X / Reflections

1 / The Perpetrators

The Germans killed five million Jews. A process of such magnitude does not come from the void; to be brought to a conclusion in such dimensions an administrative undertaking must have meaning to its perpetrators. To Adolf Hitler and his followers the destruction of the Jews had meaning. To these men, the act was worthwhile in itself. It could not be questioned. It had to be done. When half of Europe lay conquered at Germany’s feet, the uniqueness of the opportunity became compelling. The chance could not be missed. At that moment the German bureaucrat beckoned to his Faustian fate. The scope of human experience was to be widened as never before. Inevitably, at this point the German machine of destruction had to attempt the ultimate, for when a generation seeks to accomplish more than its scientific and artistic heritage has equipped it for, its path to fulfillment lies only in destruction. The process of creation is tedious and long; destruction alone is both swift and lasting.

Let us point out at once that the Germans have not been the only ones in history who have had a reason to embark upon a destructive course of action. When we examine the world historical scene, we may note that many times, in many countries, bureaucracies have launched the opening phases of a destruction process. Even now, in the Union of South Africa and elsewhere specialists are selecting, exploiting, and concentrating new victims. Very often, seemingly harmless bureaucratic activities—such as the definition of a particular group and the exclusion of its members from office—contain the seeds of administrative continuity. Potentially, these measures are steppingstones to a killing operation, but as a rule insurmountable barriers from without and within arrest and disrupt the destructive development. Externally, the opposition of the victims may bring the process to a halt; internally, administrative and psychological obstacles may bar the way. The discriminatory systems of many countries are the leftovers of such disrupted destruction processes.

The German destruction of the Jews was not interrupted. That is its crucial, decisive characteristic. At the threshold of the killing phase the flow of administrative measures continued unchecked. Technocratic and moral obstacles were overcome. An unprecedented killing operation was inaugurated, and with the beginning of this operation the Germans demonstrated once and for all how quickly even large groups, numbering in the millions, could be annihilated.

How was this done?

The Destructive Expansion

The German destructive effort may be likened to a three-dimensional structure which was expanding in all three directions. In one direction we can see an alignment of agency after agency in a machinery of destruction. In another direction we note the development, step by step, of the destruction process. In the third we can observe an attempt to set up multiple processes aimed at new victims and pointing to a destruction, group by group, of all human beings within the German reach.

Let us examine first the horizontal expansion at the base: the growth of
the machinery of destruction. We know that as the process unfolded, its requirements became more complex and its fulfilment involved an ever larger number of agencies, party offices, business enterprises, and military commands. The destruction of the Jews was a total process, comparable in its diversity to a modern war, a mobilization, or a national reconstruction.

An administrative process of such range cannot be carried out by a single agency, even if it is a trained and specialized body like the Gestapo or a commissariat for Jewish affairs, for when a process cuts into every phase of human life, it must ultimately feed upon the resources of the entire organized community. That is why we found among the perpetrators the highly differentiated technicians of the armament inspectorates, the remote officials of the Postal Ministry, and — in the all-important operation of furnishing records for determination of descent — the membership of an aloof and withdrawn Christian clergy. The machinery of destruction, then, was structurally no different from organized German society as a whole; the difference was only one of function. The machinery of destruction was the organized community in one of its special roles.

As the apparatus expanded, its potential increased — the wider the base, the farther the reach. When the machine was finished, so was the process. But now we may ask: What determined the order of involvement? What determined the sequence of steps? We know that the bureaucracy had no master plan, no basic blueprint, no clear-cut view even of its actions. How, then, was the process regulated? What was the key to the operation?

A destruction process has an inherent pattern. There is only one way in which a scattered group can effectively be destroyed. Three steps are organic in the operation:

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<th>Definition</th>
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<td>Concentration (or seizure)</td>
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<td>Annihilation</td>
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This is the invariant structure of the basic process, for no group can be killed without a concentration or seizure of the victims, and no victims can be segregated before the perpetrator knows who belongs to the group.

There are, of course, additional steps in a modern destructive undertaking. These added steps are not required for the annihilation of the victim, but they are dictated by considerations of cost and economy. These are expropriations. In the destruction of the Jews expropriatory measures were introduced after every organic step. Thus dismissals and Aryanizations came after the definition; exploitation and starvation measures followed concentration; and the confiscation of personal belongings was incidental to the killing operation. In its completed form a destruction process in a modern society will consequently be structured as shown in the accompanying chart.

The sequence of steps in a destruction process is thus determined. If there is an attempt to inflict maximum injury upon a group of people, it is therefore inevitable that a bureaucracy — no matter how decentralized its apparatus or how unplanned its activities — should push its victims through these stages.

This is a twofold destructive expansion: the growth of the machine of destruction and the development of the destruction process. Today we know of a destructive expansion upon still another plane: as the machine was thrown into high gear and as the process accelerated toward its goal, German hostility became more generalized. The Jewish target became too narrow. More
targets had to be added. This development is of the utmost importance, for it casts a revealing light upon the perpetrators’ fundamental aim.

If a group seeks merely the destruction of hostile institutions, the limit of 34,000 to 40,000 Gypsies in the Reich. In accordance with a Himmler directive the Criminal Police were empowered to seize all persons who looked like Gypsies or who wandered around in “Gypsy-like” manner. Those who

**Definition**

**Dismissals of employees and expropriations of business firms**

**Concentration**

**Exploitation of labor and starvation measures**

**Annihilation**

**Confiscation of personal effects**

its most drastic action would be drawn with the complete destruction of the bearers of the institutions. The Germans, however, did not draw the line with the destruction of Jewry. They attacked still other victims, some of whom were thought to be like Jews, some of whom were quite unlike Jews, and some of whom were Germans. The Nazi destruction process was, in short, not aimed at institutions; it was aimed at people. The Jews were only the first victims of the German bureaucracy; they were only the first caught in its path. That they should have been chosen first is not accidental — historical precedents, both administrative and conceptual, determined the selection of the people which for centuries had been the standby victim of recurring destructions. No other group could fill this role so well. None was so vulnerable. But the choice could not be confined to the Jews. Three illustrations will make this more clear.

**Example 1.** The destruction process engulfed a group which was classified as a parasitical people leading a parasitical life: the Gypsies. There were were seized were classified as follows:

- **Z** Full Gypsy (Zigeuner)
- **ZM+** Gypsy Mischling, predominantly Gypsy
- **ZM** Gypsy Mischling with equal Gypsy and German “blood-shares” (Blutsanteile)
- **ZM−** Gypsy Mischling, predominantly German
- **NZ** Free of Gypsy blood (Nicht Zigeuner)

1. In the past the Gypsies had been linked to the Jews in popular belief as well as scholarly investigation. A seventeenth-century German writer, Johann Christof Wagenseil, wrote a thesis to prove that “the very first Gypsies were Jews who stemmed from Germany [die allerersten Zigeuner sind aus Deutschland gebürtige Juden gewesen],” Wagenseil, Der Meister-Singer Holdssilgen Kunst (in the introduction), printed 1697. The Nazis were not so sure of the Gypsy origins; however, it was thought that there was some racial affinity to the Jews. Two agencies were engaged in research on the subject: the Reichszentrale zur Bekämpfung des Zigeunerwesens and Rassenhygienische Forschungstelle of the Reichsgesundheitsamt. H. Küppers, “Die Beschäftigung von Zigeunern,” Reichsarbeitsblatt, V (March 25, 1942), 177, reprinted in Die Judenfrage (Vertrauliche Beilage), April 15, 1942, pp. 30–31.
The victims in the first three categories were subjected to special wage regulations, taxes, and movement restrictions. Special provisions were made for "privileged Gypsy mixed marriages," etc. In the 1940's the Germans went one step further: mobile units of the Security Police in Russia killed roving Gypsies; the military commander in Serbia concentrated Gypsies and shot them; and in Auschwitz several thousand Gypsies were gassed.

Example II. The Poles in the territories incorporated by the Reich were in a rather precarious position. It had been planned to shave them into the Generalgouvernement, while the incorporated provinces to the west were to have become purely German. But that program, like the forced emigration of the Jews from Europe, collapsed. In the back of some people's minds a "territorial solution" now loomed for these Poles. On May 27, 1941, an interministerial conference took place under the chairmanship of Staatssekretär Conti of the Interior Ministry. The subject of discussion was the reduction of the Polish population in the incorporated territories. The following proposals were entertained: (1) no Pole to be allowed to marry before the age of twenty-five; (2) no permission to marry to be granted unless the marriage was economically sound; (3) a tax on illegitimate births; (4) sterilization following illegitimate birth; (5) no tax exemptions for dependants; and (6) permission to submit to abortion to be granted upon application of the expectant mother.

One year later, on May 1, 1942, Gauleiter Greiser of the incorporated Wartheland reported to Himmler that the "special treatment" of 100,000 Jews in his Gau would be completed in another two or three months. Greiser then proceeded in the same paragraph to request Himmler's permission for the use of the experienced (eingearbeiteten) Sonderkommando at Kulmhof in order to liberate the Gau from still another danger which threatened "with each passing week to assume catastrophic proportions." Greiser had in his province 35,000 tubercular Poles. He wanted to kill them. The suggestion was passed on to health expert Blome (Conti's deputy) who wanted to refer the matter to Hitler. Months passed without a decision. Finally Greiser expressed his disappointment to Himmler. "I for my person do not believe that the Führer has to be bothered with this question again, especially since he told me only during our last conversation, with reference to the Jews, that I may deal with those in any way I please." 

Example III. In consequence of an agreement between Himmler and Justice Minister Thierack, so-called asocials were transferred from prisons to concentration camps. On November 16, 1941, Reich Chancellery memorandum, May 27, 1941, NG-844.

8. Greiser to Himmler, November 21, 1942, NO-249. The Poles were ultimately spared.
1944, after the transfer of the "asocials" had largely been completed, the judiciary met to discuss a weird subject: ugliness. The phrase on the agenda was "gallery of outwardly asocial prisoners [Museum äusserlich asozialer Gefangener]." The summary of that conference states:

During various visits to the penal institutions, prisoners have always been observed who—because of their bodily characteristics—hardly deserve the designation human [Mensch]; they look like miscarriages of hell [Missgeburten der Hölle]. Such prisoners should be photographed. It is planned that they too shall be eliminated [auszuschalten]. Crime and sentence are irrelevant. Only such photographs should be submitted which clearly show the deformity.  

The Obstacles

We have talked so far about a destructive expansion which is unparalleled in history. An entire bureaucratic network was involved in these operations; a destruction process was brought to its final conclusion; and a veritable target series was established in a first attempt at unlimited destruction. The German bureaucracy, however, did not always move with unencumbered ease. From time to time barriers appeared on the horizon and caused momentary pauses. Most of these stoppages were occasioned by those ordinary difficulties which are encountered by every bureaucracy in every administrative operation: procurement difficulties, shortages, mixups, misunderstandings, and all the other annoyances of the daily bureaucratic process. We shall not be concerned with these occurrences here. But some of the hesitations and interruptions were the products of extraordinary administrative and psychological obstacles. These blocks were peculiar to the destruction process alone, and they must therefore claim our special attention.

Administrative Problems. — The destruction of the Jews was not a gainful operation. It imposed a strain upon the administrative machine and its facilities. In a wider sense it became a burden which rested upon Germany as a whole.

One of the most striking facts about the German apparatus was the sparseness of its personnel, particularly in those regions outside the Reich where most of the victims had to be destroyed. Moreover, that limited manpower was preoccupied with a bewildering variety of administrative undertakings; upon close examination the machinery of destruction turns out to have been a loose organization of part-timers. There were at most a handful of bureaucrats who could devote all their time to anti-Jewish activities. There were the "experts" on Jewish affairs in the ministries, the mobile killing units of the RSHA, the commanders of the killing centers. But even an expert like Eichmann had two jobs: the deportation of Jews and the resettlement of ethnic Germans; the mobile killing units had to shoot Jews, Gypsies, commissars, and partisans alike; while a camp commander like Höss was host to an industrial concentration next to his gas chambers.

In the totality of the administrative process the destruction of the Jews presented itself as an additional task to a bureaucratic machine already overburdened and strained to the utmost by war preparations and by war itself. To grasp this fact, we need think only of the railroads or of the armies which moved east into Russia. The German...

9. Generalstaatsanwalt (chief prosecutor), Oberlandesgericht Bamberg, to Generalstaatsanwalt Helm in Munich, November 29, 1944, enclosing summary of conference held under the chairmanship of Ministerialdirektor Engert on November 16, 1944, NG-1540.

10. "In the Reich only the most vital transports are run," Präsident Emmrich in traffic conference held on December...
administration, however, was not deterred by the pressures of other assignments; it never resorted to pretenses, like the Italians, it never took token measures, like the Hungarians, it never procrastinated, like the Bulgarians. The German bureaucrats worked efficiently, in haste, and with a sense of urgency. Unlike their collaborators, the Germans never did the minimum. They always did the maximum.

Indeed, there were moments when an agency’s eagerness to participate in the decision-making led to bureaucratic competition and rivalry. Such a contest was in the offing when Unterstaatssekretär Luther concluded an agreement with the BSHA to preserve the Foreign Office’s power to negotiate with Axis satellites in Jewish matters. Again, within the SS itself, a jealous struggle was waged between two technocrats of destruction, Obersturmbannführer Höss and Kriminalkommissar Wirth, over the replacement of carbon monoxide with Zyklon B in the killing centers. We have observed this bureaucratic warfare also in the attempt of the judiciary to conserve its jurisdiction in Jewish affairs. When that attempt was finally given up, Justice Minister Thie rack wrote to his friend Bormann:

I intend to turn over criminal jurisdiction against Poles, Russians, Jews, and Gypsies to the Reichsführer-SS. In doing so, I base myself on the principle that the administration of justice can make only a small contribution to the extermination of these peoples.

This letter reveals an almost melancholy tone. The judiciary had done its utmost; it was no longer needed.

The bureaucrats did not spare themselves; neither could they spare the economy. Just how expensive was the destruction of the Jews? What were the effects of this cost? Table 88 reveals the financial aspects of the operations.

Upon analysis of Table 88, we observe two important trends: with the progress of the destruction process, gains declined; on the other hand, expenditures tended to increase. Looking at the table horizontally, we thereupon discover that in the preliminary phase (above the dividing line) financial gains, public or private, far outweighed expenses, but that in the killing phase (below the dividing line) receipts no longer balanced losses. Let us examine the cost of this killing phase a little more closely.

Receipts (last three items in the left column) were meager. This is explained by the fact that in occupied and satellite territories the Germans did not engage in extensive confiscations. In the interest of a “final solution” in these areas the German perpetrators had to leave most of the Jewish property to their non-German collaborators.

Losses, however, were high. How do we explain those figures? Direct expenditures (here estimated in the hundreds of millions) were comparatively small. They represent a remarkable attempt at economizing. We have seen how sparingly personnel were used, both in the killing units and in the killing centers. The deportation trains (Sonderzüge) were made up of freight cars, and several thousand Jews could be transported in one train. The killing centers were extraordinarily cheap, notwithstanding Speer’s complaint that

9, 1942, in Paris; summary, dated December 12, 1942, in Wi/T 2.10. As for the military in Russia, see chapter on mobile killing operations, passim.
11. See pp. 289–90.

14. Aryanization differentials, Reich property tax, and confiscations under the 11th Ordinance listed in letter from Restaurosalung des ehemaligen Reichsfinanzenministeriums to Allied Control Commission, November 14, 1946, NG-4906. For other statistics, see this book, passim.
15. See p. 354.
Himmler was using scarce building materials too extravagantly. The installations were built with camp labor, and the inmates were housed in huge barracks with no light and no modern toilet facilities. The investment in gas chambers and ovens was not very great, either. Why all this economizing? The answer is simple. In all these cases savings did not reduce efficiency; they might even have promoted the smooth implementation of bureaucratic measures. The destruction process was oriented not to cost but to efficiency. Not money but time was of the essence.

This point is even more sharply illustrated when we examine the next two items. The razing of the Warsaw ghetto ruins after the battle of April-May, 1943, was a Himmler project for which the Finance Ministry received a bill in the amount of 150,000,000 reichsmark. Himmler felt that a park should obliterate the site of the ghetto, lest Warsaw grow back to its former size.

The last item in the expense column—the loss of Jewish war production—is a glaring illustration of the triumph of speed over cost. Himmler never made any pretense that for him the destruction of the Jews had priority even over armaments. When he was overwhelmed with arguments in favor of the war effort, Himmler had only this reply: "The argument of war production, which nowadays in Germany is the favorite reason for opposing anything at all, I do not recognize in the

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**Table 88 / The Cost of Destroying the Jews**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Receipts, Gains, Savings</th>
<th>Expenditures and Losses</th>
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<tr>
<td>Net profits to industry from purchase and liquidations of Jewish enterprises: ca. one-fourth to one-half of value of Jewish business property in Reich-Protektorat area. These profits probably amounted to billions of reichsmark.</td>
<td>Loss of markets abroad in consequence of buyers' resistance and boycott; no estimates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aryanization differentials paid by companies to Reich: 49,000,000 reichsmark.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reich Flight Tax: 900,000,000 reichsmark.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reich Property Tax (fine): 1,127,000,000 reichsmark.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wage differentials and other industry savings as result of employment of Jewish labor: probably in tens of millions.</td>
<td>Direct expenditures for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wage differentials, special income tax, and other wage savings accruing to Reich: probably in tens of millions.</td>
<td>a. personnel and overhead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confiscations under the eleventh ordinance (securities and bonds): 186,000,000 reichsmark.</td>
<td>(prior to killing phase)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confiscations under the eleventh ordinance and other measures (not including securities and bonds): 592,000,000 reichsmark.</td>
<td>b. personnel and overhead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous confiscations not booked by Finance Ministry in above figures: possibly hundreds of millions.</td>
<td>(in killing operations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraordinary direct expense for razing of Warsaw ghetto: 150,000,000 reichsmark.</td>
<td>a. Transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of Jewish production in consequence of the &quot;final solution&quot;: ca. 3,000,000,000 reichsmark.</td>
<td>d. Camp installations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(in hundreds of millions)</td>
<td>(in hundreds of millions)</td>
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first place."17 In the measured language of the Ministry for Eastern Occupied Territories, the priority of the destruction process was phrased as follows: "Economic questions should not be considered in the solution of the Jewish question."18 Let us now explore the consequences entailed by the loss of the Jewish labor force.

The war economy lost the aggregate value of those products which two or three million workers in Germany and in the occupied countries could produce in two or three years. This loss was total because the destruction process had removed the Jewish labor force without replacement from going concerns. This does not imply that in individual plants or warehouses Jews were not replaced; it does mean that in the total production picture the loss of Jewish labor could never be made up, in spite of all labor recruitment drives by Plenipotentiary for Labor Allocation Sauckel, for in 1944 the shortage of workers had reached a total of not less than 4,000,000.

What was the value of that lost production? In military terms the loss cannot be calculated, but in monetary terms it is possible to make some estimates. Economy Minister Funk estimated after the war that the total value of war production in Germany, from 1941 through 1943, was 260 billion reichsmark. The amount produced in the occupied territories he estimated (for the same period) at 90 billion marks.19 If we consider that in Germany about 0.5 per cent of the labor force engaged in war production was Jewish, and that in the occupied territories about 2 per cent were Jews, the value of Jewish war production lost is approximately 3 billion reichsmark.

This figure swamps the entire income derived from the destruction process after the "final solution" had started, and it proves that whenever it was not efficient to be thrifty, the implementation of the operations could be extravagant in the extreme.

**Psychological Problems.** — The most important problems of the destruction process were not administrtive but psychological. The very conception of the drastic "final solution" was dependent on the ability of the perpetrators to cope with weighty psychological obstacles and impediments. The psychological blocks differed from the administrative difficulties in one important respect: an administrative problem could be solved and eliminated; the psychological difficulties had to be dealt with continuously. They were held in check but never removed. Commanders in the field were ever watchful for symptoms of psychological disintegration. In the fall of 1941 Higher SS and Police Leader Russia Center von dem Bach shook Himmler with the remark:

> Look at the eyes of the men of this Kommando, how deeply shaken they are. These men are finished [fertig] for the rest of their lives. What kind of followers are we training here? Either neurotics or savages [Entweder Nervenkranke oder Rohlinge].

Von dem Bach was not only an important participant in killing operations. He was also an acute observer. With this remark he pointed to the basic psychological problem of the German bureaucracy: the German administration had to make determined efforts to prevent the breakdown of its men into either "savages" or "neurotics." That was essentially a dual task — one part disciplinary, the other moral.

The disciplinary problem was understood clearly. The bureaucrats were
fully aware of the dangers of plundering, torture, orgies, and atrocities. Such behavior was first of all wasteful from an administrative point of view, for the destruction process was an organized undertaking which had room only for organized tasks. Moreover, "excesses" attracted attention to aspects of the destruction process which had to remain secret. Such were the activities of Brigadeführer Dirlewanger, whose rumored attempts to make human soap drew the attention of the public to the killing centers.

Indeed, atrocities could bring the entire "noble" work into disrepute. What was wasteful administratively was dangerous psychologically. Loose behavior was an abuse of the machine, and a debauched administration could disintegrate. That was why the German administration had a certain preference for quick, blow-type (schlagartige) action. Maximum destructive effect was to be achieved with minimum destructive effort. The personnel of the machinery of destruction were not supposed to look to the right or to the left; they were not allowed to have either personal motives or personal gains. An elaborate discipline was introduced into the machine of destruction.

The first and most important rule of conduct of this discipline was the principle that all Jewish property belonged to the Reich. So far as Himmler was concerned, the enforcement of that rule was a success. In 1943 he told his Gruppenführer:

The riches which they [the Jews] owned we have taken from them. I have given strict orders, which Obergruppenführer Pohl has carried out, that this wealth should naturally [selbstverständlich] be delivered to the Reich. We have taken nothing. Individuals who have transgressed are being punished in accordance with an order which I gave in the beginning and which threatened that anyone who takes just one mark is a condemned man. A number of SS men—not many—have transgressed against that order, and they will be condemned to death mercilessly. We had the moral right vis-à-vis our people to annihilate [umschalten] these people which wanted to annihilate us. But we have no right to take a single fur, a single watch, a single mark, a single cigarette, or anything whatever. We don't want in the end, just because we have exterminated a germ, to be infected by that germ and die from it. I will not stand by while a slight infection forms. Whenever such an infected spot appears, we will burn it out. But on the whole we can say that we have fulfilled this heavy task with love for our people, and we have not been damaged in the innermost of our being, our soul, our character.21

There is, of course, considerable evidence that more than a few individuals "transgressed" against the discipline of the destruction process. No estimate can be formed of the extent to which transport Kommandos, killing units, the ghetto and killing center personnel, and even Kommando 1005—the grave-destruction Kommando—filled their pockets with the belongings of the dead. Moreover, we should note that Himmler's rule dealt only with unauthorized takings by participating personnel in the field. It did not deal with authorized distributions to the participants.

The essence of corruption is to reward people on the basis of their proximity to the loot—in a corrupt system, the tax collectors become rich. In the course of the destruction process many distributions were made to the closest participants. We need remind ourselves only of the Finance Ministry's appropriation of fine furniture during the deportations of Jews from Germany, the distribution of better apartments to civil servants, the cuts taken by the railways, SS and Police, and

21. Speech by Himmler at Gruppenführer meeting at Poznan, October 4, 1943, PS-1010.
postal service in the allocation of the furniture of the Dutch, Belgian, and French Jews, the "gifts" of watches and "Christmas presents" to SS-men and their families. The destruction process had its own built-in corruption. Only unauthorized corruption was forbidden.

The second way in which the Germans sought to avoid damage to "the soul" was in the prohibition of unauthorized killings. A sharp line was drawn between killings pursuant to order and killings induced by desire. In the former case a man was thought to have overcome the "weaknesses" of "Christian morality," in the latter case he was overcome by his baseness. That was why in the occupied USSR both the army and the civil administration sought to restrain their personnel from joining the shooting parties on the killing sites.

Perhaps the best illustration of the official attitude is to be found in an advisory opinion by a judge on Himmler's Personal Staff, Obersturmbannführer Bender. Bender dealt with procedure to be followed in the case of unauthorized killings of Jews by SS personnel. He concluded that if purely political motives prompted the killing, if the act was an expression of idealism, no punishment was necessary unless the maintenance of order required disciplinary action or prosecution. However, if selfish, sadistic, or sexual motives were found, punishment was to be imposed for murder or for manslaughter, in accordance with the facts.

The German disciplinary system is most discernible in the mode of the killing operation. At the conclusion of the destruction process Hitler remarked in his testament that the Jewish "criminals" had "atoned" for their "guilt" by "humane means." The "humaneness" of the destruction process was an important factor in its success. It must be emphasized, of course, that this "humaneness" was evolved not for the benefit of the victims but for the welfare of the perpetrators. Time and again, attempts were made to reduce opportunities for "excesses" and Schweinereien of all sorts. Much research was expended for the development of devices and methods which arrested propensities for uncontrolled behavior and which lightened, at the same time, the crushing psychological burden on the killers. The construction of gas vans and of gas chambers, the employment of Ukrainian, Lithuanian, and Latvian auxiliaries to kill Jewish women and children, the use of Jews for the burial and burning of bodies—all these were efforts in the same direction. Efficiency was the real aim of all this "humaneness."

So far as Himmler was concerned, his SS and Police had weathered the destruction process. In October, 1943, when he addressed his top commanders, he said to them:

Most of you know what it means when 100 corpses lie there, or when 500 corpses lie there, or when 1000 corpses lie there. To have gone through this and—apart from a few exceptions caused by human weakness—to have remained decent, that has made us great. That is a page of glory in our history which has never been written and which is never to be written... 

However, the descent into savagery was not nearly so important a factor in the destruction process as the feeling of growing uneasiness that pervaded the bureaucracy from the lowest strata to the highest. That uneasiness was the product of moral scruples—the lingering effect of two thousand years

22. See p. 603.
23. Memorandum by OStubaf. Bender, October 22, 1942, NO-1744.
24. See p. 635.
of Western morality and ethics. A Western bureaucracy had never before faced such a chasm between moral precepts and administrative action; an administrative machine had never been burdened with such a drastic task. In a sense, the task of destroying the Jews put the German bureaucracy to a supreme test. The German technocrats solved also that problem and passed also this test.

To grasp the full significance of what these men did, we have to understand that we are not dealing with individuals who had their own separate moral standards. The bureaucrats who were drawn into the destruction process were not different in their moral makeup from the rest of the population. The German perpetrator was not a special kind of German. What we have to say here about his morality applies not to him specially but to Germany as a whole. How do we know this?

We know that the very nature of administrative planning, of the jurisdictional structure, and of the budgetary system precluded the special selection and special training of personnel. Even the killing units and the killing centers did not obtain professional killers. Every lawyer in the RSHA was presumed to be suitable for leadership in the mobile killing units; every finance expert of the WVHA was considered a natural choice for service in a death camp. In other words, all necessary operations were accomplished with whatever personnel were at hand. However one may wish to draw the line of active participation, the machinery of destruction was a remarkable cross-section of the German population. Every profession, every skill, and every social status was represented in it. We know that in a totalitarian state the formation of an opposition movement outside the bureaucracy is next to impossible; however, if there is very serious opposition in the population, if there are insurmountable psychological obstacles to a course of action, such impediments reveal themselves within the bureaucratic apparatus. We know what such barriers will do, for they emerged clearly in the Italian Fascist state. Again and again the Italian generals and consuls, prefects and police inspectors, refused to co-operate in the deportations. The destruction process in Italy and the Italian-controlled areas was carried out against unremitting Italian opposition. No such opposition is to be found in the German area. No obstruction stopped the German machine of destruction. No moral problem proved insurmountable. When all participating personnel were put to the test, there were very few lingerers and almost no deserters. The old moral order did not break through anywhere along the line. That is a phenomenon of the greatest magnitude.

Just how did the German bureaucracy overcome its moral scruples? We know that it was something of a struggle; we know also that the struggle was won only with the employment of the most complex psychological tools fashioned during centuries of German cultural development. Fundamentally, the psychological defense arsenal consisted of two parts: the repressive mechanism and the system of rationalizations.

First of all, the bureaucracy wanted to hide its deeds, it wanted to conceal the destruction process, not only from all outsiders but also from the conscience of its own conscience. The repression proceeded through five stages. The first was secrecy.

As we might expect, every effort was made to hide the ultimate aim of the destruction process from Axis partners and from the Jews. Inquiries such as Hungarian Prime Minister Kallay put to the Foreign Office about the disappearance of European Jewry, or
questions which foreign journalists in Kiev asked army authorities about mass shootings,\textsuperscript{27} could obviously not be answered. Rumors which could spread like wildfire had to be smothered. "Plastic" evidence, such as "souvenir" photographs of killings, mass graves, and the wounded Jews who had risen from their graves, had to be destroyed.\textsuperscript{28} All these efforts were an administrative necessity. However, beyond that, they were necessary also for psychological reasons. The extreme care with which the machinery of destruction, and particularly the SS and Police, guarded the secrecy of its operations betrayed uncertainty, worry, and anxiety. In May, 1944, the RSHA complained to the Justice Ministry that the Landgericht in Vienna was making too many inquiries to elicit the whereabouts of deported Jews for the purpose of rendering decisions in proceedings involving proof of descent (Abstammungsverfahren). The Landgericht had been told repeatedly, said the complaint, that no information could be given about deportees, but the court had persisted in making inquiries. Quite apart from the fact that the "Jews" (that is, the persons seeking clarification of their status) had been given plenty of time to clear questions about their descent, these people were only trying to hide their ancestry, anyway, in order to remove themselves from the effect of "Security Police measures" (sicherheitspolizeiliche Massnahmen). For these reasons, and because of more pressing war work, the Security Police could not furnish replies, etc. etc.\textsuperscript{29}

Thus the first stage in the repression was to shut off the supply of information from all those who did not have to know it. Whoever did not participate was not supposed to know. The second stage was to make sure that whoever knew would participate.

There was nothing so irksome as the realization that someone was watching over one's shoulder, that someone would be free to talk and accuse because he was not himself involved. This fear was the origin of what Leo Alexander has called the "blood kit,"\textsuperscript{30} the irresistible force that drew every official "observer" into the destruction process. The "blood kit" explains why so many office chiefs of the RSHA were assigned to mobile killing units and why staff officers with the killing units were ordered to participate in the killing operations.\textsuperscript{31} The "blood kit" also explains why Unterstaatssekretär Luther of the Foreign Office's Abteilung Deutschland insisted that the Political Division countersign all instructions to embassies and legations for the deportation of Jews.\textsuperscript{32} Finally, the "blood kit" explains the significant words spoken by Generalgouverneur Frank at the conclusion of a police conference in Krakow:

We want to remember that we are, all of us assembled here, on Mr. Roosevelt's war-criminals list. I have the honor of occupying first place on that list. We are therefore, so to speak, accomplices in a world-historical sense.\textsuperscript{33}

The third stage in the process of repression was the prohibition of criticism. Public protests by outsiders were extremely rare; the criticisms were expressed, if at all, in mutterings on the rumor circuit. It is sometimes hard, even to distinguish between expressions of sensationalism and real criticism, for

\textsuperscript{26} See p. 522.
\textsuperscript{27} See p. 212.
\textsuperscript{28} See pp. 240, 249–50.
\textsuperscript{29} RSHA to Justice Ministry, May 3, 1944, NC-900.
\textsuperscript{31} See p. 215.
\textsuperscript{32} See p. 350.
\textsuperscript{33} See p. 332.
often the two were mixed. One example of such mixed reactions is to be found in the circulation of rumors in Germany about the mobile killing operations in Russia. The Party Chancellery, in confidential instructions to its regional machinery, attempted to combat these rumors. Most of the reports, the chancellery stated, were "distorted" and "exaggerated." "It is conceivable," the circular continued, "that not all of our people—especially people who have no conception of the Bolshevist terror—can understand sufficiently the necessity for these measures." In their very nature, "these problems," which were sometimes "very difficult," could be solved "in the interest of the security of our people" only with "ruthless severity."34

In the German documents we found a singular example of a genuine public protest: A Catholic priest named Lichtenberg, prayed for the Jews in open services at St. Hedwig's Cathedral in Berlin. He prayed not only for baptized Jews but for all the Jewish victims. Placed in custody, he pronounced himself a foe of National Socialism and declared that he wanted to share the fate of the Jews in the East, in order to pray for them there. Released from prison, Lichtenberg died on the way to a concentration camp.35

Within the bureaucracy we find a few more examples of criticism, though again it was very seldom outspoken protest. Of course, it was permissible to criticize measures from the viewpoint of German welfare. We have seen the unbelievable amount of discussion about the Mischlinge and Jews in mixed marriages—that is, persons against whom action could not be taken without hurting Germans. Again, we have noted the voluminous correspondence, dealing with the adverse effects of anti-Jewish measures on the war effort. Once in a while it was permissible even to mention the harmful psychological effects of killings on the perpetrators, but a sharp line was drawn between such criticisms and the implication that the destruction process itself was intrinsically wrong.

A Director of the Reichsbank, Wilhelm, overstepped the line when he cautioned his chief, Puhl, not to visit concentration camps and when he announced his refusal to participate in the distribution of Jewish belongings with the words: "The Reichsbank is not a dealer in second-hand goods."36 Generalkommissar Kube of White Russia violated the injunction against moral condemnations by making accusations against the KdS in White Russia, Strauch. Kube implied that Jews—at least those Jews who had come from Germany ("from our own cultural level")—were human beings and that Strauch and his killers were maniacs and sadists who had satisfied their sexual lust during shootings. Strauch did not take kindly to such criticism. In a complaint against Kube he wrote that "it was regrettable that we, in addition to having to perform this nasty job, were also made the target of mud-slinging."37 In the Interior Ministry the expert on Jewish affairs, Ministralrat Löser, was disturbed by reports of killings which had occurred in Riga; he began to put questions to his chief, Staatssekretär Stuckart, and requested a transfer. After a while a colleague asked Löser to stop pestering the Staatssekretär, for Stuckart's position was difficult enough.38

On the highest level, the following story was told by Gauleiter Schirach's secretary: While Schirach's wife was staying in a hotel in Amsterdam, she watched a roundup of Jews at night.

34. See p. 300.
35. See pp. 299–300.
36. See p. 617.
37. See p. 253.
38. Affidavit by Löser, February 24, 1948, NG-1944-A.
The Jewish women "screamed terribly." Mrs. Schirach's nerves were so much on edge that she decided to tell her husband about it. The Gauleiter advised her to tell the story to Hitler himself, since the Führer would not tolerate such "abuses" (Misstände). During their next visit to Hitler Mrs. Schirach told the story. Hitler listened "ungraciously," interrupting several times and telling her not to be so sentimental. Everyone present found the exchange between Hitler and Mrs. Schirach "very embarrassing" (äusserst peinlich). The conversation broke down, no one spoke, and Mr. and Mrs. Schirach left the room. The Schirachs departed the next day without saying good-bye. 39

In its fourth stage the repressive mechanism eliminated the destruction process as a subject of social conversation. Among the closest participants it was considered bad form to talk about the killings. This is what Himmler had to say on the subject in his speech of October 4, 1943:

I want to mention here very candidly a particularly difficult chapter. Among us it should be mentioned once, quite openly, but in public we will never talk about it. Just as little as we hesitated on June 30, 1934, to do our duty and to put comrades who had transgressed [the brown shirts] to the wall, so little have we talked about it and will ever talk about it. It was with us, thank God, an inborn gift of tactfulness, that we have never conversed about this matter, never spoken about it. Every one of us was horrified, and yet every one of us knew that we would do it again if it were ordered and if it were necessary. I am referring to the evacuation of the Jews, to the extermination of the Jewish people. . . . 40

39. Affidavit by Maria Höpken, January 19, 1946, Schirmel-3. Affiant was not a witness but claims that the identical story was told to her on separate occasions by Schirach and his wife.

This, then, was the reason why that particular "page of glory" was never to be written. There are some things that can be done only so long as they are not discussed, for once they are discussed they can no longer be done.

We know, of course, that among those who were not quite so close to the killing operations the sensations of the destruction process were irresistible. The rumor network was spread all over Axis Europe. One Foreign Office official stationed in Rome mentions that he discussed details of the killings with at least thirty of his colleagues. 41 But the urge to talk was not so deep in men who were heavily involved in the destruction process. Höss, the Auschwitz commander, says that he never spoke about his job even to his wife. She found out about what he was doing because of an inadvertent remark by a family friend, Gauleiter Bracht. 42 The Treblinka guard, Hirtreiter, never spoke of his task at all. 43

The fifth and final stage of the repressing process was to omit mention of "killings" or "killing installations" even in the secret correspondence in which such operations had to be reported. The reader of these reports is immediately struck by their camouflage vocabulary: Endlösung der Judenfrage ("final solution of the Jewish question"), Lösungsmöglichkeiten ("solution possibilities"), Sonderbehandlung (or SB — "special treatment"), Evakuierung ("evacuation"), Umsiedlung (same), Spezialeinrichtungen ("special installations"), durchgeschleust ("dragged through"), and many others.

There is one exchange of correspond-
ence in which knowing officials carried the game of pretense to the point of distortion and outright falsification. In 1943 the Foreign Office inquired whether it would be possible to exchange 30,000 Baltic and White Russian Jews for Reich Germans in Allied countries. The Foreign Office representative in Riga replied that he had discussed the matter with the Security Police commander in charge; the Bds had felt that the "interned" Jews could not be sent away for "weighty Security Police reasons." As was known (bekanntlich), a large number of Jews had been "done away with" in "spontaneous actions." In some places these actions had resulted in "almost total extermination" (fast volle Ausmerzung). A removal of the remaining Jews would therefore give rise to "anti-German atrocity propaganda," etc. Thus even in 1943 an internal secret letter could claim that the Jews in the East had all been victims of pogroms.

A particularly revealing example of disassociation may also be found in a private letter written by a sergeant of the Rural Police to a police general. The sergeant, at the head of 23 German gendarmes and 500 Ukrainian auxiliary policemen, had killed masses of Jews in the Kamenets Podolski area. These are excerpts from his letter.

Naturally we are cleaning up considerably, especially among the Jews...

I have a cozy apartment in a former children's asylum. One bedroom and a living room with all of the accessories. Practically nothing is missing. Naturally, the wife and the children. You will understand me. My Dieter and the little Liese write often, after their fashion. One could weep sometimes. It is not good to be a friend of children as I was. I hope that the war, and with it the time of service in the East, soon ends.45

44. Windecker to Foreign Office, April 5, 1943, NC-2652.
45. Meister der Gendarmerie Fritz Jacob

The process of repression was continuous, but it was never completed. The killing of the Jews could not be hidden completely, either from the outside world or from the inner self; therefore the bureaucracy was not spared an open encounter with its conscience. It had to pit argument against argument and philosophy against philosophy. Laboriously, and with great effort, the bureaucracy had to justify its activities.

Psychological justification is called rationalization. The Germans employed two kinds of rationalizations. The first was an attempt to justify the destruction process as a whole; it was designed to explain why the Jews had to be destroyed. It was focused on the Jew. The other explanations served only to justify individual participation in the destruction process: a signature on a piece of paper or the squeeze of a trigger. They were focused entirely on the perpetrator. Let us consider first the broad rationalizations which encompassed the whole destruction process. In the formation of these justifications old conceptions about the Jew — reinforced and expanded by new propaganda — played an important role. Precisely how did German propaganda function in this process?

The Germans had two kinds of propaganda. One was designed to produce action. It exhorted people to do things, for instance, to come to a mass meeting, to boycott Jewish goods, or to kill Jews. This type of propaganda — the command propaganda — does not concern us here since it was confined, on the whole, to the incitement of boycotts and pogroms, the so-called Einzelaktionen. But the Germans also engaged in a campaign which consisted of a series of statements, for example, allegations which implied that the Jew was bad. This propaganda...
had a very important place in the arsenal of psychological defense mechanisms.

The function of declarative propaganda is to act as a storehouse which may be drawn upon according to need. The statement "the Jew is bad" is taken from the storehouse and is converted in the perpetrator's mind into a complete rationalization: "I kill the Jew because the Jew is bad." To understand the function of this propaganda is to realize why it was continued until the very end of the war, and, surreptitiously, even after the end of the war. Propaganda was needed to combat doubts and guilt feelings wherever they arose — whether inside or outside the bureaucracy — and whenever they arose — before or after the perpetration of the acts.

In fact, we find that in April, 1943, after the deportations of the Jews from the Reich had largely been completed, the press was ordered to deal with the Jewish question continuously and without letup. In order to build up a storehouse the propaganda had to be turned out on a huge scale. "Research institutes" were formed, doctoral dissertations were written, and volumes of propaganda literature were printed by every conceivable agency. At times this activity even led to bureaucratic competition. Thus Unterstaatssekretär Luther of the Foreign Office had to assure Obergruppenführer Berger of the SS-Main Office that the Foreign Office's pamphlet Das russische Tor ist aufgestossen ("The Russian Gate is Thrown Open") in no way competed with Berger's masterpiece Der Untermenschen ("The Subhuman").

40. Instructions by Reich Press Chief, April 29, 1943, NG-4705.
41. Notably, the Institut zur Erforschung der Judenfrage in Frankfurt, under Dr. Klaus Schickert, Steegrichtung to Rosenberg, January 22, 1944, NG-1659.
43. Luther to Berger, June 22, 1942, NG-3304.
44. See p. 297.
45. Himmler speech, June 21, 1944, NG-4977.

What did all this propaganda accomplish? How was the Jew portrayed in this unending flow of leaflets and pamphlets, books and speeches? How did the propaganda image of the Jew serve to justify the destruction process?

First of all, the German map, drew a picture of an international Jewry ruling the world and plotting the destruction of Germany and German life. "If international-finance Jewry," said Adolf Hitler in 1939, "inside and outside of Europe should succeed in plunging the nations into another world war, then the result will not be the Bolshevization of the earth and, with it, the victory of the Jews, but the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe." In 1944 Himmler said to his commanders: "This was the most frightening order which an organization could receive — the order to solve the Jewish question," but if the Jews had still been in the rear, the front line could not have been held, and if any of the commanders were moved to pity, they had only to think of the bombing terror, "which after all is organized in the last analysis by the Jews."