an election year spurred President Roosevelt to create the War Refugee Board.[55] The pressure came from a Treasury Department report entitled: "Report to the Secretary on the Acquiesence of this Government in the Murder of the Jews"[56] and the WRB was created on 22 January 1944, with John Pehle as its first executive director.[57] Pehle established programs and policies, which saved and protected thousands of European Jews from Nazi extermination.[58] Pehle was replaced as director of the WRB by Brigadier-General William O'Dwyer in January 1945, and the War Refugee Board was in operation until 14 September 1945.[59]

This effort in early 1944 was, arguably, at least two years too late. Similarly the British government were also reluctant to take action to save Jews. The British White Paper of 17 May 1939 allowed for the admission, "from the beginning of April this year [1939], of some 75,000 [Jewish] immigrants to Palestine over the next five years."[60] In addition, this policy paper allowed for the further admission, over the following five-year period, that "a quota of 10,000 Jewish immigrants will be allowed, on the understanding

that a shortage in any one year [from 1939 onward] may be added to the quotas for subsequent years."[61] However, after millions of Jews had already been exterminated by Nazi Germany, "in October 1944 registered Jewish immigration to Palestine was still 14,000 short of the total set in the White Paper."[62] Although it was a time of war, this shortage of the quota reflected more of a reluctance to accept Jews than a shortage of ships to transport them. As an official in London remarked, if the German government was pressured to let Jews out of Europe, they just might do so and "unload an even greater number of Jews on our hands."[63]

The Vatican had success in helping and rescuing Jews on the periphery of the Nazi empire. However, the greatest problem faced by those who wanted to help Jews escape was that there was nowhere for Jews to escape to. Both Britain and the United States were reluctant to let Jewish refugees in, at a time when Jews were desperate to escape Nazi extermination. On the part of the United States, David Wyman attributes this reluctance to anti-Semitism, both within American society and on Capitol Hill.[64] In Britain, the pressure was political, as the potential release of thousands of Jews from Europe would upset the balance that Britain was trying desperately to hold on to between Arabs and Jews in Palestine. Once the war began, and particularly after the early and rapid German military successes, millions more Jews came under German control. More and more Jews had nowhere to go and their fate was sealed.

This is not to blame the Americans and the British as being responsible for the deaths of Jews at the hands of the German forces. The critique of the Allied governments must be balanced by considering the diversion of Allied resources and war materiel from the bloody struggle with German forces in order to either rescue Jews or to sabotage Nazi

killing operations. Until the German defeats at Stalingrad, in February 1943,[65] and in North Africa, in May 1943,[66] the outcome of the war was by no means clear. Moreover, the Western Allies did not yet have a foothold on the Continent. It can be argued in this context, that the best way to stop Nazi crimes was to defeat Germany and to use all available resources in order to achieve this goal as quickly as possible.

While the Allies cannot be held responsible for the killing of Jews at the hands of the Germans and their allies, the Americans and British *can* be held responsible for not doing everything in their power to save Jews. And Jews could have been saved. Although there were not yet any Nazi mass-killing operations in progress before the war, it was clear after *Kristallnacht* in 1938 that Nazi persecution of Jews was increasing, both in magnitude and intensity. Jews wished to emigrate from German-controlled territory before the war, but they simply had nowhere to go. Saving Jews was a question of the opening of frontiers to Jewish refugees and perhaps the providing of a few ships. This was not done.

[1]P. Hoffmann, "Roncalli in the Second World War: Peace Initiatives, the Greek Famine and the Persecution of the Jews," in Journal of Ecclesiastical History, Vol. 40, No. 1 (January 1989), p. 82. Roncalli was apostolic delegate in Turkey and Greece and archbishop of Meesambria from January 1935 to December 1944 (Ibid., p. 74).
[2]C. Falconi, The Silence of Pius XII, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1970), p. 97.
[3]Ibid., pp. 92-93.
[4]S. Friedländer, Pius XII and the Third Reich: A Documentation, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), p. 237.
[5] Lapide, Three Popes, pp. 265-66.
[6]Friedländer, Pius XII, pp. 164-66.
[7]Ibid., pp. 168-69.
[8] P.E. Lapide, Rom und die Juden, (Herder Druck, Freiburg im Bresigau 1967), S. 230.
[9] Ibid., S. 231.
[10]Hoffmann, "Roncalli," p. 84-85.
[11]Ibid., pp. 86-90.
[12]Ibid., p. 90, fn 103.
[13]Ibid., p. 83, fn 64.
[14]Ibid., p. 82.
[15]Ibid., p. 83.
[16]Actes et documents du Saint Siège relatifs à la seconde guerre mondiale, ix, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1975, p. 89.
[17]Actes et documents, ix, p. 90.
[18]Ibid.
[19]Ibid.
[20] R. Breitman, Staatsgeheimnisse: Die Verbrechen der Nazis—von den Allierten toleriert, (Karl Blessing Verlag, München 1999), S. 166.
[21]D.S. Wyman, Abandonment of the Jews, p. 21.
[22]Ibid.
[23]Ibid., p. 22.
[24]Ibid., pp. 20-22.
[25]Ibid., pp. 40-41.
[26]Ibid., p. 24.
[27]Ibid.
[28]Ibid.
[29]Ibid.
[30]Mashberg, "Documents Concerning the American State Department and the Stateless European Jews, 1942-1944," in Jewish Social Studies, 39 (1977), p. 165.
[31]Ibid.
[32]Foreign Relations of the United States, 1943 I, p. 134, cited in Actes et documents, ix, p. 90, p. 89, fn 9.
[33] Breitman, Staatsgeheimnisse, S. 314.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.
[36]M. Domarus, Hitler: Speeches and Proclamations 1932-1945, vol. 3, (Wauconda: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, Inc., 1997), p. 1447.
[37]Ibid., p. 1449.
[38]Fröhlich, Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels. Teil II: Diktate 1941-1945, Band 6: Oktober-Dezember 1942, S. 438.
[39]Wyman, Abandonment of the Jews, p. 29.
[40]Ibid.
[41]Mashberg, "Documents," p. 177.
[42]Ibid.
[43]Ibid.
[44]Ibid.
[45]Ibid., pp. 165, 174.
[46]Ibid., p. 167.

[47]Ibid.
[48]Ibid., pp. 167-68.
[49] Ibid., p. 166.
[50] Breitman, Staatsgeheimnisse, S. 250.
[51] Mashberg, "Documents," pp. 164, 166.
[52]Ibid., p. 166.
[53]Ibid.
[54]Ibid., p. 167.
[55]Ibid., p. 179. Roosevelt was reelected in November 1944 (Kinder and Hilgemann, Atlas of World History, p. 219).
[56]Mashberg, "Documents," pp. 164-74.
[57]Ibid., p. 179.
[58]Ibid.
[59]Ibid.
[60]"Palestine: Statement of Policy," Accounts and Papers, (12.), State Paper, Session 8 November 1938 - 23 November 1939, Volume XXVII, (London: HMSO, 1939), p. 606.
[61]Ibid., p. 607.
[62]Hoffmann, "Roncalli," p. 84, fn 64.
[63]B. Wasserstein, Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-1945, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 252.
[64]Wyman, Abandonment of the Jews, pp. 9-14.
[65]The remnants of the Sixth Army, 90,000 soldiers, under Field Marshal von Paulus surrendered to the Soviet army by 2 February 1943. (W. Langer, An Encyclopedia of World History, 5th Ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1972, p. 1143.)
[66]The remainder of the German and Italian forces in North Africa, including the *Afrika Korps* under Field Marshal Rommel, was defeated in Tunisia by Anglo-American forces. The final collapse occurred on 7 May 1943; approximately 150,000 German and Italian troops surrendered to Allied forces (Taylor and Shaw, Dictionary of the Third Reich, p. 319). Rommel escaped capture, as he had been recalled from North Africa. He left Tunisia for Rome on 9 March 1943 (B. Liddell-Hart, ed., The Rommel Papers, New York: Da Capo Press, 1988, pp. 418, 422; G.L. Weinberg, A World at Arms: A Global History of World War II. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 596.)

CONCLUSION

It is said that time heals all wounds. However, time also distorts the memory and perspective of past events. This distortion that accompanies the passing of time is dangerous, especially in the context of the discussion surrounding the Holocaust. The Holocaust cannot, of course, be described as merely a wound; rather, it was the most horrifying example of organised and planned mass-murder the world has ever seen. The danger here lies in the fact that distorted memory, misinformation and ignorance of the history of this period makes it easier for individuals to deny that the Holocaust occurred, or to attempt to trivialise it. Some people brand all Germans as Nazis, all willing and eager murderers. Extreme views provide a simple way of viewing this catastrophe--they provide a simple solution to a very complex problem. The Holocaust was a complex series of events that does not allow for such a simple explanation.

The most constructive manner to deal with this distortion of past events is to promote open discussion of the Holocaust, with all of the available facts. The Holocaust forms the background of any view of the Second World War in Europe, and especially of Germany during this time period, and it is incredibly difficult and perhaps impossible to have a frank discussion about this period without invariably offending one group or another. This background makes it difficult for some to separate the individuals within German resistance to Hitler from other Germans; from devout Nazi supporters, from murderers, from those who simply did nothing. The monolithic view of all Germans as "bad" or "evil" was a problem that hindered the German Resistance almost sixty years

ago, as it tried to establish contact with and obtain assistance from the Allied governments in its effort to bring down Hitler's regime.

The nature of resistance in Germany was quite different from that of other, occupied nations of Europe. If a German resisted the Nazi regime, he was committing treason. In France, Holland, Russia, for example, resistance was patriotic. In these lands resistance was a heroic effort to rid the country of foreign invaders. As there was a great number of Germans that supported the Nazi regime, resistance within Germany was made even more difficult and dangerous. Millions of Germans supported the Nazi regime. There were many Germans involved in the perpetration of the Holocaust, directly or indirectly. It is also true that many Germans, perhaps too many, turned inward and did not risk action against the regime that would place them, or their family, in serious danger. This is especially true when they were not directly affected by this persecution. However one cannot extrapolate from these statements that all Germans knew about and supported Nazi plans for the *extermination* of European Jewry. Moreover, Goldhagen's charges that the German Resistance "fundamentally shared the regime's concept of the Jews" and that there was a "glaring absence of significant protest or privately expressed dissent, especially principled dissent" are not supported by the evidence found in this paper.

In the case of the students of the White Rose and of some courageous senior officers like Blaskowitz and Gersdorff, who protested against atrocities committed by German forces in Eastern Europe, they seemed to be attempting to inspire others to follow their example. As Moltke stated, "as soon as one man takes a stand, a surprising number of others will stand, too. But there always has to be one to go first; otherwise it does not work."[1] Both Blaskowitz and Gersdorff protested against SS killings because they were

unlawful, immoral and befouled the honour of the German Army and officer corps. These officers protested clearly, openly and in plain language in a manner, which would force their fellow officers to notice.

Their protests could have served as a rallying point or a common cause for other German officers. However, too many of them chose to ignore these protests. The top officers, like Brauchitsch and Halder (and the list could continue), chose to immerse themselves in their "duty" and failed to see their duties as professionals, Germans and at the very heart of it all—as *human beings*. To remain at one's post and simply do nothing about the killings is in a sense, an acceptance and approval of them. These military men were in a position of power—especially in comparison to the average German citizen. Yet they still did not act.

In his diary, Hassell referred to the persecution of the Jews forty-three times. Hassell viewed Hitler's regime as a "criminal political system" and felt that Nazi crimes, in particular the mass murder of Jews, "enormously besmirched the historical honour of the German nation."[2] Such "privately expressed" and "principled" dissent is to be found often in his diary—his shame at the murders committed in the name of Germany motivated him to risk and eventually sacrifice his life in the cause of getting rid of the leading mass murderer: Hitler himself.

Similarly, Moltke was also appalled at Nazi crimes and the ruthlessness and criminality of Hitler's regime, although it is clear from his letters that he did not truly perceive the magnitude of the crimes that the regime had committed. Moltke worked to help Jews where possible and also attempted to warn the Allies of the situation faced by

Jews in German-occupied Europe and to inform them of the work of the Resistance. His efforts would also cost him his life.

Goerdeler took grave risks to warn the British government of Hitler's intent to wage war against Europe before the war started. He also attempted to give a clear picture of the persecution of Jews in Germany and tried to persuade the British government to put diplomatic pressure on Germany in an effort to reduce it. If arrested, Goerdeler would have faced either several years in prison or likely the death penalty. Goerdeler's warnings went unheeded by the British government. Goerdeler attempted to work against Nazi persecution of Jews, both as *Bürgermeister* of Leipzig and as a leader of the Resistance. Goerdeler was also among those executed for listening to their conscience and taking action for the good of their country.

Compared to the tremendous suffering and the enormous number of Jewish and other victims of the Holocaust, the sacrifice of the German Resistance to Hitler is small. However, the efforts and above all the sacrifice of the German Resistance shows that not all Germans were "evil Nazis", that many were decent, courageous and principled, and were prepared to give their lives for their convictions. This is part of the everlasting significance of the resistance.

This study also raises questions. Many Germans acquiesced to Nazi intimidation in the face of ghastly crimes committed in their name. The reactions to *Kristallnacht* show shame and revulsion, but also at times indifference to the plight of the Jews. Prelate Lichtenberg of Berlin "prayed for the Jews" and spoke out against their persecution, but few others spoke out so loudly in 1938. *Kristallnacht* was not just a violent and rowdy outburst but a symptom of the increasing persecution of Jews in German society.

Unfortunately, few recognised or understood this in Germany at the time. Why did Germans react this way, or not act at all?

One must pose the question: "What would I have done in this situation?" For one living in a Western democracy, it is probably impossible to understand fully the nature of the Nazi regime. The repressive nature of National-Socialist Germany made resisting the regime very difficult and dangerous. After the series of decrees and laws in March 1933, which included the "Insidiousness Decree", it became a criminal offence to make critical or unflattering remarks about the regime. One must remember that Germans also did not have the freedom of association in order to organise and effectively protest against the Nazi regime. As stated above, one could be arrested in this totalitarian state for much less than participating in a public protest. Criticism of the government had become a criminal act. There were no basic freedoms in this society. One could be arrested in the middle of the night, dragged from one's home and be held indefinitely without warning and without legal recourse. Nazi 'Special Courts' could pass judgements and mete out severe punishments, even in cases that were out of their jurisdiction. Those convicted by such courts faced penalties ranging from jail terms to the death penalty. Lastly, once convicted, there was no possibility of appeal.

The *Gestapo* ruthlessly policed German society and searched out cells of resistance or non-conformity within it. This secret police force was composed of a modest number of agents and derived its information from informants and a seemingly steady stream of denunciations from the German population. Even the most innocuous comments, once overheard and related to the local *Gestapo* office, could earn one a visit from *Gestapo* agents. Such comments could likely be punished with a lengthy prison sentence or a

"stay" in a concentration camp. A Nazi prison sentence could likely result in the death of the inmate; people within Germany knew this, and attempted to avoid receiving any attention from the *Gestapo* whatsoever.

The courageous efforts of the students of the White Rose movement showed that resistance was possible, but that starting a widespread resistance movement in such a society was much more difficult. These students and intellectuals went to great effort to print and mail illegal leaflets that exposed and condemned Nazi mass murder and called for Germans to listen to their conscience and to join in the movement to subvert Hitler's criminal government. Why did other Germans not follow their example?

The strength of character required to resist authority, especially the Nazi authority, is possessed by very few. Those who did resist, especially those discussed in this paper, were not "typical" or "ordinary" human beings. Their courage to act found its source in their family background, their military or professional training and often, in their Christian faith.

The efforts of the Vatican and its representatives also deserve to be recognised. As stated, once the war began, it became incredibly difficult to get Jews out of Europe and away from certain death at the hands of the SS and other tools of Nazi extermination. The Holy See and, in particular, Angelo Roncalli had some success in slowing down deportations and actually saving Jews with false baptismal certificates on the periphery of the Nazi empire of extermination. It can be argued that many more Jews could have been saved if the Western Allies had opened their doors to Jewish immigration. The doors remained closed and the British and American governments remained largely inactive. This point is important to keep in mind, especially when one looks back and judges the

inaction of Germans. Before the war, it was clear that Jewish persecution was rising. Jews wished to emigrate, but they that they had nowhere to go. That would have been the time to get them out. Yet during the conflict, if ships had been made available and more important, if the Jews had had somewhere to go, many of them could have been spared their ghastly fate at the hands of the Nazis. Nearly six million Jews were exterminated by Nazi Germany. Between 1 January 1933 and 30 June 1942, the total number of Jewish immigrants entering the United States was 162,138.[3]

Today, sadly, we are still faced with ethnic cleansing and mass murder in various parts of the world. Looking back, the events of the Holocaust are not easy to comprehend. For those who lived and learned about these crimes as they occurred, they must have been at least as difficult, if not more difficult, to comprehend. The experience of the Holocaust has not allowed humanity to avoid mass murder today. The inhumanity of "systematic, 'racially' motivated extermination"[4] has been and still is being practised in the world today, albeit without the careful planning and technological applications that gave the Nazi murder of European Jews "a special quality."[5] While the study of Nazi genocide may not enable to eliminate atrocities and mass murder from our society in the near future, it is still important to understand why these events happened and to try to come to terms with these horrible events. One cannot hold this generation, or the next one, accountable for crimes committed by their grandfathers. Yet this generation and the next ones have the responsibility to keep the memory and the discussion of these terrible crimes alive, in order that they are never forgotten.

[1]Moltke, Letters, p. 180.
[2]Ibid., S. 299.
[3] Mashberg, "Documents," p. 174.
[4]Hoffmann, German Resistance, p. 131.
[5]Ibid.

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