sicker of the Foreign Office once questioned the British chargé d'affaires about the percentage of "Aryan" blood in Mr. Rublee, an American on a mission in behalf of refugees.53

This type of reasoning was also applied in reverse. If a power was friendly, it was believed to be free of Jewish rule. In March, 1940, after Ribbentrop had succeeded in establishing friendly relations with Russia, he assured Mussolini and Ciano that Stalin had given up the idea of world revolution. The Soviet administration had been purged of Jews. Even Kaganovich (the Jewish Politbureau member) looked rather like a Georgian.54

The claim of Jewish world rule was to be established irrefutably in a show trial. Toward the end of 1941 the Propaganda Ministry, the Foreign Office, and the Justice Ministry laid plans for the trial of Herschel Gryzspan, the man who had assassinated a German Embassy official (vom Rath) in Paris in 1938.55 The trial was to prove that Gryzspan's deed was part of a "fundamental plan by international Jewry to drive the world into a war with National Socialist Germany,"56 but it was never held, because the Justice Ministry in its eagerness had made the fatal mistake of adding homosexuality to the indictment. At the last moment, it was feared that Gryzspan might reveal "the alleged homosexual relations of Gesangschaftsrat vom Rath." And so the whole scheme was dropped.57

When Germany began to lose the war at Stalingrad, the propaganda machine sought to make up in sheer volume of endless repetition for the "proof" it had failed to obtain in the ill-fated Gryzspan trial. The Jew was now the principal foe, the creator of capitalism and Communism, the sinister force behind the entire Allied war effort, the organizer of the "terror raids," and, finally, the all-powerful enemy capable of wiping Germany off the map. By February 5, 1943, the press had to be cautioned not to "overestimate the power of the Jews."58 On the same day, however, the following instructions were issued:

Stress: If we lose this war, we do not fall into the hands of some other states but will all be annihilated by world Jewry. Jewry firmly decided (fest entschlossen) to exterminate all Germans. International law and international custom will be no protection against the Jewish will for total annihilation [totaler Vernichtungswille der Juden].59

52. Memorandum by Ribbentrop, November 18, 1938, on the Italian protest in the Streicher affair, Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945, Ser. D, IV, 524-25. The point in question was the "temperamental Pope," Pius XI, not the "diplomatic Pope," Pius XII.

53. Weizsäcker to Wörmann, Dg. Pol., trade and legal divisions, Referat Deutschland (Ausland), November 7, 1938, NG-4696. The British diplomat replied that he didn't think Rublee had any Jewish blood.


56. Rintelneus to Weizsäcker, quoting Ribbentrop's views, April 2, 1942, NG-179.


How was this theory applied to justify specific operations? The "Jewish conspiracy" was used over and over again. We find the theory in the correspondence of the German Foreign Office, which pressed for deportations in Axis countries on the ground that the Jews were a security risk.\(^6^0\) The Jews were the spies, the enemy agents. They could not be permitted to stay in coastal areas because in the event of Allied landings they would attack the defending garrisons from the rear. The Jews were the inciters of revolt; that was why they had to be deported from Slovakia in 1944. The Jews were the organizers of the partisan war, the "middle men" between the Red Army and the partisan field command; that was why they could not be permitted to remain alive in partisan-threatened areas. The Jews were the saboteurs and assassins; that was why the army chose them as hostages in Russia, Serbia, and France.\(^6^1\) The Jews were plotting the destruction of Germany; and that was why they had to be destroyed. In Himmler's words: "We had the moral right vis-à-vis our people to annihilate this people which wanted to annihilate us." In the minds of the perpetrators, therefore, this theory turned the destruction process into a kind of preventive war.

However, the Jews were portrayed not only as a world conspiracy but also as a criminal people. This is the definition of the Jews, as furnished in instructions to the German press:

Stress: In the case of the Jews there are not merely a few criminals (as in every other people), but all of Jewry rose from criminal roots, and in its very nature it is criminal. The Jews are no people like other people, but a pseudo-people welded together by hereditary criminality [eine zu einem Scheinvolk zusammengeschlossene Erbkrimalität].\(^6^2\) The annihilation of Jewry is no loss to humanity, but just as useful as capital punishment or protective custody against other criminals.\(^6^3\)

And this is what Streicher had to say:

Look at the path which the Jewish people has traversed for millenia: Everywhere murder; everywhere mass murder.\(^6^4\)

A Nazi researcher, Helmut Schramm, collected all the legends of Jewish ritual murder.\(^6^5\) The book was an immediate success with Himmler. "Of the book \textit{The Jewish Ritual Murders}," he wrote to Kaltenbrunner, "I have ordered a large number. I am distributing it down to \textit{Standartenführer} (SS-colonel). I am sending you several hundred copies so that you can distribute them to your \textit{Einsatzkommandos}, and above all to the men who are busy with the Jewish question."\(^6^6\) \textit{The Ritual Murders} was a collection of stories about alleged tortures of Christian children. Actually, hundreds of thousands of Jewish children were being killed in the destruction process. Perhaps, that is why \textit{The Ritual Murders} became so important. In fact, Himmler was so enthusiastic about the book that he ordered Kaltenbrunner to start investigations of "ritual murders" in Roumania, Hungary, and Bulgaria; he also suggested that Security Police people be put to work tracing British court records and police descriptions of missing children, "so that we can report in our radio broadcasts to Eng-

\(^6^2\) \textit{Deutscher Wochendienst}, April 2, 1943, NG-4713.

\(^6^3\) Speech by Streicher during dedication of Wilhelm Gustloff Bridge in Nuremberg, September, 1937, M-4. Gustloff, the AO \textit{Landesgruppenleiter} in Switzerland, had been assassinated by a Jew.

\(^6^4\) Helmut Schramm, \textit{Der jüdische Ritualmord – Eine historische Untersuchung} (Berlin, 1943).

\(^6^5\) Himmler to Kaltenbrunner, May 19, 1943, NG-4899.
land that in the town of XY a child is missing and that it is probably another case of Jewish ritual murder.”

How the theory of Jewish criminality was applied in practice may be seen in the choice of some of the expressions in the reports of killing operations, such as the term “execution” (in German, hingerichtet, exekutiert, Vollzugsfähigkeit). In correspondence dealing with the administration of the personal belongings taken from dead Jews, the WVHA used the cover designation “utilization of the property of the Jewish thieves [Verwertung des jüdischen Hohler- und Diebesgutes].”

A very striking example of how the theory invaded German thinking is furnished in the format of portions of two reports by the army’s Secret Field Police in occupied Russia:

Punishable offenses by members of the population:

- Espionage
- Theft of ammunition
- Suspected Jews (Judenverdacht)
- Moving about with arms (Freischärlerer)
- Theft
- Jews

In the culmination of this theory to be a Jew was a punishable offense (strafbare Handlung); thus it was the function of the rationalization of criminality to turn the destruction process into a kind of judicial proceeding.

There was a third rationalization which was focused on the Jew: the conception of the Jew as a lower form of life. Generalgouverneur Frank was given to the use of such phrases as “Jews and lice.” In a speech delivered on December 19, 1940, he pointed out that relatives of military personnel surely were sympathizing with men stationed in Poland, a country “which is so full of lice and Jews.” But the situation was not so bad, he continued, though of course he could not rid the country of all lice and Jews in a year.

On July 19, 1943, the chief of the Generalgouvernement Health Division reported during a meeting that the typhus epidemic was subsiding. Frank remarked in this connection that the “removal” (Entsiedlung) of the “Jewish element” had undoubtedly contributed to better health (Gesundheit) in Europe. He meant this not only in the literal sense but also politically: the re-establishment of sound living conditions (gesunder Lebensverhältnisse) on the European continent.

In a similar vein Foreign Office Press Chief Schmidt once declared during a visit to Slovakia, “The Jewish question is no question of humanity, and it is no question of religion; it is solely a question of political hygiene” (die Frage der politischen Hygiene).

In the terminology of the killing operations the conception of Jews as vermin is again quite noticeable. Dr. Stahlecker, the commander of Einsatzgruppe A, called the pogroms conducted by the Lithuanians “self-cleansing actions” (Selbstreinigungsaktionen). In another report we find the phrase “cleansing-of-Jews actions” (Judenreinigungsaktionen). Himmler spoke of “extermination” (Ausrottung). Many times, the bureaucracy used the word Entjudung; this expression, which was used not only in connection with killings but also with reference to Aryan-

66. Ibid.
68. GPF Group 722 to 207th Security Division Ic, February 23, 1943, NOKW-2210.
69. Speech by Frank to men of guard battalion, December 19, 1940, Frank diary, PS-2233.
70. Summary of Generalgouvernement health conference, July 9, 1943, Frank diary, PS-2233.
71. See p. 471.
zations of property, means to rid something of Jews.\textsuperscript{72} Again, we discover the term \textit{judenrein}, which in exact translation means "clean of Jews." Finally, in the most drastic application of this theory, a German fumigation company, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Schildlingsbekämpfung, was drawn into the killing operations by furnishing one of its lethal products for the gassing of a million Jews. Thus the destruction process was also turned into a "cleansing operation."

In addition to the rationalizations which were used to justify the whole undertaking as a war against "international Jewry," as a judicial proceeding against "Jewish criminality," or simply as a "hygienic" process against "Jewish vermin," there were also those rationalizations which were fashioned in order to enable the individual bureaucrat to justify his individual task in the destruction process. It must be kept in mind that most of the participants did not fire rifles at Jewish children or pour gas into gas chambers. A good many, of course, also had to perform these very "hard" tasks, but most of the administrators and most of the clerks did not see the final, drastic link in these measures of destruction.

Most bureaucrats composed memoranda, drew up blueprints, signed correspondence, talked on the telephone, and participated in conferences. They could destroy a whole people while sitting at their desks. Except for inspection tours, which were not obligatory, they never had to see "100 bodies lie there, or 500, or 1000." However, these men were not stupid; they realized the connection between their paper work and the heaps of corpses in the East. And they realized, also, the shortcomings of those rationalizations which placed all evil on the Jew and all good on the German. That was why they were compelled to justify their individual activities. Their justifications contain the implicit admission that the paper work was to go on, regardless of the actual plans of world Jewry and regardless of the actual behavior of the Jews who were about to be killed. We can divide the rationalizations focused on the perpetrator into five categories.

The first rationalization was the oldest, the simplest, and therefore the most effective: the doctrine of superior orders. First and foremost there was discipline. First and foremost there was duty. No matter what objections there might be, orders were given to be obeyed. A clear order was like an absolute; armed with such an order, a perpetrator felt that he could pass his responsibility and his conscience upward. When Himmler addressed a killing party in Minsk, he told his men that they need not worry. Their consciences were in no way impaired, for they were soldiers who had to carry out every order unconditionally.\textsuperscript{73}

Every bureaucrat knows, of course, that open defiance of orders is serious business, but he also knows that there are many ingenious ways of evading orders. In fact, the opportunities for evasion and hesitation increase as one ascends in the hierarchy. Even in Nazi Germany orders were disobeyed, and they were disobeyed even in Jewish matters. We have mentioned the statement of Reichsbankdirektor Wilhelm, who would not participate in the distribution of "second-hand goods." Nothing happened to him. A member of the RSHA, Sturmbannführer Hartl, simply refused to take over an \textit{Einsatzkommando} in Russia. Nothing happened to this man, either.\textsuperscript{74} Even Generalkommissar Kube, who had actually

\textsuperscript{72} Compare \textit{Entlausung} ("ridding of lice") and \textit{Entwesung} ("ridding of vermin," or "fumigation").

\textsuperscript{73} See pp. 218-19.

\textsuperscript{74} Affidavit by Albert Hartl, October 9, 1947, NO-5384.
frustrated a killing operation in Minsk and who had otherwise expressed himself in strong language, was only warned.

The bureaucrat clung to his orders not so much because he feared his superior (with whom he was often on good terms) but because he feared his own conscience. The many requests for “authorization”—whether for permission to mark Jews with a star or to kill them—demonstrate the true nature of these orders. When they did not exist, the bureaucrats had to invent them.

The second rationalization was the administrator’s insistence that he did not act out of personal vindictiveness. In the mind of the bureaucrat duty was an assigned path; it was his “fate.” The German bureaucrat made a sharp distinction between duty and personal feelings; he insisted that he did not “hate” Jews, and sometimes he even went out of his way to perform “good deeds” for Jewish friends and acquaintances. When the trials of war criminals started, there was hardly a defendant who could not produce evidence that he had helped some half-Jewish physics professor, or that he had used his influence to permit a Jewish symphony conductor to conduct a little while longer, or that he had intervened on behalf of some couple in mixed marriage in connection with an apartment. While these courtesies were petty in comparison with the destructive conceptions which these men were implementing concurrently, the “good deeds” performed an important psychological function. They separated “duty” from personal feelings. They preserved a sense of “decency.” The destroyer of the Jews was no “anti-Semite.”

Staatssekretär Keppler of the Office of the Four-Year Plan was interrogated after the war as follows:

**Question** [by Dr. Kemper of the prosecuting staff]: Tell me, Mr. Keppler, why were you so terribly against the Jews? Did you know the Jews?

**Answer**: I had nothing against the Jews.

**Question**: I am asking for the reason. You were no friend of the Jews?

**Answer**: Jews came to me. Warburg invited me. Later Jews looked me up in the Reich Chancellery and asked me to join the board of directors of the Deutsche Bank.

**Question**: When were you supposed to join the board of directors?

**Answer**: I didn’t want to; it was in 1934, they wanted to give me a written assurance that I would be a director in half a year. If I had been such a hater of Jews, they would not have approached me.

**Question**: But you transferred capital from Jews into Aryan hands

**Answer**: Not often. I know the one case of Simson-Suhl. Also the Skoda-Wetzler Works in Vienna. But it turned out that was no Jewish enterprise.

Keppler was then asked whether he had not favored the “disappearance” of the Jews from Germany. The Staatssekretär fell back on Warburg, with whom he had once had an “interesting discussion.” The interrogator broke in with the remark that “now we do not want to talk about anti-Semitism but about the final solution of the Jewish question.” In that connection, Keppler was asked whether he had heard of Lublin. The Staatssekretär admitted hesitantly that he had heard of Lublin and offered the explanation that he was “deeply touched by this matter” (dass mich das furchtbar peinlich berührt). What did Keppler do when he was touched like this? “It was very unpleasant for me, but after all it was not even in my sphere of jurisdiction.”

Another defendant in a war-crimes trial, the former commander in Norway, Generaloberst von Falkenhorst, offered the following explanation for his order to remove Jews from Soviet prisoner-of-war battalions in his area.

Falkenhorst pointed out that, to begin with, there were no Jews among these
prisoners, for the selection had already taken place in Germany (i.e., the Jewish prisoners had already been shot as they were shuttled through the Reich). The order was consequently "entirely superfluous and might just as well not have been included. It was thoughtlessly included by the officer of my staff who was working on it, from the instructions sent to us, and I overlooked it." The general then continued:

For the rest it may be inferred from this that the Jewish question played as infamous a part in Norway as elsewhere, and that I and the Army were supposed to have been particularly anti-semitic.

Against this suspicion I can only adduce the following: First, that in Scandinavian countries there are only very few Jews. These few are hardly ever in evidence. The sum total in Norway was only about 350. [Actual figure: 2000.] A negligible number among two or three million Norwegians. These [Jews] were collected by [Reichskommissar] Terboven and according to orders despatched to Germany by steamship. In this manner the Jewish problem in Norway was practically solved [i.e., by deportation to Auschwitz].

As regards myself, I made at this time an application to Terboven at the request of the Swedish Consul, General Westring, in Oslo, who did not much like visiting Terboven, for the release of a Jew of Swedish nationality and of his family with permission to leave the country, gladly and, as a matter of course, fulfilling the Consul's wish to facilitate the return of these people to Stockholm.

If I had been a rabid anti-semite I could, without further ado, have refused this request, for the matter did not concern me in the slightest.

On the one hand, however, I wanted to help the Swedish Consul, and, on the other hand, I have nothing against the Jews. I have read and heard their writings and compositions with interest, and their achievements in the field of science are worthy of the highest respect. I have met many fine and honorable people among them.76

How widespread the practice of "good deeds" must have been may be gauged from the following remark by Heinrich Himmler:

And then they came, our 80,000,000 good Germans, and each one has his decent Jew. It is clear, the others are swine [Schweine], but this one is a first-class Jew. Of all those who speak thus, no one has seen it, no one has gone through it.77

But even if Himmler regarded these interventions as expressions of misplaced humanity, they were necessary tools in the attempt to crystallize one of the important justifications for bureaucratic action—duty. Only after a man had done "everything humanly possible" could he devote himself to his destructive activity in peace.

The third justification was the rationalization that one's own activity was not criminal, that the next fellow's action was the criminal act. The Ministerialrat who was signing papers could console himself with the thought that he did not do the shooting. But that was not enough. He had to be sure that if he were ordered to shoot, he would not follow orders but would draw the line right then and there.

The following exchange took place during a war-crimes trial. A Foreign Office official, Albrecht von Kessel, was asked by defense counsel (Dr. Becker) to explain the meaning of "final solution."

**QUESTION:** This expression "final solution" was used with various meanings. In

75. Interrogation by Kemper of Keppler, August 20, 1947, NC-3041.


77. Speech by Himmler, October 4, 1943, PS-1919.
1936 “final solution” meant merely that all Jews should leave Germany. And, of course, it was true that they were to be robbed; that wasn’t very nice, but it wasn’t criminal.

JUDGE MAGUIRE: Was that an accurate translation?

DR. BECKER: I did not check on the translation. Please repeat the sentence.

ANSWER: I said it was not criminal; it was not nice, but it was not criminal. That is what I said. One didn’t want to take their life; one merely wanted to take money away from them. That was all.\(^78\)

The most important characteristic of this dividing line was that it could be shifted when the need arose. To illustrate: Once there was a Protestant pastor by the name of Ernst Biberstein. After several years of ministering to his congregation, he moved into the Church Ministry; from that agency he came to another office which was also interested in church matters—the Reich Security Main Office. That agency assigned him to head a local Gestapo office. Finally he became the chief of Einsatzkommando 6 in southern Russia. As commander of the Kommando, Biberstein killed two or three thousand people. These people, in his opinion, had forfeited the right to live under the rules of war. Asked if there were Jews among his victims, he replied: “It is very difficult to determine that. Also, I was told at that time that wherever there were Armenians, there were not so many Jews.”\(^79\)

To Biberstein the moral dividing line was like the receding horizon. He walked toward it, but he could never reach it.

Among the participants in the destruction process there were very few who did not shift the line when they had to cross the threshold. One reason why the person of Generalkommissar Kube is so important is that he had a firm line beyond which he could not pass. The line was arbitrary, and very advanced. He sacrificed the Russian Jews and fought desperately only for the German Jews in his area. But the line was fixed. It was not movable, it was not imaginary, it was not self-deceptive. We have indicated that the destruction process was autonomous, that it could not be stopped internally; the adjustable moral standard was one of the principal tools in the maintenance of this autonomy.

There was a fourth rationalization which implicitly took cognizance of the fact that all shifting lines are unreal. It was a rationalization of more sophisticated people and was built on simple premise. No man alone can build a bridge. No man alone can destroy the Jews. The participant in the destruction process was always in company. Among his superiors he could always find those who were doing more than he; among his subordinates he could always find those who were ready to take his place. No matter where he looked, he was one among thousands. His own importance was diminished, and he felt that he was replaceable, perhaps even dispensable.

In such reflective moments the bureaucrat quieted his conscience with the thought that he was part of a tide and that there was very little a drop of water could do in such a wave. When Werner von Tippelskirch, a Foreign Office official, was interrogated after the war, he pointed out that he had never protested against the killing of Jews in Russia because he had been “powerless.” His superiors, Erdmannsdorff, Wörmann, and Weizsäcker, had also been “powerless.” All of them had waited for a “change of regime.” Asked by Prosecutor Kempner whether it was right to wait for a change of regime “and in the meantime send thousands of people to their

\(^{78}\) Testimony by Albrecht von Kessel, Case No. 11, tr. pp. 9514-15.

\(^{79}\) Interrogation of Biberstein, June 29, 1947, NO-4967.
death,” von Tippelskirch replied, “a difficult question.”

The fifth rationalization was the most sophisticated of all. It was also a last-ditch psychological defense, suited particularly to those who saw through the self-deception of superior orders, impersonal duty, the shifting moral standard, and the argument of powerlessness. It was a rationalization also for those whose drastic activity or high position placed them out of reach of orders, duty, moral dividing lines, and helplessness. It was the jungle theory.

Oswald Spengler once explained this theory in the following words: “War is the primeval policy of all living things, and this to the extent that in the deepest sense combat and life are identical, for when the will to fight is extinguished, so is life itself.” Himmeler remembered this theory when he addressed the mobile killing personnel at Minsk. He told them to look at nature: wherever they would look, they would find combat. They would find it among animals and among plants. Whoever tired of the fight went under.

From this philosophy Hitler himself drew strength in moments of meditation. Once at the dinner table, when he thought about the destruction of the Jews, he remarked with stark simplicity: “One must not have mercy with people who are determined by fate to perish [Man dürfte kein Mitleid mit Leuten haben, denen das Schicksal bestimmt habe, zugrunde zu gehen].”

2 / THE VICTIMS

So far we have pointed out how the Germans overcame their administrative and psychological obstacles; we have dealt with the internal problems of the bureaucratic machine. But the internal technocratic and moral conflicts do not fully explain what happened. In a destruction process the perpetrators do not play the only role; the process is shaped by the victims, too. It is the interaction of perpetrators and victims that is “fate.” We must therefore discuss the reactions of the Jewish community and analyze the role of the Jews in their own destruction.

When confronted by force, a group can react in five ways: by resistance, by an attempt to alleviate or nullify the threat (the undoing reaction), by evasion, by paralysis, or by compliance. Let us consider each in turn.

The reaction pattern of the Jews is characterized by almost complete lack of resistance. In marked contrast to German propaganda, the documentary evidence of Jewish resistance, overt or submerged, is very slight. On a European-wide scale the Jews had no resistance organization, no blueprint for armed action, no plan even for psychological warfare. They were completely unprepared. In the words of Anti-Partisan Chief and Higher SS and Police Leader Russia Center von dem Bach, who observed the Jews and killed them from 1941 to the end:

Thus the misfortune came about.

80. Interrogation by Kempner of Werner von Tippelskirch, August 28, 1947, NC-2801.
81. Oswald Spengler, Der Untergang des Abendlandes (Munich, 1923), II, 545–46.
82. See p. 219.
83. Henry Picker (ed.), Hitler's Tischgespräche im Führerhauptquartier 1941–1942 (Bonn, 1951), entry for April 2, 1942, p. 227. The entries are summaries by Picker of “Hitler's remarks at the dinner table.”
old slogan that the Jews are conspiring to dominate the world and that they are so highly organized. In reality they had no organization of their own at all, nor even an information service. If they had had some sort of organization, these people could have been saved by the millions; but instead they were taken completely by surprise. Never before has a people gone as unsuspectingly to its disaster. Nothing was prepared. Absolutely nothing. It was not so, as the anti-Semites say, that they were friendly to the Soviets. That is the most appalling misconception of all. The Jews in the old Poland, who were never communistic in their sympathies, were, throughout the area of the river Bug eastward, more afraid of Bolshevism than of the Nazis. This was insanity. They could have been saved. There were people among them who had much to lose, business people; they didn't want to leave. In addition there was love of home and their old experience with pogroms in Russia. After the first anti-Jewish actions of the Germans, they thought now the wave was over and so they walked back to their undoing.1

The Jews were not oriented toward resistance. They took up resistance only in a few cases, locally, and at the last moment. Measured in German casualties, Jewish armed opposition shrinks into insignificance. The most important engagement was fought in the Warsaw ghetto (16 dead and 85 woundened on the German side, including collaborators). 2 In Galicia sporadic resistance resulted in some losses to SS and Police Leader Katzmann (8 dead, 12 wounded). 3 In addition, there were clashes between Jewish partisans and German forces in other parts of the East, and occasional acts of resistance by small groups and individuals in the ghettos and killing centers. It is doubtful that the Germans and their collaborators lost more than a few hundred men, dead and wounded, in the course of the destruction process. The number of men who dropped out because of disease, nervous breakdowns, or court martial proceedings was probably greater. The Jewish resistance effort could not seriously impede or retard the progress of destructive operations: The Germans brushed that resistance aside as a minor obstacle, and in the totality of the destruction process it was of no consequence.

The second reaction was the attempt to avert the full force of the German destructive measures. This attempt was carried out in three forms. One was the petition - the appeal. By appealing, the Jews sought to transfer the struggle from a physical to an intellectual and moral plane. If only the fate of the Jews could be resolved with arguments rather than with physical resources and physical combat - so Jewry reasoned - there would be nothing to fear. In a petition by Rabbi Kaplan to French Commissioner Xavier Vallat this Jewish mentality becomes absolutely clear. Among other things, the Rabbi pointed out that a pagan or an atheist had the right to defame Judaism, but in the case of a Christian, did not such an attitude appear "spiritually illogical as well as ungrateful?" To prove his point, Kaplan supplied many learned quotations. 4 The letter is as though it were not written in the twentieth century. It is reminiscent of the time toward the close of the Middle Ages when Jewish rabbis used to dispute with representatives of the Church over the relative merits of the two religions.

Yet in various forms, some more eloquent than others, the Jews appealed and petitioned wherever and whenever

1. Von dem Bach made this statement to Leo Alexander, who quoted it in his article "War Crimes and Their Motivation," Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology, XXXIX, 315.
2. See p. 328.
the threat of concentration and deportation struck them: in the Reich, in Poland, in Russia, in France, in the Balkan countries, and in Hungary.6 Everywhere the Jews pitted words against rifles, dialectics against force, and everywhere they lost. The reliance upon petitions became so great that internal struggles developed over the formulation and timing of the appeals.

When the petition system is unsuccessful, when an appeal fails to save the whole group, there is a tendency to appeal for part of the group. In the minds of the drafters, these appeals therefore become life-and-death matters. Whoevery is excluded is given up. We may cite as an example the conflict in the Vienna Jewish community, over the petitioning for exemptions from deportations. At the end of 1941, when the community organization (Kultusgemeinde) made an "agreement" with the Gestapo about "exempt" categories, the head of the Jewish war invalids, who had been left out of the "negotiations," accused the deportation expert of the Kultusgemeinde of "sacrificing" the disabled veterans. He later on, when the war invalids were pressed to the wall, the leaders of the veterans' organization discussed the advisability of presenting an independent petition. One of the war-invalid chief said, "Fundamentally, I am of the opinion that we cannot afford a war with the Kultusgemeinde." Another commented: "The Hauptssturmführer will say to himself "These are Jews, and these are Jews. Let them fight among themselves. Why should I worry about that?" He the SS-Haupsturmführer will eventually drop us in this matter [Er wird uns in dieser Frage eventuell fallen lassen]." Thereupon the head of the war veterans said, "My answer is that such an eventual will be time to disband our organization."

Sometimes the Jews appealed not with words but with personal gifts; they attempted to bribe individual Germans. But these attempts were largely unsuccessful: the German officials accepted the gifts but these Germans were not bought.8 Even the few Jewish girls who offered themselves to policemen on the eve of ghetto-clearing operations were killed on the next day.9 The bribery did worry Himmler, but it had no effect on the progress of the operations.

There was a second way in which the Jews tried to avert disaster: by judicious compliance with orders, and sometimes by anticipatory compliance with orders not yet issued. The most conspicuous example of anticipatory compliance was the decision of the Jewish community leaders in Poland to organize a forced labor system.10 Another anticipatory move was made by the Jewish leadership in Kishlovodsk (Caucasus), where, in full awareness of the German threat, the Judenrat confiscated all Jewish valuables— including gold, silver, carpets, and clothing—and handed the property to the German commander.11 A third example of anticipatory compliance may be found in the minutes of a discussion held in the Shavel Judenrat (in Latvia) on March 24, 1943. The Judenrat had been asked three times whether any births had occurred in the ghetto, and each time it had denied that there were any births. Now, however, the Jewish leadership was confronted with twenty pregnancies. It decided to use persuasion and, if need be, threats on the women to submit to abortions. One woman was in her eighth month; the Judenrat decided that in this case a

7. See pp. 281–82.
8. See pp. 526, 529.
10. See p. 165.
doctor would induce premature birth and that a nurse would kill the child. (A doctor objected to doing the job himself.) The nurse would be told to proceed in such a way that she would not know the nature of her act.\textsuperscript{12}

In one respect this Jewish co-operation created administrative problems within the machinery of destruction. The zeal with which the Jews applied themselves to the German war effort accentuated the differences of interests which paired industry and the armament inspectorates against the SS and Police, but these differences were ultimately resolved to the disadvantage of the Jews. And insofar as the Jews co-operated in other ways, the attempts at forestalling not only availed nothing but actually fitted into German plans. Playing into German hands, they speeded the process of destruction.

The third alleviation attempt may be noted in the system of relief and salvage, from the elaborate social services of the ghetto communities to the 'primitive "organization" in the killing centers.'\textsuperscript{13} The relief system was basically the product of a calculation of time, the hope or expectation that the liberation would come before the destruction process could consume itself. We know, simply by counting the relative handful of survivors, that this attempt failed also.

The basic reactions to force are fundamentally different from each other. Resistance is opposition to the perpetrator. Nullification or alleviation is opposition to the administrative enactment. In the third reaction, evasion, the victim tries to remove himself from the effects of force by fleeing or hiding. The phenomenon of flight is most difficult to analyze. We know that the emigration of approximately 350,000 Jews from Germany and German-occupied Czechoslovakia before the war was forced. In many cases the emigrating Jews had been deprived of their livelihood, and they reacted to the consequences of anti-Jewish measures rather than in anticipation of disaster. The flight of the Belgian and Parisian Jews in 1940 and the evacuation of Soviet Jews a year later was compounded with mass migrations of non-Jews. Here again, the flight was not a pure reaction to the threat of the destruction process but also a reaction to the war. We know that only a few thousand Jews escaped from the ghettos of Poland and Russia, that only a few hundred Jews hid out in the large cities of Berlin, Vienna, and Warsaw, that only a handful of Jews escaped from camps. Von dem Bach mentions that in Russia there was an unguarded escape route to the Pripet Marshes, but few Jews availed themselves of the opportunity.\textsuperscript{14} In the main, the Jews looked upon flight with a sense of futility; the great majority of those who did not escape early did not escape at all.

There were instances when in the mind of the victim, the difficulties of resistance, undoing, or evasion were just as great as the problems of automatic compliance; in such instances the futility of all alternatives became utterly clear, and the victim was paralyzed. Paralysis occurred only in moments of crisis. During ghetto-clearing operations many Jewish families were unable to fight, unable to petition, unable to flee, and also unable to move to the concentration point to get it over with. They waited for the raiding parties in their homes, frozen and helpless. Sometimes the same paralytic reaction


\textsuperscript{13} To "organize" in a camp meant to take a bit of food or some item of clothing wherever it could be found.

\textsuperscript{14} Statement by von dem Bach in \textit{Aufbau} (New York), September 6, 1946, p. 40.
struck Jews who walked up to a killing site and for the first time gazed into a mass grave half-filled with the bloodied corpses of those who had preceded them.

The fifth reaction was automatic compliance. Much has been said and much has been written about the Judenräte, the informers, the Jewish police, the Kapo—in short, all those persons who deliberately and as a matter of policy co-operated with the Germans. But these collaborators do not interest us so much as the masses of Jews who reacted to every German order by complying with it automatically. To understand the administrative significance of this compliance, we have to see the destruction process as a composite of two kinds of German measures: those which perpetrated something upon the Jews and involved only action by Germans, such as the drafting of decrees, the running of deportation trains, shooting, or gassing, and those which required the Jews to do something, for instance, the decrees or orders requiring them to register their property, obtain identification papers, report at a designated place for labor or deportation or shooting, submit lists of persons, pay fines, deliver up property, publish German instructions, dig their own graves, and so on. The successful execution of these latter measures depended on action by the Jews. Only when one realizes how large a part of the destruction process consisted of the fulfilment of these measures can one begin to appraise the role of the Jews in their own destruction.

If, therefore, we look at the whole Jewish reaction pattern, we notice that in its two salient features it is an attempt to avert action and, failing that, automatic compliance with orders. Why is this so? Why did the Jews act in this way? The Jews attempted to tame the Germans as one would attempt to tame a wild beast. They avoided “provocations” and complied instantly with decrees and orders. They hoped that somehow the German drive would spend itself.

This hope was founded on a two-thousand-year-old experience. In exile the Jews had always been in a minority; they had always been in danger; but they had learned that they could avert danger and survive destruction by placating and appeasing their enemies. Even in ancient Persia an appeal by Queen Esther was more effective than the mobilization of an army. Armed resistance in the face of overwhelming force could end only in disaster.

Thus, over a period of centuries the Jews had learned that in order to survive they had to refrain from resistance. Time and again they were attacked; they endured the Crusades, the Cossack uprisings, and the Czarist persecution. There were many casualties in these times of stress, but always the Jewish community emerged once again like a rock from a receding tidal wave. The Jews had never really been annihilated. After surveying the damage, the survivors had always proclaimed in affirmation of their strategy the triumphant slogan, “The Jewish people lives [Am Yisraal Cha’af].” This experience was so ingrained in the Jewish consciousness as to achieve the force of law. The Jewish people could not be annihilated.

Only in 1941, 1942, and 1943 did the Jewish leadership realize that, unlike the pogroms of past centuries, the modern machine-like destruction process would engulf European Jewry. But the realization came too late. A two-thousand-year-old lesson could not be unlearned; the Jews could not make the switch. They were helpless.

Let us not suppose, however, that compliance was easy. If it was difficult for the Germans to kill, it was harder still for the Jews to die. Compliance is a course of action which becomes in-
creasingly drastic in a destruction process. It is one thing to comply with an order to register property but quite another to obey orders in front of a grave. The two actions are part of the same habit—the Jews who registered their property were also the ones who lined up to be killed. The Jews who lined up on a killing site were the ones who had registered their property. Yet these two activities are very different in their effects. Submission is altogether more burdensome in its last stages than in its beginning, for as one goes on, more and more is lost. Finally, in the supreme moment of crisis the primeval tendency to resist aggression breaks to the surface; resistance then becomes an obstacle to compliance, just as compliance is an obstacle to resistance. In the Jewish case the cooperation reaction was the stronger one until the end. The Jews consequently dealt with their resistance in much the same way as the Germans dealt with their consciences.

The major obstructions faced by the Jews in their course of submission were never physical ones. No major administrative encumbrances were encountered by the surrendering victims. Only a resistance organization with sufficient power to interfere with surrender can erect such obstructions. This kind of resistance organization could not be formed, and this kind of organized resistance could therefore not occur. However, there were significant psychological blocks on the path to capitulation, blocks which revealed themselves clearly in the victims' repressions and rationalizations.

People do not easily accept the fact that they are going to be killed; if they have the know-how to resist, they will defend themselves as best they can. If, on the other hand, they have unlearned the art of resistance, they will repress their knowledge of the true situation and will attempt to go on as though life could not change. The Jews could not resist. In complying with German orders they therefore tried, to the utmost of their ability, to ignore all evidence of danger and to forget all intimation of death. They pretended that nothing unusual was happening to them, and that belief became so crucial that they did anything to perpetuate it.

One is struck by the fact that the Germans repeatedly employed very crude deceptions and ruses. The Jews were bluffed with "registrations" and "resettlements," with "haths" and "inhalations." At each stage of the destruction process the victims thought that they were going through the last stage. And so it appears that one of the most gigantic hoaxes in world history was perpetrated on five million people noted for their intellect. But were these people really fooled? Or did they deliberately fool themselves?

We have evidence that even in the absence of misleading promises the Jewish victims managed to repress their awareness of catastrophe and to substitute for that knowledge a mere illusion. In survivors' accounts we find long descriptions of the elaborate educational programs for the children, and one survivor tells us that in the closing days of the Kaunas ghetto the slogan of the victims was "life for an hour is also life [A sho gelebt is och gelebt]."

The Jews, in short, did not always have to be deceived; they were capable of deceiving themselves; the Jewish repressive mechanism could work independently and automatically. In the minutes of the Vienna Jewish war invalids' conferences we discover the same significant absence of direct references to death and killing centers that we have already noted in German correspondence. The Jewish documents abound with such roundabout expres-

sions as “favored transport” (meaning Theresienstadt transport), “I see black,” “to tempt fate,” “final act of the drama,” etc. The direct word is lacking.

Moreover, the attempt to repress unbearable thoughts was characteristic not only of the ghetto community but of the killing center itself. In Auschwitz the inmates employed a special terminology of their own for killing operations: a crematory was called a “bakery”; a man who could no longer work — and who was therefore destined for the gas chamber — was designated a “Moslem”; and the depot holding the belongings of the gassed was named “Canada.”

These, it must be emphasized, are not Nazi terms; they are expressions by the victims. They are the counterparts of the Nazi vocabulary, and, like the German euphemisms, they were designed to blot out visions of death.

There were moments, of course, when the issue could not be evaded, when forgetting was no longer effective. In such moments of crisis the victims, like the perpetrators, resorted to rationalizations. The Jews, too, had to justify their actions. It is interesting to note how the two principal rationalizations emerged directly from the repressive pattern.

The Germans were notably successful in deporting Jews by stages, for always those who remained behind could reason that it was necessary to save the many. The operation of that psychology may be observed in the Vienna Jewish community, which concluded a deportation “agreement” with the Gestapo, with the “understanding” that six categories of Jews would not be deported.

Again, the Warsaw ghetto Jews argued in favor of co-operation and against resistance on the ground that the Germans would deport sixty thousand Jews but not hundreds of thousands. The bisection phenomenon occurred also in Salonika, where the Jewish leadership co-operated with the German deportation agencies upon the assurance that only “Communist” elements from the poor sections would be deported, while the “middle class” would be left alone. That fatal arithmetic was also applied in Vilna, where Judenrat chief Gens declared: “With a hundred victims I save a thousand people. With a thousand I save ten thousand.”

In situations where compliance with death orders could no longer be rationalized as a life-saving measure there was still one more justification: the argument that with rigid, instantaneous compliance unnecessary suffering was eliminated, unnecessary pain avoided, the necessary torture reduced. The entire Jewish community, and particularly the Jewish leadership, now concentrated all its efforts in one direction — to make the ordeal bearable, to make death easy.

This effort is reflected in the letter which the Jewish Council in Budapest sent to the Hungarian Interior Minister on the eve of the deportations: “We emphatically declare that we do not seek this audience in order to lodge complaints about the merit of the measures adopted, but merely ask that they be carried out in a humane spirit.”

The effort is also illustrated in the following statement, which the chief of the Reich Association of the Jews in

16. See pp. 278–82.
22. See pp. 541–42.
Germany, Rabbi Leo Baeck, made after the war:

I made it a principle to accept no appointments from the Nazis and to do nothing which might help them. But later, when the question arose whether Jewish orderlies should help pick up Jews for deportation, I took the position that it would be better for them to do it, because they could be more gentle and helpful than the Gestapo and make the ordeal easier. It was scarcely in our power to oppose the order effectively. 23

When Baeck was in Theresienstadt, an engineer who had escaped from Auschwitz informed him about the gassings. Baeck decided not to pass on this information to anyone in the ghetto city because "living in the expectation of death by gassing would only be the harder." 24

The supreme test of the compliance reaction came in front of the grave; yet here, too, the Jews managed to console themselves. From one of the numerous German eyewitness reports comes the following typical passage:

The father was holding the hand of a boy about ten years old and was speaking to him softly; the boy was fighting his tears. The father pointed to the sky, stroked his head, and seemed to explain something to him. . . . I remember a girl, slim and with black hair, who passed close to me, pointed to herself, and said, "Twenty-three." . . . The people, completely naked, went down some steps which were cut in the clay wall of the pit and clambered over the heads of the people lying there, to the place where the SS-man directed them. Then they lay down in front of the dead or injured people; some caressed those who were still alive and spoke to them in a low voice. Then I heard a series of shots. 25

The German annihilation of the European Jews was the world's first completed destruction process. For the first time in the history of Western civilization the perpetrators had overcome all administrative and moral obstacles to a killing operation. For the first time, also, the Jewish victims — caught in the strait jacket of their history — plunged themselves physically and psychologically into catastrophe. The destruction of the Jews was thus no accident. When in the early days of 1933 the first civil servant wrote the first definition of a "non-Aryan" into a civil service ordinance, the fate of European Jewry was sealed.

The DESTRUCTION of the EUROPEAN JEWS

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