

**LAWLESSNESS IN THE OCCUPIED
SOVIET TERRITORIES DURING
WORLD WAR II**

**Ben Hanson
Bachelor of Arts in History**

Statement of Presentation

This thesis is presented as part of the requirements for the Honours degree of Bachelor of Arts in History at Murdoch University.

June 2017

I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains, as its main content, work that has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary educational institution, including Murdoch.

Signed:

Full name: Benjamin Elliot Hanson

Student Number: 31859487

Date:

Copyright Acknowledgement Form

I acknowledge that a copy of this thesis will be held at the Murdoch University Library.

I understand that, under the provisions of s51.2 of the Copyright Act 1968, all or part of this thesis may be copied without infringement of copyright where such a reproduction is for the purposes of study and research.

This statement does not signal any transfer of copyright away from the author.

Signed:

Full Name of Degree: Bachelor of Arts with Honours in History

Thesis Title: Lawlessness in the Occupied Soviet Territories During World War II

Author: Ben Hanson

Year: 2017

ABSTRACT

Members of both the German counterinsurgency forces and Soviet partisans terrorised the civilians of the occupied Soviet territories during World War II. At times, fighters of either force robbed, sexually assaulted and killed civilians. The nature of the rear-area security war was such that these actions could be treated as legitimate acts of war rather than wanton crimes. This thesis seeks to explain these crimes by exploring its preconditions. Both the German and Soviet regimes can be understood to have deliberately undermined the restraints that would have helped prevent these crimes from occurring. Judicial restraints were nullified with the war on the frontlines distancing itself from international law and the norms of war. Psychological and moral restraint was undermined with both regimes' official ideologies conceiving of the occupied civilians as innately criminal. Finally, a further aspect of judicial restraint was countered as fighters were not heavily punished for individualistic crimes against the civilian population.

With these restraints removed, the overwhelming picture of the rear areas is one of lawlessness. Fighters from both forces of the security war had absolute authority over the occupied civilians and often exploited them to a horrific degree. Both forces can be seen as having converged against the civilian population and a full understanding of the occupied experience seems incomplete without recognition of this. This convergence also highlights similarities between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union with both, otherwise-opposed, ideologies manifesting themselves in comparable ways in the rear areas.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page.....	1
Statement of Presentation.....	3
Copyright Acknowledgement Form.....	4
Abstract.....	5
Acknowledgements.....	7
Introduction.....	8
I, A CRIMINAL WAR: THE NEGATION OF JUDICIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL RESTRAINT.....	19
II, CRIMINAL AND ALIEN ELEMENTS: THE UNDERMINING OF MORAL RESTRAINT.....	32
III, AUTONOMY, CHOICE AND DISCIPLINE.....	40
IV, THE RESULT.....	49
V, THE IMPLICATIONS.....	55
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	58

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to start by sincerely thanking those close to me for their constant support over the last year.

I would also like to acknowledge Murdoch University's history faculty, for their faultless assistance in bringing me to this stage. Particularly, Sandra Wilson and Dean Aszkielowicz have both gladly offered their advice over the years.

Finally, I would like to thank my supervisor, Andrew Webster, for his guidance in what I reassure myself to be the gruelling first steps to any historian's career. Andrew's help has always been thoughtful and honest, and it is truly appreciated.

INTRODUCTION

Philosopher A. C. Grayling attests that war creates a moral space beyond the realms of regular human life, with otherwise reprehensible actions being committed under their cover.¹ The atrocities committed by the German security divisions and Soviet partisan bands in the occupied Soviet Union between 1941 and 1945 are tragically not uncommon. Conflict is deeply synonymous with atrocity in our modern age. Yet it must be remembered that this was not always so. The conduct of the Axis invasion of the USSR would have been near unrecognisable as war, by the extent and pitch of its aims and violence, if observed by an eighteenth century visitor accustomed to inter-state conflicts between the European powers.² In the words of Richard Evans, Hitler's *Generalplan Ost* "proposed destruction on a scale never before contemplated in human history."³ The excesses of the war, being first perpetrated in Poland, were far beyond what had been experienced on the Western Front just a year earlier.

The radicalisation of warfare was an intentional product of the central commands of both Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. The depravity of the frontlines infected the operational norms of those involved in the rear-area security war. German occupation forces and Soviet partisans warred within a place beyond morality, necessity and law. Any action could be inflicted on the civilian population without need, without repercussions and without punishment. Civilians became exploitable chattel within the domains of warlords and gangsters, whose regimes had engineered the destruction of any restraints that would otherwise curb their actions. Not only were these regimes mostly unwilling to identify where atrocities were committed outside of war aims, they were also simply unable to do so. The excesses of both the security units and the partisans were so intrinsically tied to the states that had armed them that individualistic crimes were wholly indistinguishable from official orders.

For a civilian living in the occupied territories of the Soviet Union, it mattered little if the soldiers that entered the town were from German security divisions or the Soviet partisans. At times, both rounded up and executed hostages, and both ensured the starvation and freezing of others by razing property and confiscating all food stocks. Simultaneously, individual acts of robbery, sexual violence and murder were inflicted on the occupied civilians on a daily basis. These absurdly-boundless actions made a mockery of the official

¹ A. C. Grayling, *War: An Enquiry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), first introduced on page 10.

² Truman O. Anderson, "Germans, Ukrainians and Jews: Ethnic Politics in Heeresgebiet Süd, June-December 1941," *War in History* 7, no. 3 (2000), 326.

³ Evans, *The Third Reich At War*, (New York: The Penguin Press, 2009), 174.

ideologies of both forces. Rape was one of the many offences by German security divisions against those that Nazi ideology would regard as *Untermensch*, sub-human. Soviet partisans similarly exploited the same civilian population that other members of the resistance believed they should be protecting. These were above all individualistic, opportunistic crimes under the guise of legitimate warfare. When the crimes of each force are compared, the overwhelming impression is that the forces converged against a single target: the civilian population. This convergence is paradoxically in spite of the radically opposed ideologies of each state, as well as the profoundly contrasting way that each force conceived of itself. On an individual level, however, members of each force seemed to share perceptions of themselves and of their victims that harmonised with their counterparts in the opposing force.

Historians have considered this convergence in the past but the event requires further contemplation. Richard Overy encapsulates the position of the civilians when he explains that the partisans' "victims were to be found not only among the German occupiers but among the ordinary Soviet people, who came to fear their own side almost as much as they did the enemy."⁴ Similarly, Truman Anderson aptly details that the civilian population appeared "willing to obey whichever antagonist appeared most credible at a given time."⁵ Kate Brown's *A Biography of No Place* ends with a discussion of the ongoing conflict between the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) and the Soviet state between 1945 and 1953. The way Brown presents the post-Second World War activity is significant as it adheres to this essay's conception of the rear-area security war. Brown explains: "It was an extended feud, an unforgiving war of attrition in which bands of NKVD special units and UPA guerrillas haunted the forests, terrorizing each other and the civilian population."⁶ In line with Brown's focus, Snyder's *Bloodlands* brilliantly characterises the civilians as caught between the two regimes. The security war's double-victimisation of the occupied civilians is exemplified in his explanation of how each force recruited from the civilian population:

By early 1943, the people of Belarus, especially the young men, were caught in a deadly competition between German forces and Soviet partisans that made nonsense of the ideologies of both sides ... For the Belarusians who ended up fighting and dying on one side or the other, it was very often a matter of chance, a question of who

⁴ Richard Overy, *Russia's War* (London: Penguin Books, 1999), 143.

⁵ Truman Anderson, "Incident at Baranivka: German Reprisals and the Soviet Partisan Movement in Ukraine, October-December 1941," *The Journal of Modern History* 71, no. 3 (1999), 622.

⁶ Kate Brown, *A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 223.

was in the village when the Soviet partisans or the German police appeared on their recruiting missions, which often simply involved press-ganging the young men.⁷

Snyder's thesis harmonises with the arguments of this essay. His concept of the convergence of the two states, rather than them paralleling one another, rightly asserts that the word parallel "suggests that they don't touch."⁸ Snyder follows Vasily Grossman in recognising that both Nazism and Stalinism were built on "their ability to deprive groups of human beings of their right to be regarded as human",⁹ and this victimised the millions of civilians between the two capitals.

The argument here takes its start from the insights of Snyder, that discussions of civilian's experiences are incomplete without the concept of convergence. If a historian does discuss convergence, it is often not given the emphasis that it deserves, as wholly representative of the civilian experience. Each crime that either force committed against the civilians has a nearly identical counterpart committed by the other side. This is despite the vast differences between each force at face value. The question remains insufficiently explored, despite having its constituent parts well investigated by numerous historians: Why did this convergence occur? In attempt to answer this question, this study is to be a distillation, rather than a synthesis, of the event's current historical consensus, with a renewed attempt to understand its implications.

While the narrative of simultaneous victimisation tells us about the targets of exploitation, there is an interwoven narrative which illuminates more about the perpetrators. While it was the states themselves that facilitated, encouraged and rewarded crimes to be committed, it was individuals that had to commit them. As such, this is a study of the regimes that intended (or in the USSR's case, consented) to turn the conflict into an apocalyptic struggle. More importantly, however, this is a study of the individuals that exploited the lawlessness of the rear areas to their own benefit. The nature of the occupied USSR during the Second World War, this temporal-spatial zone, is better understood by the actions that individuals took on their own, without orders, rather than those actions which were directly insisted upon by superiors. Rather than a question of what evil can be committed under the command of authority, the rear-area security war suggests what evil can be committed when the opportunity arises.

⁷ Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (London: Vintage, 2015), 243, 244.

⁸ "New Views on the Holocaust and 1980s Britain" *History Extra* (London: Immediate Media Co. (BBC), October 10, 2015), <http://www.historyextra.com/podcast/Holocaust-Thatcher-Britain>.

⁹ Snyder, *Bloodlands*, 387.

This study is a thematic history of the rear-area security war from June 1941, with the Axis invasion of the USSR, to late 1944. This latter date has little significance as instability persisted in the region well after 1945 (such as with the aforementioned UPA-USSR conflict). It was by 1944, however, that most occupation zones had been entirely retaken by the USSR, with Soviet partisans being drafted into the Red Army or assigned to what can broadly be defined as reconstruction, such as local law enforcement or in labour battalions. The focus here is on the occupied territories of the USSR, such as *Reichskommissariat Ukraine* and *Reichskommissariat Ostland* (Belarus and the Baltic states), as it was in this space that security and partisan forces most resembled one another. Other resistance movements, such as those in the Balkans and modern-day Poland, differed from the Soviet-German theatre enough to warrant a separate investigation. For one, forces like the UPA, the *Armia Krajowa*, or the *Četnik* movement, were fighting for the idea of a state, or a state that had been defeated. Although the entirety of Ukraine had been occupied, the central Soviet command was still in control of armies in the field, as opposed to the Polish government-in-exile.

Language restrictions on my own part have restricted the sources of this essay to English-language material. Similarly, having completed this work in Perth, Australia, has limited archival access to the various digital databases available for German and Soviet study. For the Third Reich, these databases include the Documents on German Foreign Policy series, particularly the incomplete Volume D, covering up to late 1941. The Harvard Law School Library's Nuremberg Trials Project has also been used for its translated, digitised documents. Primary sources for the Soviet side have been used from the Harvard Project on the Soviet Social System, as well as from the collection of English-language survivor interviews in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum online database. While the sources used from the latter of these databases are almost entirely from partisan members that were also Jews, the majority of those that contribute to this essay report no maltreatment for this. Although other historical works have uncovered numerous cases of partisan anti-semitism, alongside the USSR's mistreatment of ethnic minorities, the interviewees that add to this essay were overwhelmingly considered by their peers to be partisans first and Jews second. Their experience can be considered as representative of the rest of their partisan band's regardless of their individual demographic within them.¹⁰

These Soviet sources also deserve special mention as they must be vetted more carefully than those available for the German experience. The majority of those available in the two aforementioned databases are memoirs and interviews by contemporary actors,

¹⁰ For a thorough discussion of Jewish experience in partisan bands, see Alexander Statiev, "Soviet Partisan Violence Against Soviet Civilians: Targeting Their Own," *Europe Asia Studies* 66 no. 9 (2014), 1537-1540.

recorded many years after the war. As such, these sources are only referred to when the validity of their content is highly probable, adheres to current scholarly consensus or corroborates the findings of other similar primary sources. Deviation from this rule is reserved for self-criticism and credence given to rival organisations. While it is more difficult to trust decade-old benign recollections of one's own actions, it is more reasonable to consider moments of self-criticism and the rare concessions of praise of one's past enemies as closer to an unedited recounting of the event.¹¹

Although we will be focusing on self-serving, opportunistic crimes, offences that were committed under official orders are of enormous significance as they set the tone for the war behind the frontlines. The highest echelons of the German and Soviet states encouraged the war to be fought on a deeply criminal level, where ever-intensifying savagery was to be accepted as the norm. The official ideologies of both the Nazi and the Stalinist systems conceived of the occupied civilians as punishable without evidence, as well as without guilt on the part of the executioner. This facet of each state's ideology had a resounding impact on the conduct of the rear-area security war, with both forces enjoying almost-limitless authority. The final piece of this study is a discussion of each force's disciplinary systems. The resounding conclusion is that not only did individualistic offences go unpunished, individuals were also able to restrain their *own* conduct without punishment. The forces of the security war were able to determine their own conduct to a great extent, and yet the exploitation of the civilian population was an extremely common choice.

The historiography of both the *Wehrmacht* (the German armed forces) and the Soviet partisans has dramatically evolved since World War II. The historical narratives of both forces began with what can be now recognised as severe misrepresentations. These histories were seized by authors that wished to present a certain public face for the forces in question. While the messages of these first-wave histories undoubtedly remain true for a section of the *Wehrmacht* and the partisans, they certainly no longer resonate with the majority of those that took part in the rear-area security war. The contentions of these first histories endured for decades, being challenged and confronted piecemeal until receiving their virtual deathblow in the 1990s. The evolution of the *Wehrmacht* narrative began as a gradual process, requiring the inheritors of the Third Reich's past, the German people, to begin to interrogate their role in the war. This process, known as *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, the coming to terms with the past, began in the 1960s with a few brave individuals, and was also an outcome of the

¹¹ See Alexander Brakel, "The Relationship Between Soviet Partisans and the Civilian Population in Belorussia Under German Occupation, 1941-4," in *War in a Twilight World, Partisan and Anti-Partisan Warfare in Eastern Europe, 1939-1945*, ed. Ben Shepherd and Juliette Pattinson (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 83.

Historikerstreit, the “historians’ dispute”, in the 1980s. This coming to terms with the past effectively climaxed with the opening of Hamburg museum exhibit, “War of Annihilation: Crimes of the German *Wehrmacht* 1941-1944” in 1995.

Meanwhile, the Soviet partisans’ narrative stagnated, held in stasis like the USSR itself, until the opening of the Russian archives in 1991. Soviet censoring did briefly relax at times, and this allowed for dialogue to begin on the true nature of USSR’s wartime conduct. However, these periods of questioning were brief. Despite major advances in the partisans’ historiography, there are still obstacles to a post-Soviet coming-to-terms-with-the-past today. The revelations of the both the Third Reich and the Soviet Union’s historiographies have failed to have their implications given the focus that they deserve, partly because of the legacy of their earlier historiographies. One major obstacle of these legacies appears to be the reluctance to conceive of both the *Wehrmacht* and the Soviet partisans as necessarily comparable. However, this comparison is vital for a satisfactory understanding of life in the occupied Soviet territories during World War II. By making this comparison, we settle the understanding of the two forces back into the same position that they were often viewed by those civilians that were caught between them.

The true conduct of the *Wehrmacht* was intentionally obscured after the war. The actions of German frontline forces, as well as those involved in the rear-area counterinsurgency war, the *Banditkampf*, were romanticised for several decades. The *Wehrmacht* was portrayed as an honourable fighting force, unsullied by the atrocities that characterised the SS and the Nazi Party. This popular conception of the army saw the armed forces as an apolitical weapon, untarnished by the ideology of the fanatics that wielded it.¹² Within this framework, the counterinsurgency war in the eastern front’s rear areas was argued to be a just conflict against a savage, wholesale uprising.¹³ The post-war memoirs of *Wehrmacht* personnel were a generous contributor to this conception of the war, with a great host of memoirs displaying what Weinberg aptly regards as “an astonishing degree of ignorance, actual or pretended” of the military’s role in the Holocaust,¹⁴ in tandem with the atrocities of the *Banditkampf*. The SS were utilised as a moral scapegoat for the generation of Germans that had to rebuild after 1945, as well as the descendants of theirs that were embracing the identity of Germany as something other than Nazi. The spirit of de-

¹² Ben Shepherd, “‘Unprecedented, Merciless and Unrelenting Harshness’: Fanaticism and Brutalisation in Wehrmacht Anti-Partisan Warfare in the Soviet Union,” in *Fanaticism and Conflict in the Modern Age*, ed. Matthew Hughes and Gaynor Johnson (London: Frank Cass, 2005), 63.

¹³ Ben Shepherd, “The Clean Wehrmacht, The War of Extermination, and Beyond,” *Historical Journal* 52, no. 2 (2009), 461.

¹⁴ Gerhard L. Weinberg, *A World At Arms, A Global History of World War II* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 926. Well known *Wehrmacht* memoirs include Erich von Manstein’s *Lost Victories*, as well as Franz Halder’s *The Halder Diaries*.

Nazification in West Germany was effectively not only to remove the legacy of Nazism, but to replace it with a conception of Germany as a democratic ally to the West, on the frontline against communism. The myth of the clean *Wehrmacht* was indirectly fostered within this space, with the US government playing an active role in rehabilitation of Germany's image.¹⁵ The idea of the clean *Wehrmacht* was similarly constructed in British post-war memory, with a tenacious ennoblement of the *Heer*, the German army, through the figure of Erwin Rommel.¹⁶ While the image of the clean *Wehrmacht* does resonate with a stratum of its personnel, this grain of truth is vastly outweighed by the mass of contradicting cases.

The first stage of the Soviet partisans' historiography shared the same hallmarks. Historians writing from within the Soviet Union portrayed the partisans as a state-wide uprising, a cohesive resistance motivated by their communist loyalties. Partisan bands were said to have enjoyed popular support, surviving off the devoted patronage of the occupied populace. The conclusions of these historians were that the partisans greatly contributed to the Axis' repulsion from the USSR. The official Soviet histories politicized the partisans' role, portraying them as exemplars in the fight against fascism, rather than focusing on Nazism.¹⁷ Early Western histories of the Eastern Front either adhere to the Soviet line or wholly avoid the region. Many follow a Churchillian, Western-centric account of the war, prioritising conflict zones that the British themselves were active in. Publications such as Wilmot's *The Struggle for Europe*,¹⁸ Calcorossi and Wint's *Total War*¹⁹ and Taylor's *The Second World War*²⁰ discuss virtually every major European guerrilla group other than those active on the Eastern Front, on which they provide little detail, if any at all.

Part of the neglect of the East was certainly that Western historians could only access the archives of the Western Allies. Equally powerful, however, was the reluctance of some writers, such as Churchill himself, to venerate what appeared to be an increasingly hostile and bold rival, the USSR.²¹ The Cold War was, in this way, both a physical and an ideological barrier to the progression of the Soviet partisans' historiography. If a non-Soviet publication

¹⁵ See Brian C. Etheridge, "The Desert Fox, Memory Diplomacy and the German Question in Early Cold War America," *Diplomatic History* 32, no. 2 (2008), 207-238 for a compelling view of US identity shaping in the early Cold War.

¹⁶ See Patrick Major, "'Our Friend Rommel': The Wehrmacht as a 'Worthy Enemy' in Postwar British Popular Culture," *German History* 26, no. 4 (2008), 520-535.

¹⁷ Alexandra Goujon, "Memorial Narratives of WWII Partisans and Genocide in Belarus," *East European Politics and Societies* 24, no. 1 (2010), 6.

¹⁸ Chester Wilmot, *The Struggle For Europe* (New York: Harper, 1952).

¹⁹ Peter Calvocoressi and Guy Wint, *Total War: Causes and Courses of the Second World War* (New York: Penguin, 1972).

²⁰ A. J. P. Taylor, *The Second World War: An Illustrated History* (New York: Putnam, 1975).

²¹ David Reynolds, *In Command of History: Churchill Fighting and Writing the Second World War* (London: Allen Lane, 2004), 311.

from this early period *does* cover the partisan war, the reader is at risk of simply encountering inaccuracies. As we are presented with in Kamenetsky's *Hitler's Occupation of Ukraine*,²² the nature of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) is seriously misrepresented. What Kamenetsky does include on the Soviet partisans does remarkably adhere to the current historical consensus, though this is not the focus of this work and is given very little attention overall. Although omissions are expected in early histories, and Kamenetsky's work is still noteworthy, this early publication should not be read without warning. The UPA are presented as purely honourable fighters without mention of the group's ideological harmony with Nazism, their assistance of the *Einsatzgruppen* (the "task forces" directed against Jews) killings, their exterminationist reprisals or their subsequent genocidal campaign in 1943 Volhynia.²³ Although the Ukrainian nationalist partisans are not to be a focus of this essay, Kametsky's 1956 publication is highly representative of the first-wave histories of the eastern partisan movements.

The historiography of the *Wehrmacht* was increasingly challenged until its total shift in the 1990s. The historical methodology of *Alltagsgeschichte*, or everyday history, of the 1970s and 1980s attempted to address the increasingly evident gaps in the historical understanding by a focus on those within the otherwise-anonymous institutions of the Reich. The aim of this when applied to the *Wehrmacht* was to investigate the extent to which ordinary soldiers had harmonised with Nazi ideology, and the systemic mechanisms that achieved this. The *Historikerstreit* of the 1990s represented the general acceptance of the complicit-*Wehrmacht* narrative, at least in scholarly circles. Historians that may have previously argued for the idea of a clean *Wehrmacht* had now effectively accepted the army's role in the Holocaust. Their new position, however, was that the Holocaust should be seen no differently than the genocides perpetrated by other states in the past.²⁴ The *Historikerstreit* can be seen as a continuation of the postwar German identity debate, struggling with the Holocaust's moving historical consensus. The *Historikerstreit* was the last major attempt to salvage what Bosworth refers to as "a usable past" from the Third Reich, attempting once again to imbue Germany with moral distance from the Holocaust.²⁵ The 1995 Hamburg

²² Ihor Kamenetsky, *Hitler's Occupation of Ukraine, 1941-1944: A Study of Totalitarian Imperialism* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1956).

²³ See Timothy Snyder, "The Causes of Ukrainian-Polish Ethnic Cleansing 1943," *Past & Present* 179 (2003); Also, Olesya Khromeychuk, "Ukrainians in the German Armed Forces During the Second World War," *History* 100, no. 343 (2015) for one of the topic's leading scholars on Ukrainian collaboration.

²⁴ Omer Bartov, "Preface," in *The German Army and Genocide, Crimes Against Prisoners, Jews, and Other Civilians, 1939-1944*, ed. The Hamburg Institute for Social Research (New York, The New Press, 1999), 14.

²⁵ R. J. B. Bosworth, *Explaining Auschwitz and Hiroshima: History Writing and the Second World War 1945-1990* (London: Routledge, 1999), 74.

exhibition, “War of Annihilation: Crimes of the German *Wehrmacht*, 1941-1944”, along with articles such as “Obedience to Murder? The Hidden War of the German *Wehrmacht*”, by the weekly newspaper *Die Zeit*, brought the debate into the public sphere for the first time.²⁶

The official government position of several post-Soviet countries are yet to come to terms with their own past, intentionally obscuring further studies of the partisans. Government policy has guided a critical engagement with the past whenever it has occurred. Khrushchev's “thaw” during the 1950s and 1960s softened censorship in the interests of de-Stalinisation. A similar phenomena occurred again under Gorbachev with *perestroika* and *glasnost*, “restructuring” and “openness”, during the late 1980s and 1990s. Public debate was opened during these periods, and the fall of the Soviet Union with the subsequent, brief opening of the country’s archives, allowed for serious reinterpretation of the partisans’ role.²⁷ However, a reintroduction of censorship hampers the partisans’ historiography in Russia today with recent laws against the “rehabilitation of Nazism”. Introduced in May 2014, this bill criminalises the dissemination of intentionally false, or on commemorative holidays, disrespectful information about the USSR’s conduct during the Second World War. A similar set of restrictions were passed in Ukraine in the same month, criminalising the defaming of the Ukrainian Insurrection Army.²⁸ The ongoing task of accepting the past has a tangible impact on a full historical understanding, with first-hand archival material that would paradoxically violate these laws being closed to the public. The Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI) lists the material that is still inaccessible to the public:

Reports on immoral partisan actions (desertion, drunkenness, plunder of the local population, etc.); ... Documents on the execution of civilians by partisans (Finnish civilians, families of traitors, etc.); ... Information on the hostile attitude of the population towards partisans; ... Documents on conflicts among the commanders of partisan units.²⁹

In light of this, historian Alexander Brakel provides a useful discussion of archival study on the partisan movement in his essay’s contribution to *War in a Twilight World*. Brakel convincingly recommends using the archives of the rivals of the faction that the historian wishes to study. For example, seeking the uncommon but revealing times that the Polish *Armia Krajowa* gave a positive assessment of the *Armia Ludowa* or the UPA, or similarly

²⁶ Bartov, “Preface,” 14, 15.

²⁷ Goujon, “Memorial Narratives of WWII Partisans,” 7.

²⁸ See David R. Marples. “Anti-Soviet Partisans and Ukrainian Memory,” *East European Politics and Societies* 24, no. 1 (2010): 26-43; David R. Marples, “Stepan Bandera: The Resurrection of a Ukrainian National Hero,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 58, no. 4 (2006), 555-566 for one of the topic’s leading scholars on Ukraine’s politically-driven memory debate.

²⁹ Statiev, “Soviet Partisan Violence Against Soviet Civilians,” 1526.

when the Ukrainian nationalists gave a positive assessment of the Soviet partisans.³⁰ Where it is possible to see through the maligning of the enemy that is expected from primary sources, these records can provide an illuminating insight into their rivals. Among others, the current governments of Ukraine, Belarus and Russia each struggle with their country's role in the security war under German occupation. Having reviewed the primary source material first hand in order to determine what which archives were to be barred, these governments deny sufficient explanation to those civilians that were brutalised by the partisans under the guise of war.

The German counterinsurgency campaign is now widely acknowledged to have been an extension of the Holocaust. Simultaneously, the tremendous crimes that many Soviet partisans inflicted against their own people can be recognised as similar to the tactics of the Germans themselves. It seems that from the perspective of the civilians caught between them, the two rival forces effectively converged against a common enemy: the occupied peoples. For the civilians caught between the two warring forces, it did not matter if it was *Wehrmacht* security divisions or Soviet partisan bands that were entering their village from one day to the next; the outcome was often essentially the same. The civilians were stripped of their possessions, suffered sexual violence, had their property destroyed and members of their community executed. Examining the convergence of these atrocities is not to afford the groups moral equivalence but *practical* equivalence. As Christopher Browning posits in the introduction of *Ordinary Men*, "Explaining is not excusing; understanding is not forgiving."³¹ An understanding of this convergence helps explain not only each force's crimes, but also sheds extra light on the ideologies of both the Nazi and Soviet regimes, with both regimes being able to express themselves in the same way against the occupied civilians.

The first chapters of this study will cover the preconditions to the rear-area's lawlessness. Chapter I will focus on the systemic influences, whereby criminality was deliberately set as an innate facet of the war's conduct. The forces of the security war were granted judicial impunity, satisfying the most literal precondition to lawlessness. Chapter II will discuss each state's effort to nullify their soldiers' moral judgement. Just because soldiers have the ability to kill without punishment does not mean that they will do so. However, both ideology and substance abuse undermined these restraints. The final precondition to lawlessness will be discussed in Chapter III. This is the inability or unwillingness of each regime to punish their troops' excesses. Another considerable aspect of this is that soldiers were not punished for restraining their own actions either, indicating that they had some

³⁰ Brakel, "The Relationship Between Soviet Partisans and the Civilian Population," 83.

³¹ Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men, Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (London: Penguin Books, 2001), xviii.

choice to act in moderation if they wished to do so. Once the preconditions have been traced, Chapter IV will highlight the outcome and extent of lawlessness. Finally, Chapter V will consider this argument's impact on our understanding of the event, in both history and memory.

I

A CRIMINAL WAR: THE NEGATION OF JUDICIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL RESTRAINT

“Kriegsraeson geht vor Kreigsmanier”

German proverb, necessity in war overrules the manner of warfare.¹

The thunder of artillery on the morning of 22 June 1941 signalled the end of the German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact. In its place, this unannounced bombardment heralded the beginning of a savage war. The war’s criminality was quickly established by both regimes’ highest echelons of command. Any international laws governing the standards of warfare were wholly neglected by both Germany and the USSR, with atrocities being perpetuated under each power’s official orders. Any normative standards that would have otherwise influenced the treatment of civilians, soldiers and prisoners of war were intentionally undermined. Both Hitler, as well as Stalin in response, conceptualised of the conflict as a war of extermination, an existential conflict that would bring about the complete destruction of either people.² Atrocity was to become an official operational norm on the frontlines, and this atmosphere greatly contributed to what actions were deemed acceptable in the rear-area security war. Ideology fuelled excessive violence that, in turn, pushed the conflict to become what ideology had promised it would be.

The aims of the German invasion were inseparable from the Nationalist Socialist worldview. The USSR had been long marked as *Lebensraum*, living space, for German colonisation, and this process would be accomplished through the exploitation and extermination of the native populace. The extent of these goals was outlined in the official *Generalplan Ost*, which accounted for the deportation and death of between thirty-one and forty million civilians in Eastern Europe.³ The primary method to liquidate these civilians was the *Hunger Plan*, under which starvation in order to clear the way for the future German pioneers.⁴ The *Hunger Plan* was not an arbitrary vestige of ideology but also synchronized with Hitler’s and Göring’s beliefs of what would bring victory against the USSR.⁵ The collapse of the home front in 1917 left Hitler with an enduring paranoia of the dangers of a poorly fed home population; confiscated food would not only starve the native inhabitants but

¹ L. Oppenheim, *International Law: A Treatise, Vol. II: Disputes, War and Neutrality* 7th ed, ed. H. Lauterpacht (London: Longmans, 1952), 231.

² Overy, *Russia’s War*, 114.

³ Evans, *The Third Reich At War*, 173.

⁴ Snyder, *Bloodlands*, 162, 163; Evans, *The Third Reich At War*, 172, 173.

⁵ Snyder, *Bloodlands*, 170.

would also supplement the Reich's civilian and military rations.⁶ Germany's imports of food did initially lessen once Operation Barbarossa had begun, after the end of the huge amounts of food entering the Reich under the German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact trade deals. German civilian food rations increased by between twenty and twenty-five percent between 1941-1943 as a direct result of occupation requisitions.⁷ The result of this on the ground, however, was the starvation of three million Soviet citizens. In the words of one German soldier, the requisition groups resembled roving Huns, taking everything from an already impoverished populace.⁸

A deliberate effort was made by the German high command to harmonise *Ostheer* (the German Army operating in the east) conduct with Nazi ideology. The main tactic to achieve this goal was the removal of restraints that would have otherwise encouraged mercy. *Wehrmacht* forces were both relieved of judicial obligations, as well as were psychologically inured to atrocity. The negation of legal restraints began even before the launching of Operation Barbarossa with the "criminal orders", chief of which was the Commissar Order issued on 6 June 1941. These directives called for the immediate execution of political figures, partisans and Jews, as well as ordering collective punishments against the local populace if suspects were not found for partisan offenses.⁹ These decrees were subsequently adhered to by the vast majority of German commanders on the Eastern Front. Only a diminutive number of generals instructed their troops against the execution of commissars and civilians, such as Field Marshal Fedor von Bock and Lieutenant-Colonel Henning von Tresckow.¹⁰ Their comrades-in-arms had almost unconditionally consented to the conflict's radicalisation. In the words of General Erich Hoepener to his troops on 2 May 1941, the coming conflict was to be "carried out with unprecedented harshness."¹¹

Complicity in atrocity was simultaneously forced upon *Ostheer* units, ensuring a downward spiral of complicity with Nazi war aims. Merely participating in the war in the east, by means of not refusing orders or surrendering to the enemy, personally embroiled members of the military in war crimes. To simply ensure that the division was sufficiently fed

⁶ Grier, "The Eastern Front in World War II," *European History Quarterly* 44, no. 1 (2014), 105; Snyder, *Bloodlands*, 161; Evans, *The Third Reich At War*, 173.

⁷ Calvocoressi and Wint, *Total War*, 254.

⁸ Rutherford, "One Senses Danger From All Sides, Especially From Fanatical Civilians': The 121st Infantry Division and Partisan and Partisan War, June 1941-April 1942," in *War in a Twilight World, Partisan and Anti-Partisan Warfare in Eastern Europe, 1939-1945*, ed. Ben Shepherd and Juliette Pattinson (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 70.

⁹ Anderson, "Germans, Ukrainians and Jews," 326, 337, 338; Evans, *The Third Reich At War*, 175, 176.

¹⁰ Evans, *The Third Reich At War*, 176.

¹¹ Evans, *The Third Reich At War*, 176.

meant the indirect death of Soviet civilians by starvation.¹² At the same time, Jews were used as an object of demonstration to psychologically condition onlookers,¹³ as well as to evoke the anti-Semitism of the occupied populations.¹⁴ Anti-Semitism was common before the invasion, being expressed in pogroms, though the Jews were now used as a model for what conduct would be acceptable under the new regime.¹⁵ Kate Brown thoughtfully places the reader into the position of the civilians that witnessed the start of the Holocaust in their own country:

It was easy to pick out the Untermensch among the straggling, tattered, and starved columns of Jews ... An inhabitant of German-occupied Ukraine could only hope and begin to believe that there indeed was something inherently wrong with Jews, something that justified the horrifying humiliation and abuse. Hatred of the weak and victimized served to protect people from the thought that persecution and death was arbitrary and could strike (them) randomly.¹⁶

The outcome of this demonstration was comparable for both the invaders and the occupied civilians. Jewish lives were now displayed to be worthless and violence against them would go unpunished, if not rewarded.

Civilians that collaborated with the invaders were affected by the same murderous conditioning as the German forces. Many had initially welcomed the invaders as their saviours from Soviet rule. Collaboration was hoped to be the first step to the creation of an independent state. Wolodymyr Stachiw, who would later become the Plenipotentiary Extraordinary of the short-lived independent Ukraine, wrote directly to Hitler just one day after the beginning of Operation Barbarossa. Stachiw was writing on behalf of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) when he offered his confidence that Germany would defeat the Soviet Union. Calling on Hitler to sanction Ukrainian independence, Stachiw beseeched the “champion of the ethnic principle” to “consolidate the new ethnic order of Eastern Europe”.¹⁷ Germans were similarly received with national flags, flowers, bread and salt in the newly-Soviet borderland regions, where armed fifth columnists took the invasion as an opportunity to revolt.¹⁸

¹² Snyder, *Bloodlands*, 170.

¹³ Anderson, “Germans, Ukrainians and Jews,” 328, 329.

¹⁴ Shepherd, ““Unprecedented, Merciless and Unrelenting Harshness,”” 71.

¹⁵ Overy, *Russia’s War*, 135, 142.

¹⁶ Brown, *A Biography of No Place*, 218.

¹⁷ Wolodymyr Stachiw to Adolf Hitler, Alfred Rosenberg, et al., June 23, 1941, in *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945: Series D (1937-1945) Volume XIII*, hereafter DGFP: D, XIII (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945), 6, 7.

¹⁸ David Motadel, “Islam and Germany’s War in the Soviet Borderlands, 1941-5,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 48, no. 4 (2013), 788; Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 193-198.

Those that volunteered or were drafted into German auxiliary units were tasked with the undesirable jobs in the rear-areas. This occurred from the very beginning of the campaign, with Lithuanian collaborators being armed and set loose on the population, just three days after Operation Barbarossa began.¹⁹ Operations such as the guarding of railway lines quickly escalated to combating Soviet partisans and punishing villages suspected of supporting the Soviets.²⁰ Similarly, wishing to avoid the psychological damage of executing civilians by firing squad, this part of the Final Solution was also increasingly tasked to the auxiliary Order Police.²¹ Securing one's own survival under the new regime may have encouraged placing one's own life before others, but this set a dark precedent for the collaborators. Killing former neighbours for the Germans destroyed the boundaries of which actions could be justified to preserve your own fate. Survival appears to have been above any deep loyalties to the Nazi cause, however. The German defeat at Stalingrad in February 1943 alerted the civilian population to the possibility of German defeat. Those employed by the German security forces deserted in droves, with ten thousand auxiliary policemen leaving German service in Ukraine between March and April 1943 alone.²² The various eastern guerrilla forces vied for the enlistment of these militia deserters, who offered these forces both the equipment and the training that they had received under the Germans.²³ The Soviet partisans operating in Belarus recruited up to twelve thousand of these deserters in early 1943. The weapons that they bolstered the partisan bands with may have been the exact same ones that had killed Soviet sympathisers and Jews just a short time earlier.²⁴

The importance of civilian collaboration is most important because of the later exodus of collaborators into partisan ranks. Just as following *Wehrmacht* orders often meant committing atrocities, collaborating with the occupation often meant killing civilians. Many of those that did so found themselves fighting under the Soviet banner before the end of the war. For these civilians, turning on their former commanders offered them a chance of atonement; a final chance to avoid suspicion once the USSR overturned the German occupation. That these civilian militia would soon fill Soviet ranks has resounding implications for the later crimes of the partisans. The simple wish to survive the German occupation desensitised many future partisans to the murder of defenceless civilians. In this way, German collaboration was the instrument by which the psychology of the Holocaust infiltrated partisan ranks.

¹⁹ Overy, *Russia's War*, 140.

²⁰ Brown, *A Biography of No Place*, 217.

²¹ Browning, *Ordinary Men*, 24, 25.

²² Snyder, "The Causes of Ukrainian-Polish Ethnic Cleansing," 218.

²³ Snyder, "The Causes of Ukrainian-Polish Ethnic Cleansing," 211.

²⁴ Snyder, *Bloodlands*, 242.

The destruction of judicial restraints was boundless on the Eastern Front, with international law being wholly overturned. Both powers upheld that the other was not eligible for the protection of Hague or Geneva law, the most recent of which was the 1907 Hague Convention and the 1929 Geneva Convention. The 1907 Hague Convention was largely declaratory for already-established laws and this was acknowledged during the post-war Nuremberg Trials.²⁵ However, the Hague Convention is still worth consulting to assess the Eastern Front's vast distance from international norms. Although there are crossovers, the Hague laws have historically limited the means and extent of warfare, with Geneva law focusing on humanitarian protections for those affected by conflict, such as civilians and prisoners. These conventions prohibit certain weapon types, such as projectiles that release fatal or disabling gases, as well as govern the treatment of prisoners of war and the requisitioning of material from occupied populations. Germany argued that the USSR was not under the protection of the 1929 Geneva laws as the USSR had not ratified the document. This argument was invalid, however, as the convention defined the obligations of its participants, not of their victims. On the contrary, the USSR had argued that Germany had negated any of the USSR's obligations by violating international law themselves, despite the 1929 Geneva laws being ratified by Weimar Germany.²⁶ The 1907 Hague Convention had been ratified by Tsarist Russia, and the USSR disseminated a protocol on 1 July 1941 for the treatment of POWs. These orders matched Hague requirements to a reasonable extent by the judgements of the German counterintelligence personnel that had intercepted a copy of it.²⁷

The stripping of international norms allowed the *Wehrmacht* to perpetrate the second great atrocity of the war, the killing of Soviet prisoners. Those that survived execution at the point of capture succumbed to starvation and disease in their millions; these men and women were herded into open fields, surrounded by barbed wire and left to die.²⁸ One report by the President of the Westphalia Land Labour Office highlighted the situation of the Soviet POWs to the Ruhr Coal-Mining Authority on 3 February 1942. Preceded by a request that these figures be kept confidential, the Labor Office estimated that fifteen thousand prisoners had been dying of typhus every day.²⁹ The mass deaths of Soviet POWs, whether directly or by

²⁵ Oppenheim, *International Law*, 229, 235.

²⁶ Colin D. Heaton, *Occupation and Insurgency: A Selection of the Hague and Geneva Conventions on the Eastern Front, 1939-1945*, ed. Steve Greer (New York: Algora Publishing, 2009), 45, 46.

²⁷ Mark Edele, "Take (No) Prisoners! The Red Army and German POWs, 1941-1943," *The Journal of Modern History* 88, no. 2, 348, 349.

²⁸ Overy, *Russia's War*, 112; Snyder, *Bloodlands*, 166; Evans, *The Third Reich At War*, 182, 183, 185; Bartov, *Germany's War and the Holocaust*, 8.

²⁹ Gaertner, Land Labour Office to Essen, Ruhr Coal Mining District Group, 3 February 1942, Evidence Code NI-5222, HLS Nuremberg Trials Project, Harvard Law School Library, <http://nuremberg.law.harvard.edu/documents/786-letter-to-the-ruhr?q=soviet#p.1>.

neglect continued until October 1941. It was at this point that forced labour was eked out of the few that still dared surrender to the Germans and survived out-of-hand execution.³⁰

The German forces were similarly bound by international law in the occupied rear areas, though this too was completely neglected. While Soviet partisans were obligated to act in accordance with the 1907 Hague Convention with their tactics against the invaders, it seems as though it was *domestic*, not international law that should have guided their conduct against their own people. The partisans were dealing with civilians that they regarded to still be Soviet citizens that were awaiting liberation. For the Germans, international law should have restricted the material requisitions as well as the services demanded from the occupied civilians and POWs, such as in military brothels and labour camps. International law mandated that private property beyond “arms, horses, military equipment and military papers” were not to be taken from prisoners or civilians.³¹ Similarly, services were not to be forced from of the population except for cases of military necessity.³² The Geneva Convention also stipulated that while prisoners could be employed for labour, this must be safe work and must not be for the production of war material. In addition, prisoner labour was required to be financially compensated for and had to adhere to the work hours of free civilians in that same region.³³

These protections were made a mockery of by Germany’s campaign. The German labour draft was an integral part of Germany’s occupational strategy in the eastern territories. Occupied regions were to be exploited to sustain the Reich, whether by material or by the enslavement of able-bodied workers. This draft was both to increase the Reich’s production and to deny potential manpower to the Soviets, when able-bodied men could otherwise be drafted into the partisans.³⁴ Rumours of the appalling conditions that these workers were subjected to quickly reached back to the occupied zones.³⁵ One contemporary complained about the state of his Russian workers, explaining that their “miserable” food allowance was

³⁰ Evans, *The Third Reich At War*, 184, 185; Bartov, *Germany’s War and the Holocaust*, 9, 10

³¹ *Extracts from The Hague and Geneva Conventions on the Laws of War (1907, 1929) Concerning the Treatment of Prisoners of War*, Evidence code NO-1171, HLS Nuremberg Trials Project, Harvard Law School Library, 3, <http://nuremberg.law.harvard.edu/documents/2972-extracts-from-the-hague?q=evidence:no%2A+hague#p.1>.

³² *Extracts from The Hague and Geneva Conventions*, NO-1171, 2.

³³ International Committee of the Red Cross. *Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War. Geneva, 27 July 1929*, Article 28 - 34. <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/Treaty.xsp?action=openDocument&documentId=0BDEDDDD046FDEBA9C12563CD002D69B1>.

³⁴ Slepian, “Partisans, Civilians and the Soviet State,” 43.

³⁵ Weinberg, *A World At Arms*, 431.

leaving them incapable of rudimentary tasks.³⁶ The slave-labour campaign intensified as the German army suffered defeats that they would not recover from. By March 1943, following the German defeat at Stalingrad, this labour drive was attempting to claim three thousand people a day from *Reichskommissariat* Ukraine.³⁷ At this exact time Fritz Sauckel, the Plenipotentiary for Labour Mobilisation, requested that the Führer increase the supply of foreign workers. In an unbelievable parody of reality, Sauckel explains “never before have foreign workers been so decently treated anywhere in the world as is being done by the German population”.³⁸ By the end of the war, children as young as ten were being forcibly taken to labour in the Reich. These slaves contributed to the 96% of involuntary labourers, all but two-hundred thousand of five million, that were working in Germany in 1944.³⁹

The Hague Convention effectively ruled that irregular forces, such as partisans, were only covered by the protections that it offered to regular soldiers if they conducted themselves *as regular soldiers*. This conduct was defined by the taking of orders from a superior, the open carrying of arms, the wearing of identification (an emblem, for example) and the partisans’ own observance of international law in their fight with the enemy. If any of these stipulations were not held, the irregular fighter was considered to be a war criminal acting outside of the authorisation of their state. Execution at the point of capture was considered to be a reasonable punishment for war criminals of this category.⁴⁰ The effect of these laws was that partisan war was virtually prohibited, as they denied partisan forces any potential of success.⁴¹ Despite ratifying (and thereby indicating that they agreed with) the 1907 Hague Convention, the USSR upheld that a partisan’s association with regular armed forces should provide them with the same legal protections as uniformed soldiers.⁴² The German occupation was not obligated to protect partisans that violated international requirements. However, the Hague did outlaw collective violence and the taking of civilian hostages,⁴³ both of which were horrendously violated by the occupation forces.

³⁶ Essen, Krupp Works, to Hupe, 14 March 1942, Evidence code D-316, HLS Nuremberg Trials Project, Harvard Law School Library, <http://nuremberg.law.harvard.edu/documents/3843-letter-to-dr-hupe?q=russian+workers#p.1>.

³⁷ Timothy Snyder, “The Causes of Ukrainian-Polish Ethnic Cleansing 1943,” *Past & Present* 179 (2003), 225.

³⁸ Fritz Sauckel, Plenipotentiary for Labour Mobilisation, to Hitler, 10 March 1943, Evidence code PS-407-II, HLS Nuremberg Trials Project, Harvard Law School Library, <http://nuremberg.law.harvard.edu/documents/3120-letter-to-hitler-concerning?q=evidence:%22PS-407-II%22#p.1>.

³⁹ Calvocoressi and Wint, *Total War*, 255.

⁴⁰ Oppenheim, *International Law*, 256, 257.

⁴¹ Heaton, *Occupation and Insurgency*, 37, 57; Anderson, “Incident at Baranivka,” 594.

⁴² Heaton, *Occupation and Insurgency*, 45.

⁴³ Anderson, “Incident at Baranivka,” 594.

German anti-partisan tactics had a long history of harshness and the eastern occupations were not spared this doctrine's extremities. The taking of hostages, execution of civilians and razing of property were all cemented in the German counterinsurgency doctrine by Helmuth von Moltke, Chief of the Prussian General Staff, in 1870.⁴⁴ The German army suffered from what would become a traumatic insurgency following the decisive defeat of the French army at Sedan in 1870.⁴⁵ Moltke's doctrine survived to 1945, with the underlying theme that rear-area pacification could only be achieved by beating the population into submission, rather than by a "hearts and minds" campaign.⁴⁶ Just as established by Moltke over half a century earlier, punishments on the Eastern Front were carried out against civilian centres with scant justification. *Wehrmacht* units performed civilian executions for a number of petty offences, such as admitting to being able to read or write, or failing to remove one's cap before a German official.⁴⁷ *Oberkommando des Heeres* (OKH), the Supreme High Command of the German Army, ruled that between fifty and one hundred civilians "should be executed for every German death."⁴⁸ These directives were widely followed, with the executions of randomly-selected males and the razing of entire villages as common tactics to punish the populace.⁴⁹ In Ukraine alone, two hundred and fifty villages and their inhabitants were destroyed under the justification of reprisals.⁵⁰ Although some commanders recognised the short-sightedness of indiscriminate killings, the overarching goal of the occupation was to have the populace fear the Germans more than they feared the partisans.⁵¹

Nazi ideology was wedded to the *Wehrmacht* anti-partisan doctrine, radicalising the rear-areas in the same way as the frontlines. The rear-area security war quickly became a vehicle for the fulfilment of the Holocaust. Especially in 1941, when the partisan threat was nearly non-existent, the Nazi Party's ideological enemies were the real target of rear-area security operations. The definition of "partisan" was used for the justification of the death of anyone, with the regime's ideological enemies, Jews and communists, being targeted for immediate execution.⁵² The perceived connection between Jews and Bolsheviks had long been established as a recurrent theme of Nazi ideology. It was during the September 1941

⁴⁴ Jeff Rutherford, "'One Senses Danger From All Sides,'" 60.

⁴⁵ Rutherford, "'One Senses Danger From All Sides,'" 60; Ben Shepherd, "Wehrmacht Security Regiments in the Soviet Partisan War, 1943," *European History Quarterly* 33 (2003), 494.

⁴⁶ Shepherd, "The Clean Wehrmacht," 459.

⁴⁷ Overy, *Russia's War*, 133.

⁴⁸ Richard Overy, *Russia's War* (London: Penguin Books, 1999), 144.

⁴⁹ Anderson, "Incident at Baranivka," 607-609.

⁵⁰ Overy, *Russia's War*, 133.

⁵¹ Anderson, "Incident at Baranivka," 609.

⁵² Ben Shepherd, "The Clean Wehrmacht, the War of Extermination, and Beyond," *The Historical Journal* 52, no. 2 (2009), 458; Anderson, "Germans, Ukrainians and Jews," 328, 329; Snyder, *Bloodlands*, 240.

Mogilev conference, convened to discuss the Final Solution and anti-partisan warfare, that the two topics were joined together with the resounding conclusion that "where there is a Jew, there is a partisan".⁵³ It was not only ideology that drove *Wehrmacht* atrocity, however. Battle frustrations, beginning in the winter of 1941 and escalating with defeats at Stalingrad and Kursk, pushed the *Wehrmacht* to increasingly reckless violence against the civilian population.⁵⁴

Despite the importance of Nazi ideology in radicalising the conflict, whether or not the National Socialist worldview was genuinely accepted by members of the *Ostheer* is not of great consequence to the conclusions of this essay. What is important is the acknowledgement that even more restrained *Ostheer* divisions did partake in the atrocities of the Eastern Front. Even units that recognised the necessity of reciprocal engagement with the natives, such as the 221st Security Division, still instigated atrocities against the populace. In the 221st's case, despite being so understrength that a general terror campaign was untenable, subordinate Battalion 242 still massacred civilians in response to individual frustrations.⁵⁵ Similarly, even units whose supply situation seemed to be relatively stable, such as the notably-restrained 121st Infantry Division, still played a heavy part in the food requisitions that were contributing to the starvation of the natives.⁵⁶ Actions such as these are critical as they represent the fulfilment of Nazi war aims in the east, regardless of a commander's belief in National Socialism and its tenets.

There are numerous examples of benevolence from the occupation forces, as well as true reciprocal good will between the Germans and the occupied.⁵⁷ However, general complicity in Nazi war aims was widespread. Official opposition to the most heinous excesses of the war, such as *Einsatzgruppe* massacres, was rare.⁵⁸ There are several reasons other than ideological conviction for the campaign's convergence with Nazi war aims, such as career benefits, battle frustrations and military necessities, and there is evidence that these factors were at times more influential than ideology in the reasons for the troops' excessive violence.⁵⁹ However, most, if not all of these additional motivations can be understood as

⁵³ Waitman W. Beorn, "A Calculus of Complicity: The Wehrmacht, the Anti-Partisan War, and the Final Solution in White Russia, 1941-42," *Central European History* 44 (2011), 308

⁵⁴ Ben Shepherd, *War in the Wild East: The German Army and Soviet Partisans* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2009), 168.

⁵⁵ Shepherd, "Wehrmacht Security Regiments," 500-506.

⁵⁶ Rutherford, "One Senses Danger From All Sides," 70.

⁵⁷ See Anderson, "Germans, Ukrainians and Jews," for a convincing study of this.

⁵⁸ Heaton, *Occupation and Insurgency*, 36, 38-40; Anderson, "Germans, Ukrainians and Jews," 326, 337, 338.

⁵⁹ Shepherd, "Unprecedented, Merciless and Unrelenting Harshness," 64.

having stemmed from Party decisions that would intentionally radicalise their forces.⁶⁰ As such, deliberate high command decisions caused the *Wehrmacht* operational norms to be indistinguishable from Nazi war aims, regardless of if that was the intentions of individual soldiers.

THE SOVIET RESPONSE

It is important to note that this chapter, the removal of judicial and psychological restraints, focuses on the Germans. The radicalisation of warfare was instigated by the invaders, having been envisioned and premeditated well before Operation Barbarossa. It must be remembered that the Soviet Union was invaded. Although the Stalinist system perpetrated horrendous repression against those that fell within its borders, they did not begin the cycle of brutality that emerged on the frontlines. However, the Soviet state did consent to the barbarity of the war by perpetrating war crimes under official orders. Just as occurred on the German side, the judicial and psychological restraints that could have otherwise de-escalated the nature of the war were thoroughly undermined. The Soviet state brutalised both their armed forces and their civilians, indicating to survivors that any means could be taken in the pursuit of victory. The radicalisation of war had a significant effect on the conduct that was to be perpetrated in the war's rear areas. It was here that the lessons of the frontline determined both the pitch of violence, as well as the utter mercilessness that was expected from fighters.

The Hague Convention, as well as the USSR's own guidelines on the treatment of POWs, was commonly breached with extreme violence. Red Army soldiers received mixed messages on how they were to treat prisoners, from both the Army's command structure and state propaganda. At times, soldiers interpreted their overarching orders to be the killing of any that surrender. Such a view was most prevalent after Stalin's speech on 6 July 1941, in which he called for the "war of extermination" that Hitler had instigated to be met with war in kind from the Soviets.⁶¹ There are many cases of Red Army personnel expressing that they believed their orders were to take no prisoners, in both diaries and under German interrogation.⁶² At worst, German captives were tortured or mutilated, with reports of the removal of eyes and genitals, as well as beheadings and deliberate freezing.⁶³ The terrible treatment of Soviet POWs encouraged hideous acts of revenge against German prisoners, with state propaganda ensuring that soldiers knew the fates of their captured comrades.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ See Shepherd, "The Clean Wehrmacht," 456 for exploration of these influences.

⁶¹ Edele, "Take (No) Prisoners!" 352, 353.

⁶² Edele, "Take (No) Prisoners!" 354.

⁶³ Chris Bellamy, *Absolute War: Soviet Russia in the Second World War*, (New York: Vintage, 2007), 189; Edele, "Take (No) Prisoners!", 369.

⁶⁴ Edele, "Take (No) Prisoners!" 352, 353, 367, 368.

The disregard of judicial restraints allowed for the psychological hardening of soldiers to atrocity. The mistreatment of prisoners became something of an ideological training exercise, with violence against captives bringing further depravity into the realm of possibility. The recollections of one Red Army soldier, Galina Golofeevskaya, exemplify the psychological conditioning imposed on both sides. Golofeevskaya explains the effect of her reluctant consent to execute a German prisoner: “after that I killed the Germans calmly, I thought less about them, and they became only enemies to me.”⁶⁵ Later, after another similar episode, she adds, “a brutalized feeling towards all Germans, especially the ones from Stalingrad, arose in me, and there was no inch of regret, I treated them like animals, even those we had taken prisoner.”⁶⁶ These excerpts are from a Soviet interview series, “the Chronicle of the Great Patriotic War,” for which Golofeevskaya was asked to recount her role in the war, and may be treated with some scepticism as a result. However, the interview at least shows that this sort of conduct was believed to have been in line with the state’s policies of the time.⁶⁷ Official orders encouraged the psychological acceptance of war crimes as appropriate conduct.

While the radicalisation of combat normalised increasingly-brutal war crimes, prisoners of war were accepted by Red Army soldiers in reasonably large numbers. Both the robbing of captives and the execution of prisoners was attempted to be stemmed by the orders of conscientious commanders. Such actions had the potential to damage discipline and only encouraged ferocity from the invaders who feared being taken alive.⁶⁸ In one illuminating case, one Chief of Political Propaganda attempted to inspire compassion from his corps by education. He recommended to one of his counterparts that soldiers be explained “the German soldier is a worker and a peasant. He fights not of his own will ... once the German soldier surrenders, he stops being the enemy.”⁶⁹ These sentiments were intermittently stressed to the troops, with the result that prisoners were taken in far higher numbers than would have otherwise been accepted.

Ironically, while the German prisoners were being offered protections, the Soviet state was brutalising its own people in the pursuit of victory. Both soldiers and civilians were shown to be completely expendable, even if their sacrifice was for extremely dubious tactical benefit. Extreme disciplinary measures were enacted to stem panic and desertion; the so-called “blocking detachments” were convened to fire on any Soviet soldiers that withdrew

⁶⁵ Bischl, “Presenting Oneself: Red Army Soldiers and Violence in the Great Patriotic War, 1941-1945,” *History* 101 (2016), 476.

⁶⁶ Bischl, “Presenting Oneself,” 476.

⁶⁷ Kerstin Bischl, 472, 473.

⁶⁸ Edele, “Take (No) Prisoners!” 350.

⁶⁹ Edele, “Take (No) Prisoners!” 350, 351.

without orders to do so.⁷⁰ In June 1942 blocking detachments were even prohibited from firing warning shots before gunning down their comrades.⁷¹ Such measures seem to have been a necessary evil when generals were sending their Red Army forces in full frontal attacks against enemy emplacements. In some of the direst cases, soldiers were reported to have linked arms as they ran, simply to help momentum carry their bodies towards the overheating machine guns.⁷² In another tragedy, one thousand mounted soldiers of a Mongolian cavalry division charged in open terrain against enemy emplacements. All one thousand were killed without causing a single German death.⁷³ The waste of life that such was not limited to soldiers, but was also extended to the civilian militia, the People's Levy (the Russian equivalent of the German *Volkssturm*, the People's Storm). Often no more than factory workers there are cases where mostly unarmed Levy forces were ordered into attack against the enemy's tanks.⁷⁴ Casualties were enormous in these cases, with the militia simply unable to harm their enemies.

Civilians were similarly brutalised, further affirming that no cruelty would be too great in the USSR's defence. The civilians of Leningrad were exposed to this reality to a terrifying extent. Upon taking command of the Leningrad defence, General Zhukov threatened soldiers with the execution of their families if they surrendered.⁷⁵ A soldier could not have been blamed for believing Zhukov, with families already being punished with the cutting of state support (such as pensions), arrest and deportation if their relatives were accused of desertion.⁷⁶ Stalin affirmed that the enemy's crimes would be matched only by Soviet crimes when he revealed his underlying ideology: "War is merciless, and it will bring defeat in the first instance to him who shows weakness and vacillation".⁷⁷ This was not a hollow statement, having been his reply to the report that Germans were using men, women and children as human shields. A civilian's life became nothing more than a consumable object, able to be called upon for any number of perceived boons. This cold logic was again displayed in late 1941 when Leningrad apartment-building managers were decimated simply to stiffen the city's resolve.⁷⁸ Such excessive violence further contributed to the depth of brutality that was considered appropriate in the eastern theatre. Whether Stalin's beliefs of a merciless war were necessary and just or not, the Soviet state's devaluation of life is deeply

⁷⁰ Beevor, *The Second World War*, 198.

⁷¹ Bischl, "Presenting Oneself," 471.

⁷² Beevor, *The Second World War*, 200.

⁷³ Overy, *Russia's War*, 114.

⁷⁴ Beevor, *The Second World War*, 203.

⁷⁵ Beevor, *The Second World War*, 204.

⁷⁶ Bischl, "Presenting Oneself," 472.

⁷⁷ Overy, *Russia's War*, 90. Beevor, *The Second World War*, 204, 205.

⁷⁸ Overy, *Russia's War*, 97, 98.

significant for the ensuing atmosphere in the rear-areas. The legitimacy of brutality against any obstacle to victory, friend or foe, greatly contributed to the extent of violence that was considered acceptable in the rear-area security war.

As has been established so far, judicial and psychological restraints had been removed from the conflict. Those that took up arms had been released from any strict compliance with international law and norms. War crimes were considered to be acceptable conduct, and obscene violence was established as simply one more tool to employ against the enemy. At the same time, official orders had nurtured the type of psychology that was required to wage a war of this kind. Participation in atrocity had gradually desensitised soldiers to the war's ever-escalating brutality. While the Soviet Union's role in this is less severe, the state still contributed to each of these aspects to a significant extent.

The rear-area security war would soon be conducted according to the tone of the war that had been set on the frontlines. As will be discussed in Chapter III, the civilians that were caught between the German security forces and the Soviet partisans were terribly exploited by members of both forces. In our effort to explain this phenomenon, it would not be convincing if rear-area civilians were expected to have enacted terrible violence against their former neighbours simply because the wider war demanded brutality. Similarly, treating one's enemies without mercy would not explain the robbery, rape and murder of otherwise-innocent civilians. The missing piece of this explanation is the conceptualisation of civilians living in the occupied territories as the enemy. Both National Socialism and Stalinism allowed for the view of the occupied civilians as criminal or alien elements. Terrorising, exploiting and purging these civilians was able to improve one's own situation (financially, for example), while simultaneously being perceived as helping the war effort. This leads us to Chapter II, to explain the undermining of moral restraints as the next precondition to civilian victimisation.

II

CRIMINAL AND ALIEN ELEMENTS: THE UNDERMINING OF MORAL RESTRAINT

Both Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union ideologues conceptualised civilians under the German occupation as inherently culpable and subsequently disposable. This perception was another counterweight to moral sensibilities that could otherwise have restrained the violence that they were subjected to. At the same time, the idea of a population that innately deserved punishment also undermined any question of whether bystanding civilians were legitimate targets of war. The guilt that both regimes saw in these civilians was the result of foundational tenets of Nazi and Soviet ideology, respectively. The German *Wehrmacht* and the Soviet partisans had this ideology impressed upon them, and members from both forces either genuinely believed this ideology, or more likely, took this message as a green light to exploit the occupied civilians. The Soviet state condemned its citizens to a criminalised destiny, whereby almost every stratum of society was perpetually under suspicion of imagined crimes. This criminality was especially extended towards Soviet citizens under German occupation, as these peoples' mere survival under German rule indicated that they had not resisted the occupation energetically enough. Similarly, Nazi ideology considered eastern peoples to be *Untermenschen*, subhumans, possessing an intrinsic criminal nature as a characteristic of their race. This distrust of the character of eastern peoples was exacerbated by racism that had fermented since Germany's defeat in World War I.

The Soviet Union's suspicion of those living under German rule greatly contributed to the lawlessness of the rear areas. The state conceived of civilians as legitimately liable to punishment for unproven or future crimes. The quotas of the state security apparatus cared not if a crime had reasonable evidence or not, or if punishment was being meted out simply for the possibility that a citizen would commit future crimes. The concept of innocent until proven guilty did not exist in the USSR, where imagined guilt was proven correct by coerced confessions. As Solzhenitsyn explains for a returning Soviet prisoner of war, "As always, the interrogation began with the hypothesis that you were obviously guilty."¹ Suspicion was not new, but was a perpetual facet of the Soviet system, having become obsessed with enemies, both internal and external, since its formation just over two decades earlier.² One civil war Cheka agent explained the security services paradoxical investigative method: "for execution we do not need proof, suspicion or interrogation. We find the people necessary and that is

¹ Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*, 100.

² Geoffrey Roberts, *Stalin's War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 17, 18.

all.”³ This strange circular reasoning placed victims in an impossible situation, where their execution was justified by their guilt, and their guilt was established not by proof but by the authority’s suspicion of them.

Soviet security mechanisms, refining those of earlier Tsarist rule, were not to punish criminal offenders but to repress the population. Early GPU directives explained exile to be “not a judicial punishment, but as a measure of social defence”.⁴ Historian Iain Lauchlan thoughtfully notes that the labels that the security services applied to citizens to justify their arrest were subjective, such as “Whites, kulaks, bandits, wreckers, hooligans” and intellectuals. These categories required no definition and the terms were left to be vague and open to interpretation.⁵ With state suspicion came the infamous practices of public denunciations, arrest and torture without warrant, as well as public show trials.⁶ The underlying tenet of these practices was that life was cheap for a Soviet citizen.⁷ This bleak message was blatantly relayed to citizens, with the undisguised nature of state security as an element of its terror. Contemporary Gertrude Flor illustrates this aspect of state security when she speaks on life in the newly-Soviet Chernivtsi, Ukraine in 1940. Flor describes a widely circulated poster that introduced the population to crime and punishment in the USSR. The poster depicted a child being rewarded a wristwatch by “Uncle Stalin” for informing on his parents, who had complained to one another that there were to again be no eggs for breakfast.⁸ Flor, whose own step-father was executed and whose mother was deported, explains that “very slowly it became clear to everybody that you couldn’t talk... You could even think against them.” While children were encouraged to denounce their parents, the lives of innocents were sacrificed in pursuit of the guilty and both workers and soldiers were brutalised by their superiors. In a land of two hundred million, the state’s most abundant resource was its most exploited.

Rampant suspicion was supplemented by Stalin’s personal distrust of the many ethnic minorities within the Soviet Union. The Soviet population was factionalised into categories of ethnicity, nationality or place of birth. These categories would be employed to determine which populations were to be targeted by the state security apparatus, with ethnicity defining one’s perceived potential to commit future crimes against the state. This divisional thought

³ Iain Lauchlan, “Chekist Mentalité and the Origins of the Great Terror,” in *The Anatomy of Terror, Political Violence Under Stalin*, ed. James Harris (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 19.

⁴ Lauchlan, “Chekist Mentalité,” 21.

⁵ Lauchlan, “Chekist Mentalité,” 21.

⁶ Roberts, *Stalin’s War*, 15-17.

⁷ Snyder, *Bloodlands*, 239.

⁸ Gertrude G. Flor, interview with Randy M. Goldman, *The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, May 29, 1996, <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn504909>.

process ran directly contrary to the ideals of an international, homogenous communist front, in a dark irony that pervaded the state's security apparatus. At the same time, the persecution of ethnic groups also contradicted one of Stalin's earlier campaigns, *korenizatsiia* (nativisation), which promoted multinationalism with the creation of sub-territories within the USSR from 1923 to the mid-1930s. The central Soviet state encouraged the use of native languages and cultural institutions within these republics, to exist alongside the official state apparatus.⁹

Despite this, the mid-1930s saw ethnicity and place of birth quickly become perceived as major indicators for one's potential to become a traitor in the event of invasion.¹⁰ The myriad suspects to fall under Stalin's gaze were arrayed in a great host from the Western Ukrainian borderlands to the Far Eastern reaches: "Ukrainians, Poles, Latvians, Germans, Estonians, Finns, Bulgarians, Romanians and Greeks", Crimean Tatars, Chechens, "Turks, Kurds and Iranians ... Chinese and Koreans", in a regrettably inexhaustive list, were suspected of an innate desire to collude with the regime's enemies.¹¹ These people had either immigrated to the Soviet Union and were feared to be riddled with saboteurs, or were internal nationalities with past conflicts against the Soviet state in recent memory.¹² These suspicions were not arbitrary and millions were targeted for deportation, imprisonment and execution as a result, with the number of victims reaching a height in the wake of the German advance in 1941. Stalin's security machinations deported 3,266,340 people to the Soviet interior between 1941 and 1948, with two thirds of these three million being targeted for their ethnic categories alone.¹³ These victims would find themselves in the wastelands of the interior, with food, clothing and shelter barely able to sustain life. Ten percent of the deportees died during their terms, with the highest national death rates reaching twenty-five percent.¹⁴ To this, Vyacheslav Molotov, Stalin's foreign minister, would attest that even Stalin's prewar Great Terror was chiefly to target these future collaborators, with their bloodlines determining their destiny to betray their country.¹⁵ Ethnic cleansing, underpinned by rampant suspicion was deeply entrenched in Stalin's approach to crime and punishment.¹⁶

⁹ Otto J. Pohl, *Ethnic Cleansing in the U.S.S.R., 1937-1948* (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1999), 3, 4.

¹⁰ Evans, *The Third Reich at War*, 197.

¹¹ Roberts, *Stalin's War*, 18, 19.

¹² Pohl, *Ethnic Cleansing in the U.S.S.R.*, 4.

¹³ Pohl, *Ethnic Cleansing in the U.S.S.R.*, 1, 2.

¹⁴ Pohl, *Ethnic Cleansing in the U.S.S.R.*, 3.

¹⁵ Roberts, *Stalin's War*, 18, 19.

¹⁶ Pohl, *Ethnic Cleansing in the U.S.S.R.*, 137.

The lack of restraint that the partisans enjoyed in their dealings with the occupied civilian population was a direct result of the USSR's crime and punishment system. Both the moral and judicial restraints that could have otherwise curbed partisan excesses were undermined by the state's firmly-established security methods. Civilians in the rear areas were perceived as infested with criminality and the persecution of these criminal elements was considered to be within the partisan's role. A key component of the occupied civilian's criminality was *Stavka's* disavowment of passive resistance as a legitimate civilian strategy. The survival of those living under German occupation indicated to the Soviet command that they were either guilty of some form of collusion with the enemy, or were not loyal enough Soviets to sufficiently resist the invaders. In this perversion of logic, slave labourers, such as ghettoised Jews, were involuntarily but directly contributing to the German war effort and deserved no rescue as a result.¹⁷ The state's legitimization of punishing citizens without evidence for imagined or potential, future crimes provided the partisans with an unquestionable, undebatable jurisdiction to continue NKVD-style policing in the rear-areas.

Partisans were able to enter villages and, as one partisan veteran, Philip Helbling, recalled, simply kill the civilians that were "no good." Helbling provides one example for this, in which his orders were relayed to him by the member of his unit that he suspected to be its imbedded political commissar, with Helbling explaining that "my mission was to kill the collaborators". Helbling recalls that no evidence was provided to him to justify the execution of the civilians, even in spite of his friendship with the one giving the order.¹⁸ Another partisan veteran, Nikolai Obryn'ba fighting in the Belarus region of Polotsk, describes his role as almost identical to Helbling's. One instance began with Obryn'ba's group encircling a village and taking the residents hostage. At this point, Obryn'ba's partisan commander called for an investigation into the hostages' guilt with no more direction than the curt order to "sort them out". Despite having no prior knowledge of any of the villagers' guilt, Obryn'ba executed two civilians, one of which had worked as a land surveyor for the German administration. The most significant aspect of this instance is not the act itself, but the executor's own conception of his investigation. He explains, "Logic was my only weapon in the prosecution. I had neither witnesses nor time - logic alone had to prove a man's guilt or innocence". Just as the civil war Chekists of earlier decades, Obryn'ba concludes that "My conscience was clear."¹⁹

¹⁷ Snyder, *Bloodlands*, 239.

¹⁸ Helbling, Interview.

¹⁹ Statiev, "Soviet Partisan Violence Against Soviet Civilians", 1527, 1528.

This methodology was a direct continuation of Soviet policing, extended to the German-occupied territories. If they were so inclined, partisans were able to brutalise the population without concern that their victims may be deemed to be innocent or that their excesses would be punishable by their superiors. The ability to justify the execution of anybody, without evidence, investigation or orders, provided the partisans with limitless potential to exploit the civilian population. Victims of robbery and rape could simply be killed with the unquestionable justification that they were collaborators. As no evidence was required prior to execution, no evidence could be provided to the executor's superiors. One last conclusion is clear from these cases, that at least a portion of the partisans had internalised the state's conception of crime and punishment. No investigation was required, no questions were asked, and execution was the only punishment.

The German security forces similarly criminalised the occupied civilian populations through a convergence of ideology and historical experience. The eastern populations were believed to have an innate criminality, an untrustworthiness and a maliciousness that resulted from their race or their assumed political orientation. Many military units were under the leadership of generals and field-marsahls that despised the eastern peoples. This hatred had become institutionalised from these commander's World War I experiences: Slavs were condemned for the brutality of the Russian invasion of eastern Germany in 1914; the Bolsheviks were perceived as having spread their ideology like a disease to the German people; and Jews were thought to be intrinsically tied to the "stab in the back" that contributed to German surrender in 1918.²⁰ The German military's traditional anti-communism and anti-Semitism, as well as the understanding that Slavs must be treated without mercy, was accentuated by the Polish campaign and years of ideological indoctrination.²¹ Some Slavic peoples were afforded a degree of favour under the occupation, such as Ukrainians, who were thought to be descended from the Germanic Ostrogoths.²² However, the vast majority of those under the population, Slavs, Jews and communists, were thought to be innately and unconditionally guilty. The Mogilev conference of September 1941, introduced in Chapter I, was one of the chief influences on the definition of a partisan widening to include anyone that the occupation forces desired.²³ The wide autonomy than individual commanders had in the pacification of their territories, to be discussed in Chapter III, meant that the personalities of these commanders had more of an impact on their operations than otherwise would have been

²⁰ Shepherd, "The Clean Wehrmacht," 463; Heaton, *Occupation and Insurgency*, 13; Shepherd, "Unprecedented, Merciless and Unrelenting Harshness," 66, 67.

²¹ Evans, *The Third Reich At War*, 176.

²² Anderson, "Germans, Ukrainians and Jews," 347.

²³ Anderson, "Germans, Ukrainians and Jews," 328, 329.

possible. As such, the military's institutionalised enmities seamlessly melded with Nazi ideology and a conception of the civilian population as legitimate war targets, infested with their historic and genetic culpability.

Moral restraint was not only undermined by ideology but was heavily supplemented by alcohol abuse. Despite severe malnutrition reported in many of the partisan units, alcohol was sought out to bewildering extents. By the advanced stages of the war, Soviet airdrops provided munitions, medical supplies, weaponry, retrieved the wounded and inserted political commissars but rarely provided food to the partisan units.²⁴ Food was short supply across the front, with partisan units seeming to take lesser priority than the already underfed Red Army. One veteran that served with both the partisans and the Red Army on the Stalingrad front recalls his Army unit's search for anything that they could eat, including stray cats in the ruins.²⁵ With the regular armed forces suffering from such supply issues, partisans were left to a similar fate, having to become entirely self-sufficient for their food consumption. Despite this, alcohol was consumed to excess before, during and after operations. Another partisan veteran, Joshua Fishmann, recalls that despite a meagre diet of only bread and potatoes, with poor-enough conditions that the unit experienced an outbreak of typhus, alcohol was still commonly consumed. In one incident that stood out to Fishmann, excess casualties were taken when many members of his unit were drunk as they attempted to defend against a night attack.²⁶ One partisan veteran, Elia Miranski, passed down his personal history to his daughter, who recalled that moonshine was brewed in the forests by Miranski's group, operating outside of Valozhyn, Belarus. Miranski's daughter explained that alcohol was used to calm the group's shattered nerves before military actions.²⁷

In such dire circumstances as the partisans found themselves within, the procurement of alcohol had become a central part of their unit's *raison d'être*. Some villages were effectively forced to buy their protection from the partisans with liquor, with one commander claiming to have "several hundred examples of partisans beating, hanging or shooting peasants for only a half a litre of alcohol."²⁸ With alcohol's significance, intoxication must be understood as one of the influences on the lack of restraint in the rear-areas. While it is clear that drunkenness alone does not account for the rampant robbery, rape and murder of fellow

²⁴ Fishmann, Interview; Kagan, Interview; Harvard Project on the Soviet Social System (hereafter HPSSS). Schedule B, Vol. 12, Case 143 (interviewer H.D.), 33, [https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:5477242\\$43i](https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:5477242$43i).

²⁵ Helbling; Interview.

²⁶ Joshua Fishmann, interview with Arthur Kirsh, *The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, July 13, 1982, <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn513779>.

²⁷ Elia Miranski and Genia Miranski, interview with Gail Schwartz, *The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, May 19, 2013, <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn59188>.

²⁸ Brakel, "The Relationship Between Soviet Partisans and the Civilian Population," 88.

citizens, alcohol undoubtedly played a part in the undermining of moral and ethical inhibitions in the rear-areas.

Occupation forces similarly abused drugs and alcohol to facilitate compliance with their brutal orders. The “stimulant decree” of 17 April 1940 officially introduced Pervitin, a pill form of methamphetamine developed by the Berlin Temmler pharmaceutical company, into the medical supplies of the Wehrmacht and the SS. Pervitin had been used widely by the *Wehrmacht* during the invasion of Poland and France with the effects of eliminating fatigue and inhibitions while increasing confidence and aggression.²⁹ While Pervitin alone is not significant for its effect on moral restraint, it has significant implications for how accepted substance use was. Pervitin was an integral part of a culture of substance reliance with which to plug the gaps of human endurance. The frontlines demanded unceasing energy and vigilance from the *Wehrmacht*, and Pervitin’s popularity shows the acceptance of external substances to meet this demand.

Just as the frontlines demanded physical endurance from the *Wehrmacht*, the Holocaust was demanding psychological endurance in the rear areas. The Germans were aware of the psychological damage that executing civilians would have on their forces, even despite the propaganda campaign against Jews and *Untermenschen*.³⁰ On 11 July 1941 an order to kill all male Jews between 17 and 45 that were found looting in Bialystok, Poland, was accompanied with an order to ensure that the “spiritual care” of the executioners be maintained with evening social events, recreation and constant reinforcement about the “political necessity” of the killings.³¹ While gradual complicity had been fostering a desensitisation to executions, this was not enough. One member of the Order Police recalls the integral part that alcohol played in the “spiritual care” of his unit: “Most of the other comrades drank so much solely because of the many shootings of Jews, for such a life was intolerable sober.”³²

Alcohol was to become the final influence on the removal of moral restraints. The terrorising of defenceless civilians, even those defined as ideological enemies, still required this element to reach the extent that it did on the Eastern Front. The events of 17 August 1942 exemplify the horrendous role of alcohol in the eastern rear-areas, at Łomazy, a Polish village within the Generalgouvernement, roughly fifty kilometres from the modern-day Belarusian

²⁹ Norman Ohler, *Blitzed, Drugs in Nazi Germany*, trans. Shaun Whiteside (London: Allen Lane, 2016), 78, 87.

³⁰ Norman M. Naimark, “War and Genocide on the Eastern Front, 1941-1945,” *Contemporary European History* 16, no. 2 (2007), 267.

³¹ Browning, *Ordinary Men*, 14.

³² Browning, *Ordinary Men*, 82.

border. The execution of the Jewish population of Łomazy, some 1,700 civilians, was carried out by the Order Police and Slavic *Hiwis* (abbreviated from *Hilfswillige*, the optimistically-termed “willing helpers”). The executioners at Łomazy became increasingly drunk throughout the killings, steadying themselves in the knee-high pool of blood and groundwater that had formed in the killing-site’s mass grave. Several of the perpetrators still had a bottle of vodka in hand as they fired wildly into the mass of victims, many of which were left to suffocate or drown after being hit with nonfatal shots.³³ While a full exploration of alcohol’s role in the east has yet to be attempted, its use in the psychological facilitation of mass killings is clear. Drug use helped allow the occupational forces to carry out horrendous acts against the civilian population. Methamphetamine helped normalise substance dependence in the Wehrmacht, acting as a precursor to the widespread consumption of alcohol that was used so deliberately to undermine moral restraint. Alcohol can be clearly seen as another factor that destroyed personal, moral sensibilities, harmonising with the host of other influences in the creation of lawlessness.

The undermining of morality is deeply significant to explain the double-victimisation of the occupied civilians. As we have seen, the depravity of the frontlines fostered a war that within which any violence, however obscene, was able to be enacted against the enemy. This possibility was imposed on top of the National Socialist worldview, which saw criminality as an intrinsic facet of the Eastern European *Untermenschen*. Similarly, Soviet law and order, particularly under Stalin, saw the population of the borderlands as divisive fifth columnists. Both regimes’ governments encouraged the punishment of these civilians without mercy, and most importantly, without evidence of their crimes. Any scruples of morality that remained against these enemies was undermined by the prevalence of alcohol in both forces, with violence committed under its effects escalating the perpetrators’ complicity with atrocity.

The criminality of the occupied civilians seems to have been a profoundly significant element to their exploitation. From this, terrorising the civilian population was able to be conducted either under the guise of a legitimate act of war, or on the contrary, this could have been actually believed to have been a legitimate act of war. Under such a mindset, the civilian that had just been robbed of their winter food stocks could be conceived of as a saboteur or a *kulak* (a wealthy land-owning peasant), hoarding supplies to the detriment of the war effort. Worse still, what rights did a civilian marked as an agent of the enemy have to their home or their life? Even sexual violence may have been understood in this way as some perverted form of extractive revenge against a subversive enemy.

³³ Browning, *Ordinary Men*, 83, 84.

III

AUTONOMY, CHOICE AND DISCIPLINE

Despite the rigid nature of Nazi and the Soviet ideology, both security divisions and partisan commanders enjoyed enough autonomy to restrain their methods if they wished to do so. Institutional rivalries, competing jurisdictions and bureaucratic mismanagement provided each force with a host of conflicting orders. Any one of these orders could be invoked to justify a great spectrum of conduct in the rear areas. Commanders could employ a hearts and minds campaign, limiting requisitions and otherwise-indiscriminate reprisals; or requisitioning could ensure the populace starved and reprisals could destroy entire population centres. The legal freedom provided to both forces allowed them to commit excessive offences against the occupied civilians without penalty, though punishments were similarly light if commanders shirked direct orders to brutalise the populace. The result was that the exploitation of the occupied civilians was both by design and consented to by the commanders on the ground; the preconditions that encouraged and allowed individual offences against civilians had been set, and many commanders took the opportunity to exploit the populace over the range of options available to them.

Institutional anarchy provided rear-area German commanders with a vast set of conflicting orders. Much of the operational management of the partisan war fell to institutions below Hitler, with the dictator separating himself from the day-to-day administration of the Reich. The establishments that took on Hitler's discarded portfolios, such as the *Wehrmacht*, the SS and the Foreign Ministry, fought between themselves with competing claims to counterinsurgency policy.¹ Hitler's administrative aloofness effectively provided his subordinates with only the long-term, ideology-laden goals of the occupation. This long-term vision, without specific instructions for its achievement, is illustrated in one particular meeting between Hans Lammers (Chief of the Reich Chancellery), Alfred Rosenberg (Leader of the Foreign Policy Office and leading ideologue) and Hitler. Lammers documents the minutes of the interaction, within which *Reichskommissariat* Ukraine's future was being considered. The outcome was that it would likely remain a Reich colony for at least twenty-five years, but the operational requirements for this are not mentioned in the document.² In much the same way, Norway was to become part of the Greater German Reich "in a hundred or so years".³ These were not a lone incidents, with Lammers or Martin Bormann (most

¹ Gumz, "German Counterinsurgency Policy in Independent Croatia 1941-1944," 36, 37, 43, 46.

² Hans Lammers, October 1, 1941, in *DGFP: D, XIII* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945), 596, 597.

³ Gordon Wright, *The Ordeal of Total War, 1939-1945* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 141.

importantly Secretary to the Führer) increasingly left to pass Hitler's rare, vague and abstract commandments down to his subordinates.⁴ Despite his reclusiveness, Hitler vehemently attested that only *his* campaign decisions were correct, and dissenting commanders were ostracised, redeployed and replaced.⁵ By December 1941, Hitler had placed himself as Commander-in-Chief of the army. Richard Evans explains the supreme position that Hitler was in as “complete dominance over the top army commanders.”⁶ The dictator went on to do little more than obtusely order against retreat of any kind, insisting that an indomitable will would achieve the Final Victory.⁷ The little central direction that Hitler gave to the various hydra heads snapping at one another were lofty, out-of-touch ideological commandments. The result of a dictator-less dictatorship, where power was determined not by rank but by personal ties with the reclusive leader (reclusive from both physical contact as well as from the realities of the war), was endemic administrative breakdown.⁸ The struggle for power between institutions whose status had been raised by Hitler's whims reached disastrous heights of eventually-unreparable inefficiency.⁹

The conduct by which overarching orders were achieved was largely in the hands of commanders on the ground. Although commanders received general orders, the way in which their objectives were achieved could be significantly influenced by their own wishes. Just as Hitler only provided vague ideological orders, the *Wehrmacht* was also operated by the principle of mission command, or *Auftragstaktik*. In this, commanders received orders to achieve a general objective. Commanders on the ground were expected to interpret the situation in the field and to pursue their directives in the way they thought most fitting.¹⁰ At the same time, the key to navigating military red tape was by interpreting one's actions as achieving Hitler's vague ideological aims. Any action justified as vaguely to the benefit of the Führer was almost assured to be sanctioned.¹¹ As Ian Kershaw explains his concept of “working towards the Führer”, the interpretive power available to the mechanisms of the Third Reich was centred on the distant figure of the leader. Simply “Invoking the Führer's name”, he contends, “was the pathway to success and advancement.”¹² Kershaw dubs Hitler as the great “enabler” of the Third Reich: a pervasive guarantee of an action's retroactive

⁴ Ian Kershaw, *Hitler, the Germans, and the Final Solution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 32.

⁵ Evans, *The Third Reich At War*, 209 - 213; Ohler, *Blitzed*, 166.

⁶ Evans, *The Third Reich At War*, 213.

⁷ Evans, *The Third Reich At War*, 210-213.

⁸ Kershaw, *Hitler, the Germans, and the Final Solution*, 32, 35.

⁹ Kershaw, *Hitler, the Germans, and the Final Solution*, 35, 36.

¹⁰ Antony Beevor, *The Second World War* (New York: Little Brown and Company, 2012), 194.

¹¹ Kershaw, *Hitler, the Germans, and the Final Solution*, 40.

¹² Kershaw, *Hitler, the Germans, and the Final Solution*, 34,

sanction.¹³ Compounding the effect of bureaucratic infighting and conflicting orders, German commanders were able to creatively suggest, rebuke and sanction orders at will.

Although the focus of this essay is to explain the crimes of individuals, the concept of *Auftragstaktik*, as well as the retroactive justification of actions as beneficial to the Reich, is still significant as a potential counterbalance to lawlessness. That a commander could be tasked to pacify a region and could personally decide on a harsh or tempered occupation gives insight to the ability of commanders to somewhat redress the norms that were acceptable in their domains. While a benign occupation was utterly incompatible with the ideological war aims of the Nazi state, there were opportunities for the occupation to temper itself if desired. The needs of the Reich, paired with the other preconditions to brutality that have been explored thus far, virtually ensured the occupation's harshness. However, there is a vast gulf between implementing a doomed hearts-and-minds campaign and the creation of the occupation region as a *Todeszone*, a dead-zone devoid of civilian life.

The success of conscientious commanders to limit their troops' offences was largely unsuccessful. Despite unparalleled control over some areas of discipline, excessive offences against the civilian population were largely outside of their authority. This is another important element of the autonomy of the German occupation, as just as there were mechanisms to allow for less brutal treatment of the population, there were no levers to avoid the opposite. As Omer Bartov correctly notes, "It was difficult to punish the men for acts that merely emulated similar and far more destructive official actions."¹⁴ *Wehrmacht* officials effectively had disciplinary jurisdiction over only some offences as a result of the troops' legal freedom under the criminal orders. The disciplinary control that commanders held was primarily to maintain combat discipline and morale. Punishment was severe for actions such as blunt insubordination and self-inflicted wounds, with roughly twenty thousand soldiers executed by the end of the war.¹⁵ These punishments were new to the modern German state, with disciplinary executions far exceeding World War I levels.¹⁶ Soldiers were commonly executed out-of-hand for crimes of cowardice but could only be pleaded with, often unsuccessfully, to desist from massacring defenceless victims.¹⁷ Obscene offences against civilians were forced to be begrudgingly accepted by German officers as a steam-valve solution to the threat of morale and combat discipline dropping with the radicalised war conditions. However, given that uncontrolled executions themselves were feared to be

¹³ Kershaw, *Hitler, the Germans, and the Final Solution*, 40.

¹⁴ Bartov, *Germany's War and the Holocaust*, 18.

¹⁵ Bartov, *Germany's War and the Holocaust*, 15.

¹⁶ Bartov, *Germany's War and the Holocaust*, 17.

¹⁷ Bartov, *Germany's War and the Holocaust*, 15, 18, 23, 24.

damaging to morale and discipline, these steam-valve killings were effectively the lesser of two evils for a commander attempting to alleviate the ever-present risk of desertion.

It would have been imprudent for commanders to proactively punish their soldiers further, already being faced with manpower shortages with the then-unprecedented 1941 losses. German security forces had never been adequately reinforced to control the vast rear-areas. These numbers only diminished as the war continued, being replaced with increasingly-inferior reserves.¹⁸

Even when OKH decided that a more measured treatment of the population was necessary in late 1941, the criminal orders were still largely upheld by the majority of the army's regiment commanders.¹⁹ Ideology, personality and the military's influence in the Reich played a part, with many commanders sharing the ideological resolve that the Nazi heads demanded against the state's mortal enemies, Jews, Bolsheviks and Slavs.²⁰ In all, the disciplinary measures of the Third Reich still facilitated an unrestricted approach to the civilian population. The difficulty of commanders to punish their troops' excessive violence, paired with their frequent unwillingness to do so, undermined the effect that military discipline could have to restrain offenses against the civilian population.

The vast majority of Soviet partisans were similarly governed by an anarchic struggle between the NKVD, Red Army and Party officials until the Central Staff was formed on 30 May 1942. Bureaucratic tension between these three groups caused partisan lives to be exchanged, seized and sacrificed in political power games. Mismanagement, whether accidental or intended to spite another agency, was endemic, with conflicting spheres of authority leaving partisans without coherent orders.²¹ Conflicting jurisdictions were a daily chaos, that was only partially alleviated once the partisans were under the task of the Central Staff. Kenneth Slepyan highlights the bureaucratic anarchy facing a partisan commander of the Vitebsk *Oblast* (translated as "province"), who could at once receive orders and have to simultaneously report to "representatives of the Kalinin Front, the Belorussian Staff, the Vitebsk Obkom, and the Central Staff itself, not to mention the operational groups of the Third and Fourth Shock Armies".²² Even if it was possible to concurrently satisfy each of these factions, the Central Staff were constantly under threat from partisans becoming

¹⁸ Alexander Hill, "The Partisan War in North-West Russia 1941-4: A Re-examination," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 25, no. 3 (2002), 44, 45.

¹⁹ Römer, "The Wehrmacht in the War of Ideologies," 94.

²⁰ Bartov, *Germany's War and the Holocaust*, 18, 19; Römer, "The Wehrmacht in the War of Ideologies," 94.

²¹ Slepyan, *Stalin's Guerrillas*, 104-113.

²² Slepyan, *Stalin's Guerrillas*, 119.

partizanshchina, described by the regime as showing “disobedience, lack of political consciousness, possessing unorthodox or even hostile ideology, and pursuing the interests of one’s self or one’s group over those of the state.”²³ Despite the variety of partisan groups, whether they resemble civilian self-defence groups or specially-inserted guerrilla forces, all levels of the partisan movement displayed traits befitting the *partizanshchina* label at times.²⁴ There were measures to minimize the chance of conflicting orders, and subsequently avoid allowing partisans to choose their desired course of action, such as having to seek approval before addressing a partisan band. These requests wasted crucial time, however, and counter-measures were introduced to allow the circumvention of these permission requests.²⁵ Such red tape greatly hampered military efficiency, however, with this multi-layered system having become a complicated, confusing apparatus. Rival institutions gave life-or-death orders to the partisans from within this bureaucratic web, with the Central Staff (and at times, even Stalin) as the arbitrator of their disputes.

The realities of war similarly hampered coherent central strategy behind the frontlines. A moving front, as well as the fragility and spontaneity of partisan operations, undoubtedly heightened the already-complicated command structure. Neither armies nor partisan bands remained in permanent locations, creating a fluid succession of changing battlefield commanders to liaison between. In addition, it was not uncommon for partisan bands to be wholly annihilated, drafted into the regular armed forces or Soviet labour battalions. At the same time, new partisan bands could be formed in their absence, or previously-unknown partisans could be discovered behind enemy lines.²⁶ Full control over the partisans was to be inevitably difficult as a result, but this was not the only operational issue frustrating an efficient chain of command. Even radio communication with all of the known detachments, then numbering 1,079, was only established in December 1943. This vital element to coordinated rear-area harassment was only completed *eight months* after the German defeat at Stalingrad, in what is now widely considered to be the loss from which the German army was unable to recover from. Prior to that, the Central Staff estimated that it only had radio lines to between ten and fifteen percent of the then-far-less-numerous partisan bands in mid-1942.²⁷ Orders could only be delivered by courier to units without radio equipment. This undertaking was near-useless, however, with orders taking forty to fifty days to reach their target and with mortality rates of just over seventy percent

²³ Slepyan, *Stalin’s Guerrillas*, 136.

²⁴ Slepyan, *Stalin’s Guerrillas*, 139.

²⁵ Slepyan, *Stalin’s Guerrillas*, 119-121.

²⁶ Slepyan, *Stalin’s Guerrillas*, 120.

²⁷ Slepyan, *Stalin’s Guerrillas*, 122, 123.

from one particular station in the Orel *Oblast*.²⁸ A partisan band's spontaneous nature was only encouraged by the lack of orders reaching them. By the time that full communications had been established, the flawed command mechanism was reaching units that had already spent the first chapter of the war being devoted to simply staying alive.

Many partisans exploited the complicated hierarchy above them to the advantage of their primary goal: survival. Partisans seem likely to have issued themselves falsified orders in a number of cases, playing conflicting departments off against one another. These forgeries allowed them to act as they wished and were often employed to counteract undesirable orders that they had already received.²⁹ One such example concerns the 2nd Voroshilov Partisan Brigade, consisting of 590 members operating out of the Briansk *Oblast*, Russia. This particularly-large unit had been ordered to undertake a dangerous raid deep into occupied Ukraine in February 1943. The heads of this brigade countered this order with directives that had them, in their words, marching "from one place to the other". An addition order, later reckoned by the Central Staff to be a forgery, was created under the falsified authority of Marshall (Chief of Staff) Vasil'evskii, directing the Voroshilov band to remain in the relative safety of the Briansk forest. These fake orders were adhered to until June 1943, when the brigade was destroyed by a German attack.³⁰ The Voroshilov group's poor luck does not detract from its ability to selectively evade their real orders for four months. The complexities of the partisans' command structure, as well as the Central Staff's tentative communications with them, allowed for the institutional inefficiency that could be exploited by fighters on the ground. That forged orders could go unexamined highlights both the inefficiency of the command system to recognise errors, as well as the atmosphere of the apparatus where contradictory orders cancelling one another out were not investigated with any haste.

Even partisan bands that simply followed genuine orders could choose the nature of their conduct to a reasonable degree. The official partisan doctrine changed several times during the conflict, providing partisans with official justification for both harsh and moderate treatment of the civilian population. Early *Stavka* policies were considerably destructive to civilians, calling on partisans to conduct a scorched-earth campaign against civil buildings. This tactic was announced by Stalin's Order No. 428 on 17 November 1941 that required the destruction of all settlements located between forty and sixty kilometres from the frontlines as well as all road-side settlements between twenty and thirty kilometres *from all roads*. One hundred thousand Molotov cocktails were distributed for this purpose, and 398 settlements

²⁸ Slepyan, *Stalin's Guerrillas*, 122.

²⁹ Slepyan, *Stalin's Guerrillas*, 125-127.

³⁰ Slepyan, *Stalin's Guerrillas*, 125-127.

had been destroyed in the following two weeks alone.³¹ As will be discussed further in Chapter III, even partisan commanders that pushed the boundaries of these orders and destroyed more than was necessary were not punished.³² The civilians that were left homeless were at great risk of perishing with winter looming. One can only imagine the horror of surviving the frontline moving through your village, only to have it razed to the ground by the few people that might otherwise protect it.

By 1942, new orders directed partisans to enter friendly relations with the population in the interest of fermenting a state-wide uprising. The scorched-earth destruction of civilian property, however, still fell under the category of necessary military objectives and was still possible as a result.³³ Contradictory orders, bespeaking a confused state policy, continued throughout the war. Soviet partisans were able to call on any one of the conflicting orders to justify their actions to the political commissars that were assigned to them as the war progressed. By the end of the war, the term “partisan” could denote several types of insurgent. The types of fighters could starkly differ from one another, ranging from those who welcomed families and the defenceless, to those that mercilessly provoked German reprisals against innocent villagers.³⁴ The leader of partisan forces in wartime Belarus, Panteleimon Ponomarenko, discouraged hostile actions against the peasantry, advocating for the acceptance of volunteers rather than conscription, as well as positive relations with the locals.³⁵ Ponomarenko called a “dysfunctional” relationship with the peasantry “the most serious crime of all”.³⁶ This official attitude starkly contrasts with commonly-held attitudes on the ground, however. One partisan veteran interviewed after the war confirms that reports of the partisans provoking German reprisals against the populace are essentially accurate. Ponomarenko’s directives are wholly contradicted, with the veteran explaining, “If a village had to be burned down for this purpose [to encourage the support of the surviving populace], there was no mercy.”³⁷ Whether following imaginary, ideological or official orders, partisans were able to decide the nature of their conduct to a great extent. This lack of control was only a continuation of the preconditions to individual crimes.

³¹ Statiev, “Soviet Partisan Violence Against Soviet Civilians”, 1529.

³² Statiev, “Soviet Partisan Violence Against Soviet Civilians”, 1530.

³³ Kenneth Slepyan, “Partisans, Civilians and the Soviet State: An Overview,” in *War in a Twilight World, Partisan and Anti-Partisan Warfare in Eastern Europe, 1939-1945*, ed. Ben Shepherd and Juliette Pattinson (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 38-44.

³⁴ Slepyan, “Partisans, Civilians and the Soviet State,” 44.

³⁵ Slepyan, “Partisans, Civilians and the Soviet State,” 49, 50, 51.

³⁶ Slepyan, “Partisans, Civilians and the Soviet State,” 49.

³⁷ Kagan, Interview.

Individualistic crimes could be disguised as contributions to the war effort but even undeniably criminal acts were seldom punished. The major cause of this was the culture of freedom that had developed within the partisan bands. One of the appeals of partisan enlistment was living outside of the regime's gaze and beyond the state apparatus of control. Partisans were mythologised as free, nomadic fighters akin to the peasant and Cossack rebels of earlier centuries.³⁸ In line with this, a significant portion of the partisan bands were fighters who viewed enlistment as a chance for "reckless adventure",³⁹ in the words of one partisan commander operating in occupied Ukraine, A. Fyodorov. Fyodorov goes on to recall these fighters to be "the fellows who thirsted for 'autonomy.'" The freedom that partisan life offered these members would have undoubtedly been welcomed after life under Soviet or German rule. The state's laws were supplanted with what Joseph Elman, a Jewish partisan veteran, refers to as the "rule of the jungle".⁴⁰ Not only was this freedom characterised by an absence of military organisation but also by open banditry. True to the definition of *partizanschina*, the partisan's freedom was closely tied with hostility to authority and individualistic crime. Although this was a more dangerous period, it was also more lucrative for opportunistic fighters. As a result, commanders were often challenged or ignored as they attempted to curtail their fighters' actions. Partisans nearly mutinied against their commander in one instance, when their consumption of jam was to be rationed.⁴¹ Even if a partisan commander held the view that the civilian population should be protected, such as by restraining the requisitioning of their goods, they may have been unable to express this for fear of retribution. The frustrated partisan bands were sometimes uncontrollable by their commanders, who feared assassination if they reprimanded their "drunken, marauding fighters".⁴²

The lack of punishment for violence against the occupied civilians only exacerbated the likelihood of their exploitation. Offences perpetrated against even the most obviously-innocent civilians were seldom or insufficiently punished. This was largely a result of each of the other preconditions discussed thus far. Civilians could be treated without any mercy for what were only imagined crimes. Civilians were terrorised simply because it was possible to do so, and any offences against them could be justified by the excuse that they were subversive elements. At the same time, both the German counterinsurgency forces and the Soviet partisans enjoyed a significant degree of autonomy. The ability for a commander to

³⁸ Slepyan, *Stalin's Guerrillas*, 138, 141.

³⁹ A. Fyodorov, *The Underground Committee Carries On*, trans. L. Stoklitsky, (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1952) 196.

⁴⁰ Joseph Elman, interview with Katie Davis, *The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, May 19, 1998, <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn506424>.

⁴¹ Slepyan, *Stalin's Guerrillas*, 140.

⁴² Slepyan, "Partisans, Civilians and the Soviet State," 50.

dictate the nature of their force's conduct represents a potential, but rarely employed, counterweight to the many influences encouraging brutality. That many commanders did not protect the civilian population highlights the extent to which they were either unwilling or unable to do so.

IV THE RESULT

The deep mire of preconditions established so far were seized by the German security divisions and the Soviet partisans. Crimes were committed against the occupied populace outside of operational orders, for personal gain and to the detriment of their state's military cause. The civilians caught between each force suffered looting, robbery, murder and rape from both forces on a daily basis. This is not to say that all occupation forces and all partisan members acted in this same way, and the motivations for these offences are varied, though the overwhelming picture that forms from this is that the civilians were trapped within a war that had the ability to reach out and touch them personally. Mattia Tualdo of the European Council on Foreign Relations for the Middle East and North Africa, was recently interviewed on living under a dictatorship, or in the power vacuum that follows them. Although Tualdo was discussing Libyans under Gaddafi, his thoughtful comment holds true for those in the occupied Soviet Union during World War II: "It's a hard choice between dictatorship and anarchy, your life is in danger anyway. It's just that instead of one oppressor, you have many."¹ Especially for those living in the newly-Soviet borderlands, having survived the deportations and executions of the USSR's takeover, civilians found themselves as objects of exploitation for both the Germans and the partisans.

Looting occurred to a great extent from the early stages of the Second World War, but it was radicalised with the removal of any restraints in the east. It was not abandoned cars being looted by soldiers in the east, however, but food and homes. The *Hunger Plan*, in the larger context of *Generalplan Ost*, called for the merciless requisitioning of all food available to the invaders. The millions that had their last cow or last bushel of grain taken at gunpoint died as an intentional result of that exterminationist policy. It would have been certain death for the invaders to have been caught without sufficient shelter as temperatures dropped. Whole villages were forcibly evacuated by the occupiers to meet this need, and the fates of the fleeing civilians cannot have been unknown to the soldiers who took up residence in their abandoned properties. Although looting was inextricably tied to the murderous policies of the Nazi state, one can imagine the dire circumstances that some soldiers found themselves within in the east. With the front turning against them to an ever-escalating degree and with miles of inhospitable land between them and their bombed, blockaded homes, taking opportunities to salvage one's assets does not seem beyond the common course that wars take. However, the

¹ "Is Partition Libya's Future?" *Late Night Live* (Sydney: ABC, April 19, 2017). <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/latenightlive/is-partition-libyas-future/8453830>.

extent and *intent* of the looting in the rear areas does aid in forming an understanding of the horrors of the German occupation.

The occupation forces were able to employ any one of their comprehensive guiding orders to kill anyone they desired. Innocents could be chosen for out-of-hand execution for crimes of partisan affiliation, racial inferiority and suspected communist sympathies. By the end of the war, reprisals had caused a significant amount of the 3.1 million civilians killed and the twenty-eight thousand villages and hamlets destroyed. Murder was intrinsically linked to the other crimes of the occupation, robbery and sexual violence. The occupation forces were placed in a position where questions were rarely asked if the murdered “partisan” had been killed to silence any reports of rape, or owned wealthy property that was to be used by the police or local *Volksdeutsche* (locals considered to be German enough to move into positions of influence in the occupied regions). Personal gain was not the only impetus for German reprisals, as highlighted in the work of historians such as Ben Shepherd who identifies the influences of German military tradition and culture, careerism, a harsh interpretation of military necessity and battle frustrations.² Of these, careerism stands out as a particularly significant element as it involves personal gain for a civilian’s brutalisation. Including massacred civilians in the numbers of killed enemy partisans gave security commanders direct, personal career benefits. The benefit of such actions is outside of the realm of military aims simply as the German tactic of brutalising the population into submission did not work. The brutalisation of the civilian population in 1941 was unnecessary, as much of the populace would have been otherwise receptive to German rule and did not support the miniscule partisan movement.³ Both the survivors of reprisals and those fleeing the slave labour campaign had little choice but to join the partisans, which was, of course, exploited by the partisans themselves. It is possible that security commanders did not realise that their brutal submission tactics were ultimately helping the partisan movement, especially as only a diminutive number of German commanders openly warned about an imprudently harsh occupation. However, it is reasonable to assume, as horrific as it is, that some security commanders pursued the career opportunities that killing civilians gave them, regardless of if this achieved any real tactical advantages, or directly despite it not doing so.

Despite its utter contradiction of Nazi war aims and gender ideology, sexual violence was a pervasive phenomena on the Eastern Front. The only requirement in the majority of

² See Shepherd, “The Clean Wehrmacht, the War of Extermination, and Beyond.”

³ Shepherd, “The Clean Wehrmacht, the War of Extermination, and Beyond,” 464; See Anderson, “Germans, Ukrainians and Jews,” 335 - 338 for the positive reception of Germans in the rear of Army Group South.

cases was not the victim's ethnicity, bloodline or culture, but their sex.⁴ Even Nazism's mortal enemy, Jews, were not spared from this aspect of the occupation. Perverse "beauty shows" were held more than once, where both the winners and losers were executed together.⁵ Sexual violence greatly melds together with robbery and murder, but theft in these cases is not material, but bodily, and the crime is in isolation of the murder that often occurred just afterwards. With a famished native population and the appeasement of the invaders' absolute authority as one of the few ways to preserve one's life, the Germans held total dominion over their captive's bodies.

There are several theories of why rape occurs, especially in war zones. Although sexual violence's use as a tool of terror is involved, sexual gratification seems to have been the most convincing motivation in the eastern rear areas. Although power (as the traditional feminist interpretation of rape) was undoubtedly one facet, it seems strange to equate sexual violence with authority in a setting where the victim knew that they could be murdered without it being considered a crime.⁶ Although it would be simplistic and wrong to equate sexual violence against both those within and outside the forced servitude of a military brothel, the moral obstacle to rape is undoubtedly lowered in a position where the offender already controls the life and death of the victim.

Many of the bands that would later be referred to as Soviet partisans spent the first chapter of the war as little more than bandits. The entrenchment of the partisan's unpunishable authority only legitimized and exacerbated this heritage. Just as for the German invaders, looting was justified as an extension of the partisan's need to live off the civilian populace. In the words of one partisan survivor, the total looting of the civilian population was done in full knowledge of Soviet high command with the presumption that anything that the Soviets did not take would just be left for the Germans.⁷ In this way, even the most defenceless of the civilian population were weaponised against the invader, with their perpetual poverty adding to the inhospitality of the land. Just as with the host of preconditions discussed earlier in this essay, the leeway afforded to a partisan that is able to requisition material at their own discretion encouraged the wholesale stripping of a victim's possessions. Emboldened, often drunk partisans requisitioned without limit, commonly taking things that seemed to be of no use to them. There are many cases similar to these, but a simple trend

⁴ Wendy Jo Gertjeanssen, "Victims, Heroes, Survivors: Sexual Violence on the Eastern Front in World War II" (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 2004), 2.

⁵ Snyder, *Bloodlands*, 230.

⁶ Gertjeanssen, "Victims, Heroes, Survivors," 255.

⁷ Kagan, Interview.

emerges in instances where a woman's lingerie is demanded by male fighters, or a child's only winter jacket is stolen.⁸ Partisans soon resembled gangsters, operating behind the officially-mandated racket of wartime resistance.

For many, life as a partisan was greatly motivated as a chance for life at all. The broken remnants of destroyed villages, in a country sundered by an exterminationist occupation and civil war, had to seize what chances they could to survive. In many cases, robbery of this kind to have been motivated by something other than survival, such as a chance to wield power over a defenceless other. However, one can imagine that someone fleeing a burning home could take what opportunities arose to emerge out of the war with some semblance of their pre-war wealth. One partisan veteran recalls selling salt on the black market after being drafted into the Red Army at many times its usual value.⁹ It seems that many in this way were simply attempting to salvage the livelihoods that had been sacrificed or lost during the fighting. Attempting to understand this phenomena in this way does not deserve to detract from the overwhelming condemnation that many of the partisans earned by stripping the population's necessities.

Partisans were similarly able to murder civilians at will, often accompanying the many other instances of robbery and rape. As has been established, partisans were provided a mechanism that allowed the execution of civilians to be legitimised and accepted as a contribution to the war. This ability was soon to be severely exploited as an individualistic, opportunistic method of coercion and punishment. Historian Alexander Brakel details the great many examples of murder in the National Archive of Belarus. In one instance, a village had become a nightly raiding ground of the local partisan band. A resident farmer was demanded for vodka and was shot in the head while he explained that he had none. In a similar case, a partisan attempted to rape the female maidservant of a property while his accomplice executed a local farm boy that had stood up to them in her defence.¹⁰ The term "collaborator" was applied without deliberation, such as with civilians simply tilling their own fields being considered as working with the enemy and promptly being executed.¹¹ Slepyan provides another telling example of the looseness of the term "collaborator" from the Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History. In this case, a partisan's robbery of a family

⁸ Brakel, "The Relationship Between Soviet Partisans and the Civilian Population," 88.

⁹ Helbling, Interview.

¹⁰ Brakel, "The Relationship Between Soviet Partisans and the Civilian Population," 88.

¹¹ Slepyan, "Partisans, Civilians and the Soviet State," 46.

ended with the murder of the father. To justify the action, this man was quickly identified as “an alien element to Soviet power”.¹²

At the same time, partisans murdered one another, with partisan bands developing regional rivalries. This killing was not wholly beyond the existing nature of the conflict, with the Central Staff readily able to mark partisan bands for destruction if their loyalty was suspect. Partisan leaders were openly murdered or befell “accidental” deaths at the hands of their rivals’ agents.¹³ Much of the violence of inter-partisan conflict appears to have lessened with the creation of the Central Staff in May 1942. Even once the Central Staff had been convened, however, partisan rivalries were still able to go unpunished. One partisan veteran, introduced earlier in this essay, Joseph Elman, explains one instance whereby partisans were killed and looted for valuables from another local group. This crime was reported to the authorities later in the war, though no action was taken. The way that Elman recalls the response of the authorities gives the impression that this sort of murder can be considered to be an unfortunate side effect of a partisan war. This was a necessary evil to defeat the invaders. Certainly, it would likely be very difficult to find whoever was responsible for these murders, but the authorities’ response still sheds light on the nature of the conflict.¹⁴

Partisans enacted sexual violence on the occupied civilian population, as well within as their own ranks. Women formed roughly five percent of some partisan bands, with the highest estimates reaching just over nine percent of the movement by the end of the war.¹⁵ Although Eisa Shor, a partisan veteran from the majority-Jewish Bielski band, recalls that she was not discriminated against for being a woman in a partisan detachment, she does note that she had to work to establish her value on military operations.¹⁶ In other bands, however, women were commonly addressed simply as “whore” or as “camp partisan wives”. Women often had to seek a male protector or were considered as the valued property of male fighters whose rank determined the number of women that they perceived rights to.¹⁷ The lack of restraint that partisans enjoyed within their own ranks mirrors their dealings with civilians, such as in one instance where a partisan woman was executed as a spy by the unit’s NKVD head after she refused his advances. This was not an isolated phenomenon, with camp women risking rape or death for their defiance.¹⁸ In discussing the motivations of rape on the Eastern Front, historian Wendy Jo Gertjeanssen posits that rape occurred as a result of the

¹² Slepyan, *Stalin’s Guerrillas*, 140.

¹³ Slepyan, *Stalin’s Guerrillas*, 106, 178.

¹⁴ Elman, Interview.

¹⁵ Slepyan, *Stalin’s Guerrillas*, 195.

¹⁶ Shor, Interview.

¹⁷ Snyder, *Bloodlands*, 239; Slepyan, *Stalin’s Guerrillas*, 195.

¹⁸ Slepyan, *Stalin’s Guerrillas*, 195.

perpetrator's negative attitude towards women, as well as their belief in their right to the victim's bodies, among other reasons.¹⁹ I would argue that Gertjejanssen is essentially correct, though with the added layer that many of these victims were of the occupied people, and thus inhabited a lower rung of moral consideration and obligation in the minds of both the German and Soviet perpetrators.

The nature of the rear-area security war was such that the robbery, rape and murder of a civilian could easily go unpunished. Simultaneously, looting, violence and killing were often rewarded with the recognition of a successful mission. The occupied territories, in this way, became a space within which any action was permissible against the civilian population. Any level of brutality or exploitation could be employed against them. Above all, these actions were conceived to be legitimate acts of war against an enemy population. Substance-abuse had become a powerful tool to help one survive the frontlines. As a result, alcohol fuelled fighters' crimes and the states that had created these conditions were either unwilling or unable to alleviate them. Certainly, not every fighter in the rear area treated civilians in this way. However, this behaviour was not perpetrated by a diminutive few. Exploitation of the occupied civilians was extremely common and therefore represents a pervasive mentality in the rear areas. It is significant that a conclusion on these actions can be discussed without specific reference to either the German counterinsurgency forces or the Soviet partisans. Both forces perpetrated these crimes in very comparable ways, as a result of very comparable influences. This leads us to the final chapter, within which we will consider the implications of these similarities.

¹⁹ Gertjejanssen, "Victims, Heroes, Survivors," 255.

V

THE IMPLICATIONS

To have ... testimony ... of a moral blindness that afforded men (and the occasional woman) to see repugnant acts without recognizing them as such - this is a challenge to what we fervently wish to hold self-evidently true: that human beings are capable of distinguishing between right and wrong.¹

This statement was originally intended to explain significance of the *Wehrmacht's* role in the Holocaust, though it is largely as true for the Soviet partisans as it is for them. Similarly, what Michael Geyer refers to as the “profound disablement of moral judgement”² displayed by the *Wehrmacht* is also resoundingly true for many Soviet partisans. Disablement is a horrifically apt word for this phenomena as the regimes that each force claimed loyalty to intentionally and mercilessly undermined the legal, moral and psychological restraints that would have otherwise curbed the nature of the rear-area security war. In this way, the security war showed that moral judgement, the human ability to distinguish between right and wrong, was able to be nullified by outside influences. The efforts of the Nazi and Soviet leadership to radicalise the war on the frontlines destroyed any resemblance that the war could have had to the international norms of war. What was considered as a legitimate war aim, or a legitimate target, was broadened to include even the most heinous acts against utterly defenceless targets. This radicalisation compounded with the intrinsic forms of the two regimes. Nazi racial theory cemented with the traditions of the German army to view the occupied eastern civilians as possessing a racially-determined criminality. The harsh German anti-partisan doctrine reinforced this ideology, calling for extreme violence for the slightest provocation. The Soviet crime and punishment system similarly discouraged mercy against the occupied civilians, allowing punishments to be meted out without any justification. The final source of the rear-area's lawlessness was the state's inability to punish individualistic crimes when they did occur. The war had descended to such a depraved pitch that violence of passion and greed could not be distinguished from the fighting of the enemy.

Once lawlessness had been created, both the German counterinsurgency forces and the Soviet partisans used their freedom to exploit the occupied civilians. In this way, a look at a relatively limited set of examples shows a convergence of the two rival forces. This

¹ Michael Geyer, “Foreword,” in *The German Army and Genocide, Crimes Against Prisoners, Jews, and Other Civilians, 1939-1944*, ed. The Hamburg Institute for Social Research (New York, The New Press, 1999), 8.

² Geyer, “Foreword,” 8.

convergence is almost total, being visible on nearly every level of the security war's official and unofficial conduct. As a result, convergence seems to wholly eclipse any other observation on the civilian's experience in the occupied Soviet territories. Convergence certainly has been discussed by historians in the past. However, the extent to which it occurred appears to have been only suggested implicitly, whereas it needs to be stated explicitly.

There was one key difference between the forces of the security war that must not be overshadowed by their comparisons. The German counterinsurgency campaign was a pivotal part of the Holocaust. While both forces of the security war conceived of the civilians as disposable, Jewish civilians were more than disposable for the German forces; they were marked for death.³ Jews were consistently selected over others as the targets of reprisals and collective punishments as a result of this distinction.⁴ The convergence of the security war tactics, in light of their significance to the Holocaust, should encourage further contemplation by historians of the partisan movement. This should not lessen the horror of the Holocaust by relativisation, nor should it be pursued without an acknowledgement of the nuanced differences between the two forces' tactics.

Despite the comparison between the forces of the security war being open in the recollections of contemporary observers,⁵ the lack of explicit discussion of their convergence seems to be a result of the conflict's historiography. It might be that the sense of caution and sensitivity that historians approach the study of the Holocaust with has also played a part in the security war's study. The complex issues of morality that were generated by the *Historikerstreit*, the aforementioned "historians' dispute", may have dissuaded historians from making what has been a politically-loaded comparison in the past. This is the observation from a student that began their studies long after the *Historikerstreit* had subsided, though this dispute seems to be a reasonable origin if my understanding of the historiography is correct. There are still valuable lessons to learn from a comparison of the two forces. That two seemingly-dichotomous groups, fighting under the banner of two seemingly-opposite states, could have acted in the same way against the occupied civilians begs further inquiry. When questioned, the face-value differences between the two forces and their states gives way to similarities between the ways that they each conceptualised themselves and their victims.

³ A distinction eloquently made by Geyer, "Foreword", 8, 9.

⁴ Shepherd, "The Clean Wehrmacht," 459.

⁵ See Elman, Interview. Elman refers to the occupied civilians as "caught in between" the forces of the two states, for just one example.

Similarly, this argument has powerful implications for the politics of memory in the post-Soviet countries. It is here that memory disputes have arisen regarding the groups that collaborated with the Germans or committed similar actions to them, such as in Ukraine with the UPA and with the Soviet partisans themselves in Russia and Belarus. The trend of misrepresenting the various guerrilla and partisan groups continues to this day, with government decrees in Russia and Ukraine that inhibit these countries from coming to terms with the past. This thesis has not covered the other guerrilla groups of the Eastern Front, though it seems as though their histories will also share similarities those explored here. Without critical reflection on the part of the post-Soviet countries themselves, true acknowledgement of the realities of the war, still obscured seventy years on, cannot be achieved. A new *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, a coming-to-terms-with-the-past, for those that inherited the Soviet partisans' legacy will not be completed while the remaining archives on this topic stay inaccessible.

Finally, despite the potential hopelessness that any morality can withstand the moral disablement of such a time and place as the occupied USSR during the Second World War, we must remind ourselves that some glimmer of innocence did survive the war. Kenneth Slepyan provides a heartening excerpt from the Russian State Archives. This radio message was presented to partisans, ranging from children to the elderly, men and women, that were defending their village on 28 June 1942:

Patriotism begins from the most ordinary: from the tree next to the house, from the lane running down the river with the smell of antonovka apples or the steppe fields. The war helps every Soviet person understand the beauty of his native place.⁶

Even despite its ideological frame, excerpts like this must be remembered to avoid wholesale condemnation of the partisan movement. There were many people on the Eastern Front that became classed as collaborators or partisans by circumstance alone. Many of these shared the simple desires for life, peace and home. Even those that brutalised their former neighbours can be seen as victims of a war that they did not ask for. This essay began with the insight from A. C. Grayling that war creates a moral space beyond the realms of everyday human life. The occupied civilians saw their homes transformed into a literal space beyond morality, where they were not only victims of it but were encouraged to participate. For those that did take part in the violence, however, the terrifying conclusion remains: the only thing that was able to restrain the fighters in the east was themselves, and overwhelmingly, they did not.

⁶ Kenneth Slepyan, *Why They Fought: Motivation, Legitimacy and the Soviet Partisan Movement*, 17.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

- Bosworth, R. J. B. *Explaining Auschwitz and Hiroshima: History Writing and the Second World War 1945-1990*. London: Routledge, 1999.
- Browning, Christopher R. *Ordinary Men, Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*. London: Penguin Books, 2001.
- Brown, Kate. *A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004.
- Calvocoressi, Peter and Guy Wint. *Total War: Causes and Courses of the Second World War*. New York: Penguin, 1972.
- Bellamy, Chris. *Absolute War: Soviet Russia in the Second World War*. New York: Vintage, 2007.
- Evans, Richard J. *The Third Reich At War*. New York: The Penguin Press, 2009.
- Fyodorov, A. *The Underground Committee Carries On*, translated by L. Stoklitsky. Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1952.
- Grayling, A. C. *War: An Enquiry*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017.
- Heaton, Colin D. *Occupation and Insurgency: A Selection of The Hague and Geneva Conventions on the Eastern Front, 1939-1945*, edited by Steve Greer. New York: Algora Publishing, 2009.
- Kamenetsky, Ihor. *Hitler's Occupation of Ukraine, 1941-1944: A Study of Totalitarian Imperialism*. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1956.
- Kershaw, Ian. *Hitler, the Germans, and the Final Solution*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.
- Ohler, Norman. *Blitzed, Drugs in Nazi Germany*, translated by Shaun Whiteside. London: Allen Lane, 2016.
- Oppenheim, L. *International Law: A Treatise, Vol. II: Disputes, War and Neutrality*. 7th ed. Edited by H. Lauterpacht. London: Longmans, 1952.
- Overy, Richard. *Russia's War*. London: Penguin Books, 1999.
- Pohl, Otto J. *Ethnic Cleansing in the U.S.S.R., 1937-1949*. Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1999.
- Reynolds, David. *In Command of History: Churchill Fighting and Writing the Second World War*. London: Allen Lane, 2004.
- Roberts, Geoffrey. *Stalin's War: From World War to Cold War, 1939-1953*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007.

- Shepherd, Ben. *War in the Wild East: The German Army and Soviet Partisans*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2009.
- Slepyan, Kenneth. *Stalin's Guerrillas, Soviet Partisans in World War II*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2009.
- Snyder, Timothy. *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin*. London: Vintage, 2015.
- Taylor, A. J. P. *The Second World War: An Illustrated History*. New York: Putnam, 1975.
- Waller, James. *Becoming Evil, How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing*. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Weinberg, L. Gerhard. *A World At Arms, A Global History of World War II*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Wilmot, Chester. *The Struggle For Europe*. New York: Harper, 1952.
- Wright, Gordon. *The Ordeal of Total War, 1939-1945*. New York: Harper & Row, 1968.

Journal Articles and Book Chapters

- Anderson, Truman O. "Germans, Ukrainians and Jews: Ethnic Politics in Heeresgebiet Süd, June-December 1941." *War in History* 7, no. 3 (2000), 325-351.
- Anderson, Truman. "Incident at Baranivka: German Reprisals and the Soviet Partisan Movement in Ukraine, October-December 1941." *The Journal of Modern History* 71, no. 3 (1999): 585-623.
- Bartov, Omer, "Preface." In *The German Army and Genocide, Crimes Against Prisoners, Jews, and Other Civilians, 1939-1944*. edited by The Hamburg Institute for Social Research. New York, The New Press, 1999.
- Bartov, Omer. *Germany's War and the Holocaust, Disputed Histories*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003.
- Beevor, Antony. *The Second World War*. New York: Little Brown and Company, 2012.
- Beorn, Waitman W. "A Calculus of Complicity: The Wehrmacht, the Anti-Partisan War, and the Final Solution in White Russia, 1941-42." *Central European History* 44 (2011): 308-337.
- Brakel, Alexander. "The Relationship Between Soviet Partisans and the Civilian Population in Belorussia Under German Occupation, 1941-4." In *War in a Twilight World, Partisan and Anti-Partisan Warfare in Eastern Europe, 1939-1945*, edited by Ben Shepherd and Julie Pattinson, 35-57. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
- Edele, Mark. "Take (No) Prisoners! The Red Army and German POWs, 1941-1943." *The Journal of Modern History* 88, no. 2: 342-379.
- Etheridge, Brian C. "The Desert Fox, Memory Diplomacy and the German Question in Early Cold War America." *Diplomatic History* 32, no. 2 (2008): 207-238.

- Michael Geyer, "Foreword." In *The German Army and Genocide, Crimes Against Prisoners, Jews, and Other Civilians, 1939-1944*. edited by The Hamburg Institute for Social Research. New York, The New Press, 1999.
- Goujon, Alexandra. "Memorial Narratives of WWII Partisans and Genocide in Belarus." *East European Politics and Societies* 24, no. 1 (2010), 6-25.
- Grier, Howard D. "The Eastern Front in World War II." *European History Quarterly* 44, no. 1 (2014): 103-112.
- Hill, Alexander. "The Partisan War in North-West Russia 1941-4: A Re-examination." *Journal of Strategic Studies* 25, no. 3 (2002): 37-55.
- Khromeychuk, Olesya. "Ukrainians in the German Armed Forces During the Second World War." *History* 100, no. 343 (2015): 704-724.
- Lauchlan, Iain. "Chekist Mentalité and the Origins of the Great Terror." In *The Anatomy of Terror, Political Violence Under Stalin*, edited by James Harris, 13-28. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Lehnstaedt, Stephan. "Resistance in Eastern Europe." In *A Companion to World War II, Volume II*, edited by Thomas W. Zeiler and David M. DuBois, 618-37. West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing, 2013.
- Marples, David R. "Anti-Soviet Partisans and Ukrainian Memory." *East European Politics and Societies* 24, no. 1 (2010): 26-43.
- Marples, David. R. "Stepan Bandera: The Resurrection of a Ukrainian National Hero," *Europe-Asia Studies* 58, no. 4 (2006), 555-566.
- Major, Patrick. "'Our Friend Rommel'": The Wehrmacht as a "Worthy Enemy" in Postwar British Popular Culture." *German History* 26, no. 4 (2008), 520-535.
- Motadel, David. "Islam and Germany's War in the Soviet Borderlands, 1941-5." *Journal of Contemporary History* 48, no. 4 (2013): 784-820.
- Naimark, Norman M. "War and Genocide on the Eastern Front, 1941-1945." *Contemporary European History* 16, no. 2 (2007): 259-274.
- Römer, Felix. "The Wehrmacht in the War of Ideologies: The Army and Hitler's Criminal Orders on the Eastern Front." In *Nazi Policy on the Eastern Front, 1941: Total War, Genocide and Radicalization*, edited by Alex J Kay, Jeff Rutherford and David Stahel, 73-100. New York: University of Rochester Press, 2012.
- Rutherford, Jeff. "'One Senses Danger from All Sides, Especially From Fanatical Civilians': The 121st Infantry Division and Partisan and Partisan War, June 1941-April 1942." In *War in a Twilight World, Partisan and Anti-Partisan Warfare in Eastern Europe, 1939-1945*, edited by Ben Shepherd and Julie Pattinson, 35-57. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
- Shepherd, Ben. "The Clean Wehrmacht, the War of Extermination, and Beyond." *The Historical Journal* 52, no. 2 (2009): 455-473.

Shepherd, Ben. "'Unprecedented, Merciless and Unrelenting Harshness': Fanaticism and Brutalisation in Wehrmacht Anti-Partisan Warfare in the Soviet Union." In *Fanaticism and Conflict in the Modern Age*, edited by Matthew Hughes and Gaynor Johnson, 63-80. London: Frank Cass, 2005.

Shepherd, Ben. "Wehrmacht Security Regiments in the Soviet Partisan War, 1943." *European History Quarterly* 33 (2003): 493-529.

Slepyan, Kenneth. "Partisans, Civilians and the Soviet State: An Overview." In *War in a Twilight World, Partisan and Anti-Partisan Warfare in Eastern Europe, 1939-1945*, edited by Ben Shepherd and Julie Pattinson, 35-57. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Snyder, Timothy. "The Causes of Ukrainian-Polish Ethnic Cleansing 1943." *Past & Present* 179 (2003), 197-234.

Statiev, Alexander. "Soviet Partisan Violence Against Soviet Civilians: Targeting Their Own." *Europe Asia Studies* 66 no. 9 (2014): 1525-1552.

Primary Source Databases

Elman, Joseph. Interview with Katie Davis. 1998.A.0113. *The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*. May 19, 1998, <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn506424>.

Extracts from The Hague and Geneva Conventions on the Laws of War (1907, 1929) Concerning the Treatment of Prisoners of War. Harvard Law School Library - Nuremberg Trials Project, 2, <http://nuremberg.law.harvard.edu/documents/2972-extracts-from-the-hague?q=evidence:no%2A+hague#p.1>

Fishmann, Joshua. Interview with Arthur Kirsh. *The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*. July 13, 1982. <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn513779>.

Flor, Gertrude G. Interview with Randy M. Goldman. 1996.A.0209. *The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, May 29, 1996, <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn504909>.

Harvard Project on the Soviet Social System. Schedule B, Vol. 12, Case 143 (interviewer H.D.). Widener Library: Harvard University. <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:FHCL:965183>.

Helbling, Philip. Interview with Linda G. Kuzmack. *The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*. July 13, 1982. <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn504586>.

International Committee of the Red Cross. *Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War*. Geneva, 27 July 1929. https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/Treaty.xsp?action=openDocument&documentId=0BDE_DDD046FDEBA9C12563CD002D69B1.

Kagan, Jack. Interviewer unknown. 1995.A.1285.22. *The Imperial War Museum*, June 29, 1986, <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn510829>.

Lammers, Hans, October 1, 1941. In *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945: Series D (1937-1945) Volume XIII*. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1954, 596, 597.

Miranski, Elia and Genia Miranski. Interview with Gail Schwartz. 2013.74.1. *The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, May 19, 2013, <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn59188>.

Shor, Esia. Interview with Judith Cohen. 2010.83. *The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*. February 22, 2010. <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn41515>.

PhD Dissertations

Gertjeanssen, Wendy Jo. "Victims, Heroes, Survivors: Sexual Violence on the Eastern Front in World War II." PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 2004.

Radio and Podcasts

"Is Partition Libya's Future?" *Late Night Live*. podcast radio programme. Presented by Phillip Adams. Sydney: ABC, April 19, 2017. <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/latenightlive/is-partition-libyas-future/8453830>.

"New Views on the Holocaust and 1980s Britain" *History Extra* (London: Immediate Media Co., BBC, October 10, 2015). <http://www.historyextra.com/podcast/Holocaust-Thatcher-Britain>.