

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: KNOWING THE ENEMY: NAZI FOREIGN
INTELLIGENCE IN WAR, HOLOCAUST, AND
POSTWAR

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Dissertation Directed by: Professor Jeffrey Herf
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“Knowing the Enemy: Nazi Foreign Intelligence in War, Holocaust and Postwar,” reveals the importance of ideologically-driven foreign intelligence reporting in the wartime radicalization of the Nazi dictatorship, and the continued prominence of Nazi discourses in postwar reports from German intelligence officers working with the U.S. Army and West German Federal Intelligence Service after 1945. For this project, I conducted extensive archival research in Germany and the United States, particularly in overlooked and files pertaining to the wartime activities of the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt*, *Abwehr*, *Fremde Heere Ost*, *Auswärtiges Amt*, and German General Staff, and the recently declassified intelligence files pertaining to the postwar activities of the Gehlen Organization, *Bundesnachrichtendienst*, and Foreign Military Studies Program. Applying the technique of close textual analysis to the underutilized intelligence reports themselves, I discovered that wartime German intelligence officials in military, civil

service, and Party institutions all lent the appearance of professional objectivity to the racist and conspiratorial foreign policy beliefs held in the highest echelons of the Nazi dictatorship. The German foreign intelligence services' often erroneous reporting on Great Britain, the Soviet Union, the United States, and international Jewry simultaneously figured in the radicalization of the regime's military and anti-Jewish policies and served to confirm the ideological preconceptions of Hitler and his most loyal followers. After 1945, many of these same figures found employment with the Cold War West, using their "expertise" in Soviet affairs to advise the West German Government, U.S. Military, and CIA on Russian military and political matters. I chart considerable continuities in personnel and ideas from the wartime intelligence organizations into postwar West German and American intelligence institutions, as later reporting on the Soviet Union continued to reproduce the flawed wartime tropes of innate Russian military and racial inferiority.

KNOWING THE ENEMY:
NAZI FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE IN WAR, HOLOCAUST, AND POSTWAR

by

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BAB – Bundesarchiv-Berlin
BAK – Bundesarchiv-Koblenz
BfV – Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz (Federal Republic of Germany Office for the Protection of the German Constitution)
BND – Bundesnachrichtendienst (German Federal Intelligence Service)
CIA – Central Intelligence Agency
CIC – U.S. Army Counterintelligence Corps
CIG – Central Intelligence Group
DCI – Director of Central Intelligence
DGFP – *Documents on German Foreign Policy, Series D*
EUCOM – U.S. European Command
FBI – Federal Bureau of Investigation
FHO – Fremde Heere Ost (Foreign Armies East)
FHW – Fremde Heere West (Foreign Armies West)
G-2 – U.S. Army Intelligence Unit
GDR – Deutsche Demokratische Republik (German Democratic Republic/East Germany)
GIS – German Intelligence Service
GO – Gehlen Organization
GSWW – *Germany and the Second World War Volumes*
FMSP – Foreign Military Studies Program
Ic – German Army Unit Intelligence Officers
IMT – International Military Tribunal
JCS – Joint Chiefs of Staff
KPD – Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (German Communist Party)
NACP – National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD
NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NKVD – Narodnyi Kommissariat Vnutrennikh Del (Soviet Secret Police)
NSDAP – Nationalsozialistische deutsche Arbeiterpartei (Nazi Party)
OKH – Oberkommando des Heeres (German Army High Command)
OKW – Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (German Armed Forces High Command)
O. Qu. IV - Oberquartiermeister IV (Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence – Supervisory Office within OKH for FHO/FHW)
OMGUS – Office of Military Government United States
OSS – Office of Strategic Services
OUN – Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists
PAAA – Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts, Berlin, Germany
RSHA – Reichssicherheitshauptamt (Reich Security Main Office)
RSHA VI – Reichssicherheitshauptamt Amt VI (RSHA foreign intelligence office)
SD – Sicherheitsdienst (SS intelligence)
SS – Schutzstaffel (Protective Corps)
USFET – U.S. Forces European Theater
USHMM – United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC

INTRODUCTION

Introduction - The German Foreign Intelligence Services

This dissertation examines the reports prepared by the Nazi-era German foreign intelligence services and their Cold War successor organizations, and evaluates the politicization of the German foreign intelligence services in both periods. It analyzes what information on enemy nations was gathered, processed, and presented to leaders in the Nazi state in order to understand the consequences of the politicization of German intelligence during the war and the stubbornness of ingrained prejudices afterwards. Drawing on the underutilized reports of the German foreign intelligence services, I argue that during the Second World War, the German intelligence services' (GIS) politicized intelligence reports on foreign affairs and provided flawed evidence to confirm the Nazi worldview. These reports supported the widely held assumptions in the Nazi elite that Britain was politically and morally bankrupt, that the Soviet Union was tottering militarily and racially inferior, and that the United States' vast economic potential was undermined by political, cultural, and racial degeneration. Taken as a whole, the reports of the German intelligence services lent credence to the contradictory ideas that all three were puppets in the hands of international Jewry, the all-powerful archenemy of Germany, but that none would be a particularly difficult foe. As much subsequent scholarly literature has shown, amateurism and incompetence were certainly also factors in the German intelligence services' tendency to draw erroneous conclusions.¹ But the

¹ Kent Fedorowich, "German Espionage and British Counter-Intelligence in South Africa and Mozambique, 1939-1944," *The Historical Journal* 48, no. 1 (2005): 209-230; Mark M. Hull, "The Irish Interlude: German Intelligence in Ireland, 1939-1943," *The Journal of Military History* 66 (July 2002): 695-718; Hans L. Trefasse, "The Failure of German Intelligence in the United States, 1935-1945," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 42, no. 1 (June 1955) 84-100; Thomas H. Etzold, "The Futility Factor: German Information Gathering in the United States," *Military Affairs* 39, no. 2 (April 1975), 77-82; David

most significant fatal flaw in the German intelligence services' reporting during the war was a protracted inability to see the world as it actually was. Moreover, I argue that this deficiency continued to distort the reports of a substantial portion of GIS veterans after 1945 as they endeavored to leverage their supposed expertise on the Soviet Union into positions of prominence in Western intelligence in the early years of the Cold War.

This thematic study of the German foreign intelligence services focuses on several principal questions: What information did the GIS gather on Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States, the principal enemies of the *Reich* in the crucial period 1939-1941? Did this information reasonably represent world events, or was it clouded by the ideological assumptions of National Socialism or older anti-Semitic and anti-Russian prejudices? What were the policy implications of the reports produced by the German foreign intelligence services during the war? What continuities in personnel and ideas marked German intelligence veterans' Cold War reporting on the Soviet Union in the service of the western powers? Was the faith of American military and civilian intelligence officials that former German intelligence officers could offer valuable insight into the motivations of Soviet politicians and the strength and strategy of the Red Army misplaced? Put another way, how "Nazified" were the German intelligence services during the war, and to what extent did the ideological reporting of the war years influence the "technocratic" reporting of the successor German intelligence organizations in the Cold War West?

In answering these questions, I analyze the unpublished reports of a variety of intelligence organizations from archives in both Germany and the United States. For the

Kahn, *Hitler's Spies: German Military Intelligence in World War II* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1978), esp. 12-26.

years 1939-1945, this dissertation draws significantly from the wartime reports of the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* (held at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC and in the *Bundesarchiv-Berlin*) the German Foreign Office (held at the *Politisches Archiv des Auswärtiges Amt* in Berlin), the *Abwehr*, and *Fremde Heere Ost* (held in the captured German records at the United States National Archives in College Park, MD and in the *Militärarchiv Freiburg*). For the Cold War period, I draw predominantly on recently declassified reports relating to postwar collaboration between German and American intelligence in the records of the FBI and CIA on the Gehlen Organization, along with unpublished reports from the United States Army and Foreign Military Studies Program (held at the National Archives in College Park, MD) and the unpublished records of the *Bundesnachrichtendienst* in Germany (held at the *Bundesarchiv Koblenz*).

In Hitler's Germany, there were three significant sources of foreign intelligence for policy-makers: the German Foreign Office (*Auswärtiges Amt*) and its extensive networks of diplomatic contacts, embassies and missions abroad; the German military's intelligence gathering and strategic planning organizations in the *Oberkommando des Heeres*, (OKH) and *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*, (OKW); and the state "Security Service," the political intelligence branch of the Nazi Party and SS (*Sicherheitsdienst* or SD III *Ausland*, reorganized as *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* (RSHA) *Amt VI* after September 27, 1939)². Among their other functions, these agencies provided information

² The specific offices under investigation in the German military are *Oberkommando des Heeres* (OKH): *Ober Quartiermeister* of army intelligence (O. Qu IV) and its subordinate staff intelligence and operational planning group on the Soviet Union, *Fremde Heere Ost* (FHO); *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* (OKW): *Abwehr*, the pre-existing military intelligence organ, comprised of Foreign Information, Intelligence, Special Operations, and Counterintelligence Sections. There were of course other intelligence organizations of minor importance not included in this study, such as the NSDAP *Auslandsorganisation*

on foreign governments, militaries, economies and societies. As Hitler and the Reich prepared for war with Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States, and the subsequent “Final Solution to the Jewish Question” in Europe, the information culled by these institutions informed the policy-making and military planning of the Nazi state. Members of the German intelligence services (particularly in the *RSHA*) occasionally participated directly in the killing of Jews during the war. More importantly, however, in their capacities as evaluators of enemy strength and strategic intentions, the German intelligence community actively provided evidence that supported the existence of a “World Jewish Conspiracy” and the predominance of Jews in “partisan activities” behind the lines. Such reporting not only implicated the intelligence community in the criminality of the Nazi state, but also betrayed a fundamental misunderstanding of world-events. The German foreign intelligence services systematically blundered in evaluating American, British, and Soviet economic and military capacity, strategic aims, and ability to intervene directly in Europe, while also inaccurately stressing the pervasiveness of Jewish power in all three states. This flawed understanding of the outside world, widely held by Hitler and his closest followers and reinforced at every turn by the German intelligence services, had disastrous effects on the German war effort and deadly consequences for European Jewry.

As the military defeat of Nazi Germany by Allied forces became increasingly apparent after 1943, German intelligence officers in the *RSHA*, *Wehrmacht*, and *Auswärtiges Amt* endeavored to present themselves to the Anglo-Americans as advocates

under Ernst Wilhelm Böhle or Ribbentrop’s ill-fated *Informationstelle III*, and Hermann Göring’s *Forschungsamt* (radio intercept service) which all together yielded only modest dividends during the war. Other agencies of major importance, such as FHO’s sister organization *Fremde Heere West*, have been omitted for reasons of emphasis (see n. 51).

and practitioners of objective and sober analysis in contrast to the “fanatics” and “ideologues” in Hitler’s inner circle.³ These intelligence operatives brokered a future for themselves in postwar West German and Anglo-American intelligence organizations through the propagation of two related narratives: (1) the claim of possessing valuable expertise in foreign intelligence gathering and assessment, particularly on the Soviet Union, and (2) the claim that as “apolitical,” or “objective” intelligence workers, their expertise was in no way tainted by Nazi ideology or criminality. After research in the files of American intelligence agencies, postwar interrogations and trial testimony, and captured German records held at the United States National Archives, I contend that key institutions of the German intelligence service *were* in the hands of Nazi “true believers,” and that many non-Party “professionals” in the *Abwehr* and FHO were often criminally culpable in genocide and other war crimes.

In the postwar period, captured German army intelligence officers prepared intelligence reports under the command of former Chief of the German General Staff Franz Halder on Soviet military strategy and tactics for the U.S. Army in what ultimately became known as the “Foreign Military Studies Program.” At the same time, the “Gehlen Organization,” (which became the West German Federal Intelligence Service, or *Bundesnachrichtendienst* in 1956) was a mixture of military and RSHA intelligence analysts under the leadership of former Foreign Armies East head Reinhard Gehlen. It

³ See the Final Report on the Case of Walter Friedrich Schellenberg: May 3, 1946, pg. 11. NACP RG 65, Entry 136-P Box 3, Class File 100-103569, Bulky 39, folder 1/4; and Walter Schellenberg, *The Labyrinth: Memoirs of Walter Schellenberg, Hitler’s Chief of Counterintelligence*, trans Louis Hagen (Boston: Da Capo Press First Edition, 2000). These memoirs, much like the complete transcripts of postwar Allied interrogations of Walter Schellenberg are filled with Schellenberg’s self-aggrandizing claims of “objectivity” in intelligence gathering. Many more of Schellenberg’s former colleagues and subordinates in the RSHA made similar claims, as did Reinhard Gehlen, the head of *Fremde Heere Ost* after 1942 and leader of the “Gehlen Organization” and *Bundesnachrichtendienst* in postwar West Germany. Gehlen’s memoir *Der Dienst: Erinnerungen 1942-1971* (Hase & Köhler, 1971) claims a wartime experience of solid objective analysis corrupted or ignored by an “irrational” Hitler and his followers.

worked closely with the newly established U.S. Central Intelligence Agency to monitor and combat Soviet influence in Western Europe. In both cases, the German “experts” on the Soviet Union consistently invoked familiar tropes of racial determinism, social Darwinism, and apocalyptic confrontation between East and West in interpreting and predicting Soviet policy, often incorrectly.

Before proceeding further, I should define “intelligence” as I use the term here, which is generally broader than traditionally defined in two important ways. First, for my purposes, the sources of intelligence, the raw information or data on which it is based, need not be secret or obtained through subversive or illegal means.⁴ Second, intelligence as examined in these pages frequently has an experiential element as well, which broadens the definition of what constitutes an “intelligence service” significantly. These deviations from the usual consideration of intelligence are not arbitrary, but originate in the sources themselves. While wartime German intelligence services certainly sought to obtain secret information through code-breaking, telephone tapping, blackmail, and other subversive methods, the vast majority of their day-to-day operations were devoted to analyzing publicly available information from enemy media reports, political speeches and legislative debates, and direct observation of labor, economic, and military conditions.⁵ At the same time, wartime intelligence reports did not consist merely of a summary of newspaper clippings or serve as a government-sponsored wire service

⁴ For a definition of intelligence dependent on “secret” information, see John Keegan, *Intelligence in War: Knowledge of the Enemy From Napoleon to Al-Qaeda* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003) and Michael Warner, “Wanted: A Definition of ‘Intelligence,’” *Studies in Intelligence* 46, no. 3 (2002): 15-22.

⁵ German code-breaking was particularly relevant at the time of the Munich Crisis, as through tapped telephone cables and deciphered radio intercepts, that Hitler and others were able to more shrewdly evaluate the motivations of the British and French negotiators and the extent to which they would tolerate a pro-German settlement in the Sudetenland, for example. But this type of intelligence coup, particularly after the start of the war, was rare. See David Kahn, *The Codebreakers: The Comprehensive History of Secret Communication from Ancient Times to the Internet* Revised Ed. (New York: Schribner, 1996).

(although services such as the Foreign Office's *Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro* or DNB did fulfill this function, and the intelligence services under consideration here drew on its reports). For the German subjects of this study, intelligence was the outcome of a *process* of gathering, analyzing, summarizing, and contextualizing a wide variety of information for policy-makers. In Nazi Germany and postwar West Germany this process of transforming information into intelligence was often politicized and highly subjective. In both cases, institutional frameworks of intelligence organizations and policy-maker's desires alike viewed personal perspective as "intelligence" as well. After 1945, for example, the U.S. Army urged German military officers to reflect on, analyze, and report on their personal experiences on the Eastern Front as a means of evaluating Soviet economic and military potential in the Foreign Military Studies Program. Although this institution was not overtly labeled an "intelligence service," the work that was done there as conceived of by Americans and Germans alike was, in fact, intelligence work. Similar attitudes prevailed in Nazi Germany in the early years of the war, when Foreign Office diplomats reported on their own experiences and impressions as a part of their day-to-day informational duties. These reports too, besides serving as sub-sources for the intelligence summaries of institutions such as the RSHA and *Abwehr*, were treated as intelligence, as in the case of the German military attaché in Washington Friedrich von Bötticher. He reported his impressions on the United States to OKW, OKH, and Hitler directly.

Writing the history of intelligence organizations presents a number of methodological problems. No matter how effective or incompetent the German intelligence services were, the German defeat in 1945 was due to myriad political,

economic, and military factors. Furthermore, the German intelligence service was hardly the only one to make costly mistakes during the war, as the services of Axis and Allied countries alike frequently committed operational blunders and underestimated foreign military strength in accordance with their own world-views and prejudices.⁶ On the one hand, to posit that the German intelligence services had little or no significance for either Hitler's strategic assumptions or major decisions in the early phases of the war is simply incorrect.⁷ On the other hand, the contribution of the German intelligence services to the formation of state policy is easily overestimated, as its influence was contingent on the actual and perceived quality of the reports themselves and policy-makers' willingness to incorporate intelligence reports' conclusions into their own political calculations.⁸

Postwar interrogations and memoirs of high-ranking political and military figures, and much subsequent historiography, concluded that when it came to the German intelligence services, Hitler paid attention to reports that confirmed his beliefs and

⁶ John Ferris, "Intelligence" in *The Origins of World War Two: The Debate Continues*, ed. Robert Boyce and Joseph A. Maiolo (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 313-318. See, for example, the British and American underestimations of Soviet strength that paralleled the Germans' own underestimation in Martin Kahn, "Russia Will Assuredly Be Defeated: Anglo-American Governmental Assessments of Soviet War Potential Before Operation Barbarossa," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 25 (2012): 220-240.

⁷ Much scholarly literature on intelligence work focuses on the utility of "good" or "bad" intelligence for specific military outcomes, ultimately concluding that intelligence work is often of secondary importance to actual battlefield encounters. In essence, the argument here is that "good" intelligence does not guarantee victory, while "bad" intelligence does not guarantee defeat. See Keegan, *Intelligence and War*. Other studies of the Second World War choose to ignore the Axis and Allied intelligence services entirely. The most prominent example of this is Richard Overy, *Why the Allies Won* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), but the conspicuous absence of a serious treatment of the German intelligence apparatus by the Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt's *Germany and the Second World War Series* (apart from some depth given to the German military's analysis of the Soviet Union prior to Operation Barbarossa in Volume IV, and continued underestimations of Soviet strength after 1942 in Volume VI) speaks volumes. Such analyses, however, in focusing on battlefield outcomes, do not take into account the broader importance of intelligence agencies in shaping policy and grand strategy discourses.

⁸ Ferris, 308-313. See also the conclusions of Walter Laqueur, *World of Secrets: The Uses and Limits of Intelligence* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), esp. pg. 324.

ignored the rest.⁹ Given Hitler's well-known obstinacy and ideological fanaticism, this is certainly likely. A strict focus on the direct causal relationship between intelligence reports and Hitler's individual policy decisions, however, obscures the importance of the German intelligence services' day-to-day role in providing evidence in support of the National Socialist world-view. Wartime intelligence reports were not, after all, propaganda, even if the more sensational reports tended to confirm familiar propaganda themes.

Due to the overlapping systems of authority that characterized the Nazi dictatorship, intelligence reports flowed vertically to Hitler and his paladins, but also horizontally through the institutions of the Nazi dictatorship. Persistently bizarre and erroneous reports from the German ambassadorial staff in Washington and London pointing to the dire influence of international Jewry on state policy decisions not only served to reinforce the preconceived views of Ribbentrop, but also colored the day-to-day perceptions of Foreign Office Political Department staff, State Secretary Weizsäcker, and others. The German military attaché in Washington, Lt. Gen. Friedrich von Bötticher, had the privilege of reporting to Hitler directly on occasion, but his flawed assessments of U.S. strength also circulated through the Foreign Office, German Armed Forces High Command and German General Staff as well, informing their calculations of American military and economic potential. At the same time, reports from military attachés and

⁹ See, for example, the self-exculpatory apologia of Lt. Gen. Friedrich von Bötticher, German Military Attaché in Washington from 1933-1941: NACP Microfilm Publication M1035: MS# B-484, *Impressions and Experiences of the Military and Air Attaché at the German Embassy in Washington D.C. During the Years 1933-1941*, 27 April 1947, and the similar line taken by former Deputy Chief of Operations Staff (OKW WFSt) Walter Warlimont in DeWitt C. Poole. Head of Mission, "State Department Special Interrogation Mission – General of the Artillery Walter Warlimont," 29 October 1945, pg. 4. NACP RG 498, UD-287, Box 1344. Richard Overy, "Strategic Intelligence and the Outbreak of the Second World War," *War in History* 5, no. 4 (1998): 455. For an example of an application of this argument for the period 1933-1939, see Zachary Shore, *What Hitler Knew: The Battle for Information in Nazi Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

diplomatic personnel formed the basis of much of the reporting of the *Abwehr* and the RSHA, as they were consistently incorporated into daily intelligence digests and summaries. *Fremde Heere Ost*'s racialized reports on Soviet troop strength flowed upward through command channels to the German military planning staffs, but also outward to individual unit commanders at the front. The self-consciously ideological reports prepared by RSHA VI were not just for the personal amusement of Himmler or Heydrich, but also served as a key source of information on world events for Amt VI's parallel RSHA offices as well – if a Gestapo section chief charged with rounding up Jews or an *Einsatzgruppe* commander in the East felt a pang of conscience or doubt, he need only look to his daily intelligence digest to be reminded of the necessity of his mission.

Given the disparate agencies and institutional profiles at work, this phenomenon does not appear to only fit Ian Kershaw's framework of functionaries "working towards the Führer" or creating "intelligence to please" out of a desire to further Hitler's wishes.¹⁰ The German foreign intelligence services' reporting in the early phases of the war instead speaks to what Wolfram Wette has referred to as the "fluid boundaries" between popular anti-Semitic, racist prejudices and doctrinaire Nazism that rendered widespread acceptance and enthusiasm for the regime and its goals (and crimes) possible across a broad spectrum of the German population.¹¹ Such fluidity allowed the same prejudices, particularly a racialized view of ethnic Russians and the Soviet Union to flourish in the

¹⁰ Ian Kershaw, "Working Towards the Führer: Reflections on the Nature of the Hitler Dictatorship," *Contemporary European History* 2, no. 2 (July 1993): 103-118. Uri Bar-Joseph and Jack S. Levy, "Conscious Action and Intelligence Failure," *Political Science Quarterly* 124, no. 3 (Fall 2009): 461-488.

¹¹ Wolfram Wette, *The Wehrmacht: History, Myth, Reality*, trans. Deborah Lucas Schneider (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 78.

absence of Nazism after 1945 among both unrepentant RSHA ideologues and German military intelligence officers who had never been directly “brutalized” at the front.¹²

This dissertation presents an outcome-driven, rather than process-oriented study of the German foreign intelligence services which challenges the still dominant interpretive framework of polycratic chaos in the Nazi wartime intelligence institutions. I am more concerned with the information gathered by the German intelligence services, its presentation to political and military leaders, and the importance of intelligence work for major policy decisions from 1939-1942, than with the internal roadblocks and obstacles facing the German foreign intelligence services. As is the case in many institutional studies of Nazi Germany, a history of the intelligence services involves unclear mandates, overlapping spheres of influence and authority, personal ambitions and animosities, and rivalries for power and influence within the dictatorship. Historians of the Third Reich have drawn much attention to the “institutional chaos” that hindered the effectiveness of German foreign intelligence.¹³ The SS and RSHA waged political warfare against the Foreign Office for control of police attachés and pursued independent foreign policy agendas at cross-purposes to Foreign Office directives. Military

¹² Omer Bartov, *The Eastern Front 1941-1944: German Troops and the Barbarization of Warfare*, 2nd Ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001).

¹³ A prominent undercurrent in Paehler, “Espionage, Ideology, and Personal Politics”; Kahn, *Hitler’s Spies*; Reinhard H. Doerries, *Hitler’s Last Chief of Foreign Intelligence: Allied Interrogations of Walter Schellenberg* (New York: Routledge, 2007); Michael Geyer, “National Socialist Germany: The Politics of Information” in *Knowing One’s Enemies: Intelligence Assessments Before the Two World Wars* ed. E.R. May (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 310-347; Williamson Murray, “Net Assessment in Nazi Germany in the 1930s,” in *Calculations: Net Assessments and the Coming of World War II* ed. Allan R. Millet and Williamson Murray (New York: The Free Press, 1992), 60-96; and memoirs such as including Walter Schellenberg’s *The Labyrinth* and Wilhelm Höttl’s *The Secret Front: Nazi Political Espionage 1938-1945* (New York: Enigma Books, 2003). This interpretation fits well into the rich historiography on the extent and implications of polycratic rule in Nazi Germany dating back at least to Franz Neumann’s 1944 work *Behemoth* and developed more fully in Martin Broszat’s *Der Staat Hitlers* of 1969. For a brief introduction to this historiography, see Joseph W. Bendersky, *A Concise History of Nazi Germany*, 4th ed. (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014), 99-111 and Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 69-92.

intelligence offices continuously battled against the ambitions of the RSHA and SS to subsume all intelligence-gathering offices under their authority in a unified secret information service (*Geheimer Meldedienst*). The *Abwehr* ultimately lost this struggle, and was absorbed by the RSHA in 1944. Within the RSHA itself, Gestapo chief Heinrich Müller continually sought to undermine the foreign intelligence department of the RSHA in hopes of increasing his own influence within the organization. Meanwhile, elements of the *Abwehr* and *Fremde Heere Ost* and *West* featured prominently in resistance efforts to topple Hitler's regime.

As Peter Hayes has forcefully argued, however, irrationally organized institutional structures with overlapping mandates did not prevent the Nazi regime from carrying out day-to-day operations effectively (if not efficiently).¹⁴ The foreign intelligence services were no exception. The Party, military, and state foreign intelligence offices enjoyed a certain level of cooperation even as these various "turf wars" played out behind the scenes. RSHA *Amt Ausland* and the *Abwehr* routinely exchanged information and, until late in the war, generally abided by agreements dating back to 1935 to stay within the bounds of "political" and "military" intelligence respectively.¹⁵ Both the military and political intelligence services were dependent on the

¹⁴ Peter Hayes, "Polycracy and Policy in the Third Reich: The Case of the Economy," in *Reevaluating the Third Reich*, ed. Thomas Childers and Jane Caplan (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1993), 190-210.

¹⁵ This professional working relationship was facilitated by the close personal relationship between Heydrich and Canaris, which dated to the summer of 1923 and their mutual careers in the German Navy. The appointment of Canaris as head of the *Abwehr* in 1935 did much to improve the relations between Heydrich's SD and the *Abwehr*, and Canaris and Heydrich's personal friendship endured to Heydrich's death in 1942 in spite of the strain on their relationship as a result of the SD's role in the 1938 Fritsch Affair, increasing opposition to the regime in *Abwehr* circles, and the RSHA's role in planning and executing wartime atrocities. The two were neighbors in Berlin and were frequent houseguests of one another (along with their families); Heydrich even played in Canaris' wife Erika's string quartet. At their last professional meeting, a joint *Abwehr*-RSHA security conference in Prague featuring 300 intelligence officials that began on May 18th, Canaris stayed in Heydrich's home. He was reportedly shocked and shaken when Czech partisans gunned down Heydrich in the streets of Prague less than a fortnight later.

Auswärtiges Amt's embassy network for much of their information, and generally followed Foreign Office policies and procedures well enough to maintain access to their respective police and military attachés abroad.¹⁶ RSHA *Ausland* chiefs Heinz Jost and Walter Schellenberg generally succeeded in frustrating Gestapo Müller's ambitions to supersede the work of Amt VI. While a number of Canaris' subordinates attempted to countermand unpalatable orders or plotted to overthrow the German dictatorship, the *Abwehr* foreign intelligence department still interpreted data, authored memoranda, and filed reports within the military command structure. During the war, the German intelligence services may not have functioned as efficiently as they could have under circumstances totally devoid of institutional competition, (a problem that bedevils all government institutions to some degree in any case), but at no time during the crucial period 1939-1942 did the German intelligence services neglect to file their daily, weekly, or monthly intelligence reports. The rest of this chapter explores the origins of these institutions and their reports in more detail.

Political Intelligence: RSHA Amt VI (Ausland)

Originally created as a separate office of the SD in late 1934 by Himmler and Heydrich as a means of circumventing the joint Göring-Foreign Office ban on Gestapo operations in foreign countries, the SD foreign intelligence department's mandate

Robert Gerwarth, *Hitler's Hangman: The Life of Heydrich* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011), 37, 84-86, 112, 118, 272-73. On the delineation of authority between political and military intelligence work and cooperative agreements between the SD and *Abwehr*, see BA-MA, RW 5/194 Abschrift Anl. Zu Abw. 4218/12.36.III z.g. vom 23.12.36 gez Canaris, I.V. Dr. Best 21 December 1936. Norbert Müller et. al., ed., *Materialien aus dem Bundesarchiv Heft 16 - Das Amt Ausland/Abwehr im Oberkommando Wehrmacht: Eine Dokumentation* (Koblenz, 2007), Doc. 21.

¹⁶ See the agreement between *Abwehr* and Foreign Office Representatives of April 1941: PAAA R 101832, Canaris zu Auswärtiges Amt, 29 April 1941. *Materialien Aus dem Bundesarchiv Heft 16 - Das Amt Ausland/Abwehr im Oberkommando Wehrmacht: Eine Dokumentation*, Doc. 95.

expanded apace with Himmler and Heydrich's growing portfolios.¹⁷ Unlike the *Abwehr* or other intelligence offices of the German armed forces, Himmler and Heydrich conceived of SD foreign intelligence as an organization that would report exclusively on political matters of interest to the Nazi state.¹⁸ Heinz Jost, a Party "old fighter" who lacked any intelligence experience and would stay on as the chief of RSHA VI until 1942, was recruited to run the new organization, designated SD-III, in 1935. As late as 1937, SD-III remained the smallest branch of the SD Main office, employing only twelve officers and twenty-nine support personnel. These individuals were more preoccupied with counter-espionage duties and competing with other agencies for contacts in German enclaves abroad than in reporting on foreign nations.¹⁹ As the amalgamation of the security services into one central administration (Reich Security Main Office - RSHA) began to take shape in 1938 and 1939, however, Heydrich and Himmler's vision for SD foreign intelligence expanded as well. As described in a copy of a speech drafted by the organization for Heydrich in 1940, the newly designated RSHA Amt VI was a political and economic intelligence service with the ambition of "serving as a centralized collection agency for all information gathered abroad," that would be "able to address any problem in any country at any time." These tasks were approached in an "active" sense, in that the RSHA's mission pertained to both the gathering of political information abroad and the cultivation of pro-German networks to influence the political systems of

¹⁷ On the SD "foreign" branch as an organizational maneuver meant to extend SS power at the expense of Göring and the Foreign Office, see Peter Longerich, *Heinrich Himmler* trans. Jeremy Noakes and Lesley Sharpe (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 187-88.

¹⁸ This necessitated constant negotiation and cooperation with the *Abwehr*, as the shifting boundaries of what exactly divided "military" from "political" intelligence grew increasingly contentious over time. Ultimately, the RSHA increasingly dabbled in military affairs as the reputation of the *Abwehr* declined during the war.

¹⁹ George C. Browder, *Hitler's Enforcers: The Gestapo and the SS Security Service in the Nazi Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 201, 208-09.

foreign countries.²⁰ This mission would only broaden with the wartime radicalization of the RSHA.

The officers of Amt VI, while still conforming largely to the expected generational profile and educational background of Michael Wildt's "unbound generation," were generally a little older and slightly less educated than their peers in the other offices of the RSHA, but still a remarkably well-educated cohort in relation to the general population. Two thirds had attended university. Most studied law, but others had backgrounds in economics, German, history, English, journalism, physical education, and chemistry. Unlike the officers of *SD-Inland* (Amt III), *Gestapo* (Amt IV), or *Kriminalpolizei* (Amt V), most of the staff of Amt VI had no background in policing, counter-espionage, or intelligence work, but came to the organization through longtime Party service.²¹ RSHA VI included many holdovers from SD III, where the personnel were generally less academic; they trained individuals who had lived or traveled widely in their assigned area, but who were also "true-believers" in National Socialism. Real world experience was considered more important than academic expertise in foreign affairs or countries. Particularly in the case of central and eastern European countries, this experiential emphasis allowed for the recruitment of foreign-born Germans or expellees from lands lost after the First World War, which generally corresponded with

²⁰ Paehler, "Espionage, Ideology and Personal Politics," 207-210. On the special mission of the RSHA as fanatically putting National Socialist theory into practice, see Michael Wildt, "The Spirit of the Reich Security Main Office," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 6, no. 3 (Dec. 2005): 333-349, *Uncompromising Generation*, 125-164, and Ulrich Herbert, "Ideological Legitimization and Political Practice of the Leadership of the National Socialist Secret Police," in *Holocaust: Critical Concepts in Historical Studies, Vol. I: Hitler, Nazism, and the 'Racial State,'* ed. David Cesarini (New York: Routledge, 2004).

²¹ Michael Wildt, *An Uncompromising Generation: The Nazi Leadership of the Reich Security Main Office*, trans. Tom Lampert (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010), 205-206. Ulrich Herbert makes a similar point of stressing the biographical component of the generation of young, well-educated, fanatical Nazi leaders that would populate the RSHA. Ulrich Herbert, *Best: Biographische Studien über Radikalismus, Weltanschauung und Vernunft, 1903-1989* (Bonn: J. H. W. Dietz, 1996).

greater fanaticism and enthusiasm for Nazi imperialistic ambitions.²² Later, the RSHA would institute strict racial requirements for intelligence officers and their spouses, as it was thought that even small quantities of “foreign” blood would impair the judgment and actions of intelligence officers.²³ The frequent juxtaposition in subsequent accounts between RSHA VI’s first leader, Heinz Jost, as a lazy, corrupt, good-for-nothing and his successor Walter Schellenberg’s efficient and industrious leadership is thus beside the point.²⁴ As a sub-section of the RSHA Amt VI was an organization governed by the principle of applying Party theory to real world situations, that is, to interpreting events through the prism of Nazi ideology.

The initial training of Amt VI officers reflected Jost’s lack of experience and Heydrich’s preoccupation with spy novels.²⁵ Efforts to inculcate the ethos of what Heydrich described as “the soldierly civil servant,” into those tasked with fulfilling “the ideologically motivated tasks of the state,” varied. Exam questions such as “Compile a

²² SD-III reporting on Czechoslovakia in the late 1930s, driven considerably by the German emigrant contingent in the office, consistently attempted to goad the regime into taking more extreme action. Browder, 201-206.

²³ Paehler, “Espionage, Ideology and Personal Politics,” 214-15.

²⁴ Besides Schellenberg’s memoirs, see Paehler, “Espionage, Ideology and Personal Politics,” 240-42, and “Interrogation Report 030/8/121 – Marin Schienke,” 28 November 1945 and “Interrogation Report 03/8/122 – Christel Erdmann,” 6 December 1945. NACP RG 498, Entry UD 210, Box 1269. Schellenberg’s much-vaunted series of reforms in 1942 certainly did not improve the objectivity of the reporting, regardless of his postwar claims. RSHA VI’s eclipse of the *Abwehr* was due more to Hitler and Himmler’s not quite unjustified distrust of the stodgy non-Party conservatism of the military intelligence elites, radicalized during the war, than to any objective improvement in RSHA VI’s methods. Schellenberg himself was certainly an ideologue, regardless of his postwar protestations to the contrary.

²⁵ Heydrich’s employment interview with Himmler in 1931 to design an SS intelligence service had been granted on the misconception that Heydrich’s prior experience in the Navy (as a protégé to Wilhelm Canaris) was as an intelligence officer instead of as a radio operator. Still, impressed by Heydrich’s embodiment of Aryan physical perfection, Himmler allowed Heydrich the opportunity to quickly sketch out a plan for a future Party intelligence service. An avid reader of spy fiction, Heydrich quickly sketched out a reasonably sound framework complemented by acceptingly pseudo-military jargon. Himmler, with even less experience in intelligence affairs than his would-be subordinate, was sufficiently impressed to hire Heydrich on the spot. As head of the SD and its successor organization, Heydrich repeatedly drew on his expertise in pulp-fiction spy stories, particularly those on the British intelligence service, as a model. Later head of the RSHA foreign intelligence branch (and former lawyer) Walter Schellenberg’s chief qualification for his early appointments in the Gestapo and in Amt VI was also an enthusiasm for true crime and spy fiction. Gerwarth, 24, 50-52, 90.

report for the entire Reich on Jews in the livestock trade and propose your own remedies to the evil described,” aimed to foster initiative and independent problem-solving within a carefully constructed ideological framework.²⁶ Besides rudimentary language training, 1940 courses for Amt VI officers at the *Führungsschule der Sipo und der SD* located in Berlin-Charlottenberg emphasized swimming, fencing, horseback riding, and small arms training (especially pistols). All students were also provided special training in bridge and roulette, and devoted a great deal of time to the “theoretical work” of safecracking and the use of dynamite. Finally, Amt VI officers were carefully instructed in photography and lock-picking by a Viennese mathematician who doubled as the card games instructor, and were given extensive background training on the structures of enemy intelligence services.²⁷ How this diverse set of skills was to improve the day-to-day operations of the vast majority of intelligence analysts that never left Amt VI headquarters in Berlin was unclear. From 1939-1941, most RSHA VI personnel lacked any type of foreign language training, and even when Schellenberg’s 1942 reorganization of the office mandated knowledge of a foreign language, such guidelines were repeatedly relaxed or ignored due to a lack of qualified applicants.²⁸

At the lower levels, the *Vertrauensmänner* (trusted informants or “V-men”) working abroad were not paid for their services, but supposedly performed their duties out of a loyalty to National Socialist ideals. *Agenten*, or “paid informants,” were

²⁶ Quoted in Gerwarth, 90.

²⁷ CIC 7th U.S. Army APO 758, “Sect VI E 7 of the RSHA and Funds of Sect. VI E 7,” 23 May 1945, pg. 1. NACP RG 319, Entry 134-A, Box 2, File XE 002303 Amt VI-E of the RSHA.

²⁸ Russian language expertise was particularly difficult to come by, as Russian-speakers were few in number and in high demand throughout the SS and RSHA, particularly after 1941. Situation Report No. 8: Amt VI of the RSHA, Gruppe VI C, February 28, 1946, pg. 1-3; NACP RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, Box 36, German Intelligence Service WWII, vol. 2, folder 2/2. See also the subsequently cited interrogation of Dr. Theodore Paeffgen.

considered the least reliable providers of information in the organization, far inferior to V-men or SD-men stationed abroad in an official capacity (*Beobachters* or “observers”). SD membership or special training was not required for V-men. In practice, this usually meant that informants abroad were drawn from the ranks of Nazi Party members in good standing who conducted business or enjoyed official appointments abroad or supporters of foreign Nazi Party emulators, such as the Swiss Nazi Party.²⁹ Prioritizing reports from like-minded individuals abroad placed a substantial burden on RSHA VI from the beginning, limiting its information pool and narrowing the scope of acceptable reporting.³⁰ At the same time, this was hardly an issue of concern for such a self-consciously ideological organization as RSHA VI.

In spite of its impressive credentials on paper (including six “Groups” labeled VIA-F and some 50 country-specific “*Referenten*” in March 1941) a shortage of qualified applicants meant that in practice this vast organization was chronically understaffed, leaving many of the subsections unmanned at all, particularly from 1939-1941. A vignette concerning the leadership of the section devoted to intelligence on “the West” (usually defined as Britain, the United States, and an ever-shifting subset of other countries) is illustrative in this regard.³¹ According to postwar interrogations, the only

²⁹ Paehler, “Espionage, Ideology and Personal Politics,” 211-212.

³⁰ Postwar interrogation reports on the activities of Amt VI in occupied countries concluded that the agency “suffered under the disadvantages that VI representatives tended to concentrate for their information on elements that were friendly to Germany, i.e. the Quislings, who were not in anything so good a position to provide intelligence as quarters favorable to the Allies.” “Eighth Detailed Interrogation Report on Huegel, Dr. Klaus” 26 June 1945, pg. 2. NACP RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, File “Schellenberg, Walter” Vol. 1, folder 2/2.

³¹ RSHA VI underwent a number of administrative reshufflings from its inception in 1939 until the end of the war in 1945, with *Gruppen* and *Referenten* being re-lettered, re-numbered, or eliminated entirely in accordance with the belligerency status of enemies, allies, and neutral countries, or purely on the whim of RSHA administrators. For instance, RSHA VI B was originally conceived of as Group “South East” from 1939-40 (Danube Region, Balkans, Asia Minor, Slovakia, Hungary), operated as Group “Technical/Logistical Matters” (code breaking, sabotage equipment, transportation) from 1940-41, before

officers working in RSHA VI G from 1939-1941, at that time responsible for intelligence on the entirety of the British Empire, the United States, and the Scandinavian countries, were SS-*Sturmbannführer* Hans Daufeldt (the Group-leader) and an SS-*Obersturmführer* Zuchristian (*Referent* leader for Great Britain). No one was qualified to run the *Referent* dedicated to the United States, so it was left vacant. Zuchristian's "slight knowledge of English," in no way hampered his career as an RSHA expert on the English-speaking peoples.³² Meanwhile, Daufeldt's key qualification for his post as Group-leader was that he had spent some time at the London School of Economics from 1936-1937. In postwar interrogations Daufeldt's former colleagues described him alternatively as "a nincompoop, a playboy, and a fool." Daufeldt's sacking in October 1942 in favor of Dr. Theodore Paeffgen did not necessarily improve the group's performance. A scathing postwar evaluation of Paeffgen, deemed an "uncompromising Nazi" by his American captors argued

Under a political system that put a premium on the absence of critical faculties Paeffgen was slated for success. The complex responsibilities of his position he strove to discharge with a smattering of foreign languages, a fair knowledge of geography (he had never heard of Houston, Texas) and indefatigable industry...He had no qualifications whatever for intelligence work. He never succeeded in acquiring the most elementary personal prerequisites for such work.³³

being reorganized as Group "German-Italian Sphere of Influence," (Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia, Greece, Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan) from 1941-42, and again as "Western Europe," (France, Low Countries, Switzerland, Spain, Portugal) from 1942-45. Meanwhile, the Group dedicated to reporting on "Ideological Enemies Abroad," (freemasonry, Jews, churches, communism, liberalism, and rightist opposition movements) was first designated RSHA F (1939-40), then RSHA H (1940-41), and finally RSHA G (1941-42) before being eliminated altogether in the 1942 reorganization as a result of the reporting on and physical destruction of all these groups being transferred to other RSHA and SS offices. On organization changes of Amt VI, Paehler, Wildt, esp. 205-214, and Kahn.

³² Counter Intelligence War Room London, "Situation Report No. 9: Amt VI of the RSHA Gruppe VI D, 23 November 1945, pg.1; 4. NACP RG 319, Entry 134-A, Box 2, File XE 002303 Amt VI E of the RSHA.

³³ AIC 1743, "Interrogation of Dr. Theodore Paeffgen," 10 September 1945, pg. iii. NACP RG 65, Entry 136-P, Box 183, Folder 65-56036-EB5 1/1.

The key qualification of a Dr. Thost, Paeffgen's foremost civilian expert on British domestic policy, was the fact that he had served as foreign correspondent in London for the *Völkischer Beobachter*, the newspaper of the Nazi Party, for four years before the war.³⁴

Whatever one may say about the quality of Amt VI personnel, the recurrent problems in staffing did not noticeably hinder the quantity of its reporting on political and economic developments in countries around the world in the early phases of the war. From 1940-1943 RSHA VI produced copious amounts of daily and biweekly intelligence reports, organized by country and circulated within the RSHA and the SS hierarchy, including Himmler personally.³⁵ As a relative latecomer to serious work in foreign political intelligence attempting to implement an ambitious new institutional framework in wartime, RSHA VI drew upon newspapers, journals, Foreign Office reports, and other publicly available information, although contributions of "V-men" abroad were by no means rare. These instructive intelligence reports were originally part of the RSHA VII archive in occupied Poland; they were captured by communist Polish forces in 1945 and held in a closed section of the Polish Interior Ministry Archives until 1985.³⁶ In addition

³⁴ Ibid, 3-4.

³⁵ There are indications that although the bulk of RSHA VI reports were labeled as "in-house" circulation Hitler read and approved of the reports as well. This can only be indirectly established, as through a 1943 note from Himmler to Schellenberg describing the Führer's approval of his good reports. Richard Breitman, "Nazi Espionage: the Abwehr and SD Foreign Intelligence," in *U.S. Intelligence and the Nazis*, 104-105.

³⁶ For more information on this wonderfully informative collection currently held on microfilm at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, see George C. Browder's introductory note at http://www.ushmm.org/online/archival-guide/finding_aids/RG15007M.html. According to USHMM, the original RSHA VI intelligence reports are currently held by the Polish Institute for National Memory, although they have also been relatively recently reincorporated into the *Bundesarchiv* collections on the RSHA. To my knowledge, Katrin Paehler's institutional biography of Walter Schellenberg and her scholarly article on RSHA reporting in Italy are the only works that have analyzed these RSHA intelligence reports. For more on the nature of these reports, see Katrin Paehler, "Foreign Intelligence in a New Paradigm: Amt VI of the Reich Main Security Office (RSHA)" in *Secret Intelligence and the Holocaust*:

to internal memoranda, meeting minutes between RSHA VI chiefs and the other RSHA *Amtchefs* and amongst RSHA VI group leaders themselves held in the collections of the *Bundesarchiv-Berlin* and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C., these underutilized intelligence reports of Amt VI spell out the RSHA's interpretation of wartime events in Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union.

Military Intelligence: OKW Abwehr and OKH Fremde Heere Ost/West

While historians of the German High Command have recently charted the comprehensive overlap in ideas between Hitler and German military elites, the historical narrative of the *Abwehr* and *Fremde Heere Ost/West* organizations continues to emphasize the realism and pragmatism of such military intelligence officials, often without reference to the intelligence reports themselves.³⁷

Collected Essays from the Colloquium at the City University of New York, ed. David Bankier (New York: Enigma Books, 2006), 273-301.

³⁷ Michael Mueller, *Canaris: The Life and Death of Hitler's Spymaster*, trans. Geoffrey Brooks (Annapolis MD: Naval Institute Press, 2007). Magnus Pahl, *Fremde Heere Ost: Hitlers militärische Feindaufklärung* (Berlin: Ch. Lins Verlag, 2012). Along with the limited explorations of intelligence failures on the Eastern front in 1941-43 in vols. IV and VI of the Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt's *Germany and the Second World War*, these studies continue to emphasize the technical failures and limitations of the German foreign intelligence services without considering those very failures as part of an overarching trend of underestimating the strength of the Soviet Union in accordance with long-held, racialized, anti-Russian and anti-communist prejudices. The closest attempt at a systematic analysis of the political failings behind the intelligence failings on the Eastern Front continues to be David Thomas, "Foreign Armies East and German Military Intelligence in Russia, 1941-45," *Journal of Contemporary History* 22, no. 2 (Apr. 1987): 261-301. While David Kahn's *Hitler's Spies: German Military Intelligence in World War Two* (Da Capo: 1978) addresses the German intelligence services in detail, further archival material is currently available than was the case when it was published in 1978, especially on the RSHA. Furthermore, Kahn's work, and others, has not yet examined the crucial question of the relationship between German intelligence organizations and crimes against humanity, nor investigated continuities in personnel and ideas from the wartime intelligence services into the postwar period in West Germany and the United States. Finally, many popular works on the German intelligence services are preoccupied with secret operations and escapades, such as rouge attempts to negotiate with the Allies late in the war or far-fetched plans to win the war via political assassinations. In all cases, a comprehensive and comparative treatment of the effects of National Socialist ideology on intelligence gathering, assessment, and operations is lacking.

Representing the closest existing connection to the military intelligence forces of the *Kaiserreich*, the *Abwehr* (translated literally as “defense” but referring to “counter-intelligence”) commanded by Admiral Wilhelm Canaris from 1935 on, was the most important intelligence office serving the *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* (OKW) after its creation in 1938. Although the *Abwehr* is primarily associated with sabotage and counterintelligence duties, it expended substantial resources in gathering, analyzing, and summarizing military and political intelligence for German policymakers, in spite of the agreements that supposedly left reporting on all political matters to the SD.³⁸ While the American and British intelligence services were concerned about the ability of the *Abwehr*’s espionage and sabotage efforts and the possibility that the reporting of its secret agents might undermine the war effort, the actual experience of the war confounded these alarmist assumptions. The files of wartime British and American counter-espionage organizations in fact reveal little respect for the quality of *Abwehr* agents, informants, and reports. *Abwehr* I, the foreign intelligence section under Leopold Bürkner, was singled out for special scorn as the weakest and most corrupt branch of the *Abwehr*, staffed by time-serving bureaucrats who simply passed on whatever information they received (even obvious Allied counter-intelligence) without comment; they went so far as to fabricate reports to meet daily output quotas.³⁹ This was symptomatic of a broader problem,

³⁸ Kahn, 224-226. Megargee, 105-106. As Kahn points out, the generic “Abwehr” moniker originated as an attempt to hide the (prohibited) intelligence operations of the German Army in the strictly circumscribed, post-Versailles *Reichswehr*. For carefully reconstructed institutional schematics of the *Abwehr* and its sub-offices as it evolved from 1918 to 1944, see Thomas Menzel, “Organisationsgeschichte des Amtes Ausland/Abwehr im Spiegel der Aktenüberlieferung im Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv, Freiburg i.Br.” *Militärhistorische Zeitschrift* 67, no. 1 (May 2008): 105-136.

³⁹ The foreign intelligence department’s tendency to recirculate lightly edited extracts from Embassy reports in particular could in some instances lead to a feedback loop of bad intelligence, where bizarre and incorrect conclusions about American, British or Russian policy peddled by highly ideological Foreign Office personnel abroad were lent further credence through their recirculation by the *Abwehr*, since the constituencies of the Foreign Office and *Abwehr* reports were generally not the same. “The German

stemming from Canaris' own tendencies toward nepotism and corruption. His persistent employment of under-qualified friends and family earned the *Abwehr* the derisive moniker "Canaris Family Limited Liability Company" in General Staff circles.⁴⁰

Interrogations of captured *Abwehr* personnel revealed that while the *Abwehr* could and did succeed in placing wireless operators in foreign countries (including Britain and the United States) during the war, their poor training often undermined their potential for success. According to British reports *Abwehr* information-gathering efforts depended on the deployment of as many low-grade agents as possible who, "generally had few or no technical qualifications for the work," and who had not received any specialized training before their departure.⁴¹ Agents did not need to know any foreign languages. One agent debarking in London immediately before the outbreak of war had never been to Britain before and had no real knowledge of the country or its customs.⁴² The best information, in fact, came from close scrutiny of publicly available sources, such as British and American economic, statistical, and technical publications either purchased directly in the United States or indirectly by Latin American intermediaries or contacts in international German industrial firms.⁴³

According to postwar interrogations, the Nazi leadership treated the *Abwehr* and Canaris with a mix of disdain and exasperation. Canaris and his officers represented what

Intelligence Service and the War," pg. 3. Headquarters, Third U.S. Army intelligence Center, "Interrogation Report No. 6: Report on Oberstleutnant Wilhelm Kubart," 15 May 1945, pg. 2-4. NACP RG 498, Entry UD-249, Box 1293, File "Third Army AIC/IR 1-9."

⁴⁰ Ibid, 8. See also Detachment 'A', OSS Austin, c/o II Corps Msg. Ctr. APO 19 U.S. Army, "Detailed Interrogation of Kapitaneutnant Fritz Jonetz," 31 August 1945. NACP RG 319, Entry ZZ-6, Box 1, File D152052 *Abwehr* IM.

⁴¹ Harry M. Kimbrall, "Memorandum for the Director: Present Interests of the German Secret Service as Revealed by British Counter Intelligence," 19 September 1942, pg. 1. NACP RG 65, Entry 136-P, Box 122, Folder 65-37193-Sec.1, Part 1/2 (*Abwehr*).

⁴² J.B. Little to Ladd, 5 November 1942. NACP RG 65, Entry 136-P, Box 122, Folder 65-37193-Sec.1, Part 1/2 (*Abwehr*).

⁴³ "The German Intelligence Service and the War," pg. 5.

Hitler, Göring, and others considered the unpalatable, timid, and corrupt conservatism of a timeserving officer class. Göring, for example, claimed that Canaris' reports from America "were of little consequence" and a waste of time, since the information Canaris claimed was of utmost importance could usually be found in Germany's newspapers a day or two later. Furthermore, any so-called "agents" Canaris had in the United States were surely "doubled" by American intelligence and undermining the quality of the *Abwehr's* reports.⁴⁴ Göring's reminiscences lent support to the postwar efforts of Canaris' subordinates to portray the *Abwehr* as a thoroughly anti-Nazi organization repeatedly stymied from access to Hitler and threatened and browbeaten by Party stooges (including OKW-Chief Keitel) because of its thoroughly non-political professionalism until the SS and RSHA finally succeeded in persuading Hitler to sack Canaris and merge the *Abwehr* into RSHA VI in 1944.⁴⁵

Although the *Abwehr* is perhaps most famous for its espionage and sabotage operations, including grand schemes to undermine the British Empire, *Abwehr I-Ausland* under Leopold Bürkner produced thousands of pages of daily intelligence summaries from 1939-1942 aimed at providing a clear "overall picture," of "the most important

⁴⁴ Frederick Ayer, Jr. to Director, FBI (Re: Herman Goering Interview), 11 June 1945. NACP RG 65, Entry 136-L, Box 1, File 61-8199 Section 1, folder 1/2.

⁴⁵ Testimony of Hans Bernd Gisevius, 26 April 1946. *Trial of the Major War Criminals Before the International Military Tribunal, Volume XII: Proceedings 18 April 1946 – 2 May 1946* (Nuremberg: 1947), 265-266. This was certainly not the experience that Keitel's deputy Alfred Jodl remembered, as he later testified that "Canaris saw the Führer dozens of times," and "...could report to him what he wanted and whatever he knew." Jodl, however, was a war criminal on trial for his life, and did not possess the clout of an Allen Dulles-sponsored intelligence professional like Gisevius. Testimony of Alfred Jodl, 6 June 1946. *Trial of the Major War Criminals Before the International Military Tribunal, Volume XV: Proceedings 29 May 1946 – 10 June 1946* (Nuremberg: 1948), 436. On a representative interrogation of Canaris' subordinate Erwin Lahousen emphasizing the resistance credentials of the *Abwehr* as an organization and its protests against the harsh treatment of Jews, see SAINT, London to SAINT (all stations), "Secret Report by Generalmajor Lahousen on Canaris' Secret Organization, Part 1" 17 Dec. 1945, pg. 1-4. NACP RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, Box 36, file "German Intelligence Service WWII, Volume 2, folder 1/2.

political events of the day.”⁴⁶ These reports aimed to summarize the world political-military situation concisely for Canaris, Keitel and the OKW more generally. They consisted of abbreviated or summarized dispatches from diplomats and military attachés abroad mixed with a smattering of radio and wire service reports from enemy, allied, and neutral countries and the occasional *V-man* report.⁴⁷ This fascinating collection of *Abwehr* daily intelligence summaries, weekly wire service reports, and monthly political military overviews (*Außen und militärpolitische Nachrichten*, *Außenpolitische Mitteilungen*, and *Außenpolitische Übersichten* respectively) held at the *Militärarchiv Freiburg* and on microfilm at the United States National Archives in College Park, MD offer clear evidence of the mixed record of *Abwehr* foreign intelligence during the war. On the one hand, these *Abwehr* reports confirm the postwar charges of lack of originality and effort, as the intelligence summaries’ overreliance on the work of other offices ensured the dissemination to the military elite of flawed and highly politicized Foreign Office assessments of world events (see below). Regardless of Canaris’ doubts about the possibility of German victory and his private concerns that the Foreign Office and RSHA’s interpretations of world events were over-optimistic and misleading, the *Abwehr*’s own reports generally perpetuated these same politicized narratives. At the same time, the *Abwehr* quietly omitted the anti-Semitic ravings in the Foreign Office reports that served as objective evidence for a world conspiring against Germany. Such

⁴⁶ Bürkner, “Betr. Außen- und militärpolitische Nachrichten,” 29 August 1939. NACP RG 242, T-77, Roll 932, file OKW/483.

⁴⁷ APO 541, “First Detailed Interrogation Report: Cramon, Dr. Hellmuth von,” 20 March 1946, pg. 2-3. NACP RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, Box 36, File “German Intelligence Service WWII,” Vol. 3, folder 1/2. Seventh Army Interrogation Center, “Amtsgruppe Ausland in the OKW – Final Interrogation Report,” 14 July 1945, pg. 1-3. NACP RG 498, Entry UD-256, file SAIC/FIR1-25.

editorial changes, however, did little to improve the quality of the *Abwehr*'s reporting on political developments abroad.

The *Oberkommando des Heeres* (OKH) had its own sources of information, the most significant of which for the purposes of this study was *Fremde Heere Ost* (FHO), which became the German Army's clearinghouse for military intelligence reporting on the Soviet Union and other Eastern nations, narrowing its focus to a near-exclusive concentration on Soviet matters after July 1940.⁴⁸ Under the command of Eberhard Kinzel (1938-42) and Reinhard Gehlen (1942-45), FHO worked under the office OKH *Oberquartiermeister IV* (O.Qu. IV), and reported directly to the Chief of the German General Staff.⁴⁹ FHO's reports served as both the basis for intelligence briefings on the Red Army and its capabilities at the General Staff level, but also circulated to individual field units at the divisional level in preparation for offensive and defensive encounters between the Red Army and *Wehrmacht*. Occasionally, Gehlen, Kinzel, or their representatives would correspond directly with Halder or his successors and address the army planning conferences directly as well. FHO's reports were drawn from a variety of sources including military attaché reports, divisional intelligence summaries and

⁴⁸ Pahl, 57-63. Thomas, 261-62. Its sister organization tasked with reporting on the Western powers, *Fremde Heere West*, does not figure prominently in this study for several reasons. First and foremost, the bulk of FHW's operational reporting duties on the Western front pertained to France and the Low Countries, which are not the subject of case studies here. When FHW did report on the British Expeditionary Force in France or British armies in North Africa, these reports were of secondary importance in relation to the overlapping intelligence jurisdictions in the West between the *Abwehr*, FHW, and the *Wehrmacht* economic planning and occupation authorities after 1940. Moreover, this dissertation is first and foremost a study of ideas and politics in the German intelligence services. Because of the very nature of its largely uncontested assignment as the clearinghouse for operational and strategic military intelligence on the Soviet Union, FHO reporting was much more bound up in hysterically anti-communist *political* narratives that compromised its reports on Soviet strength and strategic intentions.

⁴⁹ Kahn, 391-398. The office of OKH O. Qu. IV was created by Chief of the German General Staff Franz Halder in November of 1938 to serve as a supervisory office of the two geographic branches of staff intelligence (FHO and FHW). The two men who held the position, Kurt von Tippelskirch (Nov. 1938-Jan. 1941) and Gerhard Matzky (Jan. 1941-Nov. 1942) reported to Halder personally. The position was disbanded shortly after Halder's ousting in September 1942 although O. Qu. IV's component parts, *Fremde Heere Ost/West* continued their functions, but reported directly to the Chief of the German General Staff.

interrogation reports from the front, *Abwehr* reports on the Soviet Union, captured or public Soviet publications and periodicals, films, and signal intercepts. FHO had no dedicated agents of its own, but was a processing and analysis facility for information on the Soviet Union gathered from other agencies.⁵⁰

FHO's extensive memoranda on Soviet military and economic strength and strategic intentions in the field are held in the *Militärarchiv*-Freiburg and on microfilm at the United States National Archives in College Park, MD. These reports, under both Kinzel and Gehlen, reveal a systematic underestimation of the Red Army's economic and military potential in accordance with widespread anti-Russian and anti-communist political prejudices. Although often technically proficient in terms of identifying Red Army units in the field and accounting for new developments in Soviet weaponry and equipment, FHO's reports in their entirety reflecting classic and long-held ethnic and racial stereotypes in German military circles that "the Russian" was inferior and that the Soviet state was a teetering colossus awaiting destruction in the field. In this way, FHO's technical data on the Red Army was presented in such a way as to reinforce a *political narrative* of Soviet weakness and degeneracy.

The German Foreign Office

The Second World War was in many ways a crossroads in intelligence history, perhaps serving as the last major conflict where the bulk of strategic and political intelligence passed through normal diplomatic channels, particularly in the crucial period

⁵⁰ Headquarters Twelfth Army Group, Mobile Field Interrogation Unit No. 4, "Counter Intelligence Report on former Chief I-H Abwehr Berlin Wilhelm Kuebart," 1 June 1945, pg. 7. NACP RG 498, UD-265, Box 1309. Megargee, 107.

1939-1941.⁵¹ In many ways, the embassy and consulate network of the *Auswärtiges Amt* served as the nucleus of the German foreign intelligence services. Ambassadors, consuls, and their staffs enjoyed unlimited access to their postings' newspapers, trade journals, and radio reports. Their contacts with American, British, and Russian government officials also offered ample opportunity for the German diplomatic corps to contextualize this publicly available information with privileged knowledge of the inner political workings and motivations of their host countries. At the same time, military attachés stationed with diplomatic staffs abroad reported directly to OKW on military matters in foreign lands. As a result, reports encompassing all matter of political, economic, and cultural analysis flowed daily from German embassies and missions in Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union to Berlin.⁵²

Given the close relationship between Foreign Office personnel and their host countries prior to the outbreak of war, diplomatic and attaché reports on Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union should, in theory, have been the most objective and accurate. Diplomats, after all, need not rely on sketchy third-hand information from poorly trained informants thousands of miles distant, given their own extensive expertise in international affairs. Indeed, this was frequently the line taken in the postwar apologies of notable German Foreign Office personnel. The U.S. State Department's interrogation of Heinz Trützschler von Falkenstein, a longtime fixture in the Foreign Office working in the Political Department from 1939-1945, for example, claimed that the information available to Hitler on foreign countries was "of respectable quality,"

⁵¹ Overy, "Strategic Intelligence and the Outbreak of the Second World War," 452.

⁵² Occasionally, the military attachés would also file reports directly to the *Abwehr*, OKW's intelligence division, as well. DeWitt C. Poole, Head of Mission, "State Department Special Interrogation Mission - Brigadier General Erwin Lahousen," 12 December 1945. NACP RG 498, UD-287, Box 1344.

noting embassy reports from London and Washington in particular as presenting “an accurate picture of conditions in the United States, England, and the remainder of the Anglo-Saxon world.” Hitler frequently read these reports, which were transmitted to him directly by Ribbentrop. Hitler and the Nazi leadership “failed to utilize this information, preferring to believe only what accorded with their preconceived notions of reality...a fantastic world of their own creation.”⁵³

The U.S. Army’s interrogation team, meanwhile, also heard repeated claims from ex-Foreign Office personnel that they were mostly anti-Nazi but had lost control of foreign policy under the dictatorship. The bungling and obstinate Ribbentrop, they claimed, reported to Hitler directly on most matters, all but ignoring memoranda from the professional civil servants and diplomats who possessed the real expertise in foreign affairs.⁵⁴ Former Reich Chancellor (1932) and Vice Chancellor (1933-1934) Franz von Papen, for example, who served as German Ambassador to Turkey from 1939-1944, downplayed the role of the Foreign Office in informing Hitler on conditions abroad from 1939-1941, lamenting the hijacking of reporting on political conditions within foreign countries by the uncultured, unprofessional radicals of the SD.⁵⁵

Such postwar protests of innocence and objectivity are not borne out by the documentary evidence. Both early works on the Holocaust and the recent findings of the historical commission tasked with investigating the diplomatic corps of the Third *Reich*

⁵³ DeWitt C. Poole, Head of Mission, “State Department Special Interrogation Mission – Heinz Truetzschler von Falkenstein,” 25 October 1945, pg. 4. NACP RG 498, Entry UD-287, Box 1344. For a similar

⁵⁴ U.S. Army Intelligence Center, Headquarters, Third Army “Interrogation Report No. 3 – The German Foreign Office,” 15 May 1945, pg. 7. NACP RG 498, Entry UD-249, Box 1293, File “Third Army AIC/IR 1-9.”

⁵⁵ 6824 DIC (MfS)/SP1 “Report on Franz von Papen – Von Papen Answers Some Political and Intelligence Questions,” 15 May 1945, pg. 2-5. NACP RG 319, Entry ZZ-6, Box 18, file D209379 TS German Foreign Office Political Intelligence.

have thoroughly documented the Foreign Office's complicity in Nazi crimes, specifically the deportations of Jews to death camps and its pressure on Allied, occupied, and neutral countries to enact harsh anti-Jewish policies of their own.⁵⁶ Although critics of the recent *Das Amt und die Vergangenheit* maintain the distinction between an older generation of "career civil servants" relegated to matters of classic diplomacy who merely accommodated themselves to Nazism for the sake of overturning the post-1918 European diplomatic framework and the fanatical "party-loyalist newcomers" brought in by Ribbentrop after 1938 that actively contributed to the radicalization of anti-Jewish policy, the actual diplomatic cables from embassy personnel stationed abroad tend to blur these distinctions.⁵⁷ The reports of long-serving, non-Party diplomats such as Herbert von Dirksen, Hans Thomsen, Hans Dieckhoff, long-time military attaché in the United States Friedrich von Bötticher, and others, expressed agreement with much more than Hitler's territorial irredentism. Instead, their reports on political developments in foreign countries from 1939-1941 affirmed the conspiratorial and anti-Semitic fantasies of Hitler and the Nazi elite. These figures left behind myriad dispatches and memoranda, some of which have been previously translated and published in the multi-volume *Documents on German Foreign Policy* (but nevertheless remain unconsulted) and many of which remain unpublished and accessible only at the *Politisches Archiv des Auswärtiges Amt* in Berlin.

⁵⁶ For early studies that closely document the Foreign Office's complicity in genocide, see Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (London: W.H. Allen, 1961), Christopher Browning, *The Final Solution and the German Foreign Office: A Study of Referat D III of Abteilung Deutschland 1940-43* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1978). Norbert Frei, Eckart Conze, Peter Hayes, and Moshe Zimmerman, *Das Amt und die Vergangenheit: Deutsche Diplomaten im Dritten Reich und in der Bundesrepublik* (Blessing Verlag: 2010).

⁵⁷ Johannes Hürtner, "The German Foreign Office, The Nazi Dictatorship, and the Holocaust: A Critical Commentary on *Das Amt und die Vergangenheit*," *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute* 49 (Fall 2011): 84-85. Originally published as "Das Auswärtige Amt, die NS-Diktatur und der Holocaust. Kritische Bemerkungen zu einem Kommissionsbericht," *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 59 (2011): 167-92.

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The six chapters that follow offer chronological case studies of the German intelligence services in action. Chapters 1-3 examine the flawed reporting of the German intelligence services on Great Britain (Chapter 1), the Soviet Union (Chapter 2) and the United States (Chapter 3) in the crucial period 1939-1941. In the years preceding the outbreak of war, the German intelligence services reported extensively on Jewish power and political, military, and economic weaknesses in all three states. These chapters argue that the German foreign intelligence services' oft-repeated conclusions that Great Britain would not fight or would quickly drop out of the war, that the Red Army was racially inferior and would quickly collapse in the field, and that the United States' considerable economic and military potential could be safely ignored reinforced Hitler's own ideologically-driven conceptions of international affairs. Chapter 4 charts the important direct and indirect roles played by the German intelligence services' in the Final Solution and other criminal activities from 1941-1943, before the dissolution of the *Abwehr* and restructuring of the political intelligence offices under RSHA authority.

Chapters 5 and 6 move to the postwar period, examining the continuities in personnel and ideas from the wartime German intelligence services into West German and American intelligence reporting on the Soviet Union from the late 1940s into the 1960s. Primarily because of flawed American assumptions that ex-Nazi Soviet "experts" were objective professionals akin to the staff of the OSS, unreformed anti-Soviet ideologues managed to exert significant and detrimental influence on the West German

Federal Intelligence Service (Chapter 5) and the American Foreign Military Studies Program (Chapter 6), well into the 1960s.

CHAPTER 1

Misunderstanding Great Britain, 1939-1942

Britain's position must be viewed in terms of internal political conditions...The difference between 1914 and now is in the recognition that a wealthy nation must pay with blood; and that, even with a victorious war to his credit, the victor emerges diminished in strength...Britain overburdened with commitments in all parts of the world. Fight Germany? Yes. Fight for Allies? Open question. Fight for others? No.
– Notes of General Franz Halder, “Hitler Remarks,” 14 August 1939.¹

In December 1941, the British Foreign Office prepared a memorandum on German espionage operations against Great Britain since 1939. Although the British Foreign Office expressed concern about the strength of the international German intelligence network as a whole, it reported that direct German efforts against the British Isles between 1939 and 1941 were distinctly amateurish and ineffective. Local officials quickly apprehended German agents because they “had little experience either as spies or as wireless [radio] operators,” and “their equipment was faulty and their papers were deficient in even the most elementary particulars which could have been known to any German who had visited the country before the war.” The Foreign Office report bitinglly concluded that, “Had the Germans not been so confident about our reluctance and inability to make war, they might well have taken more trouble than they appear to have done in laying the foundation of their war espionage network.”²

¹ *The Halder War Diary: 1939-1942*, ed. Charles Burdick and Hans-Adolf Jacobsen (Novato, CA: Presidio, 1988), 18-19.

² This report was forwarded to the American Embassy in London as part of the effort at inter-allied intelligence cooperation. In 1943, it was provided to the FBI as potentially useful material for its war against German spies in the United States. Arthur M. Thurston to J. Edgar Hoover, “German Espionage Activities Directed Against Great Britain,” October 8, 1943, pg. 1-2. NACP RG 65: Entry 136-P, Box 125, File 65-37193-Sec.5.

As the British Foreign Office report insightfully noted, Hitler and Nazi elites more generally tended to underestimate both the ability and the will of the British government to wage war. This chapter explores the German intelligence services' fundamental misunderstanding of Great Britain between 1939-1941, informed by a series of flawed assumptions about British political weakness. Indeed, a careful examination of the foreign intelligence services' reporting on Britain in these years reveals that Hitler's seemingly fanciful analysis of British politics was anything but heterodox within the regime, and represented a plausible reading of the intelligence services' reports. The conviction that Britain would not fight was not Hitler's alone, but rather a wider consensus within the foreign policy community than is generally assumed.³ First, intelligence reports assumed that Britain would not fulfill its treaty obligations to Poland in 1939, or if it did, that a war with Britain would only be temporary and would not escalate into an actual "shooting war." Failing this, they assumed that the British government would quickly "see reason" upon the conclusion of the Polish campaign, or certainly after the defeat of France. Finally, if Britain still refused to come to terms with Germany, German intelligence officials believed that an invasion of the British Isles would force the issue, or, in the eventuality that an invasion of Britain itself proved

³ This historiographic emphasis is likely due to three overlapping factors: postwar efforts of German diplomats and military officers (some facing judgement at Nuremberg, others not) to blame Hitler alone for the strategic blunders leading to a general war in 1939, the fact that the structure of the Nazi dictatorship and Hitler's command style rendered major foreign policy decisions highly dependent on Hitler's own whims and strategy, and an overly exclusive reliance on documentation from the highest levels of state instead of mid-level intelligence memoranda. In Ian Kershaw's *Nemesis*, for example, the only other figure (and a ridiculous one at that) supporting the war with Britain and validating Hitler's decisions vis-à-vis England was Ribbentrop himself. Meanwhile, Goebbels' diary entries in the last days of August also leave the impression that Hitler alone was convinced that Britain would stand aside and that "nobody can say at the moment" whether the Führer's assumptions would prove true. See Peter Longerich, *Goebbels: A Biography*, trans. Alan Bance, Jeremy Noakes, and esley Sharpe (New York: Random House, 2015): 425-26. In fact, as I argue here, many significant experts on Britain and British foreign policy reached similar conclusions.

impracticable, direct pressure against the British Empire (accompanied by bombing Britain itself) and the destruction of the Soviet Union (Britain's last hope) would induce surrender.⁴ This set of scenarios were informed by the overall assumption that Britain lacked the political will to sustain a war against Germany.

But these assumptions, championed by Hitler and his closest advisors, were *in no way* inconsistent with the reports on Great Britain furnished by the German intelligence services, which repeatedly emphasized British political dithering. Unlike in their evaluations of the Soviet Union, the German military intelligence services generally respected the professionalism and combat potential of the British Armed Forces.⁵ In fact, given the lack of widespread military action in the Phoney War and the persistent focus on British morale and peace initiatives, the assessments of the *Abwehr* took a back seat in the British case to the diplomatic and political expertise offered by the RSHA and Foreign Office through the summer of 1940. These reports from the RSHA and Foreign Office (wrongly) identified the civilian population and political apparatus as the weak links that might first keep Britain out of the war and then force Britain to quickly come to terms.

As the German intelligence services commented extensively on the will of the British government to fight on, civilian morale and dissent within the Empire, their reports dealt in long-held stereotypes emphasizing the aristocratic and anti-democratic

⁴ The strategic dilemma of Germany vis-à-vis Britain is excellently summarized by Hans Umbreit and Klaus A. Maier in *Germany and the Second World War, Volume II: Germany's Initial Conquests in Europe*, ed. Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, trans. Dean S. McMurray and Ewald Osers (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 227-262, 361-417; and by Gerhard Schreiber in *Germany and the Second World War, Volume III: The Mediterranean, Southeast Europe, and North Africa 1939-1941*, ed. Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, trans. Dean S. McMurray, Ewald Osers, and Louise Wilmont (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 180-246, 573-639. Hereafter *GSWW* II and *GSWW* III.

⁵ *GSWW* II: 234-35.

nature of the British government and a persistent gulf between the government's actions and the will of the British people.⁶ Indeed, this reliance on preconceptions worsened notably after 1939, particularly in the reports of the RSHA and the Foreign Office that dealt with British domestic politics, as the realities of the war disrupted the free flow of information from Great Britain to Germany. As a result, intelligence reports repeatedly emphasized the dichotomy between a downtrodden and peace-desiring British public and a government clique influenced by warmongers, international agitators, and Jews. Although such narratives have featured prominently in historical studies of Nazi propaganda, the RSHA and Foreign Office intelligence reports promoted such tropes as well.

German Intelligence and the Outbreak of War in 1939

Nazi Germany's responsibility for inciting the Second World War is clear. Germany under Hitler served as the primary instigator in both the gradual destruction of the European diplomatic and military status quo from 1933-1939 and the Polish crisis of August 1939.⁷ For Hitler, the ascendancy of Germany as a hegemonic power in Central Europe with ample *Lebensraum* in the East was not possible without a settling of accounts in the West as well. In this manner the "Polish problem" was inexorably linked

⁶ On these negative stereotypes of Britain in the Nazi dictatorship and their subsequent deployment in anti-British propaganda during the war, see Gerwin Strobl, *The Germanic Isle: Nazi Perceptions of Britain* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

⁷ The definitive work on Hitler's foreign policy aspirations and accomplishments from 1933-1939 in the greater European context continues to be Gerhard Weinberg's *Hitler's Foreign Policy, 1933-1939: The Road to World War II* (New York: Enigma Books, 2010). The first volume of the Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt's *Germany and the Second World War: The Build-Up of German Aggression* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), hereafter *GSWW I*, also remains essential, as does Andreas Hillgruber's pioneering 1968 study, *Hitlers Strategie: Politik und Kriegführung 1940-41*. For a brief overview of Hitler's actions in the final days of peace in 1939, see Richard Overy, *1939: Countdown to War* (New York: Viking, 2009).

with the eventual need for a reckoning with France and Britain. Hitler was determined to wage war against Poland in August or September 1939, preferably without involving the Western powers, whose time would come in 1942-1943. Afterwards, Germany would march on the Soviet Union (the racially inferior and thus the weakest opponent) and secure its long-awaited *Lebensraum*.⁸ By all accounts, Hitler did not expect Britain and France to intervene when the decisive moment for an attack on Poland arrived in the autumn of 1939. If, however, Neville Chamberlain and Edouard Daladier decided to mobilize their troops to “die for Danzig” while Germany still possessed a relative armaments advantage, then Germany would gladly settle accounts with the Western powers ahead of schedule.⁹ The lack of concrete *Wehrmacht* operational planning against Britain and France in 1939 and the record of Hitler’s public and private statements in the run-up to the outbreak of war indicate that he was firmly convinced that the weak-willed “Men of Munich” would refrain from declaring war on Germany.¹⁰

⁸ On Hitler’s view of the world situation in 1939, including the linkage between Poland and the West and the need to settle all accounts at once should the West intervene, see the minutes of the Führer Conference at the New Reich Chancellery on May 23rd, *Documents on German Foreign Policy, Series D, Volume VI: March-August 1939* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1956): No. 433. Hereafter abbreviated DGFP, Series D, Vol. VI. For a thorough attack on the idea that Hitler desired only peace with Great Britain, see Gerhard Weinberg, “Hitler and England, 1933-1945: Pretense and Reality,” in *Germany, Hitler, and World War II* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 85-94. For pioneering works on Hitler’s conceptual linkage of a successful war in the East with a Western surrender, see Hillguber, *Hitlers Strategie* and Gerhard Weinberg, *Germany and the Soviet Union* (Leiden: Brill, 1954).

⁹ On the German armaments situation as a concept that bolstered Hitler’s conception that war with the West was desirable sooner rather than later, see Adam Tooze, *Wages of Destruction: The Making and Breaking of the Nazi Economy* (New York: Penguin, 2006), 285-325. Also Joseph Maiolo, *Cry Havoc: How the Arms Race Drove the World to War, 1931-1941* (New York: Basic Books, 2010). These calculations were also affected by Hitler’s reflections on his own mortality occasioned by his 50th birthday celebrations in 1939 – only he possessed the unifying strength of will necessary to solve Germany’s problems once and for all, and time was of the essence.

¹⁰ See Franz Halder’s notes on Hitler’s remarks of August 14, “If Führer were in the place of opponents, he would not accept the responsibility for a war...No immediate relief could be afforded by any Franco-British action. There is nothing to force them into a war. The men of Munich will not take the risk...Summing up: The last weeks have brought increasing conviction of [Poland’s] isolation.” *Halder War Diary*, pg. 19-21. Advanced *Wehrmacht* operational planning for a war in the West reflected Hitler’s assumptions that Britain and France would not intervene. Hitler only informed the OKW on his plans for a Western offensive on September 25th, and formal preparations for an assault in the West were ordered only

Failing this, the democracies' lack of superiority in armaments, their fear of the West Wall fortifications, their respect for the Low Countries' sovereignty, and their tenuous imperial position would in any case serve to prevent a theoretical war between Germany and the West from escalating into a shooting war for some time. Hitler reasoned that, faced with yet another *fait accompli* in Poland, Britain and France would surely back down eventually.¹¹ These premises were fixed constellations in Hitler's *Weltanschauung* in 1939, bolstered by Germany's rapprochement with the Soviet Union and the subsequent August non-aggression pact that secretly provided for a fourth partition of Poland between the two powers. Hitler required no prodding from the Foreign Office (although Foreign Minister Joachim Ribbentrop prodded) or *Wehrmacht* staff officers (generally enthusiastic for war with Poland but pessimistic about Western intervention) to gamble on a localized war with Poland in 1939.¹²

The period preceding the outbreak of war in 1939, however, marked at best a mixed performance for the German intelligence services. Hitler's preformed assumptions tended to privilege certain narratives and sources of information over others. As the diplomatic crisis over Poland unfolded in 1939, Foreign Office representatives in Paris did repeatedly conveyed the French government's stalwart commitment to Polish

on October 9th. Even then, widespread misgivings and pessimism within the High Command and hopes for a negotiated settlement with Britain resulted in haphazard planning into November. *GSWW* I: 536-537; *GSWW* II: 232-238.

¹¹ See Halder's notes on August 22 Führer Conference at Obersalzberg. Even after Britain and France officially declared war on September 3rd, Keitel authorized the Luftwaffe and Kriegsmarine to engage enemy commerce and naval forces, but to refrain from attacking the "Homeland" directly. The Wehrmacht was not to open hostilities with the French along the border, directed to fire only if fired upon. *Halder War Diary*, pg. 29-32; 50.

¹² While many *Wehrmacht* officers, including Army Chief of General Staff Franz Halder were thoroughly anti-Polish in attitude and excited to dispense with what they viewed as an eternal enemy, the operational planning for *Case White* through multiple drafts over the spring and early summer of 1939 anticipated dealing with Poland as quickly as possible so that units could be rapidly transferred to the West to meet any threats from that quarter. Geoffrey P. Megargee, *Inside Hitler's High Command* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2000), 67-68.

sovereignty, and French officials' assumptions that Britain too would stand firmly in support of its Polish ally should war break out.¹³ But Hitler, Ribbentrop, State Secretary Ernst von Weizsäcker, and the Foreign Office hierarchy more generally tended to ignore or downplay such reports. They assumed that France was the junior partner in the Western alliance and would in all eventualities follow the course of action determined in London.¹⁴ This, in turn, privileged the reports on Great Britain from the German Embassy in London over those from Paris and other European capitals that in some respects were more attuned to the firm attitude of the British government than the London embassy itself. At the same time, postwar interrogations and memoirs of high-ranking German officials offer extensive testimony on Ribbentrop and Hitler's strident insistence on the correctness of their own beliefs, which, according to such narratives, silenced any dissenting voices that contradicted their prior assumptions of British timidity in the run-up to war.¹⁵

Hitler and Ribbentrop were certainly not alone in their misunderstanding of Great Britain's desire to wage war in 1939, however. A close examination of the reports emanating from the German Foreign Office and the *Abwehr* provide an illuminating picture of the mixed narratives constructed by the major German foreign information networks prior to the outbreak of war. Through September 1939, Britain and Germany

¹³ From the British guarantee of Polish sovereignty on March 31st, the French government was quite serious and open in its intentions to honor such agreements militarily, even after the realization of the German-Soviet Pact in August. For a sample, see DGFP, Series D, Vol. VI: Docs 177, 379, 481, 603, and *Documents on German Foreign Policy, Series D, Volume VII: August 9 – September 3 1939* (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1956): Docs. 64, 122, 215, 216, 238. Hereafter abbreviated as DGFP, Series D, Vol. VII.

¹⁴ Richard Overy, "Strategic Intelligence and the Outbreak of the Second World War," *War In History* 5, no.4 (1998): 461. Weizsäcker, like much of the Foreign Office hierarchy and Army General Staff, was thoroughly anti-Polish and took great pleasure in his role in the destruction of Poland in the following months, come what may. Weinberg, *Hitler's Foreign Policy*, 712-13.

¹⁵ See, for example, the interrogations of Albert Speer in *Interrogations: The Nazi Elite in Allied Hands*, ed. Richard Overy (New York: Penguin, 2001).

exchanged voluminous diplomatic correspondence. The German embassy in London was fully operational, well-staffed, and filed copious reports based on first-hand observations in the capital and careful analysis of the press. Moreover, British newspapers and periodicals were freely available to any German civilian or military official in Berlin who wished to read them. The self-consciously ideological SD foreign department had yet to achieve a significant degree of influence over intelligence gathering, was ill-equipped to offer deep coverage of Britain at the time, and was in any case more focused on its role in the upcoming Polish campaign and delineating its functions in the new RSHA organization. Even so, the German Foreign Office and *Abwehr* performed, at best, unevenly; they calculated Britain's willingness to support Poland when war broke out in much the same way that Hitler did. If, as historians of the Second World War such as Richard Overy have argued, Hitler used intelligence on the West to confirm his previously held beliefs that Poland could be swiftly crushed in 1939 without a wider European war, this did not represent a significant misreading of the intelligence reports themselves.¹⁶

For Hitler and his Foreign Office representatives alike, the 1938 Munich accords served as a turning point in their assessment of Great Britain. Foreign Office reports from London in October 1938 trumpeted the resurgence in popular support for Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's peace policies and enthusiastically noted that war-mongering malcontents such as Winston Churchill, Anthony Eden, and Duff Cooper bordered on political irrelevancy. Ambassador Herbert von Dirksen's October 15th report on the political situation in England prophesized that British foreign policy would continue to

¹⁶ Ibid 451.

focus on peaceful reconciliation with Germany due to both Britain's precarious imperial position and the ever-worsening weakness of France.¹⁷ Even after the dramatic increase in popular hostility to Germany in the wake of the November *Kristallnacht* pogrom, Dirksen's reports throughout the winter of 1938-1939 continued to stress the widespread desire in the British government for *rapprochement* with Germany. Any noises from the popular press to the contrary were just that; the aloof British government could be trusted to balk at the demands of public opinion in the interests of *détente*. Such suppositions were confirmed in March 1939 by Chamberlain's response to the German invasion of Czechoslovakia, wherein the intelligence from London lent credence to the impression that the West was inclined to make empty gestures to appease nationalistic elements at home, but ultimately would not attempt to obstruct Germany's plan of territorial revisionism in central and Eastern Europe.¹⁸

British Ambassador to Germany Neville Henderson unintentionally strengthened this impression when meeting with Weizsäcker in late April to discuss the issue of British rearmament. Following the meeting, Weizsäcker summarized his impressions that the overarching goal of Chamberlain's foreign policy was to maintain peace, and that British preparations for war were merely gestures in service of the peace process – in order to maintain peace Chamberlain believed Britain must demonstrate clearly its desire to fight. “However,” Weizsäcker reported, “the British Government were, as always, determined to do everything in their power to maintain peace, and to seek a satisfactory solution to

¹⁷ Abschrift Pol. II 3215, Deutsche Botschaft London, “Unterhaus Aussprache über die tschechoslowakische Frage und das Münchner Abkommen,” 8 October 1938. Dirksen, “Politischer Bericht – England nach der Septemberkrise,” 15 October 1938. PAAA R102817 (Politische Abteilung II-Po5) Innere Politik, Parlements und Parteiwesen in England von Oktober 1938 bis December 1940.

¹⁸ Overy, “Strategic Intelligence,” 456-58. This was in accordance with Nazism's broader contempt for all democratic institutions as tragicomic shams divorced from the actual will of the people.

the existing difficulties without recourse to war.”¹⁹ At the same time, Dirksen, Weizsäcker, and others in the Foreign Office interpreted the rise of peace factions in the opposition Labour Party as a further signal of British reticence to oppose German foreign policy aims. A breathless report from the German consulate in Glasgow on the “very informative” triumph of a Labour Party representative over a noted Conservative foreign policy expert in the April 22nd Parliamentary by-election of the “South-Airshire” district argued that the election results indicated “a clear decision of the voting masses for the socialist theses” of a peaceful foreign policy. The election signified “Chamberlain-fatigue” in Scotland, and perhaps England as well.²⁰ These views were reinforced in SD reports on the Labour-Party Congress of May-June 1939, which recognized Labour’s avowed commitment to the concept of collective security and a reinvigorated League of Nations, but downplayed this in favor of isolated pro-German statements during the Party-platform debates. Much like the Foreign Office took solace in the outcome of a single local election, the SD read much significance into a Labour Party deputy’s statement “that not Germany, but England was responsible for the world unrest, because English policy was led by the stock markets,” which aimed only for the “pacification of Germany, but no justice for Germany.” Likewise, the SD read much into another speaker’s argument that “the English workers were not the enemy of the German people.”²¹ Such reports underestimated or ignored the very real increase in anti-German

¹⁹ Weizsäcker, “Memorandum by the State Secretary,” April 26, 1939. DGFP, Series D, Vol. VI: Doc. 272.

²⁰ Deutsches Konsulat Glasgow,” Politischer Bericht: Sieg des Labour-Kandidaten in der Nachwahl zum Parlamentsbezirk South-Airshire (Schottland), 22 April 1939. PAAA R102817 (Politische Abteilung II-Po5) Innere Politik, Parlements und Parteiwesen in England von Oktober 1938 bis December 1940.

²¹ SD-IIA2 “Parteitag der Labour-Party,” [date obscured] June 1939. BAB R 58/718, USHMM RG 14.016M.

sentiment in Britain that followed increased anti-Jewish measures (including the *Kristallnacht* pogrom) and Germany's blatant violation of the Munich accords.²²

Firm statements by the British government, such as affirmations of Polish national sovereignty and talk of a formal Anglo-Polish defense pact, did little to alter German perceptions of London's reticence to actively oppose German policy toward Poland.

When told point-blank by Henderson in May that British public opinion toward Germany had changed decisively and "was now even ready to enter a European war for the Poles,"

Weizsäcker responded derisively that Henderson "need not be surprised if the British guarantee to Poland was not taken very seriously in Germany, when the British Empire had considered it necessary to have itself guaranteed by the Republic of Poland!"²³

Dirksen's June reports found the British government pulling back from the "mad" and self-defeating policy of German encirclement for three reasons: the alliance with Poland was of "dubious value" because it embroiled Britain in a far away conflict between

Germany and Poland in which the British government had no natural interest; the demonstrated reluctance of Stalin to sign Western anti-German treaties; and the volatile state of British public opinion, which was in no way set against Germany. The fact that

new elections would take place either in the fall of 1939 or in 1940 also meant that

British policy was in a state of flux and indecision, beneficial to German aims.²⁴

²² Polls conducted by the British Institute of Public Opinion showed that, by July 1939, some 76 percent of those polled favored going to war to honor the guarantee to Poland, while only 13 percent responded negatively. This marked a substantial shift from the widespread pacifism manifest in Britain in the mid-1930s. Richard Overly, "Saving Civilization: British Public Opinion and the Coming of War in 1939," in David Fox and Jo Welch, eds. *Justifying War: Propaganda, Politics and the Modern Age* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 180-81.

²³ Weizsäcker, "Memorandum by the State Secretary," May 15, 1939. DGFP, Series D, Vol. VI: Doc. 385.

²⁴ Deutsche Botschaft London (Dirksen) to Berlin, "Politischer Bericht – Einkreisung und konstruktive Politik," 24 June 1939. PAAA R102817 (Politische Abteilung II-Po5) Innere Politik, Parlements und Parteiwesen in England von Oktober 1938 bis December 1940. Overly "Strategic Intelligence," 461-62.



German Ambassador to London Herbert von Dirksen, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, and German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop visiting the Chiemsee, Bavaria, as a part of Chamberlain's September 15, 1938 travels to confer with Hitler at the Berghof. Bundesarchiv Bild 183-H12472.

Acknowledging the marked growth in hostility toward Germany in Britain by early July as the diplomatic crisis over Danzig continued, Ambassador Dirksen still sought to downplay its significance, writing, "It would be wrong to conclude from this estimate of 'public opinion' that Great Britain is now inexorably headed for war. The wave of excitement will subside even as it arose, once the necessary conditions are there." According to Dirksen, the British government understood the fickle nature of the public very well, and was still committed to the peace effort.²⁵ Even if public opinion and the warmongering of discontented backbenchers such as Churchill persisted, it was

²⁵ Dirksen to Berlin, "Political Report – Stiffening of British Morale," July 10, 1939. DGFP, Series D, Vol. VI: Doc. 645.

the Chamberlain government's desire to come to terms with Germany, and its continued apparent willingness to defy rash calls for action of the nationalist elements that truly mattered.²⁶ In spite of all indications to the contrary, there was still hope of convincing Britain to stand aside from any German-Polish conflict.

Ultimately, however, the Foreign Office could not ignore the vociferous opposition to Germany in the British press and amongst prominent elements of the political establishment.²⁷ When discussing the turn in British public opinion, however, Ambassador Dirksen and other Foreign office representatives in London did not attribute the deterioration in British attitudes toward Germany throughout the spring and summer of 1939 to either the German-induced destruction of Czechoslovakia in March or to the subsequent fomenting of a diplomatic crisis with Poland over the summer. Instead, Foreign Office officials in London blamed the machinations of warmongering Conservative backbenchers and international Jewry for Germany's troubles. As early as January, Dirksen reported from a "reliable source" in London that "Jewish financiers and other Jewish circles" had pooled £1.4 million to combat Chamberlain's policy of Anglo-German rapprochement, endeavoring to ultimately bring down the Cabinet.²⁸ Monitoring the reaction in London to Hitler's speech of April 28th and the accompanying repudiation of Germany's non-aggression pact with Poland and 1935 Anglo-German Naval Agreement, *Chargé d' Affaires* Theodore Kordt reported that the widespread critical reactions in nationalist circles was disingenuous, meant to cynically bolster support for

²⁶ Dirksen to Berlin, "Political Report – Decision of the British Government to Pursue a Constructive Policy," July 24, 1939. DGFP, Series D, Vol. VI: Doc. 710

²⁷ See, for example, the confidential reports of an agent of the *Dienststelle Ribbentrop* and *Auslandorganisation*, which reported a noted hardening of British public opinion towards Germany from April to June. DGFP, Series D, Vol. VI: Doc. 551, 630.

²⁸ Dirksen, "Jüdischer Fondszur Bekämpfung der Chamberlain's Deutschen Politik," 9 January 1939. PAAA R 102827 (Politische Abteilung II-Po36) Judenfrage England vom 1937 bis 1943, D515636.

the long-standing Conservative goal of military conscription. At the same time, Kordt's report emphasized, "the real impression made" by quoting a lone Parliamentarian who thought the speech was a "remarkable, statesmanlike performance," and another anonymous figure that suggested, "Jewish financial circles are very annoyed that the speech was not of a warlike character."²⁹

In analyzing the content of a speech by Foreign Secretary Lord Halifax on June 30th, Ambassador Dirksen took as a starting premise that "Public opinion here is influenced by a strong wave of propaganda from Jewish, American, French, and Polish sources," which were succeeding in inciting the British public against Germany. He concluded that "Jewish-French" propagandists and anti-German press reports had successfully managed to "sabotage" and obfuscate Halifax's conciliatory comments toward Germany.³⁰ Reporting on the atmosphere of "war psychosis" in Britain on July 3rd, occasioned by rumors that German military action against Danzig was imminent, Dirksen explained that the "Jewish-American quarters" were serving as the "wire-pullers," "instigators," and "leaders" of an influential anti-German disinformation campaign in Britain. According to Dirksen, the false reports from Danzig could be traced to "Roosevelt and his Jewish advisors," who needed to foment a war atmosphere in Europe in order to push the (anti-German) American Neutrality Act through Congress.

²⁹ Kordt to Berlin, 29 April 1939. DGFP, Series D, Vol VI: Doc 291. Occasioned by Roosevelt's public insistence that Hitler disavow any threat of German aggression toward some 30 countries in the next 25 years as a necessary pretext toward international disarmament and cooperation to peaceably solve the German question, the speech was a typical performance by Hitler: oversized, dripping with sarcasm and contempt for the Western powers, and aimed primarily at the domestic audience. See Ian Kershaw, *Hitler 1936-1945: Nemesis* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2001), 189-190. It is significant that Kordt, along with his brother a staunch anti-Hitler activist who had sought British support for a military-backed coup in 1938 during the Sudetenland crisis and later endeavored to pass information to Downing Street about Hitler's intentions of fomenting war with Poland, reproduced these conspiratorial tropes in his own reports from Britain.

³⁰ Dirksen to Berlin, 30 June 1939. DGFP, Series D, Vol. VI: Doc. 593.

The power of the American-Jewish press aligned with “Anglo-Jewish circles, and, in their wake, the Churchill group,” was “thwarting any beginnings of a constructive policy towards Germany” in London.³¹ Months later, the German Propaganda Ministry and its affiliated publications employed these same narratives to inform the German public how international Jewry had driven Europe to war in 1939.³²

Mid-August still saw a consensus in the highest echelons of the German government that Britain would not fight a war to save Poland. On August 15th, Weizsäcker confirmed to Army Chief of General Staff Gen. Franz Halder Hitler’s insistence of the previous day that the British would not intervene, noting that “Chamberlain and Halifax in particular wish to avoid blood.”³³ As late as August 18th, with the international situation deteriorating by the day and Dirksen himself recalled to Berlin as part of the increasingly belligerent negotiations on a diplomatic solution to the Danzig question between the German and British governments, Dirksen equivocated. In a six-page memorandum to Ribbentrop and Weizsäcker on the likely British response to a German-Polish war, Dirksen prefaced his analysis with the general claim that Britain was “not 100% bound in advance to stand by Poland in every case of conflict. This would be

³¹ Dirksen to Berlin, 3 July 1939. DGFP, Series D, Vol. VI: Doc. 606.

³² Jeffrey Herf, *The Jewish Enemy: Nazi Propaganda During World War II and the Holocaust* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 53-61. While one function of the German diplomatic stations abroad was to gather and transmit information back to Berlin that could be used for propaganda purposes, the aforementioned diplomatic dispatches represented Foreign Office diplomats’ actual interpretations of the political situation in Great Britain in the Spring and Summer of 1939. In this respect the published *Documents on German Foreign Policy* (and accounts relying exclusively on those published documents) do not fully capture the underlying assumptions behind much of Dirksen and the German Embassy in London’s reporting in 1939, which lend undue credence to the notion that Dirksen was a rational and reliable “old hand” in the German Foreign Office whose considerable expertise in British affairs was ignored by Hitler and Ribbentrop.

³³ *Halder War Diary*, 14 August 1939, pg. 26.

contrary to the British mentality, which always wants to leave a possible loophole.”³⁴

After reviewing developments in British foreign policy since 1933, lamenting British efforts to encircle Germany, its “mendacious” anti-German press campaigns, and its refusal to acknowledge Poland’s “true face” as a nation driven by “lust for conquest” and “ruthless oppression of minorities,” Dirksen moved to consider the most likely scenarios that would result in a Polish-German war.³⁵ While acknowledging that Britain would likely intervene militarily in a case of overt German aggression, Dirksen argued that Polish provocations against Germany would leave Britain on the sidelines. Specifically,

If the Poles should stage a provocation – the bombardment of a German village by a Polish battery commander gone wild or the bombing of German localities by a Polish airman – it would be of crucial importance to Britain’s attitude, first, that the facts of the case be made clear to world public opinion, and secondly, that British public opinion would have time to be understand the facts that Poland alone was to blame.

Overall, the situation was in flux, dependent on specific courses of action on both the Polish and German sides and the ability of the German government to convince international opinion that the Poles were at fault.³⁶ In considering these cases, however, the “psychological factors” were also important, as the desire “to be in charge, to refute

³⁴ Emphasis in original. Herbert von Dirksen, “Aufzeichnung über die voraussichtliche Haltung Englands im Falle eines deutsch-polnischen Konflikts,” 18 August 1939, pg.3. PAAA R 29570: Deutsche-Englische Beziehungen vom Mai 1939 bis Juni 1940.

³⁵ Ibid, 2-3.

³⁶ Ibid, 4-5. Although in Hitler’s view the signing of the German-Soviet non-aggression pact in the following days strengthened Germany’s position even further, it is important to consider Dirksen’s analysis in context of the actual nature of the German invasion of Poland on September 1st – a justified response to a (staged) Polish attack on a German border station. Such is not to attribute direct influence on the famed “Gleiwitz Incident” (carried out by RSHA intelligence with reluctant material support from the *Abwehr*) to Dirksen’s memorandum. It is important, however, to consider that the extended effort involved in murdering concentration camp inmates and staging the scene was not merely a cynical effort to manipulate domestic public opinion, but was a highly technical intelligence operation meant to provide the British government a pretext for violating their treaties with Poland as well.

the extensive opinion that England is decadent, unreliable, and weak,” served as “a fixed factor” in British international calculations.³⁷

In postwar interrogations conducted by the U.S. State Department, Dirksen endeavored to cast this final prewar report as part of a broader pattern of expert advice ignored by political hacks such as Ribbentrop, who were at this point bent on war with England.³⁸ In reality, however, Dirksen’s report was overtaken by events, as the announcement of a German-Soviet treaty was viewed in Berlin as the harbinger of a titanic shift in the balance of power that would surely result in Britain refraining from intervening in purely German-Polish affairs. Dirksen’s own extensive reporting that political and military weaknesses drove Britain to put forward hollow demonstrations of strength after Munich reinforced this ultimately incorrect perception, which even Dirksen obliquely acknowledged after the war.³⁹ At the same time, Dirksen’s report was not the only one filed on August 18th, as officials from the *Dienststelle Ribbentrop* provided information confirming the prevailing attitude that the British government would ultimately stand down. This memorandum, pertaining to conversations with foreign press correspondents stationed in London, reported, “A British journalist of good repute, who recently returned from London, and who can be regarded as having very sound judgment, told neutral correspondents that Chamberlain and Lord Halifax did not really

³⁷ Ibid, 6.

³⁸ Dewitt C. Poole, Head of Mission, “State Department Special Interrogation Missions – Herbert von Dirksen,” September 18, 1945, pg. 20-21. NACP RG 498, Entry UD-287, Box 1344. Dirksen claimed he had been “cut out of events after his mid-August recall because of his divergent views, unable to meet with Ribbentrop or any one else of importance and never again solicited for his opinion after the war broke out two weeks later. Weizsäcker too, subsequently claimed to have been out of contact with Hitler from May to mid August, and professed that he had no real idea what the Führer was up to during that time. See Kershaw, *Nemesis*, 199.

³⁹ Of course, Dirksen argued in both his interrogations and memoirs, responsibility for mistaken perceptions of British weakness lay only with Hitler and Ribbentrop’s ideological zealotry, and had nothing to do with his own thoroughly objective reporting from London that was steadfastly ignored for daring to speak truth to power.

want war with Germany. They could be expected to do their utmost to avoid conflict with her. He asserts that there is really no question of a war atmosphere in London.” Ribbentrop sent the report to Hitler straight away.⁴⁰

In spite of the rejoicing in Berlin over the German-Soviet foreign relations coup, Chamberlain maintained his steadfast support for Poland in a formal communiqué to the German government that specifically refuted Hitler and others’ explanations for why Britain would stand aside from the brewing conflict. Invoking the memory of 1914 and the culpability of Britain’s allegedly unclear foreign policy position in escalating the July Crisis, Chamberlain assured Hitler that, “His Majesty’s Government are resolved that on this occasion there shall be no misunderstanding.” He continued, “no greater mistake could be made,” than to assume that the news of a German-Soviet Pact in any way altered Britain’s obligations to Poland. Furthermore, Chamberlain wrote, any German assumptions about a short European war followed by a swiftly concluded compromise peace “would be a dangerous illusion.”⁴¹ With Britain’s position unambiguously expressed, Chamberlain urged the German government to devote all its energies to a peacefully negotiated resolution to the crisis.⁴²

On the same day, however, Hitler also invoked the memory of the First World War to explain to his Generals at the Obersalzberg why Britain would not intervene in the coming conflict with Poland. Noting that the British Empire was vulnerable due to

⁴⁰ “Memorandum by an Official of the Dienststelle Ribbentrop,” August 8, 1939. DGFP Series D, Volume VII: Doc 118.

⁴¹ Message from Neville Chamberlain, 22 August 1939. PAAA R28882: Büro Reichsaußenminister – Polen-Konflikt vom 22 August bis September 1939, 5-7.

⁴² Wire-tapped diplomatic chatter throughout August underscored British steadfastness in this regard, although such reports of the *Forschungsamt* were likely ignored in favor of other, more optimistic reports from the Foreign Office and *Abwehr*. See David Kahn, *Hitler’s Spies: German Military Intelligence in World War II* (New York: MacMillan, 1978), 183.

tensions with Italy in the Mediterranean, tensions with Japan in East Asia, and tensions with the Islamic nations of the Near East, Hitler argued that any British entry into a new world war would result only in the unraveling of the Empire. Britain had not gained anything from the last war and would suffer greatly in a future one as well. Most importantly, Hitler argued, “There are no men of the caliber hard and heroic enough to carry through the decision called for by the situation... The enemy has much to lose, while we only gain.”⁴³ In spite of these words of assurance, three days later Chamberlain formalized the guarantee of March 1939 by signing a mutual defense pact with Poland, delayed until August only because of failed British attempts to draw the Soviet Union into the anti-German alliance over the summer.

One group whose will was shattered by the Hitler-Stalin Pact, however, were the few remaining anti-Hitler resistance circles in the military, such as Admiral Wilhelm Canaris and others in the *Abwehr* hierarchy, who were thoroughly pessimistic about the prospects of another two-front war. *Abwehr* staff such as Col. Hans Oster had endeavored to warn the British government about Hitler’s war plans since the Munich agreement; Canaris himself worked to encourage the Italian government to make their anti-war position clear in the early days of August in hopes of derailing Hitler’s war policy.⁴⁴ Nor were they alone. Lieutenant-Colonel Gerhard von Schwerin of the Army High Command’s “Foreign Armies West” intelligence department also endeavored to pass information to the British Foreign Office about Hitler’s plans for war against Poland,

⁴³ *Halder War Diary*, 22 August 1939, pg. 29-30.

⁴⁴ Mueller, 147-158. Kershaw, *Nemesis*, 224-26. For more information on the varied anti-Hitler resistance movements, particularly the conflicting attitudes in military circles see Hans Mommsen, *Alternatives to Hitler: German Resistance Under the Third Reich* trans. Angus McGeoch (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003).

only to be repeatedly rebuffed by ministry officials in London.⁴⁵ In the last days before the war, they performed their duties with a sense of fatalistic pessimism intermixed with blind hope for a resolution to the crisis.

The circulated digests of the *Abwehr* reflected this conflicted attitude in the final days of August, as a voluminous inflow of contradictory information on British intentions from around the world muddied the heretofore-steadfast British position on German aggression in Poland. On August 21st, reports out of Budapest claimed that any German action against Danzig would be “immediately answered with war,” while reports from Washington viewed a European war as a result of German provocations in Poland inevitable.⁴⁶ August 23rd found stiff resolve in Paris even upon the realization of the German-Soviet Pact but pessimism from Washington that the balance of power had shifted firmly in favor of the Axis and that the other powers might stand aside.⁴⁷ Two days later, an *Abwehr* V-Mann (*Verbindungsmann* or *Vertrauensmann*, informant or agent) reported that England was firmly resolved against Germany and that economic preparations for war, such as rerouting long-term shipping, were underway. On the same day, Canaris informed the General Staff of “positive evidence that Britain will strike.”⁴⁸ On August 26th, however, a different V-Mann reported that the French General Staff, while proceeding apace with mobilization, was extremely pessimistic that the British

⁴⁵ Kershaw, *Nemesis*, 906 n.308. He was only the latest in a string of German officers who attempted to warn the Western powers of Hitler’s plans that spring and summer. See Peter Hoffmann, *The History of the German Resistance 1933-1945*, 3rd ed. (Montreal: Mc-Gill Queen’s University Press, 1996.) 108-109.

⁴⁶ OKW/483 Aus. Ic, “Außen und militärpolitische Nachrichten,” 21.8.39. NACP RG 242, T-77, Roll 933.

⁴⁷ OKW/483 Ausl. 8900/39 geh. Ausl. I, “Außen und militärpolitische Nachrichten,” 23.8.39. NACP RG 242, T-77, Roll 933.

⁴⁸ *Halder War Diary*, 25 August 1939, pg. 34.

would actually stand by Poland.⁴⁹ That evening German Army headquarters expressed hopes that Britain “might still be brought around” to the German position through further negotiations.⁵⁰

At times, the nature of *Abwehr* reporting resulted in falsely optimistic feedback. The *Abwehr* intelligence reports for August 29th serve as a case in point. The previous days had seen Hitler postpone the invasion of Poland (originally set to take place on August 26th) to September 1st after Mussolini declined to join Hitler’s war on August 25th, as Italy was not materially prepared to wage war at this early date.⁵¹ This was followed by a play for time to split Britain from Poland by engaging in sham negotiations over a German-proposed Anglo-German alliance of mutual protection, followed by bad-faith British-mediated bilateral negotiations with Poland. At the time, Canaris himself interpreted these negotiations and Hitler’s cancellation order as averting the possibility of war, reasoning that “[Hitler]’ll never recover from this blow. Peace has been saved for twenty years.”⁵² In the meantime, the British exerted pressure to delay Polish mobilization while German mobilization continued apace for the new September 1st invasion date.⁵³ Although these German diplomatic maneuvers were disingenuous, they were still duly considered by British representatives and reported on in the international press. While the British government rejected the idea of any type of Anglo-German

⁴⁹ OKW/483 AUSL. 8955/39 g. Ausl. I. “Außen und militärpolitische Nachrichten,” 25.8.39; AUSL. 01/39 g. Ausl. I. “Außen und militärpolitische Nachrichten,” 26.8.39. NACP RG 242, T-77, Roll 933.

⁵⁰ *Halder War Diary*, 26 August 1939, pg. 35.

⁵¹ King Vittorio Emmanuel’s declaration over a week earlier that he would not sign a mobilization order by Mussolini in any case, which Canaris and the *Abwehr* were well aware of, anticipated Mussolini’s decision to abstain from hostilities. Bizarrely, Keitel seems to have taken the King’s refusal to go to war as further confirmation that Britain and France would not commit to war either, because if the iron will of *Il Duce* could not rally the Italian government to participate, what chance did the democracies stand? Michael Mueller, *Canaris: The Life and Death of Hitler’s Spymaster*, trans. Geoffrey Brooks (Annapolis MD: Naval Institute Press, 2007), 149-50.

⁵² Quoted in Mueller, 154.

⁵³ Weinberg, *Hitler’s Foreign Policy*, 775-778. Kershaw, *Hitler: Nemesis*, 213-15.

alliance out of hand, their willingness to broker a peaceful settlement to the German-Polish conflict and the subsequent negotiations to that effect lent an appearance of credence to overly optimistic press reports that suggested a war had been averted after all. These reports, in turn, were collected and collated by the *Abwehr* and passed along to the German High Command on the 29th as reliable evidence that Britain was wavering and might abandon Poland after all. Thus, in spite of the fact that on the morning of the 29th the British government had promulgated some 100 decrees and regulations pertaining to defensive preparations for war, the *Abwehr* reported that “The situation [of Great Britain] remains most inscrutable” and that recent negotiations have “revived optimism” of a peaceful resolution to the Polish problem in British business circles. Reports from Washington agreed that British financial interests had been shaken of late during the war scare and that the ongoing Anglo-German talks “allows for the hope of a peaceful solution” to the Danzig question.⁵⁴ This, in turn, bolstered the impression of Hitler, Jodl, and others in the High Command that Britain was “soft” and would ultimately not intervene in the coming war.⁵⁵

The unwarranted optimism surrounding the sham negotiations continued well into the evening of August 30th, when the *Abwehr* reports caught up to events and reported that Britain would fight after all.⁵⁶ Further disingenuous negotiations headed by Hermann Göring’s representatives and a dramatic final meeting between Henderson and Ribbentrop took place on 31 August, wherein the two nearly came to blows over

⁵⁴ OKW/483 AUSL. 09/39 g. Ausl. I. “Außen und militärpolitische Nachrichten,” 29.8.39. (9 Uhr); AUSL. 14/39 g. Ausl. I. “Außen und militärpolitische Nachrichten,” 29.8.39 (16.30 Uhr). NACP RG 242, T-77, Roll 933.

⁵⁵ *Halder War Diary*, 29 August 1939, 42.

⁵⁶ OKW/483 AUSL. 013/39 g. Ausl. I. “Außen und militärpolitische Nachrichten,” 30.8.39 (9 Uhr); AUSL. 014/39 g. Ausl. I. “Außen und militärpolitische Nachrichten,” 30.8.39 (12 Uhr); AUSL. 015/39 g. Ausl. I. “Außen und militärpolitische Nachrichten,” 30.8.39 (18 Uhr). NACP RG 242, T-77, Roll 933.

Ribbentrop's deliberate intransigence and transparent refusal to negotiate in good faith.⁵⁷ The German invasion went ahead as planned on the morning of September 1st. Britain's formal declaration of war followed on September 3rd.

Anticipating Peace, Planning Invasion 1939-1940

Although Hitler misinterpreted the absence of significant military operations by the Western powers in September 1939 as a sign that Britain and France desired peace, the British government was once again remarkably consistent in its public and private exhortations that there would be no peace settlement regardless of the outcome in Poland.⁵⁸ *Abwehr* daily reports noted a resolution of the British Cabinet on September 10th that called for preparations for at least a three-year war with Germany, and reports from "reliable sources" on the 19th that the Supreme English Military Council had resolved "to continue the war until the final victory and will not accept compromise."⁵⁹ The *Abwehr* digests for September 29th described the broad extent of Britain's anti-German feelings as finally unmasked, summarizing, "After the pretext 'Poland' no longer applies, the real aim of the war, 'Stop Hitler,' is revealed."⁶⁰ Similar reports continued into October, in spite of categorical assertions of deep divides between the financial elites of "The City," who were evidently having second thoughts given German successes, and

⁵⁷ Weinberg, *Hitler's Foreign Policy*, 779-81. Kershaw, *Nemesis*, 219-221.

⁵⁸ *GSWW* II: 8. Indicative of Hitler's thinking here are the express limitations placed on the scope of permissible activity for armed forces in the West in Führer Directives 3 (Sept. 9), 4 (Sept. 25), and 5 (9/30/39), which served the dual purpose of protecting the vulnerable Western frontier and leaving ample room for peace talks by limiting overt hostilities. See DGFP Series D, Vol. VIII: Docs. 43, 135, 170.

⁵⁹ OKW/483 Ausl. Nr. 032/39, "Außen und militärpolitischen Nachrichten," 14 Uhr, 10 September 1939; OKW/483 Ausl. Nr. 074/39, "Außen und militärpolitischen Nachrichten," 19 September 1939. NACP RG 242, T-77, Roll 932.

⁶⁰ OKW/483 Ausl. Nr. 0103/39, "Außenpolitische Mitteilung," 29 September 1939, pg. 5-6. NACP RG 242, T-77, Roll 932.

the obstinacy of the British government in continuing the war effort in any case.⁶¹ Given these realities, it was not particularly surprising that Chamberlain's government categorically rejected Hitler's purposefully vague (and largely propagandistic) peace offer of October 6th. Hitler had already decided to move forward with tactical operations against the West as soon as possible in the days before the sham peace offer, issuing the requisite Führer directives ordering the destruction of France and any British supporting forces on October 9th and 10th.⁶²

The idea that the long-awaited reckoning with France, originally set for late October or early November but ultimately delayed until the following Spring, would unleash the substantial inner desires of the British population and dissenting politicians for peace found justification in the continuously upbeat reporting of the Foreign Office. While acknowledging the fundamental differences between what terms the British government considered acceptable (a restored Poland) and concessions Germany was unwilling to offer, Foreign Office reports continued to argue that there existed in Britain a widespread desire for a rapid end to the war. In this view, the British fought on to maintain their "imperial prestige," which had been affronted by German belligerence, although London greatly feared the "spread of the influence of Bolshevism" that would inevitably result from the "unavoidable weakening" of the European powers in the

⁶¹ OKW/483 Ausl. Nr. 019/39 g. Ausl.I "Außen- und militärpolitische Nachrichten," 2 October 1939; Ausl. Nr. 0221/39 g. Ausl.I "Außen- und militärpolitische Nachrichten," 27 October 1939. NACP RG 242, T-77, Roll 932.

⁶² *GSWW* II: 232-238. See also the summary of Hitler's rather belligerent and skeptical comments regarding the desire of the British for peace towards the end of the Polish campaign. "Memorandum of the Conversation Between the Führer and M. Dahlerus in the Presence of Field Marshall Göring," 26 September 1939. DGFP Series D, Vol. VIII: Doc. 138. On Hitler's assumption that Britain would "be ready to talk after defeats," see *Halder War Diary*, 16 October 1939, 72.

conflict with Germany.⁶³ Weizsäcker in particular was taken with the latter point, suggesting in mid-November that a British fear of Bolshevism had the potential to bring London to the negotiating table.⁶⁴ Weizsäcker's later reports of contacts between British Ambassadors and the Italian government and evaluations of the political tensions within Britain even suggested that the evacuation of Poland would no longer serve as a necessary condition for a settlement, ignoring the explicit public statements of Cabinet officials to the contrary.⁶⁵

Even the usually more circumspect *Abwehr* reinforced the notion that the British people were not entirely behind the war in a December 2, 1939 report on the world situation. Brushing aside the minor point that the spectrum of British political parties appeared united around the government, the report pointed to the lack of offensive British infantry operations as “proof” that the English people were in no way enthusiastic to fight Germany, despite extensive government pro-war propaganda campaigns. As in the First World War, the British government was forgoing direct military intervention in favor of using its international influence in the press to agitate against Germany, particularly in America. The *Abwehr* also reported that food shortages, blackouts, and restrictions on personal freedom implemented in the British Isles as a result of the German blockade

⁶³ Likus, “Confidential Report – Memorandum by an Official of the Foreign Minister’s Personal Staff, 19 October 1939. DGFP Series D, Vol. VIII: Doc. 281. Quotes from V. Rinteln, “Circular of the Foreign Ministry, 3 November 1939. DGFP Series D, Vol. VIII: Doc. 396.

⁶⁴ Weizsäcker, “Memorandum by the State Secretary,” 11 November 1939. DGFP Series D, Vol. VIII: Doc. 348.

⁶⁵ Weizsäcker, “Memorandum of the State Secretary,” 20 November 1939. DGFP Series D, Vol. VIII: Doc. 375. Churchill had explicitly made this point about the inviolability of British demands for the return of a Polish state on November 12th.

were so far “only reluctantly borne” by the British populace, and “the need for a speedy end to the war is not inconsiderable here.”⁶⁶

At the same time, the Foreign Office reports continued to analyze the disposition and supposed goals of Jewish interests in Britain in order to judge the prospects for peace. For instance, German diplomats at The Hague interpreted the dismissal of (Jewish) British Secretary of State for War Lord Leslie Hore-Belisha at the culmination of the “Pillbox Affair” in January 1940 as indicative of broader divisions between the British government and entrenched Jewish economic interests.⁶⁷ Rather than signifying the outcome of a long-brewing internal power struggle between the War Minister and his generals, Foreign Office dispatches described the conflict between Chamberlain and “Hoare-Belisha” as signifying a long-overdue curbing of “Jewish-English big business” interests. They claimed that in 1939 Jewish big business interests had orchestrated a war with Germany that they (wrongly) expected to quickly win while reaping enormous profits. As this strategy had failed and the war looked to drag on, “Jewish big business worried it would be caught in the ‘Mousetrap’ of the British war economy,” losing profits and plant to wartime nationalization measures.⁶⁸ Given the contextual linkages between

⁶⁶ OKW/483 A.Ausl/Abw. Nr. 0400/39 g. Ausl I. “Außenpolitische Übersicht – Entwicklung der Außenpolitischen Lage im Monat November,” 2 December 1939, pg. 5-6. NACP RG 242, T-77, Roll 932.

⁶⁷ The “Pillbox Affair” consisted of an official visit of the War Minister to the Front to inspect British-engineered fortifications. Upon his return, Hore-Belisha publicly criticized what he argued were the poor conditions of the British Expeditionary Force’s prepared defenses, which he deemed insufficient. This incensed the Front commander, Lord Gort, who viewed the criticism as completely unjustified, and who had already clashed numerous times with Hore-Belisha in the past. Gort and other military commanders exerted significant pressure on Chamberlain, who finally dismissed Hore-Belisha in January 1940. The anti Hore-Belisha campaign was quite public, and anti-Semitic attacks describing Hore-Belisha manipulating Britain into war with Germany to defend European Jewry played no small role in the affair. N.J. Crowson, *Facing Fascism: The Conservative Party and the European Dictators, 1935-1940* (London: Routledge, 1997), 187-189.

⁶⁸ Aschmann to Berlin, “Telegramm Nr. 28,” 9 January 1940. PAAA R 29570 (Büro des Staatssekretärs) Deutsche-Englische Beziehungen 5.39-6.40; frame 169881-882. Such anti-Semitic outbursts were by no means isolated, as German officials often took their cues from anti-Semitic British literature on Hore-

Jewish power and English intransigence in this and earlier reports, the ouster of Hore-Belisha boded well for hopes that the British government would act reasonably in the future.

The long-awaited destruction of France in May-June 1940 failed to yield a peace settlement with Britain. Apart from Chamberlain's ouster as Prime Minister on May 10th in favor of Churchill after German successes in Norway (a victory for the so-called hard-liners unforeseen by Hitler), there was very little change at all in the British position, even after the French surrender.⁶⁹ Hitler personally had no real desire to "crush" England as he had France, since the continued existence of the British Empire played a vital role in his conception of postwar spheres of influence, and wished only that British government would "see reason" and extricate itself from continental European affairs, where it held no natural interest. Reflecting this official position, the German press was directed on June 25th, 1940 to take the line that the war against Britain continued "not so much in order to destroy the British Empire as to break British hegemony on the Continent."⁷⁰ Hitler's remarks to the General Staff approximately three weeks later expressed his puzzlement over Britain's continuing the war in similar terms – Germany must tread carefully in convincing Britain to negotiate, as the disintegration of the British

Belisha. See F.C. Grumme to Auswärtiges Amt Abt. England, 23 June 1939 in PAAA R 102827 (Politische Abteilung II-Po36) Jüdenfrage England vom 1937 bis 1943.

⁶⁹ On Hitler's failure to anticipate Chamberlain's ouster, see *Halder War Diary*, 5 May 1940, 129. Much ink has been spilled debating the "counterfactuals" of Churchill losing the internal political struggle against Halifax and the "peace party" in May and June 1940. While there was indeed a genuine peace movement fronted by Halifax, it was only strong enough to force a *discussion* of British war aims in the Cabinet and the circumstances (if any) in which the Cabinet would conclude a peace with Germany. Hagiographies of Churchill's "iron will" in quashing these revolts aside, such debates were merely examples of responsible governance, and did not reflect an ascendance of a significant peace movement that "could have" ended the war in the summer of 1940. Opposition to Churchill and the continuance of the war was divided and unorganized, and would remain so throughout the period under discussion. See Julian Jackson, *The Fall of France: The Nazi Invasion of 1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 206-211.

⁷⁰ Quoted in *GSWW* II: 366.

Empire would only benefit Japan, the United States, and others, not Germany.⁷¹

Following this trend, on June 30th, Weizsäcker confirmed to the German General Staff that a concrete basis for a treaty with Britain did not yet exist, noting that Britain probably needed a final demonstration of German military might before London would give in and leave Germany a free hand in Europe.⁷²

In this context, Hitler's second vague and propagandistic peace offer on July 19th was, once again, an empty gesture meant to fix the blame for continuing the war squarely on the British.⁷³ Accordingly, Churchill did not deign to respond to Hitler's offer, noting in private that there was no need to respond in any official capacity, given that the British government had formally announced its policy toward Germany in October 1939.⁷⁴ The German Foreign Office continued speculating about Britain's desire for peace a mere three days after Churchill's flat refusal to discuss Hitler's offer, however. Reports from Foreign Office representatives in the United States reported to the German General Staff and Commander in Chief of the Army that Britain's situation was considered "hopeless," with the British Ambassador to the United States speculating on the formation of a peace cabinet consisting of former Prime Minister David Lloyd George, Chamberlain, and Halifax.⁷⁵

In June and July, while Hitler was settling on the best method to bring about the end of the war with Britain, the Foreign Office continued to provide mixed signals on the state of affairs in London, pointing out opportunities for peace in spite of the official

⁷¹ *Halder War Diary*, 13 July 1940, pg. 227.

⁷² *Halder War Diary*, 30 June 1940, pg. 219.

⁷³ Kershaw, *Nemesis*, 301-304. *GSWW* II: 368-69.

⁷⁴ William Manchester and Paul Reid, *The Last Lion: Winston Spencer Churchill, Defender of the Realm, 1940-1965* (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 2012), 129-30. Gerhard Weinberg, *A World At Arms: A Global History of World War II* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 152 n.122.

⁷⁵ *Halder War Diary*, 22 July 1940, pg. 231.

policy of the German government (and Ribbentrop's Foreign Office in particular) to no longer pursue peace talks unless they were directly initiated by the British government.⁷⁶ Although the Foreign Office representative to the German High Command reported on July 11th that Churchill had proved victorious in an internal struggle against Lord Halifax's peace faction, resulting in the stout position of "war to the finish," other reports spoke assuredly of a widespread pessimism toward the continuation of the war in Britain and the possibility of a Spanish or French-brokered peace settlement.⁷⁷ This divergence in interpretation reflected the fact that the Foreign Office itself possessed only a muddled idea of Britain's internal situation, acknowledged by Secretary Weizsäcker in a message of July 19th calling on German Missions in Europe, Ankara, and Washington to cull all available information from their host countries on British morale, economy, foreign affairs and "relations of the Government with the people."⁷⁸

At the same time, Ribbentrop, German diplomatic staff and pro-German intermediaries in Spain, and future head of RSHA VI Walter Schellenberg schemed to undermine what they viewed as the tenuous position of the warmongering British government through overtures to the pro-German Duke of Windsor, Edward VIII, who had abdicated as King in December 1936 over his marriage to the American socialite Wallis Simpson. The German invasion had displaced the Duke and his wife from their home in France. As a result, they found themselves first in Spain and then Portugal by early July 1940. Churchill and the royal family, recognizing a potential nuisance and

⁷⁶ On the Foreign Office and the Führer no longer taking peace offers seriously, see DGFP Series D, Volume X: Docs. 65, 188, 220, 228, 236. Peace initiatives from the Vatican and other intermediaries were first ignored and then abruptly rejected following the negative British reaction to Hitler's peace speech of July 19th.

⁷⁷ *Halder War Diary*, 11 July 1940, pg. 225. Ambassador in Spain to Berlin, 17 July 1940. DGFP Series D, Volume X: Doc. 160.

⁷⁸ "Circular of the State Secretary," 19 July 1940. DGFP Series D, Volume X: Doc. 191

under no circumstances desiring the return of the Duke to England or German-occupied France, aimed to exile Edward and his wife to the Bahamas for the duration of the war by appointing him governor in chief and military commander there.⁷⁹ Grossly overestimating Edward's popularity in Britain, Ribbentrop and his would-be co-conspirators endeavored to both incite the Duke to make pro-armistice statements that would undermine the War Cabinet's will to continue the fight and recruit Edward to serve as a German-backed (restored) King of England should an amphibious invasion of the British Isles prove necessary.⁸⁰ The plan concocted by Schellenberg and Foreign Office representatives in Spain called for a clandestine "chance" meeting of the Duke and a German official near the Spanish-Portuguese border, wherein the Duke would then be smuggled across (willingly or unwillingly) to heartily accept the German proposal.⁸¹ Contrary to the perceived wisdom of the plotters, however, when actually approached on behalf of the German government, the Duke of Windsor expressed shock and confusion at Ribbentrop's plans, noted that abdication was permanent (regardless of Foreign Office representatives' assurances that Germany would alter the British Constitution to make his

⁷⁹ Manchester and Reid, 103-104. Richard Evans, *The Third Reich at War* (New York: Penguin, 2008), 137.

⁸⁰ Ribbentrop to German Embassy in Spain, 11 July 1940. DGFP Series D, Vol. X: No. 152. This missive had followed a number of other efforts by Ribbentrop to delay the Duke's departure from Madrid to Lisbon by any means necessary, and instructions to pass along to the Duke the information that the German forces in France were protecting his residence in Paris. See *Documents on German Foreign Policy, Series D, Volume X: The War Years, June 23 – August 31, 1940* (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1957): No. 2, 9, 66, 86. Hereafter DGFP, Series D, Vol. X.

⁸¹ Stohrer to Berlin, 26 July 1940. DGFP Series D, Volume X: No. 235. Although the secondary literature refers repeatedly to a hair-brained German scheme to kidnap the Duke of Windsor, the actual documents leave the question of force ambiguous. The attitude expressed is more along the lines of certainty that the Duke would be willing to go along with the scheme, given his known pro-German credentials. The kidnapping narrative cannot be ruled out however, given Schellenberg's involvement in the notorious "Venlo-Incident" of November 1939, wherein Schellenberg orchestrated the kidnapping of two British intelligence service agents in the neutral Netherlands. They were ruthlessly interrogated and imprisoned in Dachau for the remainder of the war. Endeavoring to bolster public support for the war against Britain, German propaganda linked them (falsely) to the failed assassination attempt on Hitler by Georg Elser on November 8th.

return legally justifiable), and declared his intention to debark for the Bahamas post-haste to await further developments. Foreign Office officials in Berlin and Spain had once again misread the situation.⁸²

As the armed services commenced preparations for Operation Sea Lion in the summer of 1940, the RSHA prepared for the political dimension of Germany's eventual occupation of the British Isles. The most important documents produced by SD-intelligence pertaining to the invasion and occupation of Great Britain were the 20,000 copies of Walter Schellenberg's *Informationsheft GB* in collaboration with Amt VI and other internal experts.⁸³ Meant as a primer on British history, politics, and society for German occupation authorities and support personnel, *Informationsheft GB* provides clear insights into the warped picture of Great Britain circulating in SD-intelligence at the time, endorsed by both Heydrich and future chief of Amt VI Schellenberg. Typical of other RSHA bulletins, gross generalizations and references to the hypocritical anti-democratic and warmongering positions of the Churchill government were interspersed with extensive statistics on British demography, geography, and trade. In spite of its incessant liberal propaganda, *Informationsheft GB* argued,

The current state of war clearly illustrates how much democratic freedom in Britain there really is. An Enabling Act at the beginning of the war has allowed the government to impose military law on the entire country, which, in its dictatorial applications, defies all acknowledged democratic principles.⁸⁴

⁸² DGFP Series D, Volume X: No. 224, 257, 264.

⁸³ Schellenberg was still serving under Heinrich Müller in RSHA IV (Gestapo Branch) at the time. Reinhard R. Doerries, *Hitler's Intelligence Chief: Walter Schellenberg* (New York: Enigma Books, 2009), 33-34.

⁸⁴ The document was recently translated and published in full in association with the Imperial War Museum as *Invasion 1940: The Nazi Invasion Plan for Britain by SS General Walter Schellenberg*, (London: St. Ermin's Press: 2000), 16. Original copies can be found in BAB R 58/636, available at USHMM in RG 14.016M.

The few rights that remained were abrogated by the perniciously rigid class structures that had no peer in egalitarian Germany.⁸⁵ The British education system, consisting most importantly of the Public Schools and the “International Boy Scout Movement,” were organs of British cultural propaganda and anti-German messaging, corrupted by Jewish influences.⁸⁶

The outsized influence of Jews throughout British society was a central theme, amplified by a grand conspiratorial narrative that portrayed Britain as the headquarters of an imperialistic cabal of Jews and Freemasons bent on world domination. Jews and Freemasons shared a symbiotic relationship, since “The historical significance of Freemasonry, which spread from England to the Continent, is the advancement of Jewish emancipation in Europe, born from the intellectual and political heritage of the freemasons.” Indeed, after Jewish emancipation in England

Freemasonry maintained not only close contact with the Jews but with the English churches and sects. This is linked to the essence of Puritanism, which is close to ideas from Judaism and the Old Testament. The Jews saw themselves as the chosen people on Earth and in consequence of this Puritan tradition the English regarded themselves as the chosen people of the world. This belief in being chosen is the basis of England’s world rule and therefore of a world empire.⁸⁷

Later, Freemasonry would serve as an agent of British imperial interests, forming “an invisibly effective, important political instrument for the internal structure of Great Britain and its Empire...that in its ideological orientation and its political effectiveness – as long as it lasts – it is a dangerous weapon in the hands of Britain’s plutocrats against

⁸⁵ A key example in the document is the “right” to a fair trial by jury, which is written off as a non-starter due to the prohibitively high cost of legal representation in Britain. *Invasion 1940*, 17-19.

⁸⁶ *Invasion 1940*, 27-28.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 87; 89.

national socialist Germany.”⁸⁸ British religious organizations and sects were also tools of this conspiracy, and had been since the evolution of Puritanism, which was heavily indebted to Judaism, the Old Testament, and the belief in being “the chosen people of the world,” – the basis of England’s world rule. Oliver Cromwell’s understanding “of the similarity of the English scheme for world domination and the Jewish version...set the stage for an Anglo-Jewish alliance” that persisted through Disraeli and Churchill.⁸⁹ The Anglican Church was a brute instrument of English imperial power, because “National Church and state become one, which means that the world’s Protestantism is influenced significantly by England.” The English Methodist tradition’s tendencies toward internationalism and world councils served the interests of Freemasonry. The English Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) was “entirely in the hands of the Freemasons,” and by implication, the Jews.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Ibid, 88.

⁸⁹ Ibid, 89, 94.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 51; 55.

Jews. Although there were no Jews in the current Cabinet, Anthony Eden, Duff Cooper, and Churchill himself “[had] to be seen as representatives of Jewish interests.”⁹¹ Jews also dominated the economy of the British Empire, wielding power through their control of the oil, food, insurance, banking, gold, and diamond industries, in addition to the Bank of England and the broader financial services sector. At the same time, the disproportionate influence of Jews in the BBC, British newspapers, and cinema was said to account for the rabidly anti-German attitude of British popular culture and propaganda.⁹² Although the *Informationsheft* did note that communism had not taken root in Britain and was thus of little danger, it instead pointed to the malevolent power of internationalist or pacifist organizations such as the Anti-Fascist League, which were, of course, orchestrated by Jews.⁹³ Even the famed British intelligence service, which the RSHA hierarchy so admired as a model of organizational professionalism, seemed to owe its successes to the legacy of Freemasons’ lodges, “in their presumed shapelessness, their false mysticism and anonymity which gave them such power.”⁹⁴ Freemasonry, as the handmaiden of Anglo-Jewish imperialism and imperial administration, was of central importance in understanding and evaluating the political situation that would face the would-be German occupiers.

An appendix to the *Informationsheft GB* provided 2,820 names as part of a “special search list” for occupation authority attention, complete with the agency they should be released to in the event of arrest (*Gestapo*, *RSHA* foreign intelligence, etc.). In addition to specific addresses and names of hundreds of cultural and civic organizations

⁹¹ Ibid, 95-98.

⁹² Ibid, 96-99.

⁹³ Ibid. 61-67.

⁹⁴ Ibid, 125.

and businesses from churches to masonic lodges and industrial concerns to newspaper offices that were to be immediately seized, the list included major British Cabinet and opposition figures such as Duff Cooper, Churchill, Chamberlain, and Attlee that were to be arrested on sight. Foreign nationals affiliated with Polish, Czech, Belgian, Dutch, and French governments in exile such as Jan Masaryk, Edvard Beneš and Charles de Gaulle also faced immediate arrest, as did cultural luminaries such as H.G. Wells, Aldous Huxley, Noel Coward, Virginia Woolf, and Beatrice Webb, notable Jews (the Rothschild family, Chaim Weizmann) and German émigrés such as Sigmund Freud, who had died in September 1939 and Stefan Zweig, who had already left Britain for the United States.⁹⁵ Presumably some or all of the listed individuals would have been liquidated by the *Einsatzkommandos* overseen by RSHA VII (archives and ideological research) head Dr. Franz Alfred Six, who was also tasked with seizing the records of pacifist organizations and others branded as ideological enemies of or potential resisters to the German occupation.⁹⁶ The failure of the *Luftwaffe* to attain air superiority over the English Channel and in the Eastern landing zones in the Fall of 1940, however, rendered these plans moot.

⁹⁵ Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe* (New York: Penguin 2008), 112-13. When first discovered and reported on in the British press in September 1945, the list caused a public sensation. See "Nazis' Black List Discovered in Berlin," *The Guardian*, 14 September 1945. Available online at <http://www.theguardian.com/century/1940-1949/Story/0,6051,127730,00.html>.

⁹⁶ Robert Gerwarth, *Hitler's Hangman: The Life of Heydrich* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2011), 177. Carl Tighe, "Six, Franz Alfred: A Career in the Shadows," *Journal of European Studies* 37, no: 5 (2007), 9-14. Similarly flawed histories chronicling the evils of British liberalism were also submitted to the *Einsatzkommandos* in training in addition to the names and address of targets of interest. See the Folder "England Einsatzkommando Seelöwe 1940," USHMM, RG-15.007M, Folder 107, Reel 9. Although the SS and RSHA had a more difficult time lending their specific ideological stamp to the (predominantly military) occupations in the West, there was still a significant *Einsatzgruppen* presence in Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, and France, particularly Alsace-Lorraine. Michael Wildt, *An Uncompromising Generation: The Nazi Leadership of the Reich Security Main Office*, trans. Tom Lampert (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), 251-67.

Vulnerable Points: Battling Britain in the Air and Attacking the Empire

The air war against Britain, which began in earnest in August 1940, reflected the uncertainty in Germany's strategic position after the Fall of France, specifically German political and military leadership's confusion as to how to successfully conclude the war in the West.⁹⁷ Along with the U-Boat blockade of the British Isles and indirect pressures on the British Empire, the air war was not only conceived of as a necessary prelude to the invasion of the British Isles, but also as an action with the potential to induce Britain's surrender on its own. In justifications for these operations against Great Britain, reports from all branches of the German intelligence services looked to the decline of British morale as the deciding factor, tending to overestimate both the physical and "psychological" effects of the bombing campaign and blockade on popular discontent with Churchill's War Cabinet.⁹⁸

From the outset, military intelligence drastically underestimated the combat capabilities of the Royal Air Force and overestimated the effects of presumed precision bombing on British industrial capacity. German military intelligence argued that the British would be at a comparative disadvantage because of the greater expense of their planes, "their inferior aiming devices," poor anti aircraft defenses, and moribund leadership, regardless of their stockpiles of pilots and equipment.⁹⁹ The Germans also assumed that British radar was unsophisticated, and that RAF fighters were tied closely to

⁹⁷ Megargee, 87-90. *GSSW II*, 374-75.

⁹⁸ Once again, the German intelligence services certainly were not alone in their failure to overestimate the air war's effects on industrial capacity and civilian morale; the British and American bombing campaigns over Germany were similarly marked by unrealistic expectations, as has been the idea of strategic bombing more generally. See Robert A. Pape, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War* (Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 254-313 and Richard Overy, *The Bombing War: Europe 1939-1945* (London: Penguin, 2013), 410-85; 609-42.

⁹⁹ *Halder War Diary*, 29 July 1940, pg. 235-237.

the areas near their bases, lacked flexibility, and lacked good intelligence on German intentions.¹⁰⁰ Estimates of Fighter Command's combat strength proved to be off by one half. Assurances from the *Luftwaffe* that Britain would face a 50 per cent reduction in production of aircraft and engines as a result of the strikes of August and September proved fanciful, as was the assertion that it could "smash" the RAF in fourteen to twenty-eight days.¹⁰¹ The ultimate impossibility of precise strikes nullified detailed *Abwehr* data on the sewage system and water supply of London, meticulously gathered in the interwar years at various international scientific congresses.¹⁰² Such failures exacerbated the already severe shortages of men and materiel in a *Luftwaffe* constrained by massive attrition in the France and Poland campaigns and squeezed by competing demands for state resource allocation.¹⁰³

Early reports of RSHA VI on the effects of the bombing campaign in Britain noted that the British people had so far quietly borne the burdens of the attacks, that there were strong anti-Chamberlain attitudes, and that the government was still committed to the ultimate victory over "Hitlerism." Reports on the actual effects of the bombings, however, were once again overshadowed by a tendency to editorialize, charting the consolidation of power by Churchill's government as the emergence of a de-facto British

¹⁰⁰ Overy, *Bombing War*, 79.

¹⁰¹ *GSWW* II: 388-89. *Halder War Diary*, 11 July 1940, pg. 225.

¹⁰² To obtain this data, the *Abwehr* worked closely with German members of international organizations related to water and sewage treatment, such as the *Institut für Wasser- Boden- und Lufthygiene*. At the international conferences where data on water and sewage systems were exchanged, the German delegates were always provided with false information to share with the international community, so that Berlin's water and sewage systems would remain secure. The plan was to destroy the water supply and sewage systems, making London unlivable. Similar tactics had paid dividends in the bombing of Warsaw in 1939, but those operations were dependent on complete air superiority. "Interrogation of Manfred Sellier," 5 April 1946, pg. 6. NACP RG 498, Entry UD-238, Box 1269. At the same time, due to unfavorable weather patterns, night conditions, navigation problems, and British countermeasures, the RAF estimated that only 10 to 30 per cent of German bombers actually located their targets. Hitting the targets once located was, of course, another matter. Overy, *The Bombing War*, 94-98.

¹⁰³ Tooze, 400-401.

dictatorship and the abject hypocrisy of Churchill for claiming to fight for British freedom in those circumstances.¹⁰⁴ The German air force leadership believed that all reports indicated the RAF was close to collapse in the last two weeks of August, with *Luftwaffe* commander Göring boasting on August 20th that his forces should destroy what was left in four days of “ceaseless attacks.”¹⁰⁵

September saw the “England Committee” of the Foreign Office recommend further attacks on civilian targets, noting that pro-British propaganda already blamed Germany for intentionally bombing civilians, so it made little difference what tactics were employed in the future. Moreover, the committee argued, there were benefits of purposefully bombing the working-class districts of London, in that the poor would be forced to flee to the richer (safe) districts, accentuating the already prevalent class antagonisms in Britain and causing serious political unrest in London. In pure *Dolchstoßlegende* fashion, working-class suffering, combined with the disruption in food supplies as a result of the bombing and blockade, would break the government coalition and lead to Labour-Party-backed peace initiatives.¹⁰⁶ Military intelligence units opposed these recommendations, arguing that the precise destruction of public utilities in the London area and the heavy bombing of war industries would bring the war to a swift conclusion.¹⁰⁷ Such recommendations were based on the first-hand observations of German pilots over London and other bombed areas, which looked significantly more devastated in the immediate aftermath of an attack than they actually were.¹⁰⁸ These

¹⁰⁴ RSHA VI, “Auslands-Meldungen,” 13 August 1940, pg. 15-16. USHMM RG 15.007M, Reel 71, Folder 723.

¹⁰⁵ Overly, *The Bombing War*, 82.

¹⁰⁶ *GSWW* II: 398.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ Overly, *The Bombing War*, 87-88; 111-13.

reports, however, were contradicted by the first-hand observations of the Spanish Ambassador to London, who informed a contact in the German Foreign Office that British morale remained “reasonably good,” and the German air raids had only resulted in a strengthening of public desire to see the war through to the end.¹⁰⁹ The German Army intelligence liaison to the German General Staff also reported on October 4th that, due to the immense size of London and sheer number of possible targets, it did not yet seem as if British industrial plants had been significantly affected.¹¹⁰

A memorandum from RSHA VI head Heinz Jost to Foreign Ministry liaison Undersecretary Martin Luther on October 23rd indicated that there might yet be hope for peace with Britain as a result of the extended bombing campaign. After RSHA-sanctioned feelers to shadowy figures in contact with the English Minister in Stockholm, Jost spoke of peace discussions at clandestine Cabinet meetings in London where Churchill was open to major concessions to end the war. “According to this statement,” Jost wrote, “England would be satisfied with as little as cultural autonomy for Poland.” This, Jost explained, would provide the British government all the cover it needed to “save face,” going so far as to say that “England is attempting to create for herself a similar retreat with respect to the other European countries – to which she has promised the restoration of autonomy – by intimating that here, too, she might accept concessions on the part of Germany in the cultural field as the solution.”¹¹¹ Such a solution, wherein Britain would turn a blind eye to German hegemony in Europe in exchange for vague

¹⁰⁹ Heberlein to Berlin, 25 September 1940. *Documents on German Foreign Policy, Series D, Volume X: The War Years, June 23 – August 31, 1940* (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1957): Doc. 185. Hereafter DGFP Series D, Vol. XI.

¹¹⁰ *Halder War Diary*, 4 October 1940, pg. 261.

¹¹¹ Heinz Jost to Minister Luther, “Initiation of Unofficial Peace Negotiations with England,” 23 October 1940. DGFP Series D, Vol. XI: 223.

promises of Polish, Czech, and Benelux cultural autonomy within Hitler's empire, was little more than wishful thinking.

Foreign Office reports on the effects of the bombing for the month of October concluded (in spite of evidence to the contrary in the reports themselves) that widespread physical and psychological devastation existed in Britain. Reports from Britain indicated "extraordinary shock and confusion," in the British population, arguing that such effects would be amplified the longer the raids continued. The accuracy of the German bombers was "very great," even at night, although prime targets such as the War Office, the Downing Street Residence of the Prime Minister, and the Bank of England remained generally unharmed and extended attacks on electrical utilities had not met with any measurable successes. Yet, according to Foreign Office situation reports, all train stations in London were either completely or partially destroyed, and the transportation network operated at only a third of capacity. Similarly, the bombing of industrial plant in London had resulted in the "exhaustion of labor power in the workforce," and a consequently "sizeable reduction in production capacity. While there was no evidence of food shortages in October apart from a scarcity of fresh eggs, butter, cream, and sugar, the hardships of the bombing had most definitely aggravated societal tensions between the rich, poor, and Jews. The government was having a difficult time regulating morale, which the report argued would likely result in a drift toward a British "national socialism."¹¹² Such reports seemed to confirm the November 3rd supposition by State Secretary Weizsäcker that "things will one day become too tedious in the East End of

¹¹² "Über die Lage in England bis Oktober 1940." PAAA R 29571 (Büro des Staatssekretärs) Deutsche-Englische Beziehungen 6.40-12.40.

London and negotiations with Germany, perhaps even a new cabinet, will be demanded.”¹¹³

The chronically mixed-messages continued, optimistically privileging intangible developments and trends while downplaying quantifiable evidence that the air campaigns were not having the desired effects on the British war effort. In late November, RSHA VI enthusiastically reported that the constant bombings had left the population of London and the surrounding areas “badly shaken,” as “the people see that their own fighter planes and ground defenses are not in a position to stop the German attacks.” At the same time, contrary to earlier reports, the circumstances of “general danger and deprivation have created a certain solidarity between the classes,” strengthening the public will to continue the fight. Yet belief in a British victory was “scarce.” Meanwhile, the targeting of the food supply, which was meant to foist great hardship on the people of London, was ineffective due to stockpiles and imports from abroad. Likewise, Britain possessed ample stocks of fuel, clothing, shoes, and other materials to continue the war against Germany in the foreseeable future, and the U-Boat blockade was not strangling trade. This was immaterial, however, because of the valuable “disquiet” caused by the submarine blockade. The British people had “psychologically prepared” for and adapted to the circumstances of the air war, but because of England’s historical pride in ruling the seas, even the limited success of the blockade had “sapped the spirit and the will to fight” significantly more than actual German victories. If the submarines could keep up the effort, Britain would very soon face a “psychological crisis.”¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Quoted in *GSWW* II: 402.

¹¹⁴ RSHA VI, “Auslands-Meldungen,” 29 November 1940, pg. 13-14. USHMM RG 15.007M, Reel 71, Folder 723.

This kind of magical thinking also persisted in the *Luftwaffe* command and Foreign Office as well. On December 6th, Göring's liaison officer to Army General Staff headquarters reported, "If operations [against Britain] are carried on consistently and with sufficient weight, our blows will one day pass the limits of human endurance. At present we have only a few positive indications of cracking morale. 'One day the bow will break.' Fighter opposition is weakening already."¹¹⁵ Meanwhile, preparations for the January-June campaign over the British Isles revealed that British port facilities, which German analysts originally thought were so damaged as to have been operating at only 20 per cent of handling capacity, were in fact operating at nearly 75 per cent of capacity in spite of months of heavy raiding.¹¹⁶ Later that month, a detailed report of the Foreign Office's political section, reduced to handing out surveys to Portuguese merchants, disaffected British ex-pats and anyone else of German sympathies within reach of neutral countries, continued its preoccupation with the opposition to and fragility of the Churchill government. Not bothering to estimate the actual strength or political significance of opposition forces, the "situation report" instead focused on its breadth: encompassing elements of the entire left-right political spectrum from independent actors such as David Lloyd George to disaffected Conservatives and the radical elements of the Labour movement. The working classes of Britain remained firmly opposed to the war, the report argued, but lacked the potential for a full-scale uprising because the skilled workers were "too bourgeois" for such activities.¹¹⁷ It was surely only a matter of time before the true voice of the British people would speak out against Churchill's tyranny

¹¹⁵ *Halder War Diary*, 6 December 1940, pg. 299.

¹¹⁶ Overy, *Bombing War*, 106-107.

¹¹⁷ "Die Lage in England: 1. Hälfte Dezember 1940," 14 December 1940. PAAA R 101309 (Pol. Verschluss (Geheim)) Po23Ag – Berichte aus Bern und Genf über die Lage in England, 12.40-3.41.

and bring an end to England's senseless war. Such reports habitually ignored broader geopolitical realities, such as the growing role of the United States in financing and outfitting the British war effort.

Reports of the spring and summer of 1941 continued to emphasize "psychological conditions," the extensive damage done during the raids, and the slow-moving collapse of class solidarity. For the RSHA, Churchill's purported crackdown on opposition forces and peace movements suggested there were very strong peace movements and oppositional forces in play.¹¹⁸ Reporting on the continued sorties of April and May, the RSHA optimistically concluded that while "the stubborn ability" of the English people to endure misfortune had not been shaken, the bombing had resulted in "very significant psychological confusion." Meanwhile, the British government had taken to sending "front-men," mostly clerics, to the disaffected areas of London and Liverpool to downplay the extensive damages caused by the *Luftwaffe* and push local councils into punishing anyone who spoke the truth that a given area had been "'wiped off the map' by bombs." By June, then, the British people were under an enormous strain from the air war, with nervous breakdowns more frequent and disaffection in the lower classes on the rise after the loss of Crete, held in check only by the shamefully misleading propaganda of Churchill-clique Labour-Party leaders, summed up as "If we don't win we'll become slaves of the Nazis!"¹¹⁹ Likewise, the 1941 Labour-Party Congress leaders' position that the war must continue "until the annihilation of Hitler," affirmed, according to the report, by a vote of 2,430,000 to 19,000 "did not correspond to the true mood of the masses." Indeed, the increased power of "conservative reactionaries" working against the wages

¹¹⁸ RSHA VI, "Auslands-Meldungen," 18 March 1941, pg. 15-16. USHMM 15.007M, Reel 72, Folder 724.

¹¹⁹ RSHAVI "Auslands-Meldungen," 6 June 1941, pg. 15-16. USHMM 15.007M, Reel 72, Folder 724.

and benefits of the English worker was surely building toward a social crisis. Positive evidence of class struggle already existed in London's Jewish community, where the poor Jews of the port areas, hit hard by the bombings, were mobilizing daily against the protected rich Jews and their "well appointed" underground synagogues immune to damage from the air.¹²⁰

An exaggerated estimate of the damage wrought by the *Luftwaffe* continued late in the war with the deployment of the V-weapons. As he overflew London en route to his extensive postwar interrogations, former RSHA VI head Walter Schellenberg was overheard muttering, "I cannot understand – no destruction at all" as he stared out the window.¹²¹ The entirety of the German air campaign against Britain had only managed to reduce the British war economy by approximately five per cent, largely offset by simultaneously rapid rises in armaments production.¹²² The oft-predicted collapse in civilian morale, widespread class warfare and fall of Churchill's government never materialized, although the German intelligence services kept a careful eye on food prices, disease and crime rates, and other potential indicators of unrest for years to come. Meanwhile, according to RSHA VI reports, the reaction in Britain to Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union was not the widespread depression that Nazi elites had predicted, but actually a rise in spirits.¹²³ If the Soviets could only manage to hold out, was the popular

¹²⁰ RSHA VI, "Auslands-Meldungen," 13 June 1941, pg. 10-12. USHMM RG 15.007M, Reel 72, Folder 724.

¹²¹ "Report on Interrogation of Walter Schellenberg, 27th June – 12th July 1945," pg. 37. NACP RG 65: Entry 136-Z, Box 2, File 100-103569 Section 1, Folder 1/2.

¹²² Overy, *Bombing War*, 616.

¹²³ This misunderstanding was once again driven by an ideologically-colored and hostile interpretation of the past where a "decadent" Great Britain had maintained hegemony in Europe through employing proxies or mercenaries to do its bidding, doing its utmost to avoid fighting itself. Therefore, destroying the last hopes of the British "paymasters" (the Soviet Union) and marginalizing the economic power behind Britain (the United States), would induce popular despair and a quick surrender. See Weinberg, *Germany, Hitler, and World War II*, pg. 159.

opinion, then perhaps “General Time” could save Britain as it had in 1917-18 with the arrival of American troops. While the uptick in English morale was certainly disappointing news, the RSHA took solace in its observation that anti-Semitism in Britain was on the rise, which surely boded well for the future.¹²⁴

Although the British Isles themselves remained Hitler’s primary concern in the summer of 1940, the OKW and OKH commands collaborated with German intelligence and the propaganda arms of the Foreign Office to attack the British Empire indirectly through fomenting revolt and resistance to British rule abroad. This was certainly not the first time that German intelligence contemplated initiatives aiming to set the British Empire aflame through encouraging (predominantly Muslim) anti-colonial uprisings. German political and military leaders expended significant resources during the First World War to foment an anti-Entente jihad in the Near and Far East, and extensive studies on the potency of Islamic nationalism remained a popular topic in interwar German policy think-tanks.¹²⁵ Until late 1940, when the plight of Mussolini’s forces in North Africa became clear, however, Hitler was reluctant to approve of actions that directly attacked the integrity of the British Empire. As early as June 1940, OKW Chief of Staff Alfred Jodl had suggested that a peripheral campaign against the Empire in cooperation with an anti-British coalition could prove effective in forcing Britain to sue for peace in the event that a cross-channel invasion proved impracticable. Hitler exerted some effort over the summer and fall of 1940 in order to construct such a coalition of Italy, Vichy France, Spain, and the Soviet Union, but the complete divergence in military

¹²⁴ RSHA VI, “Auslands-Meldungen,” 22 July 1941, pg. 13-15. USHMM RG. 15.007, Reel 72, Folder 724.

¹²⁵ Sean McMeekin, *The Berlin-Baghdad Express: The Ottoman Empire and Germany’s Bid for World Power* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 141-229 and David Motadel, *Islam and Nazi Germany’s War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard university Press, 2014), 8, 15-37.

preparedness, war aims, and ideological outlook amongst these powers torpedoed those efforts.¹²⁶ In the meantime, however, OKW evaluations of the strategic dilemma of late 1940 did emphasize the utility of creating “hot-spots” within the British Empire through clandestine support of various resistance groups and the extensive deployment of pro-German propaganda, although these efforts were not fully realized until after the start of Operation Barbarossa.¹²⁷

Although the Foreign Office and *Abwehr* generally stressed that the British Empire and its subjects (with the exception of neutral Ireland) stood firmly with London, early reports indicated significant internal divisions in South Africa and India that could prove receptive to German pressure over time. German intelligence was particularly enamored of Indian nationalists’ charges of hypocrisy for calling on the subjugated Indians to fight for Polish freedom and word of the strong pro-German sympathies of Afrikaners, whose interests were abrogated by the “bribery and fraud” of the Anglophile Jan Smuts.¹²⁸ Monthly *Abwehr* reports summarizing the world situation in November and December 1939 emphasized the “growing opposition” to the war in South Africa and in the widening divisions between the anti-British Indian Congress Party in India and the

¹²⁶ *GSWW* II: 408-10. *GSWW* III: 184-190. On Hitler’s efforts to bring Franco into the war, see Stanley G. Payne, *Franco and Hitler: Spain, Germany, and World War II* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 61-115. The preparations for an attack on Gibraltar, in which Canaris was intimately involved, sprung from this desire of an indirect strategy against Britain. It was later complimented by the *Afrikakorps* drive on Egypt after Hitler was forced to shore up Italian troops in North Africa.

¹²⁷ *GSWW* III: 199-200, 605-606. On German propaganda protests in the early phases of the war, see Christoph Marx, “‘Dear Listeners in South Africa’: German Propaganda Broadcasts to South Africa, 1940-1941,” *South African Historical Journal* 27 (1992), pp. 148-72; Jeffrey Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); and Motadel 82-120. The *Abwehr*, RSHA, and Foreign Office information sections were intimately involved in the propaganda efforts.

¹²⁸ See, for example OKW/483 Ausl. Nr. 0103/39, “Außenpolitische Mitteilung,” 29 September 1939, pg. 5-6. NACP RG 242, T-77, Reel 933; and Rausch to Berlin, “Political Report – India and the War,” 24 August 1939. DGFP Series D, Vol. VII: Doc. 251. The Indian nationalist opposition’s reserve of good will toward Germany, such as it was, quickly evaporated as Germany’s military operations in Eastern Europe, the Balkans, and the Soviet Union revealed it to be a more aggressive, more imperialist, more racist power than the hated British had ever been. *GSWW* III: 609-10.

pro-London ruling classes, in spite of the fact that the former lacked any significant governing input in the current constitutional framework.¹²⁹

German intelligence also endeavored to directly foment uprisings in British India and the Far East, although the feasibility of their operations was questionable. On May 25, 1940, RHSA II chief Arthur Nebe convened a series of exploratory meetings in cooperation with Jost's Amt VI and the *Reichskriminalpolizei* (Amt V) in hopes of deploying the forces of astrology to undermine British imperial rule in "India and the further Orient." A complex scheme dependent on the assumption that astrological predictions carried great weight in the East, the operation would utilize astrologers known to the police (excluding "charlatans" of course) to divine portents signifying the collapse of the British Empire and publish them in a periodical that Amt VI would smuggle to India. According to Nebe, "With this periodical the resistance of the Oriental peoples against England would continue to be incited and strengthened."¹³⁰ Needless to say, little came of the astrology initiative.

The RSHA did not possess a monopoly on hair-brained schemes to break up the British Empire. With the goal of exploiting the existence of substantial Afrikaner pro-Nazi organizations in South Africa, including the 300,000-strong *Ossewabrandwag* (OB) and its' active paramilitary wing (*Stormjaers*), in June 1941 the *Abwehr* dispatched former Olympic heavyweight boxer Sidney Robey Liebbrandt to assassinate the troublesome Prime Minister Jan Smuts and lead a pro-Nazi insurrection. After a number

¹²⁹ OKW/483 Aus./Abw. Nr. 0249/39 g. Ausl I "Aussenpolitische Mitteilung: Entwicklung der außenpolitischen Lage seit dem deutschen Friedensangebot," 2 November 1939. A.Ausl/Abw. Nr. 0400/39 g. Ausl I. "Außenpolitische Übersicht – Entwicklung der Außenpolitischen Lage im Monat November," 2 December 1939. NACP RG 242, T-77, Roll 933.

¹³⁰ RSHA IIB3, "Niederschrift über die Besprechung bei SS-Oberführer Nebe am 25.5. betreffend Astrologie," 27 May 1940. USHMM, RG-15.007M, Folder 109, Reel 9.

of inconsequential exploits, the South African authorities (with extensive cooperation of the OB leadership itself) apprehended Liebbrandt on Christmas Eve 1941.¹³¹ Likewise, repeated RSHA and *Abwehr* attempts to smuggle pro-German agents to Ireland in 1939-1941 (over the strenuous objection of Foreign Office representatives stationed there but with the encouragement of the Foreign Office Political Department) to foment an all-out Irish Republican Army (IRA) rebellion, proved futile.¹³² Agents selected for the Ireland undertaking included Ernst Weber-Drohl, a former professional wrestler and circus strongman who had difficulties speaking and writing English. The much sought after IRA connections proved disappointing, as the movement itself was poorly organized and little inclined to follow German directives.¹³³ Ultimately, the success or failure of these German-backed separatist efforts (and others) within the British Empire depended on the outcome of the war itself rather than serving as a means to ending the war, particularly after the deployment of the *Afrikakorps* in February 1941. Most significant about the various schemes to break apart the British Empire from within is the fact that the German intelligence services viewed them as plausible at all.

* * * *

A fundamental misunderstanding of British motives rooted in the conspiratorial views of Nazi ideology was endemic in the elite circles of the German dictatorship in the early phases of the war. This fundamentally flawed view of Great Britain and its

¹³¹ Kent Fedorowich, "German Espionage and British Counter-Intelligence in South Africa and Mozambique, 1939-1944," *The Historical Journal* 48, no. 1 (2005), pg. 211, 221-223.

¹³² Although the German Minister to Ireland, Eduard Hempel, vociferously objected to any intelligence plans to coordinate sabotage operations with the IRA, the Political Department of the Foreign Office under Woermann was an enthusiastic backer of *Abwehr* and SD plans to infiltrate Ireland. Woermann, "Memorandum of the Director of the Political Department," 10 February 1940. DGFP Series D, Vol. VIII: Doc. 605. On Hempel's strenuous objections, see DGFP Series D, Vol. VIII: Docs 216, 355, 465.

¹³³ Mark M. Hull, "The Irish Interlude: German Intelligence in Ireland, 1939-1943," *The Journal of Military History* 66 (July 2002): 695-718.

government in London resulted in Hitler's notorious consternation over his Anglo-Saxon cousins' refusal to lay down their arms, Deputy Party Leader Rudolph Heß' unauthorized peace mission to Scotland in May 1941, and Schellenberg's postwar mystification at the lack of bomb-damage in England.¹³⁴ Firm grounding in the tenets of National Socialism also accounts for the *Gestapo* and Amt VI-inspired views about the power of the British imperialist-Jewish-freemason alliance in *Informationsheft G.B.* Similar, if less overtly conspiratorial evaluations, however, were widespread in German intelligence reporting on Great Britain, even among the offices of those with oft-asserted anti-Hitler resistance ties, as in the case of Canaris' *Abwehr*, and Weizsäcker and Kordt's reports in the Foreign Office.¹³⁵ Such reporting emphasized the hypocrisy and corruption of a morally bankrupt, anti-democratic, London regime defined by plutocratic and Jewish interests and divorced from the will of the common people and its imperial subjects alike. Through presenting an alternate reality where negotiated peace with Britain loomed perpetually on the horizon, the German intelligence services burdened an already thoroughly muddled conception of grand strategy that first did not anticipate sustained intervention by the Western powers, and then offered no practicable alternatives for bringing the war in the West to a favorable conclusion.

A war that was not supposed to exist in the first place was then defined by a constantly shifting set of expectations. France would follow Britain's lead and Britain would not fight. Britain and France would see reason after the rapid destruction of

¹³⁴ For a brief summary of the Heß incident and its ramifications in Germany, see Kershaw, *Hubris*, 369-381; for more detail on Heß' misadventures in Scotland and in captivity, see Daniel Pick, *The Pursuit of the Nazi Mind: Hitler, Hess and the Analysts* (New York; Oxford University Press, 2012).

¹³⁵ Indeed, anti-Hitler resistance credentials were no bulwark against abetting the regime's conspiratorial and genocidal conception of world forces aligned against Nazi Germany. This will be explored further in Chapter 4.

Poland. Britain would sue for peace after France was destroyed. A clear demonstration of German military power in the skies and seas around the British Isles (followed by an invasion if necessary) would finally force peace negotiations. Blockade and bombing operations along with subversive actions throughout the British Empire would so demoralize the population and government that peace would be possible without invasion. Finally, as the Führer directives of December 1940 and January 1941 promised, the British would see reason after their last hope, the Soviet Union, was destroyed.¹³⁶

Chamberlain and his Cabinet steadfastly communicated their desire to avoid war side by side with affirmations that there existed, in the unfortunate parlance of the present-day, “red lines” that Britain would under no circumstances allow Germany to violate. While “peace circles” did exist in Britain from 1939-1941 that managed to foster important debates in government on war aims and the prerequisite conditions for a comprised peace, they were never as powerful as the German leadership and the German intelligence services imagined. Likewise, German focus on the fragility of the populace during the air campaign over England, driven by the conviction that the cliquish, plutocratic, Jewish, government in London in no way represented the true interests of a peace-loving British people, proved equally misguided. On numerous occasions, the information available to the German intelligence services clearly reflected the anti-German, pro-war, attitudes of the vast majority of the British people, the British Empire,

¹³⁶ The historiography surrounding Hitler’s decision-making in the summer and fall of 1940 and the logic underpinning the turn from Britain to the Soviet Union in his strategic thinking is well-trod ground, and will be addressed further in Chapter 2. The classic works, however, include Andreas Hillgruber, *Hitlers Strategie: Politik und Kriegführung 1940-1941* (Frankfurt am Main: Bernard and Graefe Verlag für Wehrwesen, 1965) and Gerhard Weinberg, *Germany and the Soviet Union: 1939-1941* (Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1972).

and the British government. Often, this information was discarded in favor of wishful thinking or blind hope that the situation would improve. In this sense the “problem of underestimation,” of not taking the statements of foreign leaders at face value that so plagued Europe’s attitudes toward the Nazi regime before 1939 also ruled the German regime and intelligence services’ assessment of Great Britain from 1939-1941.¹³⁷

¹³⁷ Karl Dietrich Bracher, “The Role of Hitler: Perspectives of Interpretation,” in *Fascism: A Reader’s Guide*, ed. Walter Laqueur (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1978), 212-226.

CHAPTER 2

Underestimating the Soviet Union: 1939-1942

The Russian is inferior. The army lacks leadership. It is questionable if the military leadership has exploited the most important recent experiences. The new inner orientation of the Russian Army will be no better in the Spring. – Notes on General Franz Halder's Discussions with Hitler, 5 December 1940.¹

If the German intelligence services systematically misunderstood British political intentions from 1939-1941, the intelligence reports on the Soviet Union from the Foreign Office, military, and RSHA reveal that key figures in German military intelligence and operational planning, including Chief of the German General Staff Franz Halder, head of *Fremde Heere Ost* Eberhard Kinzel, systematically underestimated the Red Army in accordance with longstanding anti-Russian political and cultural stereotypes. The military intelligence reports that formed the bedrock of *Wehrmacht* operational planning in the East from 1940-1942 failed to account for the number of Red Army frontline units and combat reserves, downplayed the combat capabilities of units they did account for, and generally ignored information that contradicted ingrained beliefs of Russian ethnic, political, cultural, and military inferiority.² Here I elaborate on Jürgen Förster and Geoffrey Megargee's (and others') arguments that the key problem with German intelligence reporting on the Soviet Union was attitudinal, a failure to see beyond these

¹ *The Halder War Diary: 1939-1942*, ed. Charles Burdick and Hans-Adolf Jacobsen (Novato, CA: Presidio, 1988), 295.

² Such errors were not confined to the scope of military intelligence alone, but were systemic throughout German planning and policy staffs working on Soviet matters. Georg Thomas' economic planning office, for example, grossly overestimated the economic output of Soviet lands earmarked for German occupation and the extent to which occupied areas could be rapidly incorporated into the Reich's war economy. *Germany and the Second World War, Vol. IV: The Attack on the Soviet Union*, ed. Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, trans. Dean S. McMurray, Ewald Osers, and Louise Willmot (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 150-54. Hereafter *GSWW IV*.

ingrained assumptions.³ I argue that whatever the very real shortcomings of the Red Army's recovery from the purges or operations in Poland and Finland in 1939-40, German intelligence assessments of the Soviet Union were limited by anti-Russian and anti-Slavic prejudices long present in the German military elite, and that the flawed rationale behind these assessments from 1939-1941 set the stage for future misunderstandings of the Red Army both during and after the war.

The failures of German military intelligence to properly evaluate the Red Army and the hubris of the High Command in planning the invasion have been well documented.⁴ Due in part to the extensive security measures undertaken by the Soviet Union to prevent information on the Red Army from leaving the country and a general inability of German military planners to envision that an invasion of the Soviet Union would present more difficulties than previous operations in Western Europe, the intelligence reports on the Soviet Union were quantitatively and qualitatively inferior to those on Britain or the United States. In addition to the detrimental effect of this underestimation in the field, the failure of German military intelligence to accurately assess the abilities of the Red Army set the stage for future blunders, both in later operations on the Eastern front and in postwar intelligence work for West Germany and the United States, since Franz Halder and other veterans of the *Wehrmacht's* intelligence

³ Jürgen Förster, "The German Military's Image of Russia," in *Russia: War, Peace, and Diplomacy – Essays in Honor of John Erickson*, ed. Ljubica Erickson and Mark Erickson (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 2005) 120-21; Geoffrey P. Megargee, *Inside Hitler's High Command* (Lawrence KS, University Press of Kansas, 2000), 108-10.

⁴ On the specific deficiencies of *Fremde Heere Ost* during both Kinzel and Gehlen's tenure see Hans-Heinrich Wilhelm, "Die Prognosen der Abteilung Fremde Heere Ost 1942-1945," in *Zwei Legenden aus dem Dritten Reich* (Stuttgart: Deutsches Verlag-Anstalt, 1974), 7-75 and David Thomas, "Foreign Armies East and German Military Intelligence in Russia, 1941-45," *Journal of Contemporary History* 22, No. 2 (Apr. 1987), 261-301. Although Magnus Pahl's *Fremde Heere Ost: Hitlers militärische Feindaufklärung* (Ch. Links Verlag: Berlin, 2012) focuses more on the administrative history of FHO and tactical successes in providing Red Army order of battle information (particularly in the Gehlen years), he too follows the accepted historiography of an institution rife with problems.

and operational planning staffs for the East assumed the mantle of “Soviet expert” after 1945. In this chapter, I extend the familiar story of the failure of German military intelligence in the planning stages of Barbarossa to the broader operations of the German intelligence services on the Soviet Union through incorporating the equally problematic reports of the RSHA and Foreign Office into the narrative of the nascent Eastern campaign in 1939-1941, while also setting the stage for a further examination of continuities in flawed reporting on the Soviet Union after 1945 in Chapters 5 and 6. Since this chapter is concerned principally with the German failure to gather accurate intelligence in the operational planning phases of Barbarossa, I consider the eliminationist “criminal orders” issued by Hitler, Keitel, and others immediately before the invasion, and the role of military intelligence in the execution of these orders, to Chapter 4.⁵

Hitler’s fixation on the vast territories of Russia as the solution to Germany’s living-space problem and his monopoly on military strategy by 1940 after the *Wehrmacht*’s successful operations in Poland, Norway, Denmark, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and France is well established. Hitler’s *Weltanschauung*, combined with his assessment of the global balance of power and Britain’s refusal to surrender in 1940, sped up his timetable for the “great showdown” with Judeo-Bolshevism in the East

⁵ In this regard I have found Andreas Hillgruber’s work on German military perceptions of Russia before 1941 most useful. Hillgruber’s astute, if somewhat oversimplified point is that the failures of underestimation endemic in the military intelligence and operational planning offices were much more consistent with traditional German perceptions of Russia, most notably the long-standing “colossus with feet of clay” myth, than with any specifically National-Socialist intellectual currents. Andreas Hillgruber, “The German Military Leaders’ View of Russia Prior to the Attack on the Soviet Union,” in *Peace to War: Germany, Soviet Russia, and the World, 1939-1941*, ed. Bernd Wegner (New York: Berghahn Books, 1997), 169-185.

and the seizure of the German people's long anticipated *Lebensraum*.⁶ After 1945, the recognition of the outsized role of Hitler and his worldview in the strategic and operational planning of the German war effort (and his later meddling in command decisions) provided cover to German military officers seeking to pin the blame for the Eastern campaign's operational failures on the Führer alone. The picture that emerged in their retelling of the war on the Eastern front was of a professional military class straightjacketed by the irrational whims of a political bungler who had a flair for visionary pronouncements but little talent for the complexities of modern military operations.⁷ According to Gen. Ernst Köstring, the German military attaché in Moscow from 1931-1933 and again from 1935-1941, Hitler's opinions on the Soviet Union were so fixed and self-assured that even though the military attachés had a yearly luncheon with the Führer, he never addressed a single question about conditions in Russia to Köstring until 1937, and only rarely sought out Köstring's expertise thereafter.⁸ In his postwar interrogations, Gen. Georg Thomas, chief economic expert of the OKW during the Barbarossa campaign, repeatedly attested to Hitler's rejection of his professional estimates of Red Army strength as "the silly talk of Jewish and pacifistic agents" and

⁶ There are many important studies that carefully reconstruct Hitler's deliberations in this regard. Seminal works on Hitler's turn from Britain to the Soviet Union include Andreas Hillgruber, *Hitlers Strategie: Politik und Kriegführung 1940-1941* (Bernard & Graefe Verlag, 1965) and Gerhard Weinberg, *Germany and the Soviet Union* (Leiden: Brill, 1954).

⁷ See *GSSW Vol. IV*, but also Wolfram Wette, *The Wehrmacht: History, Myth, Reality*, trans. Deborah Lucas Schneider (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006) and Ronald Smelser and Edward J. Davies II, *The Myth of the Eastern Front: The Nazi-Soviet War in American Popular Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008). For a more detailed discussion of this myth-making process, see Chapter 6.

⁸ Historical Interrogation Commission, War Department General Staff, G-2, Historical Branch, MID "Ernst Köstring," 30-31 August 1945, pg. 5. NACP RG 498, Entry UD-299, Box 1366, file "War Dept. Gen. Staff G-2 HIC. Demonstrating the often contradictory and self-exculpating tendencies in such postwar interrogations of high-ranking German officials, however, Köstring went on to claim that he made extensive presentations to Hitler in June 1939 stressing the peaceful intentions of the Soviet Union that paved the way for Hitler to seek a non-aggression pact with Moscow.

went so far as to claim that Keitel forbid him from submitting economic estimates that contradicted Hitler's fantasies.⁹

It would be a grave mistake to ignore contingency and agency on the Eastern front; the fate of the German invasion was decided on the battlefield, with the ultimate German defeat dependent on the combat performance of individual units, economic mobilization, the strengths and weaknesses of allied powers on both sides, and other such factors. German military intelligence failures at the strategic and operational level did not seal the fate of the *Wehrmacht* any more than Stalin's persistent refusal to acknowledge the imminent German invasion in the spring of 1941 doomed the Soviet Union to defeat.¹⁰ On the contrary, given the German leadership's gross miscalculation of Soviet military, political, and economic capabilities in comparison to the actual array of forces on both sides, the fact that the *Wehrmacht* reached Moscow in 1941 and then marshaled the resources for a significant drive to Stalingrad in 1942 in spite of massive Soviet counterattacks is, in retrospect, impressive.¹¹ Yet the fact remains that the German

⁹ DeWitt C. Poole, Head of Mission, "State Department Special Interrogation Mission – General George Thomas," 26 November 1945, pg. 2-3. NACP RG 498, Entry UD-287, Box 1344. Thomas' interrogation provides an excellent example of why historians must treat these claims with caution – notably absent from Thomas' attack on Hitler's fanaticism and other Party "amateurs" such as Himmler (credited with near single-handedly turning the Soviet population against the liberating *Wehrmacht*) was Thomas' fervid support for the notorious "Hunger Plan," the systematic plunder of Soviet foodstuffs and resulting murder of some 20-30 million civilian innocents.

¹⁰ The opening of the Russian archives in the early 1990s definitively established that British and American emissaries repeatedly attempted to warn Stalin of the forthcoming invasion; in the British case, warnings included the exact date and time of the Barbarossa jump-off. Faithful to the last moment to the idea that compliance with every German material demand would buy much-needed time for rearmament, Stalin ignored both these reports and those of his own intelligence services as evidence of a grand capitalist conspiracy to have the Soviet Union distract Hitler's attention from the West. See Bradley F. Smith, *Sharing Secrets With Stalin: How the Allies Traded Intelligence, 1941-1945* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1996), and David E. Murphy, *What Stalin Knew: The Enigma of Barbarossa* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005). On the more general deficiencies in the Red Army operational and command structure prior to Barbarossa, see David M. Glantz, *Stumbling Colossus: The Red Army on the Eve of World War* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1998).

¹¹ Consider, for example, that at every turn, in spite of the massive encirclement battles and millions of Soviet prisoners taken, at no point on the advance to Moscow were the German armies, particularly Army

intelligence services had a task to perform from 1939-1941, and failed. While this failure did not prevent the *Wehrmacht* from achieving remarkable victories in the East through 1943, the flawed reporting of the German intelligence services on the Red Army from 1939-1941 was symptomatic of a broader pattern of misunderstanding and underestimation that would continue into the postwar period. A thorough exploration of the broader origins of these postwar prejudices in the planning of Operation Barbarossa and the early reports of German intelligence organizations on the Eastern front, then, are crucial.

Analyzing Soviet Operations in Poland and Finland, 1939-1940

In spite of a perceptible increase in the American government's hostility to Germany and the apparent will of Britain to resist at all costs, the idea that a military solution in the East would yield a political solution in the West increasingly came to dominate Hitler's strategic thinking in the summer and fall of 1940. In Hitler's view, an invasion of the Soviet Union offered the dual appeal of dealing a death-blow to the meddling British war government through the annihilation of a potentially powerful ally while at the same time fulfilling the long-coveted desire for *Lebensraum* in the East. While the prospect of a two-front war was troublesome, Hitler's personal conviction that the Slavic *Untermenschen* (further debased by the Judeo-Bolshevik governing system) could not stand up to the might of the *Wehrmacht* offered the promise of a rapid campaign and a decisive solution Germany's geostrategic dilemma before any possible

Group Center, in possession of the traditional 3-1 ratio usually considered necessary to assure victory over an entrenched and tenacious defender. Instead, the German advance found itself continuously outnumbered across the front, in spite of efforts to concentrate overwhelming force in small segments of the front lines. Christian Hartmann, *Operation Barbarossa: Nazi Germany's War in the East, 1941-45* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013) 47-49.

American intervention in the war. If the destruction of the Soviet Union failed to convince Britain to see reason or the United States to stand aside, then Germany would turn to face the West with the full might of its new Eastern empire and a secure border to its rear, and alongside a greatly strengthened Japanese threat to British and American interests in the Pacific.¹²

As early as July 1940, Hitler linked British intransigence to the Churchill government's hopes in eventual Russian (and American) intervention in the war, and ordered his generals to draw up operational plans for an invasion of the Soviet Union.¹³ The failure of the *Luftwaffe's* efforts to secure air superiority over the English Channel and designated landing areas in southeastern Britain in July and August led to Hitler's indefinite postponement of Operation Sea Lion in September, along with discrete instructions to his military adjutant to ready a location for an Eastern field headquarters, to be completed by April 1941. The awkward and at times hostile atmosphere of Soviet ambassador Molotov's visit to Berlin in late November, occasioned by Ribbentrop's ham-fisted attempt (with Hitler's approval) to reroute Soviet geopolitical ambitions from the Balkans and the Baltic towards British imperial possessions in Southeast Asia merely

¹² In addition to *Hitlers Strategie* and *Germany and the Soviet Union*, and Jürgen Förster's "Hitler's Decision in Favor of War Against the Soviet Union," in *GSWW IV*: 13-51, see also Jürgen Förster, "Hitler Turns East – German War Policy in 1940 and 1941," in *Peace to War*, 115-134. On the more recent incorporation of Hitler's preoccupation with the United States into these strategic deliberations, see Norman J.W. Goda, *Tomorrow the World: Hitler, Northwest Africa, and the Path Toward America* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1998) and Adam Tooze, *Wages of Destruction: The Making and Breaking of the Nazi Economy* (New York: Penguin, 2006), esp. 429-460. While Tooze and Goda both tend to overstate the importance of the United States and the Nazi goal of global hegemony at the expense of more traditional focuses on German ambitions and objectives in the East, their work brings welcome attention to the fact that Hitler and his followers shared a preoccupation with the United States' eventual entry into the conflict, given its decisive influence at the conclusion of the First World War.

¹³ *Halder War Diary*, 22 July 1940 and 31 July 1940, pg. 230-31; 243-46. In the former entry, based on Halder's conversations with Commander in Chief of the Army Walter von Brauchitsch, Hitler still evidently held out hope of confronting Britain with a wider coalition including Spain and the Soviet Union, in order to force a political end to the war. By July 31st, however, Hitler definitively stated that if the landing operation against Britain could not take place in the near term, then "Russia's destruction must be made a part of this conflict."

served to confirm Hitler's previously held opinion that the shaky German-Soviet non-aggression pact was no longer of any practical use. By December 18th, having reviewed Halder and German Army (OKH) Commander-in-Chief Brauchitsch's plans for an invasion of the Soviet Union, Hitler formally authorized the campaign for the following spring.¹⁴ Although Hitler would certainly not absent himself from interference in the army's operational plans, it fell to the operational planning officers in OKH to author a workable invasion plan, and the military intelligence officers (most importantly those of Foreign Armies East) to provide the vital intelligence to render it effective.

The prejudices that shaped German intelligence reports on the Soviet Union existed on a fluid spectrum from both well-worn stereotypes of the Russian/Soviet state as a "colossus with feet of clay" to newer Nazi-informed expressions of racial determinism. The cultural baggage of anti-Russian sentiments in the Nazi political and military classes dated to 19th-century conceptions of an "Asian peril," infused with strident anti-communism after 1918 and with the widespread conceptions of anti-Semitism as a form of anti-Bolshevism after 1933. Given this spectrum of anti-Russian and anti-Soviet prejudices, with few exceptions the German intelligence services frequently constructed narratives that privileged the cultural backwardness and geopolitical weakness of the Soviet Union over its economic and military potential.¹⁵ Anti-communism and anti-Semitism often went hand in hand. The phrase "Jewish Bolshevism" had been common currency amongst radicalized right-wing German officers since 1918. When the acclaimed Red Army leader Mikhail Tukhachevsky

¹⁴ Ian Kershaw, *Hitler 1936-1945: Nemesis* (New York: Norton, 2000) 333-35. *Halder War Diary*, 3 December-16 January 1941, 289-311.

¹⁵ Wette, 23-25. For a broader meditation on anti-Russian prejudices in the Third Reich across various occupational milieus, see Hans-Erich Volkmann, ed. *Das Rußlandbild im Dritten Reich* (Cologne, Böhlau, 1994).

visited Berlin in 1932, future deputy to the German military attaché in Moscow Hans Krebs described him as “a sly and cunning Jew,” and “a Jewish half-breed...insincere, with a suspicious and treacherous nature, apparently a fanatical communist.”¹⁶ In such interpretations, problems afflicting the Red Army were symptomatic of deeper flaws in the “Bolshevist system,” “Russian mentality,” or “Slavic race,” although such overt examples of racism and anti-Semitism in FHO or other military intelligence assessments of the Red Army before 1941 were comparatively rare.

More common were contradictory invocations of the time-honored literary depictions of Russian duality: as a people and nation at once brutally strong and strikingly vulnerable. The idealized Russian peasant was a “noble savage” or “beautiful barbarian,” at once docile, child-like, serene, inferior, brutal, cruel, strong, and with an immense capacity to endure suffering. Although the Russian soldier was capable of bravery and heroism when defending a fixed position and would gladly sacrifice his life for his country if ordered to do so, he lacked the “German discipline,” required to conduct successful offensive operations. Red Army officers were cunning but incapable of independent thought, unruly and rebellious while at the same time lacking in initiative. In spite of the Russian state’s desire since Catherine II to modernize and Westernize, Russians were not of Europe but apart from it, whether in the form of the “Asiatic” menace or as the Judeo-Bolshevist adversary poised on Europe’s edge. Given the German preoccupation with Russia’s vast spaces (including the future German *Lebensraum* therein) and the “Russian masses” that inhabited it, the generalized characteristics that defined “Russianness” in German eyes also defined the nation as a

¹⁶ Wette, 20, 43.

whole. Militarily, economically, and politically, Russia was a “colossus with feet of clay,” a fragile giant dependent on its animal cunning and great physical strength in men and natural resources, but a prisoner of its irrationality and passions, lacking the organization and intelligence to bring all its resources to bear. This, in turn, informed the German military’s views of the Soviet political leadership as well, in the form of assurances that a rapid advance, a single swift drive on the correct weak point, would cause the entire tottering communist state to collapse.¹⁷

Stalin’s extensive purges of the Soviet government, military, and society from 1936-1940 reinvigorated the old stereotypes of a “colossus with feet of clay,” as did the perceptibly poor performance of the Red Army during its September 1939 occupation of Poland and Winter War with Finland in 1939-1940. Limited encounters and fraternizations between German officers and their Soviet counterparts in occupied Poland likewise provided anecdotal evidence for the “Asiatic” mannerisms and general backwardness of Red Army soldiers.¹⁸ Such attitudes and assumptions often formed the underlying interpretive schema of German intelligence reports on the Soviet Union, given the real difficulties obtaining actual information on Red Army organization or internal Russian affairs from 1939-1941. In the absence of facts, old (and new) prejudices held sway.

To be sure, Stalin’s purges of the Red Army in the late 1930s diminished both Soviet war preparedness and its operational potential in the field. Although the exact

¹⁷ An excellent primer on the typologies of German stereotypes of “the Russian,” “Russian-ness” and “Russia” is Katerina Clark and Karl Schlögel, “Mutual Perceptions and Projections: Stalin’s Russia in Nazi Germany – Nazi Germany in the Soviet Union,” in *Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared*, ed. Michael Geyer and Shelia Fitzpatrick (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 408-12.

¹⁸ Förster, “Image of Russia,” 122.

numbers remain uncertain, the Red Army's share of the purges from 1936-1938 included the arrest and execution or internal exile of some 20,000-30,000 counterespionage workers, 20,000-30,000 political officers, and 50,000-60,000 military officers. The upper echelons of the officer corps were disproportionately affected, as Stalin's regime liquidated 70-80 per cent of officers equivalent to the rank of admiral or general and above (such ranks were not introduced until 1940).¹⁹ In short, the purge devastated the leadership of the Red Army, and was, in fact, even more extensive than observers perceived at the time, since the "Great Purge" of 1936-1938 was followed by a lesser purge of the Red Army that continued intermittently from 1938-1942.²⁰ In this respect, the conclusions of Ernst Köstring, German military attaché in the Soviet Union, were fairly typical. Addressing the aftereffects of the purges on Red Army operational capabilities in a letter to Kurt von Tippelskirch (who served as the facilitating link between both Foreign Armies East and West and the German General Staff) on 22 August 1938, Köstring wrote,

Through the elimination of by far the greatest number of higher officers, who had in part mastered their skill quite well through a decade of practice and theoretical learning, the Red army has declined in its operational ability. The lack of older and experienced commanders will adversely affect the training of the troops for some time. The already existing lack of responsibility will now have still further disadvantageous effects.

The best commanders are lacking. But nothing allows one to recognize and prove that the attacking power of the mass has sunk so far that the army does not represent a very noteworthy factor in a warlike quarrel.

¹⁹ Bernd Bonwetsch, "The Purge of the Military and the Red Army's Operational Capability During the 'Great Patriotic War,'" in Bernd Wedger, ed. *From Peace to War: Germany, Soviet Russia, and the World, 1939-1941* (Providence, RI: Berghahn Books, 1997), 396-398.

²⁰ the Red Army and the Great Purge, see Peter Whitewood, *The Red Army and the Great Terror: Stalin's Purge of the Soviet Military* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2015). On the lesser-known purges of 1938-1942, see Michael Parrish, *The Lesser Terror: Soviet State Security, 1939-1953* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1996).

In the war economy it may be said: Organization, further development of the war economy are, just like industry, strongly affected; a present stagnation is recognizable.²¹

Earlier in the summer, in conversations with a military attaché from Britain who was also stationed in the Soviet Union, Köstring had expressed the opinion that, “The Soviet army is no longer of international importance.”²² In reporting on the aftereffects of the purges, the German intelligence services were hardly alone, as American military attachés (and those of other countries) stationed in Moscow reported extensively on the purges and later posited a connection between the purges of 1938 and the poor performance of the Red Army in Poland and Finland as well.²³ As in the case of other countries getting intelligence on the Soviet Union, the information available to the German intelligence services on the purges, as well as the Soviet economic and military apparatus more generally, was incomplete. The difference, then, between the German intelligence reports on the poor state of the Red Army and that of other countries, were the deeper causal explanations offered for the Red Army’s decline.

Although the German intelligence services efforts’ to obtain informed agents in Britain and the United States met with only partial success, gathering valuable intelligence on the Soviet Union proved particularly difficult. German signal intelligence operations never penetrated high-level Soviet codes and so did not yield significant tactical results. The substantial program of aerial reconnaissance over the Soviet Union beginning in October 1940 provided only limited tactical information and quickly became a diplomatic liability when Soviet officials took note of repeated German

²¹ Kahn, 455-56.

²² Ibid 456.

²³ David M. Glantz, “Observing the Soviets: U.S. Army Attachés in Eastern Europe During the 1930s,” *Journal of Military History* 55, no. 2 (Apr. 1991): 176-81. See also Leonard Leshuk, *U.S. Intelligence Perceptions of Soviet Power, 1921-1946* (London: Frank Cass, 2003), 86-136.

incursions into their airspace and filed multiple formal protests with the Embassy.²⁴ Soviet border security in all sectors was already substantial in 1939, bolstered by the notorious internal passport system.²⁵ Soviet-occupied Poland was quickly subjected to these same security measures, and the mutually agreed upon population transfers of *Volksdeutsche* back to the *Reich* greatly reduced the pool of German-speaking potential informers in any case. Any suggestions of the *Abwehr* or RSHA placing agents in embassy or consulate staffs in the Soviet Union under diplomatic cover were immediately quashed by wary Foreign Office officials interested in maintaining the economically beneficial status quo. Indeed, postwar British and American interrogation reports went so far as to claim that it would have been “easier [to] pass a camel through the eye of a needle” than for the German intelligence offices to gain Foreign Office approval to smuggle agents into the Soviet Union.²⁶

Such postwar claims detailing the general inadequacy of German intelligence sources on the Soviet Union from 1939-1941 are supported by both contemporary documentation and the relatively sparse surviving number of intelligence reports themselves. Internal RSHA VI memoranda from 1940-41 repeatedly lamented the abysmal state of political intelligence on the Soviet Union, referring to its border fortifications and security apparatus (including in recently annexed Eastern Poland) as akin to “a Chinese Wall.” While Amt VI was able to place one V-man inside the German embassy in Moscow without the knowledge of the Foreign Office or German military

²⁴ Gerhard Weinberg, *A World at Arms: A Global History of World War II* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 1995), 189. Thomas, 270-71.

²⁵ David Shearer, “Elements Near and Alien: Passportization, Policing, and Identity in the Stalinist State, 1932-1952,” *The Journal of Modern History* 76 (December 2004): 840.

²⁶ Counter Intelligence War Room, London. “Situation Report No. 8 – Amt VI of the RSHA,” 28 February 1946. NACP RG 263, ZZ-19, Box 36, “German Intelligence Service WWII,” Vol. 2, folder 2/2.

intelligence authorities, he had to quickly return to Germany after being drafted into the *Wehrmacht*, and was unable to file any reports. Meanwhile, the RSHA's usual contacts amongst traveling German industrialists and businessmen foundered in the face of the restrictive Soviet visa system, which generally permitted German access to limited areas of Moscow or Leningrad only.²⁷ Indirect operations from nearby countries were also problematic; most functioning V-men in the Baltic States were repatriated to Germany after the Soviet annexations of 1940 and reintroduced only after the German conquest and occupation.

The *Abwehr* faced similar difficulties, as it also claimed no direct sources inside the Soviet Union before the 1941 German invasion, allegedly because Hitler had personally forbidden direct espionage work against the Soviet Union until just prior to Barbarossa for fear of jeopardizing the fragile, yet economically beneficial, alliance between the two powers in 1939-1941. Even so, the *Abwehr* had pursued indirect means of intelligence gathering via close cooperation first with the Lithuanian security services and from liaisons with pro-German governments in Romania, Bulgaria, and Japan, all to no avail.²⁸ The *Abwehr* intelligence reports on the Soviet Union from 1939-1941 that survive reflect its lack of sources and the poor state of information on the Soviet Union more generally. Even accounting for the *Abwehr*'s tendency to summarize and reproduce the findings of other agencies, its daily intelligence summaries, weekly wire service reports, and monthly political military overviews on the Soviet Union are qualitatively

²⁷ Katrin Paehler, "Espionage, Ideology, and Personal Politics: The Making and Unmaking of a Nazi Foreign Intelligence Service," (PhD diss., American University, 2004), 218-220, 229-30.

²⁸ "Final Report on Kap. z S Walter Wiebe," 15 August 1946, App. B pg. 1; App. D pg. 5. NACP RG 498, Entry UD-210, Box 1230. *GSSW* Vol. IV, 338-39. David Kahn, *German Military Intelligence in World War II* (New York: MacMillan, 1978), 451-52.

and quantitatively inferior in comparison to reports on most other enemy or allied countries from the same period.

One source of information collected and catalogued by the *Abwehr* throughout the duration of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact were the so-called *Reiseberichte*, or “travel reports.” These reports consisted of brief interviews conducted with German businessmen returning from the Soviet Union, summarizing their experiences and observations abroad. Captains of commercial German vessels provided one source of such reports, supplying mundane information such as the sizes and names of ships they encountered as well as their cargoes and destinations, shipping traffic and movement patterns, and occasionally photographs or maps of harbors and minefields. While only modestly important for the overall campaign against the Soviet Union, this systematic interrogation of ships crews proved so successful that at the beginning of the war the *Abwehr* counted quite accurately the number of Russian warships available and under construction in Soviet ports, and their tactical organization.²⁹

A second group of individuals targeted by the *Abwehr* for these reports were German businessmen traveling through the Soviet Union itself. These produced intelligence of little value.³⁰ A typical report, chronicling the February-March, 1940, journeys of an “Officer Probst” along the Siberian railway from Vladivostok (Russia’s largest port city on the Pacific Coast) to Moscow, provides a telling example of the weaknesses of the *Reiseberichte*. Probst offered numerous and varied observations about his trip through the heart of Russia, few of which had any military or political significance. For example, it struck him as memorable that the prices of food, drink, and

²⁹ “Final Report on Kap. z S Walter Wiebe,” App. B, pg. 1.

³⁰ Kahn, 452.

tobacco were higher in the Soviet Union than in Germany, as did a brief encounter with a friendly Russian who expressed excitement that Hitler and Stalin had concluded an alliance. In another vignette, Officer Probst found it curious that on the train from Vladivostok to Moscow he noticed a young Russian officer sitting in first class while an old general and his family resided in second-class seating. When Probst enquired of a stranger why this was so, assuming that the higher-ranking officer would have the better seat, the stranger answered, “This is our times. The Adjutant probably entered the train earlier than the general and consequently got a better place.”³¹ Cultural encounters aside, Probst’s recollections are indicative of the relatively poor value of the *Reiseberichte* more generally. At best, the only information of military importance in Probst’s report was his account how long it took his train to complete the journey from Vladivostok to Moscow, as this could potentially be of use in calculating timetables for Soviet reinforcements arriving from Eastern outposts. General Staff officers repeatedly expressed frustration with the *Abwehr*’s inability to contribute valuable information in the operational planning phases of Barbarossa, with one General Staff Soviet analyst going so far as to classify the limited information on the Soviet Union gathered by the *Abwehr* as “complete rubbish.”³²

³¹ *Abwehr* Nest Bremen ONI, *Beobachtungen des I. Officiers Probst, D. “Wesermünde,” auf der Reise von Yokohama via Sibiria nach Moskau von Ende Februar bis Mitte März 1940*, NACP RG 242, T77, Roll 1518.

³² Thomas, 264-65.



Military attaché to Moscow Gen. Ernst Köstring (center) and his deputy Oberst. Hans Krebs (left) studying a map, 1941. Bundesarchiv, Bild 146-1993-114-28A.

As a military intelligence processing center that did not have its own sources of information, but instead summarized and analyzed information on the Soviet Union provided by other agencies, *Fremde Heere Ost* (FHO), was by definition as disadvantaged as the *Abwehr*, Foreign Office, or RSHA in obtaining reliable information. From its inception in 1938, it also suffered from unclear mandates (at one point it was responsible for gathering information on China, Japan, Russia, Poland, Scandinavia, the Balkans, and the United States), with its primary role as clearinghouse for information and analysis on the Soviet Union only established with Hitler's 31 July 1940 order to the General Staff ordering preparations for an invasion of the USSR.³³ Lt. Col. Eberhard Kinzel, the head of FHO from 1938 until early 1942, had no intelligence experience prior to his employment as head of FHO, having previously served as military attaché to

³³ Thomas, 262.

Poland. He had not traveled in the Soviet Union, spoke no Russian, and was by all accounts a lazy and incompetent administrator.³⁴ Besides serving the Army General Staff directly, *Fremde Heere Ost* regularly distributed printed studies and evaluations of the Red Army to other offices and individual unit commanders as well.³⁵ Working from the limited data gathered by the other German intelligence agencies, these reports often resorted to the familiar anti-Russian cultural stereotypes as explanations for the Red Army's innate inferiority.

Between 1939 and 1941, *Fremde Heere Ost* closely followed the operations of the Red Army in Poland and Finland, preparing detailed reports evaluating Soviet military performance during the period 1939-1940. Such reports frequent employment of anti-Russian stereotypes tended to undermine otherwise astute observation about the limitations of the Red Army in the field, providing an impression of insurmountable, rather than temporary weaknesses. FHO's end-of-action report on the Red Army's occupation of western Poland, for example, issued on 28 October 1939, "confirmed previous judgments" of the inferior quality of the Soviet Army. The Red Army's march into Poland was unimpressive, the report argued, because the Germans had already destroyed the Polish Army in detail prior to the Soviet intervention in mid-September. Naturally, working people and Jews had greeted the Soviets as liberators. Of central importance to FHO's summary of the occupation was that, a mix of commissars (seen as the most important contingent of the Red Army) and ordinary soldiers, accompanied by armed groups of "primarily Jews and bad elements," set about systematically plundering everything from cattle to clothing and electrical wiring, followed by the "liquidation" of

³⁴ Hillgruber, "German Military Leaders," 177-78. Kahn, 429-430.

³⁵ For a distribution list, see, for example, folder H 3/579.2. NACP RG 242, T-78, Roll 485.

large estates and reorganization of the Polish economy under “Bolshevist management methods.” Such primitive behavior was, however, to be expected of such an impoverished, bedraggled army.³⁶ FHO described the character of the Soviet commanders (the report noted that there were no officers in the Red Army as the Germans understood the term) as

...wise, agile, confident, modest, sluggish, devious, humble and subservient, well-disciplined, crisp, unworried, treacherous, ruthless, arrogant, uncouth and unpolished, polite, crooked, unkempt, listless, etc. All these types certainly appeared. There is no uniform Russian officer “corps” in our sense. It was once again confirmed through meeting with Soviet officers that the overall education of the red commanders is on average low, and that they would not meet many of the demands we place on a noncommissioned officer. Distinct “leader-personalities” were not noticed at all. It was additionally noticed at the common meals that Asiatic behavior was only slightly papered over.

As for the regular troops, FHO described them as “little disciplined” but generally “good-natured, willing, and persistent,” in spite of their poor organization, provided they were shown a strong hand.³⁷

A further FHO report, “Value-Judgment on the Red Army After the Reports of the Invasions in Poland, the Baltic, and Finland,” filed on 19 December 1939 and widely circulated in the upper echelons of German unit commanders and operational planning staffs, was also explicitly presented as a confirmation of previously held German assumptions about the Red Army. FHO first found that the Red Army was indeed equipped with modern and effective weapons; the report expressed respect for the

³⁶ BA-MA RW 5/351 O.Qu. IV, Fremde Heere Ost (II) Nr. 794/39 geh. Gez. Kinzel, 28 October 1939. Norbert Müller et. al., ed., *Materialien Aus dem Bundesarchiv Heft 16 - Das Amt Ausland/Abwehr in Oberkommando Wehrmacht: Eine Dokumentation* (Koblenz, 2007), Doc. 56. Appearances and sinister Jewish influences aside, even even the wilder manifestations Soviet looting and plunder stemmed from systematic plans to “Sovietize” Eastern Poland. See Jan T. Gross, *Revolution from Abroad: The Soviet Conquest of Poland’s Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia, Expanded Edition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002).

³⁷ Ibid.

variety, specifications and capabilities of Soviet motorized artillery and tanks. The report also confirmed the previous assumption that the Red Army was “in no way organizationally complete” and that “extraordinary shortcomings and gaps exist,” specifically in modern weapons (which had just been listed as impressive on the previous page) and transportation networks (which FHO admitted had not actually been tested by the Polish campaign but judged “extremely deficient” anyway).³⁸ This was consistent with German attitudes prior to the 1941 invasion, specifically that the Red Army, while numerically superior to the German forces, and generally well equipped, was no match for the *Wehrmacht* in terms of quality. Reports on Soviet actions in Poland and Finland lent further support for these attitudes, since they emphasized the superior manpower and equipment of the Red Army suffering humiliating setback after setback due to poor organization and leadership, themselves stemming from ethno-political deficiencies of character and intelligence.

In terms of the “quality” of the Soviet soldiers and officers, the FHO report of December 1939 offered mixed messages. “Mongol-faces” and “Tartar types” could be found throughout the armed forces. Red Army officers were generally young and inexperienced, although it was impossible to know the mettle of the senior commanders, as the Soviet government denied German military observers in Poland and the Soviet Union access to the upper echelons of the Red Army leadership.³⁹ FHO once again adhered to the standard dualistic personality trope in its evaluation of the Soviet officer corps as “clever, agile, confident, well-disciplined, fresh, carefree, polite and moderate,

³⁸ O.Qu.IV FHO (II), *Werturteil über die Rote Armee nach den Berichten über den Einmarsch in Polen, Im Baltikum und in Finnland*, pg. 1-4. NACP RG 242, T-78, Roll 589, folder H 3/1726.

³⁹ *Werterteil über die Rote Armee*, 3-4.

slow-moving, humble, deceitful, inconsiderate, uncouth, unkempt and listless.”⁴⁰

Although FHO could not determine which, if any, of these characteristics were predominant in the Red Army leadership, there was one unifying attribute, appearing underlined in the report. According to the “Value-Judgment,” the leadership of the Red Army consisted of men who were “tested and reliable, convinced communists” and staunch supporters of “the Bolshevik world view,” ideologically reinforced by the notorious commissars, with whom FHO was particularly preoccupied.⁴¹ As far as the disposition of the vast majority of Soviet troops serving in Poland, the Baltic States or Finland, the report classified their spirits as wide-ranging and ultimately undeterminable. In any case, the majority of this assessment was based on the Red Army’s performance in Poland in September 1939, and while the situation in Finland had not yet fully developed by 19 December, early indications were that it was already going badly for the Red Army, which, in spite of its great masses of men was evidently not up to the demands of modern warfare.⁴² As the Finnish war continued to go poorly for the Red Army, German observers would turn to explanations grounded in innate inferiority of Russian troops.

More strident reports from Foreign Office representatives in Finland and Moscow contributed to perceptions of overall Soviet weakness. Even after explicit instructions from Weizsäcker to all German missions to avoid sounding any “anti-Russian note[s]” in their conversations on the Russo-Finnish war (Ribbentrop characteristically ordered that “England’s guilt in the Russo-Finnish conflict should be especially emphasized”),

⁴⁰ Ibid 5.

⁴¹ Ibid, 6, 11-12. OKH and the German military and political leadership more generally obsessed over the question of political indoctrination of the officers and front-line soldiers in the Red Army, and the (assumed) expansive role of commissars in this process. See, for example, OKH Generalstab des Heeres, 12. Abt. Az 3a/n 53 (IIb) – Nr. 1601/39g. “Russland,” [undated] July 1939. NACP RG 242, T-78, Roll 586, folder H 3/1479.

⁴² Ibid 23.

dispatches from the front were certainly critical of Soviet military capabilities.⁴³ On December 18th, 1939, three weeks into the conflict, German Ambassador in Finland Wipert von Blücher reported “very considerable bloody losses,” of Soviet troops and tanks in the fighting. The lack of Soviet military preparedness (in this case not providing proper winter clothing and camouflage) rendered Red Army troops excellent targets during the day for Finnish regulars who could clearly see them in profile against the snow. At night the Soviets had to huddle around large fires to keep from freezing, rendering them vulnerable to Finnish bombing. Blücher concluded that, given the Soviet Union’s inability to exert its will over the small band of Finnish resisters, an escalation of the conflict into a devastating and interminable guerilla war was a distinct possibility.⁴⁴

Follow-up reports from Finland highlighted the growing ideological dimensions of the war, pitting the Communist hordes against the good Christian “burghers” of Finland and linking the apparent weakness of the Red Army to the greater weaknesses of the Bolshevik state.⁴⁵ This culminated in a dramatic report from Blücher to Berlin on January 11th, which triumphantly declared that the six week war with Finland had served as the “guinea pig on which the excellence of the Red Army and the appeal of

⁴³ According to Ribbentrop, malevolent English influences had encouraged the Finns to take a hard line in their negotiations with Moscow. Weizsäcker, “Circular of the State Secretary,” 2 December 1939. Ribbentrop, “Circular of the Foreign Minister,” 7 December 1939. *Documents on German Foreign Policy Series D.*, Vol. VIII: Docs. 411 and 429. Hereafter DGFP.

⁴⁴ Von Blücher, “Finnisch-Russischer Konflikt – Politischer Bericht,” 18 December, 1939. PAAA R 104615 (politische Abteilung VI – Po3a Finnland) Finnische-Russische Krieg von 5.12.39 bis 11.1.1940. Von Blücher was an old-hand Foreign Office Civil Servant who was stationed in Finland from 1935-1944. He never joined the Nazi Party, was a popular figure with the Finnish government, and in fact substantially disagreed with many policies of the Nazi regime (Ribbentrop endeavored to fire Blücher a number of times, to no avail). He did, however, work to revive German hegemony in Northern European affairs, sometimes heading an economically and politically exploitative policy toward Finland as a result. On von Blücher’s biography as a window into German-Finnish relations see Michael Jonas, *NS-Diplomatie und Bündnispolitik 1935-1944: Wipert von Blücher, das Dritte Reich und Finnland* (Göttingen: Ferdinand Schöningh Verlag, 2011).

⁴⁵ Kilo to Berlin, “In Finnland verbreitete Meinungen,” 28 December 1939. PAAA R 104615 (Politische Abteilung VI – Po3a Finnland) Finnische-Russische Krieg von 5.12.39 bis 11.1.1940.

Bolshevism have been tested by experiment.” The result was an “unequivocal” defeat for the Soviet Union, which in spite of its “tremendous superiority” in men and supply, had “suffered one defeat after another,” losing thousands of troops and hundreds of guns, tanks and planes in a futile effort. This called for a “thorough revision” of ideas concerning the danger of “Bolshevist Russia,” as Russia could no longer be considered a “first-rate” military power if “the Red Army has such shortcomings that it can not even dispense of a small country.” Additionally, the fact that the all-powerful Comintern “does not even gain ground in a country that is 40 per cent socialists,” was itself symptomatic of the impotency of Soviet foreign political might. Blücher concluded that, given the results of the war thus far and Soviet military and political weaknesses, the Eastern border was undoubtedly secure and Germany could both focus all its military attention on the Western Powers and confidently take a hardline approach to future negotiations with the Soviet Union.⁴⁶ In typical fashion, even after the tide had turned in favor of the Red Army, von Blücher attributed the Soviet victory only to the overwhelming mass of men and material the Red Army could dispatch to Finland, as opposed to improvements in supply, organization, leadership, or performance in the Red Army itself.⁴⁷

Foreign Office reports from Moscow and *Abwehr* reports from Berlin were generally more circumspect than those of FHO or observers in Finland. Ambassador to

⁴⁶ For Blücher and others, Soviet aggression in Finland had been widely condemned by the international community (apart from Germany), and the subsequent isolation of the Soviet Union in international affairs only strengthened the perception of Soviet weakness. Minister Blücher to State Secretary Weizsäcker, 11 January 1940. DGFP Series D, Vol. VIII: Doc. 526. This interpretation was also expressed by the *Abwehr* in OKW Amt Ausl./Abw. Abt. Ausland Nr. 0107/40 geh. I, “Aussenpolitische Übersicht: Entwicklung der außenpolitischen Lage im Februar 1940,” 1 March 1940, pg. 1-2. NACP RG 242, T-77, Roll 932, file OKW/484.

⁴⁷ Blücher, “Politischer Bericht – Lage in Finnland,” 22 February 1940. PAAA R 104616 (Politische Abteilung VI – Po3a Finnland) Finnische-Russische Krieg von 1.40 bis 3.40.

Moscow Friedrich Werner von der Schulenburg's report on January 8th, 1940 described repeated setbacks to the Red Army because of "the skillful defense of the Finns, terrain and weather difficulties," and "especially considerable shortcomings of Soviet organization with equipment and supplies." According to Schulenburg, the Soviet Union had been "unprepared" for the war in Finland, which, given its lack of success, price increases in the cities, and large numbers of Soviet soldiers filling provincial hospitals with "frozen limbs," was becoming increasingly unpopular. In spite of these humiliations, Schulenburg judged that a Soviet victory was inevitable, given the disparities in population, military power, and economic might between the two countries.⁴⁸ In its monthly overviews of the world situation, the *Abwehr* seconded these conclusions. Evaluating the initial Soviet defeats in December 1939 and January 1940, the *Abwehr* concluded that while the Finns had acquitted themselves well, the Red Army appeared to have no intentions of retreating and it was unlikely that the Finns would prevail in the long term.⁴⁹

Other Foreign Office officials drew broader conclusions from the Winter War. For Werner von Toppelskirch, Counselor in Moscow from 1925-41 and cousin of O.Qu.IV-head Kurt von Toppelskirch, the course of the Russo-Finnish war, while not a complete disaster for the Soviet Union by any means, served as a "wholesome damper for the well-known Soviet conceit and overestimation of their own victories." The Russian

⁴⁸ Schulenburg to Berlin, "Telegramm Nr. 47 vom 8.1.," 8 January 1940. PAAA R 29713 (Büro des Staatssekretärs) Russland 11.39-6.40.

⁴⁹ OKW Amt. Ausl./Abw. Abt. Ausland Nr. 086/40 geh. I "Außenpolitische Übersicht: Entwicklung der außenpolitischen Lage im Dezember 1939 und Januar 1940," 1 February 1940, pg. 2. NACP RG 242, T-77, Roll 932, file OKW/484. The *Abwehr* did later appear to place more importance on the damage the war did to the Red Army in a later intelligence report expressing skepticism (in the marginalia) on Molotov's public announcement that the Red Army had suffered 49,000 killed and 158,000 wounded in the protracted conflict with Finland, but absent additional context the meaning of the notations remains unclear. OKW Amt Ausl./Abw. Abt. Ausland Nr. 0239/40 geh. I "Außen- und militärpolitischer Kurzbericht Nr. 90," 30 March 1940, pg. 1. NACP RG 242, T-77, Roll 932, file OKW/484.

march into Poland had been a “promenade,” which owed its ease to the fact that “the German army had done most of the work.” The Red Army was merely reaping the product of its own overconfident and “casual” attitude toward the Finnish campaign, which, fortunately for Germany, was dealing a significant blow to the ambition of world communist revolutionaries.⁵⁰ Although Ernst Köstring, the military attaché to the Soviet Union, claimed in his postwar interrogations to have warned his colleagues against “drawing false conclusions” from the Finnish campaign, entries in Halder’s diary show that Köstring also reported that the Russian army was still four years away from a full recovery.⁵¹

Well after the Red army regrouped and defeated the troublesome Finns in the field, Kinzel and *Fremde Heere Ost* continued to emphasize its deficiencies. This conclusion was not entirely surprising, given that a number of later reports were based nearly exclusively on interviews with thoroughly anti-Soviet Finnish officers. An FHO report of October 1940 summarized the course of the war, but once again weighed the initial setbacks of the Red Army as far more important than the ultimate outcome of the war or Soviet measures taken since February 1940 to improve the Red Army. Although Kinzel briefly noted that the Red Army was working to eliminate its “deficiencies” in discipline, training, organization and leadership, the overarching conclusion drawn by FHO was that the Russo-Finnish war revealed that the Red Army did not meet the “modern demands” of war.⁵² A separate report issued by FHO two weeks later repeated

⁵⁰ Tippelskirch, “Memorandum by an Official of the Embassy in the Soviet Union,” 25 January 1940. DGFP Series D, Volume VIII: Doc. 574.

⁵¹ *Interrogation of Ernst Köstring*, pg. 4-5. Halder *War Diary*, 11 September 1940, pg. 255. Hillgruber, “German Military Leaders,” 178-79.

⁵² Kinzel, “Erfahrungen aus dem finnisch-russischen Krieg,” 2 October 1940. NACP RG 242, T-78, Roll 567, file H 3/626.

the conclusion that the Red Army was incapable of conducting any sort of large-scale mobile operations in the field for the foreseeable future.⁵³ FHO reports from the following February (nearly a year after the end of the conflict), again with Finnish input, continued to emphasize the congenital weaknesses of the Red Army and the Soviet Union more generally.⁵⁴

In projecting that the Red Army would continue to perform poorly in the future as a result of its poor past showings in Poland and Finland, the German intelligence services downplayed or ignored crucial evidence to the contrary. The persistent German focus on Red Army operations in Poland and Finland masked earlier successes of Soviet tank forces fighting in the Spanish Civil War, or the extraordinary performance of the Red Army under Zhukov in the undeclared Manchuria border wars with Japan of August 1939.⁵⁵ Even in the case of the Winter War, the Red Army endured and prevailed in Finland in spite of numerous dispiriting setbacks in the field, supply problems, and organizational confusion. As recent scholarship on the Winter War has convincingly argued, Red Army unit cohesion, morale, and discipline did not fail in spite of the disastrous start to the campaign. Contrary to German reporting, the ideological commitment of the soldiers and officers to the Soviet cause generally remained steadfast, as did party cadres' support for the war against Finland.⁵⁶ Although some Soviet soldiers shirked, deserted, surrendered, or otherwise endeavored to escape combat in Finland,

⁵³ Hillgruber, "German Military Leaders," 179.

⁵⁴ Kinzel, "Erfahrungen aus dem finnisch-russischen Krieg," 19 February 1941. NACP RG 242, T-78, Roll 567, file H 3/626.

⁵⁵ Förster, "German Military's Image of Russia," 123. On the significance of the Soviet-Japanese military clashes in Manchuria in 1939, see Stuart Goldman, *Nomonhan 1939: The Red Army's Victory that Shaped World War II* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2012).

⁵⁶ Roger R. Reese, "Lessons of the Winter War: A Study in the Military Effectiveness of the Red Army, 1939-1940," *The Journal of Military History* 72 (July 2008): 826.

such actions never threatened the overall military cohesion of the Red Army in the field, which quickly regrouped after the initial setbacks of December 1939 and January 1940.⁵⁷ Meanwhile, the popular narrative of a “plucky” Finnish Army of only a few thousand overcoming insurmountable odds against a Soviet steamroller that quickly sprung up in the aftermath of the invasion only accurately described the first weeks of the war and ignored just how remarkably well trained, supplied, and disciplined the Finnish regulars actually were during that period. An equally plausible lesson to draw from the Red Army’s experiences in the Winter War of 1939-40, then, was appreciation for the Soviet Union’s ability to suffer crippling losses and tactical failures only to regroup and prevail due to both the demanding inflexibility of the Soviet political classes, which would not accept defeat, and the tenacity of the Russian soldier in the field in both offensive and defensive operations.⁵⁸ In the context of anti-Soviet and anti-Russian attitudes in the German intelligence services and military elite between 1939 and 1941, however, such a conclusion was unthinkable.

⁵⁷ Reese, 831.

⁵⁸ Reese, 852.



Eberhard Kinzel, September 1943. Head of Foreign Armies East from its establishment in November 1938 until early 1942. Prior to accepting his post, Kinzel had no intelligence training, no first-hand knowledge of the Soviet Union, and no knowledge of foreign languages. Chief of the German General Staff Franz Halder dismissed Kinzel in favor of Reinhard Gehlen after FHO's repeated failures to properly account for Soviet strength in 1941 and because of its lack of improvement in performance in the winter of 1941-42. Bundesarchiv, Bild 146-1985-048-28.

Misjudging Soviet Military Potential on the Eve of Barbarossa

On August 11, 1941, as the exhausted troops of German Army Group North continued to encounter tenacious resistance from the Red Army, Chief of the German General Staff Franz Halder recorded in his diary,

What we are now doing is the last desperate attempt to prevent our front line from becoming frozen in position warfare...Our last reserves have been committed...The whole situation makes it increasingly plain that we have underestimated the Russian colossus...At the outset of the war, we reckoned with about 200 enemy divisions. Now we have already counted 360. These divisions indeed are not armed and equipped according to our standards, and their tactical leadership is often poor. But there they are, and if we smash a dozen of them, the Russians simply put up another dozen.⁵⁹

In an acknowledgement of this underestimation of the war potential of the Soviet Union in the planning phase of Barbarossa, Hitler, in April 1942, attributed the inaccurate intelligence reports of Soviet troop-strength to “Russian cunning” and “camouflage.” According to the Führer’s retrospective analysis, even the disastrous performance of the Red Army in the Winter War with Finland in 1939-40 was “nothing but a great piece of camouflage on their part, for even then Russia possessed armed forces which placed her among the first of the Powers, on par with Germany and Japan.”⁶⁰ The Nazi leadership’s underestimation of the military capabilities of the Soviet Union in the months leading up to Operation Barbarossa, particularly its general inability to accurately discern the number of combat-ready Red Army divisions and reserves, is a matter of historical fact. Yet the failure to accurately estimate Soviet war potential on the eve of Barbarossa was not the result of great acts of Soviet subterfuge before 1941, as Hitler claimed. The German intelligence-gathering agencies had simply failed to collect accurate information, and the German political and military leadership (including, to some extent, intelligence officials such as Kinzel) was generally uninterested in a careful consideration of the facts in any case. Hitler’s impression of a “camouflaged,” but massive, Red Army can be accounted for in that the Red Army expanded from 98 to 303 divisions between

⁵⁹ *Halder War Diaries*, 11 August 1941, pg. 506.

⁶⁰ Adolf Hitler, *Hitler’s Table Talk 1941-1944: His Private Conversations*, ed. Gerhard Weinberg, trans. Norman Cameron and R.H. Stevens (New York: Enigma Books, 2008), 324.

September 1939 and June 1941, increasing from approximately 2 million to 5.4 million men under arms. *Fremde Heere Ost* and other intelligence agencies simply failed to notice.⁶¹ Coupled with what German political, military, and diplomatic historian Andreas Hillgruber has described as “carelessness and superficiality of military planning for the Eastern campaign,” the poor quality of German military intelligence on the Soviet Union from 1939-1941 certainly contributed to the eventual German defeat in the East.⁶²

⁶¹ David Glantz, *The Role of Intelligence in Soviet Military Strategy* (Novato CA: Presidio Press, 1990), 11-12. See also See David Glantz and Jonathan House, *When Titans Clashed: How the Red Army Stopped Hitler* (Lawrence, KA: University Press of Kansas, 1995).

⁶² Andreas Hillgruber, *Germany and the Two World Wars*, trans. William C. Kirby (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 80.



Autographed portrait of General Franz Halder, late 1939 or early 1940. Bundesarchiv Bild 146-2000-003-06A.

The operational planning of the German General Staff experts reflected both the scarcity of hard intelligence available on the Soviet Union and the strength of ingrained assumptions of a rapid German victory. German long-range resource and armament plans, produced with input from all military service branches and Nazi Party leadership (bureaucratic infighting aside) reflected the ingrained assumptions of rapid victory over an inferior Russian opponent. While long-range planning against Britain and its

supporters in the United States in 1940-41 called for massive investment in a new generation of battleships and long-range heavy bombers for what Hitler described on January 9, 1941, as a “battle of the continents,” no such resources were allocated to advancements in tank technology for the Barbarossa campaign. Existing models of effective, but dated, equipment were deemed sufficient for the foregone conclusion of German military victory in the East, with the most significant increases in armaments resources allocated to the *Luftwaffe* and *Kriegsmarine*. These measures and others directed at maximizing short-term armaments and ammunition production for already-existing tank models in accordance with an, at most, four to five month campaign in Russia enjoyed the full backing of Keitel and Chief of Army Armaments (and Head of the Reserve Army) Friedrich Fromm. Limited manufacturing allocations for new tank production in early 1941 were instead envisioned for use in North Africa and the Middle East under the assumption that direct operations against the British Empire would finally result in the elusive peace settlement with Britain after the Soviet Union had been dispatched in a brief 1941 campaign.⁶³ This of course contradicted the very strategic rationale for the campaign in the East, that the destruction of the Soviet Union would itself force a political solution to the war in the West, but is nonetheless further illustrative of the unsubstantiated assumptions circulating in the German operational planning staffs at the time.

⁶³ The next generation of tanks would appear only after the German armed forces had significant trouble with Soviet model T-34 and KV-1 models in the course of the Barbarossa campaign, and was thus reactive, unlike the proactive plans for operations against the West. Bernard R. Kroener, “The ‘Frozen Blitzkrieg’: German Strategic Planning Against the Soviet Union and the Causes of Its Failure,” in *From Peace to War*. 141-44. Gerhard Weinberg, *Germany, Hitler, and World War II*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 155-56. On the significance of long-range armaments programs for an ultimate showdown between Germany and the United States, see also Goda, *Tomorrow the World*.

The actual strategic objectives for Barbarossa were equally muddled, even before the much-maligned “meddling” by the Führer.⁶⁴ The operational plans for Barbarossa prepared by the General Staff assumed that Soviet resistance would immediately cease once German forces reached a line stretching from Archangel (Arkhangelsk) on the White Sea past Moscow to Stalingrad and Astrakhan on the Volga Delta near the Caspian Sea. So confident were the staff officers of this eventuality that their maps of the Soviet Union did not go beyond this seemingly arbitrary occupation line, and were inaccurate even short of it.⁶⁵ This reality did not perturb General Staff planners however, who viewed the “Asiatic” sectors of Russia beyond the Urals as backwards, undeveloped, and incapable of supporting any kind of long-term resistance in any case.⁶⁶

Meanwhile, the concerns raised by more pessimistic elements within the *Wehrmacht*, such as 18th Army Chief of Staff Major-General Erich Marks, whose early operational study of July 1940 was one of two foundational texts of the Barbarossa campaign, were ignored by FHO’s Kinzel and his supervisory officer on Halder’s staff, Gen. Kurt von Tippelskirch.⁶⁷ Reconsidering his earlier timetable marking a complete victory over the Soviet Union in nine to 17 weeks, in September 1940 Marcks submitted a broader meditation on the geopolitical realities of the forthcoming campaign, titled “Evaluation of Situation Red.” In this report, Marcks concluded that the United States

⁶⁴ Commander in Chief of the German Army Walter von Brauchitsch admitted as much in complaining to Halder at a joint conference on 28 January 1941, expressing frustration about the unclear objectives of the Barbarossa campaign in comparison to the tighter operational planning directed against Great Britain. *Halder War Diaries*, 28 January 1941, pg. 313-14.

⁶⁵ Weinberg, *Germany, Hitler, and World War II*, *Germany, Hitler, and World War II*, 164.

⁶⁶ David Stahel, *Operation Barbarossa and Germany’s Defeat in the East* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 41. In some ways, the optimism of some General Staff officers about the ease of pacifying the Soviet Union were even more unsubstantiated than those of Party ideologues such as Himmler, who envisioned a grand struggle of German frontier warrior-farmer-knights against the Eastern menace in the new German borderlands of the East for generations to come. It was also t

⁶⁷ Rolf-Dieter Müller, *Enemy in the East, Hitler’s Secret Plans to Invade the Soviet Union*, trans. Alexander Starritt (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 227-233. Also Megargee, 114-116.

and Great Britain would immediately come to the aid of the Soviet Union, which would drastically alter the material balance of the anti-German war effort by late 1941 or, at the latest, spring 1942. The Soviet expectation of foreign assistance, hopes in an anti-German blockade, and the possibility of a second front from the Anglo-American side would in turn change the tactical calculus of the Red Army's defense operations, which would likely adopt multiple "deep" defensive positions instead of taking a fixed line along a single defensive front from the Dneper to the Dvina. Such a development would drastically alter the German invasion timetables. Tellingly, Marcks' pessimism was limited only to requesting that FHO and Senior Intelligence Quartermaster Tippelskirch evaluate his report and consider altering the expected timetables of the invasion to reflect additional operations beyond the nine to 17-week period, a crucial development given the tight campaign schedule prior to the onset of winter, even before the delay to June following Spring operations in Greece and Yugoslavia. Rather than engage with Marcks new report, however, Tippelskirch and Kinzel both assured Marcks that his concerns were ill-founded and that no contingency planning was necessary. Marcks' report was not forwarded to Halder, and its warnings had no effects on future planning.⁶⁸ Crucially, as both Rolf-Dieter Müller and Geoffrey Megargee have demonstrated, this was not a matter of hiding unfavorable information from a "mad" dictator, but rather Halder, Tippelskirch, and other members of the General Staff ignoring information that questioned *their own* assumptions about Russian capabilities.

Fremde Heere Ost certainly did not challenge the prevailing wisdom of the ease of German victory through its reporting on the strength of the Red Army from 1940-

⁶⁸ Stahel, *Operation Barbarossa*, 43-44.

1941. Instead, as the incoming intelligence rendered early estimates of some 200 total Soviet infantry, armor, and reserve divisions fanciful, FHO resorted to familiar qualitative arguments of Russian inferiority to explain away the rapidly expanding Red Army. Based on information gathered on the Soviet Union in 1940, FHO authored and distributed an official summary publication “The Wartime Armed Forces of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics” on January 15, 1941. Estimating that the Soviet Union had 11-12 million men available for military service and that the Red Army’s equipment was for the most part modern, the report proceeded to then explain that quickly emerging bottlenecks in Russian agricultural and industrial sectors would limit the deployment of the potential soldiers. Similarly, while recognizing that Soviet tanks were technologically advanced, FHO still deemed Red Army armored units as incapable of conducting “modern” warfare because of poor training and lack of coordination with other units. The natural passivity and tendency toward obedience in the typical Red Army soldier meanwhile, would provide for tenacious defensive capabilities, as the Russian would follow orders and allow himself to be killed should his commander order him to sacrifice himself for the greater cause. These same qualities rendered offensive operations unlikely.⁶⁹ Concluding that the Russian national character (dull, lacking in initiative) would not change over time, the quality of the Red Army would not improve significantly for years, if not decades.⁷⁰

Even so, the report of January 15th drastically underestimated the size of the standing Red Army as well, estimating that it contained 2,000,000 men when at that point

⁶⁹ *GSWW* Vol. IV, 235-37.

⁷⁰ Kahn, 457.

it had in fact already swelled to 4,205,000, increasing to over 5,000,000 by June 22nd.⁷¹ FHO's estimate of 10,000 Soviet tanks also proved mistaken by more than half, as the Red Army could actually field 20,000-24,000 against the Germans' 3,500 at the start of the invasion. These included a significant number of the superior T-34 model, which German intelligence had no knowledge of, in spite of its deployment in the border skirmishes with Japan in August 1939. At the same time, FHO drastically overestimated the number of Red Army divisions in close proximity to the German border, providing an overoptimistic estimate of the proportion of the Red Army that would be destroyed in the opening days of the invasion.⁷²

Throughout the spring, as Franz Halder's War Diary reveals, FHO continuously revised its estimates of Red Army strength upward without questioning the underlying assumptions of the forthcoming invasion.⁷³ On March 29th, Kinzel briefed Halder that there were 15 more divisions in European Russia than previously estimated.⁷⁴ Less than a week later, FHO admitted once again that it had grossly underestimated the strength of the Red Army in European Russia, in spite of persistent warnings from sources in Finland and Japan from mid-1940 onward. Instead of the 200 divisions and reserves that FHO and the General Staff had previously reckoned with, the new calculations accounted for 171 infantry divisions alone, in addition to 36 cavalry and 40 armored divisions.⁷⁵ Later reports from Kinzel continued to downplay the marked increase in actual Soviet strength

⁷¹ Megargee, 112-15.

⁷² Ibid. Kahn, 457-59.

⁷³ While the Halder diaries are famous and much cited, the fact that the German intelligence's underestimation of the Soviet Union was an ongoing and continuous process in the Spring, Summer, and Fall of 1941 is important to reiterate.

⁷⁴ *Halder War Diaries*, 29 March 1941, pg. 343.

⁷⁵ *Halder War Diaries*, 4 April 1941, pg. 350.

by citing supply shortages and a lack of experienced officers in these “new” divisions.⁷⁶ In this effort, Kinzel received support from Hans Krebs, Köstring’s deputy in Moscow, who reported that most of the Red Army divisions in European Russia were short of equipment, and that the officer corps was “decidedly bad.” While Russia was actively rearming, Krebs argued that there was no hope of the Red Army achieving its pre-purge level of strength for an additional twenty years.⁷⁷ FHO’s last significant report on the Red Army prior to the invasion, issued on May 20th, would prove just as divorced from reality as Krebs’ assertions that the Red Army was decades away from posing a credible threat to the German ability to achieve success in the East. Reaffirming that the bulk of Red Army forces were stationed in European Russia, FHO categorically stated “a substantial reinforcement from Asia is improbable on political grounds.” As a result, FHO contended that there was no need to make any strategic allowances for any Red Army units stationed or thought to be stationed in the Far East.⁷⁸ Outside of Moscow in November 1941, Army Group Center’s divisional intelligence reports indicated that some 34 divisions had arrived from Siberia and the Far East since July.⁷⁹

The surviving reports of *Reichssicherheitshauptamt*’s foreign intelligence office (RSHA VI) from 1940-1941 were remarkably restrained in scope and content in comparison to the highly ideological reports on Britain and the United States, reflecting

⁷⁶ *Halder War Diaries*, 26 April 1941, pg. 375-76.

⁷⁷ *Halder War Diaries*, 5 May 1941, pg. 383. Here Krebs was reinforcing the line of argument that his superior officer, Ernst Köstring had made in October and November 1940 *against* the idea of a war with the Soviet Union – the Red Army was in such a state of general disarray and backwardness and Stalin so compliant with Germany’s demands that it would be many years before Russia posed any kind of military threat to Germany. See *GSWW*, Vol. IV: 232.

⁷⁸ Thomas, 277-278.

⁷⁹ David Stahel, *The Battle for Moscow* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2015), 158.

the difficulties the agency had in reporting on the Soviet Union at this time.⁸⁰ From a military planning perspective, the most useful report from Amt VI that survived in the RSHA archives noted in August 1940 that the Soviets had plowed under a 20-meter border strip in occupied Poland and equipped it with alarms and lookout posts.⁸¹

Gleaning most of their information from *Pravda* and reports of Soviet actions outside Russia, RSHA VI reports devoted much space to the banalities of the Soviet occupation of the Baltic States, Bessarabia, and Bukovina. The latter were often characterized as suffering extreme poverty and misery as a result of Soviet occupation measures.⁸²

Only after the German invasions of Greece and Yugoslavia in April 1941 did Amt VI reports focus intently on Soviet domestic affairs. Amid reports of Soviet dread of Germany advancing “step by step,” through the Balkans, generalized chaos, and constant fear of German attacks in the Soviet territories, Amt VI described rampant state-sponsored propaganda meetings “stir[ring] up hate against Germany and the Germans.” Such propaganda proclaimed Europe (especially Germany) on the eve of a communist revolution, for which “preparations were already underway.”⁸³ Reports of May 23rd and

⁸⁰ The idea that this careful reporting could reflect utmost caution on the part of the RSHA in dealing with a reluctant and notoriously paranoid ally is possible but unlikely. Regardless of Foreign Office directives, the RSHA infiltrated and reported extensively on other allies of Germany and neutral states, especially Italy, Hungary, Romania, Switzerland, Spain, and Vichy France. The poor state of reporting on Russia is more symptomatic of the internal problems of the organization (no sources inside the USSR and understaffed and undertrained “Russia” section personnel). At the same time, the word “Bolshevism” and its variants did not appear in surviving reports until June 13, 1941, suggesting some internal restraint (or a fantastically coincidental surviving source selection bias, given the preponderance of the ideologically-loaded term in other RSHA correspondence).

⁸¹ RSHA VI, “Auslands-Meldungen,” 13 August 1940, pg. 3-4. USHMM RG 15.007M, Reel 71, Folder 723.

⁸² RSHA VI, “Auslands-Meldungen,” 29 November 1940, pg. 15-17. USHMM RG 15.007M, Reel 71, Folder 723. Also RSHA VI, “Auslands-Meldungen,” 17 January 1941, pg. 11. USHMM RG 15.007M, Reel 71, Folder 724.

⁸³ RSHA VI, “Auslands-Meldungen,” 8 April 1941, pg. 16-17; RSHA VI, “Auslands-Meldungen,” 20 May 1941, pg. 8. USHMM RG 15.007M, Reel 72, Folder 724. The April report also noted that the Soviet authorities in “Czernowitz,” (Chernivtsi) Ukraine, were dismantling factories and moving them eastward in preparation for German advances.

27th emphasized continued Soviet efforts to prepare for war, with military “exercises” accompanied by Pravda editorials calling for defense of the Fatherland. In the only surviving Amt VI report to broach the subject of Red Army capabilities before the invasion, Amt VI merely noted that the removal of commissars had likely rendered Soviet forces more effective, but fear of war with Germany remained nevertheless.⁸⁴ The final report of RSHA VI before the invasion of the Soviet Union, dated June 13th, reported “war psychosis” continuing to sweep through the Soviet territories, with Bolshevik propaganda on the one hand trying to “mentally prepare” the population for war while at the same time endeavoring to avoid the inevitable “state of panic and mass flight” from the border areas that would accompany a German invasion. This propaganda was accompanied by a frantic shipment of arms from East to West, continued assurances of domestic unrest in Germany, and promises that in the coming war the Red Army would march triumphantly to the Atlantic Coast, sweeping aside all before it.⁸⁵

Unlike Amt VI’s reports on Britain and the United States, there were no overt assertions that Jews were serving as “wire-pullers” of Soviet foreign policy, although perhaps in the case of the world headquarters of communism, where everyone “knew” that the Jews were firmly in control, it was not necessary to thoroughly document Jewish power. Anti-Semitism remained an undercurrent in RSHA VI reporting on the Soviet Union, however. Following the German invasion of Yugoslavia in April 1941, the “remarkable nervousness and restlessness” of the Russians in newly occupied Bessarabia and Bukovina was indirectly blamed on the anti-German rumormongering of the Jewish

⁸⁴ The Red Army evaluation appears in the report of May 23rd. RSHA VI, Auslands-Meldungen,” 23 May 1941, pg. 17; RSHA VI “Auslands-Meldungen,” 27 May 1941. USHMM RG 15.007M, Reel 72, Folder 724.

⁸⁵ RSHA VI, Auslands-Meldungen,” 13 June 1941, pg. 9-10. USHMM RG 15.007M, Reel 72, Folder 724.

population there.⁸⁶ Later reports from a V-Mann in Warsaw noted preferences given to Jews in Soviet population transfers,

The rich Jews in the Soviet sphere of influence [in Poland] were evacuated by the Soviets to Kazakhstan. Supposedly because they are considered bourgeoisie. Most of the Jews will be treated better than the other populations only because of their racial comrades sitting in the administrative authorities. Very many Russian officials are married to Jewesses.⁸⁷

Such reports of Jewish panic and preferential treatment to Jews behind the Soviet lines continued to confirm the linkage between the Jews and Bolshevism, a vital tenet of Nazi ideology that would have deadly consequences with the war in the East (See chapter 4).

In spite of the fact that the early phases of the invasion constituted a crushing defeat for the Red Army, the failure of the German intelligence services to correctly report on the actual state of affairs in the Soviet Union was obvious. After the German armed forces crossed the border into Soviet territory on June 22nd, however, the realization that the German intelligence services and General Staff had failed to predict the number and disposition of Red Army forces became clearer by the day. Once again the Halder Diaries, often cited as general evidence of this underestimation, are remarkably specific about the failure of *Fremde Heere Ost* in this regard. Already on June 23rd, Halder noted that reports from the front from the previous evening had revealed that German troops had miscalculated the actual proximity of Red Army forces to the German border, as the deep penetrations of the first day's assault had failed to encircle and prevent the withdrawal of a large number of prisoners.⁸⁸ As the German armies advanced deeper into enemy territory, the number of combat divisions

⁸⁶ "Auslands-Meldungen," 8 April 1941.

⁸⁷ RSHA VI, "Auslands-kurzmeldungen," 29 May 1941, pg. 4. USHMM RG 15.007M, Reel 72, Folder 727.

⁸⁸ *Halder War Diaries*, 23 June 1941, pg. 414-15.

encountered steadily grew above standard pre-invasion estimates. Kinzel's view of the enemy situation remained glowingly optimistic, however. By July 8th, a little over two weeks into the campaign, FHO claimed that the *Wehrmacht* had already eliminated 89 of 164 enemy rifle divisions and 20 of 29 armored divisions. More importantly, Kinzel flatly stated that the Soviet Union would not be able to replace these units, especially the armored divisions, due to a general "lack of officers, specialists, and artillery materiel." Most remarkably, FHO declared that all three German Army groups had achieved tactical and numerical superiority across the entire front (or in the case of Army Group South, would very soon), even accounting for the Red Army units still in reserve.⁸⁹ Halder and Kinzel's near euphoric attitude in the early days of July was not shared by Germany's allies, however, with both Italian and Japanese military officials noting that the invasion was already proceeding more slowly than expected while encountering a greater degree of resistance.⁹⁰ Combat reports from the first week's fighting acknowledged this while reinforcing the assumed racial characteristics of the Red Army, however, as Halder noted that the Russians were tenaciously "fighting to the last man," with the "Mongolians" especially resorting to "treacherous methods" in such efforts.⁹¹

As the invasion successfully progressed, the realization that the Red Army was larger than previously expected, with deeper reserves and better weapons, gradually eroded the pervasive optimism of the German High Command and General Staff. On July 17th, Army Group Center Commander Fedor von Bock recorded in his diary that Canaris

⁸⁹ *Halder War Diaries*, 8 July 1941, pg. 457-58.

⁹⁰ Stahel, 229-231. Such officials, including Count Ciano of Italy and the Japanese Naval attaché in Rome, Capt. Mitsunobu Tōyō, both expressed immediate skepticism that the German assault could ever accomplish its goals, given the vast spaces of the Soviet Union and the recent economic and industrial development East of the Urals.

⁹¹ *Halder War Diaries*, 29 June 1941, pg. 433.

was increasingly pessimistic about the Soviet invasion, in fact “fear[ing] the worst.”⁹² At the Führer’s Headquarters (FHQ) in Rastenberg in late July, Canaris himself noted the increasingly gloomy mood greeting the Soviet Union’s resilience. Although barely a month into the campaign, the much-predicted internal collapse of the Soviet Union in the face of the relentless German onslaught had simply not materialized, confounding all expectations at FHQ. In fact, as Halder’s own diary noted, the general state of the campaign was marked by *more aggressive* Soviet counter-attacks, with more tanks and planes, not less, in spite of FHO’s repeated assurances that the enemy was no longer capable of maintaining an organized front.⁹³

Even when faced with reports from the from the *Abwehr*, FHO, Halder, and others in the High Command continued to maintain that a complete German victory was nearly at hand. *Abwehr* intelligence reports from the summer reproduced information gathered from friendly diplomatic legations and the Foreign Office that contradicted the firm conviction at FHQ that a final push on Moscow would topple the Soviet Union. Passing along information received from the German Legation in Sofia, the *Abwehr* intelligence summary of 15 August, for example, noted that the German invasion had produced an atmosphere of unwavering “iron discipline” in Moscow, and had united Russians in “a defensive struggle of Slavdom” against the German aggressor. There was no indication that Stalin’s government had any plans to abandon the capital, and the report predicted that heavier bombing or even the capture of Moscow would in no way ameliorate the Soviet will to fight. Instead, the report argued that even radical German successes at the front would increase the bitterness of the Russian people toward Germany while bringing

⁹² Stahel, *Operation Barbarossa*, 253.

⁹³ *Halder War Diaries*, 26 July 1941, pg. 485.

victory no closer.⁹⁴ In spite of these reports and others describing a further newly created 23 Red Army divisions deployed at the front, FHO, Halder, and Jodl continued to maintain that the Soviet Union was nearing exhaustion of its manpower and supply reserves.⁹⁵ This was not the case. Even so, the *Abwehr*'s record reporting on Soviet matters was not separate from FHO's, as FHO merely processed and summarized information produced from the *Abwehr* and other sources. A favorite complaint at FHQ, for example, was the *Abwehr*'s failure to properly account for post-1938 Soviet rearmament, particularly developments in new weaponry. Overhearing Hitler's grumbling that, had he been properly briefed on the Soviet T-34 tank he never would have ordered the invasion, Canaris ordered his subordinates to construct a dossier proving that the *Abwehr* had certainly completed its due diligence and provided ample warning of the present problems.⁹⁶ Whether or not such proof of *Abwehr* proficiency in scouting Soviet weaponry was delivered to Hitler (or even existed in sufficient quantities as to fill a dossier) remains unclear, but, as we have seen, FHO had no knowledge of the T-34, and FHO received its technical information from the *Abwehr*.

Fully accepting the established wisdom that a rapid victory over the Soviet Union was inevitable, *Fremde Heere Ost* had not considered it necessary to calculate the total manpower strength of the Soviet Union or the Red Army's capacity for regeneration before the German setbacks outside of Moscow in the winter of 1941-42. Prior to

⁹⁴ OKW Amt Ausland/Abwehr Abt. Ausland Nr. 01368/41 geh. I "Außen- und militärpolitische Nachrichten," 15 August 1941, pg. 1. NACP RG 242, T-77, Roll 933, file OKW/486. Even these sorts of report were increasingly rare in *Abwehr* intelligence digests after June 1941, however, which were primarily concerned with reproducing short diplomatic cables on neutrality questions and Russian/Allied overtures to neutral powers in the Balkans and Middle East.

⁹⁵ *GSWW* Vol. VI, 581-87.

⁹⁶ Michael Müller, *Canaris: The Life and Death of Hitler's Spymaster* trans. Geoffrey Brooks (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2007), 206.

February 1942, FHO under Kinzel did not consult the 1939 Soviet census or attempt to systematically interrogate Soviet prisoners on the subject of Soviet age-cohorts and their scheduled call-ups.⁹⁷ This lack of understanding of how and when Soviet reserve contingents were mustered and trained resulted in further embarrassing mistakes. FHO's assessments of Soviet strength on December 1st and 4th first argued that the Red Army had no reserves left and then claimed, as a result, that the Red Army was incapable of launching any type of significant counteroffensives around Moscow. Overall, the Red Army remained an institution "unsuitable for modern warfare," in the opinion of FHO, much as it had been in 1940.⁹⁸ The Soviet counter-attacks in the Battle of Moscow deemed materially and culturally impossible by FHO began at 3:00 a.m. on December 5th.

Kinzel and FHO's first efforts to reckon with the state of Red Army reinforcements and replacements in February 1942 continued to find cause for optimism, in spite of the tenacious Soviet resistance around Moscow. In short, FHO judged Red Army reserves as very poor in quality. The Soviet deployment of former deserters, boys close to 18 and men over 46, along with increasing employment of women and "foreigners (Chinese)" as support personnel, indicated that the Red Army was in dire straits indeed.⁹⁹ Soviet prisoner statements described terrible conditions at the front and displayed a "depressed indifference and a state of helplessness," worsened by poor diet, extreme cold, dispiritedness over the minimal amounts of British and American aid, and overall exhaustion. Although FHO conceded, "No signs of 'collapse' are present," the

⁹⁷ *GSWW* Vol. VI, 884.

⁹⁸ *GSWW* Vol. VI, 884.-89. Thomas 279-280. On impressions from 1940, see Hillgruber, "German Military Leaders," 179-80.

⁹⁹ H 3/596 Kinzel, "Russischer Kräfteinsatz Stand 25.2.42," 26 February 1942, pg. 2-3. NACP RG 242, T-78, Roll 486.

report emphasized how the brutality of total war was taking a toll, undermining the innate “hardness” of the ethnic Russians forces. This manifested itself at the front through a decisive change in Soviet tactics; the rate of counter-attacks had tapered off and had shifted from general assaults to “tactical” strikes against vulnerable portions of the German lines. To the extent that these Soviet units were offering spirited resistance (driving the Germans back in spite of their well-documented inferiority!), the culprit was the “stiffening” reaction against overly brutal Party-backed occupation policies that caused the Soviet forces to fight on “only with the courage of despair.” The remedy was not more propaganda but an unlikely “change in the facts” on the Eastern Front. Even so, FHO concluded that the poor quality of Soviet reserves would result in a further near-term decline in Red Army strength since they were likely poached from other sectors of the front.¹⁰⁰ Needless to say, FHO was optimistic about the *Wehrmacht*’s prospects going forward in spite of the recent entry of the United States into the war as well.

* * * *

On November 23rd, 1941, Franz Halder accepted the new reality of the military situation on the Eastern Front, writing, “Despite our extraordinary performance, we shall not be able to totally destroy the enemy this year. Given the vastness of this country and the inexhaustibleness of the people, we cannot be totally certain of success.” Curiously, however, he continued, “We knew that from the beginning.”¹⁰¹ The question of what exactly Halder, the General Staff, *Fremde Heere Ost*, and the German intelligence

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 5-6. This tactical shift was not occasioned by Soviet mental weaknesses or poor reserves, but rather by broad changes in Soviet doctrine that re-established concentration of force as a priority. Such massing of Soviet units for attack on a limited section of the front had the dual advantage of offering better chances of success and tricking German commanders into thinking that they were massively outnumbered along the entire front. See Glantz, *When Titans Clashed*, 99-101.

¹⁰¹ *Halder War Diaries*, 23 November 1941, pg. 563.

services more generally “knew” about the Red Army would have a profound impact on the outcome of the campaign. In practice, their knowledge was not so much discrete as it was an over-arching set of ingrained attitudes and assumptions bolstered by data that confirmed them and unaltered by facts that did not. Contrary to Halder’s written statements and postwar expressions of doubt, the majority of his reports and those of his intelligence service reveal a General Staff and FHO convinced of German economic, military, cultural, and ethnic superiority over their Soviet opponents.

Halder and the General Staff’s operational assumptions and Kinzel’s intelligence reports generally demonstrated an assumed, rather than actual, knowledge of Soviet combat capabilities, organized around traditional anti-Russian prejudices. The Soviet Union was a tottering colossus, an ethnic mish-mash of exotic Asiatic brutality and Slavic stubbornness and passivity. Its soldiers were fierce defenders incapable of operating offensively. Its leaders were cunning, but not clever or imaginative. Most importantly, no matter its vast size or resources, the Russian state and its army was at all points qualitatively inferior to the smaller number of men, planes, and tanks the *Wehrmacht* could field. As the United States would find out after 1945, this “knowledge” of the Red Army, its tactics and operational tendencies did not appreciably change after Halder elevated Reinhard Gehlen and sacked Kinzel in the spring of 1942, but continued to color German intelligence reports on the Red Army to the end of the war and beyond.

CHAPTER 3

Counting Out the United States: 1939-1941

I must pay tribute to the merits of our last Chargé d’Affaires at Washington, the Councillor of the Embassy, Thomsen, and also to those of Bötticher, our Military Attaché. These two men showed them [in the United States] that they were diplomats who could not be bluffed. The reports which they sent us must be regarded as models of their kind, for they invariably gave us a perfectly clear picture of the situation. I intend not only to give immediate proof of my particular appreciation of these two men, but also, once the war is over, to confide to them missions worthy of their capabilities. I shall hold Thomsen, in particular, for a post of exceptional difficulty. – Hitler monologue, midday, 18 May 1942¹

A popular vignette in the secondary literature on Nazi Germany, cited to illustrate Hitler’s fanaticism and general disdain for intelligence reports, concerns a January 1939 conversation in Berlin between the dictator and Gen Friedrich von Bötticher, his military attaché at the German Embassy in Washington. According to Bötticher’s postwar interrogations, Hitler spent much of the meeting (a yearly luncheon with the military attachés) subjecting Ernst Köstring to a lengthy monologue on Russian affairs before finally turning his attention to Bötticher. The Führer then allegedly posed a single question, asking Bötticher whether or not it was true that Roosevelt had Jewish relatives, only to completely ignore Bötticher’s debunking of that particular Nazi obsession.² In Bötticher’s postwar apologia, this event aptly captured Hitler’s contempt for unbiased intelligence experts who had the temerity to question his preconceived notions and served as a broader indictment of the political failings of the Nazi dictatorship. This chapter argues, however, that German intelligence reporting on the United States mirrored the

¹ H.R. Trevor-Roper, ed. *Hitler’s Table Talk 1941-1944: His Private Conversations*, New ed. (New York: Enigma Books, 2008), 369.

² “State Department Special Interrogation Mission – Friedrich von Boetticher,” 6 September 1945, pg. 2. NACP RG 498, Entry UD-287, Box 1344.

ideological misconceptions underpinning Hitler's own views on America. Reports from Embassy officials such as Bötticher but also from the RSHA and *Abwehr* (since generally *Abwehr* intelligence digests merely reproduced Foreign Office and military attaché reports under their own headings from 1939-1941) grossly mischaracterized the American political scene. These reports continuously emphasized the malevolent influence of American Jewry in all affairs of state and the personal animus of a fiendish Roosevelt for Germany. These political assessments served to overshadow and undermine the otherwise accurate technical reporting on the vast economic and military potential of the United States.

Much has been written on the relationship between Nazi ideology, German intelligence reporting on the United States, and Hitler's policy decisions. Historians such as Andreas Hillgruber, Ian Kershaw, and Adam Tooze have identified the importance of Hitler's preoccupation with the economic might of the United States and the central role America played in Hitler's strategic deliberations in the summer of 1940.³ Others, most importantly Gerhard Weinberg, have consistently argued that Hitler's decision to declare war on the United States was merely a twofold demonstration of the limitations of Nazi ideology (America was a degenerate, mongrelized, and therefore weak state that need not be taken too seriously) and the general incompetence of German intelligence operations

³ Andreas Hillgruber, *Hitlers Strategie: Politik und Kriegführung 1940-1941* (Bernard & Graefe Verlag, 1965), Ian Kershaw, *Fateful Choices: Ten Decisions That Changed the World, 1940-1941* (New York, Penguin Press 2007), Adam Tooze, *Wages of Destruction: The Making and Breaking of the Nazi Economy* (New York: Penguin Press, 2007). Tooze goes farther than Hillgruber or Kershaw in tracing Hitler's obsession with America back further into the 1920s, but the key point in all three cases (and others) is that Hitler was fully aware of the economic might of the United States, and factored this into his plans, as in the much-explored contention that the German invasion of the Soviet Union proceeded two or more years before it was originally planned in order to accommodate the increasingly transparent hostility of the United States to Germany. If the Soviet Union could be quickly destroyed in 1941, then Britain (which had its hopes placed in the Soviet Union and the United States) would quickly fall as well, leaving the inevitable confrontation with the United States more manageable.

against the United States.⁴ The multivolume series on the Second World war produced by the Research Office for Military History (*Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt*) in Potsdam argues that Hitler reckoned some sort of war with the United States inevitable, but German policy endeavored to push this conflict as far into the future as possible. Apart from its analysis of German operations against the Soviet Union, however, these volumes do not examine the information on the United States at Hitler's disposal prior to the outbreak of war in 1941.⁵ Early works by Saul Friedländer and Alton Frye evaluated the role of Nazi ideology in the German Foreign Office's reports from the Washington Embassy and its pro-Nazi propaganda activities in the Western Hemisphere as a part of Hitler's desire to keep the United States out of the war, but relied primarily on the published *Documents on German Foreign Policy* series. They did not take the activities of other German intelligence offices into account. Furthermore, in their close examination of the deterioration of German-American relations, these works fail to recognize the broader ambitions of German intelligence in the United States.⁶ Recent

⁴ James Compton, *The Swastika and the Eagle: Hitler, the United States, and the Origins of World War II* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1967); Gerhard Weinberg, "Hitler's Image of the United States," *The American Historical Review* 69, no. 4 (July: 1964), 1006-1021; Gerhard Weinberg, *World In the Balance: Behind the Scenes of World War II* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1981), 53-95; Gerhard Weinberg, *A World at Arms: A Global History of World War II* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 1994) esp. 86-87 and 238-39. This interpretation, which also finds some echoes in Kershaw's work, is principally supported by Hitler's early statements in *Mein Kampf* and *The Second Book*, in addition to the usual slate of postwar apologist memoirs, which often featured Hitler's decision to declare war on the United States (without consulting his military experts) as important evidence of his insanity or ineptitude. For scholarship on the ineptitude of German intelligence in the United States, see Hans L. Trefousse, "The Failure of German Intelligence in the United States, 1935-1945," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 42, no. 1 (June 1955) 84-100; Thomas H. Etzold, "The Futility Factor: German Information Gathering in the United States," *Military Affairs* 39, no. 2 (April 1975), 77-82; David Kahn, *Hitler's Spies: German Military Intelligence in World War II* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1978), esp. 12-26.

⁵ See especially Horst Boog et. al. *Germany and the Second World War, Volume 6: The Global War*, ed. Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, trans. Ewald Osers et. al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 112-124. Hereafter *GSWW*, VI.

⁶ Saul Friedländer, *Prelude to Downfall: Hitler and the United States, 1939-1941*, trans. Aline B. and Alexander Werth (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967); Alton Frye, *Nazi Germany and the American Hemisphere, 1933-1941* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1967).

works that endeavor to “contextualize” the rabid anti-Semitism of German intelligence officials in the United States through a near-exclusive focus on their allegedly competent reporting on technical economic data miss the mark.⁷

The figures Hitler and his military staff received on American rearmament were not delivered in statistical tables, but contextualized by *political* evaluations of the United States that effectively narrowed the parameters for extracting meaning from the American rearmament data. Jewish power and the subversive activities of its discontents, isolationism, labor unrest, and international tensions between the United States and Japan served as dynamic forces undermining U.S. war potential. My argument on the German intelligence service reporting in America supports Klaus Fischer’s recent analysis of Hitler’s dual perception of the United States as an economic colossus unable to reach its full potential because of its political and racial shortcomings.⁸ It was possible for the German intelligence services to at once recognize the great economic and military potential of the United States while at the same time downplaying its practical effects in accordance with their highly politicized denigration of American society.

The information provided by the Foreign Office, RSHA, and *Abwehr* was at once incisive and irrational, a mixed bag of astute observation and woefully mistaken interpretations. Unlike Great Britain, the United States did not find itself at war with Germany until December of 1941. Unlike in the Soviet Union from 1939-1941, German diplomats in the United States enjoyed the privilege of open access to American political

⁷ Alfred M. Beck, *Hitler’s Ambivalent Attaché: Lt. Gen. Friedrich von Boetticher in America, 1933-1941* (Washington D.C.: Potomac Books, 2005). In this respect, Saul Friedlander’s early work on Hitler, the German Embassy in Washington, and the United States, which grounds the reports from the United States in their ideological context, remains all the more relevant today, in spite of its primary focus on Hitler and policymaking in Berlin as opposed to a thorough analysis of the intelligence reports themselves.

⁸ Klaus Fischer, *Hitler and America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011).

life, and were able to send a blizzard of reports to Berlin on a variety of subjects. Moreover, and perhaps most significantly, Hitler was actually interested in the reports produced by German diplomatic officials in the United States, particularly those of Bötticher.⁹ Indeed, as a military attaché in the most important neutral country in wartime, Bötticher's reports, and many others co-signed by *Charge d' Affairs* Hans Thomsen, went directly to Keitel and Hitler at OKW.¹⁰ As a result, until the opening of hostilities, the reports on the United States from the Foreign Office, specifically the German Embassy in Washington, enjoyed a greater degree of circulation and respect than those of competing agencies. Indeed, Thomsen and Bötticher were able to parlay Hitler, Keitel, Ribbentrop, and other high-ranking officials' interest into a special institutional prominence in reporting on the United States, insisting that *Abwehr* and RSHA agents respect their supremacy in America and refrain from embarrassing acts of sabotage or espionage that could compromise the fragile state of German-American relations.

This circumstance, along with the vigilance of the FBI, was reflected in the intelligence reports themselves. Indeed, the RSHA and *Abwehr* spent much of their time and resources setting up networks in Latin America that would still be able to function in the event of war with the United States, while reeling from the consistent penetration and destruction of information networks in the United States by the FBI.¹¹ While the RSHA

⁹ The fact that the Führer actually singled out Thomsen and Bötticher for praise in his "table-talks," a rarity for members of the diplomatic corps, was itself significant. See also Fischer, 30 and Beck, 149-50.

¹⁰ Kahn, 80, Beck 111-12; 149-50. The German Ambassador in the United States, Hans Heinrich Dieckhoff, was recalled from his post in late 1938 after Roosevelt recalled the American ambassador in Germany in response to the *Kristallnacht* pogrom. So from 1939-1941, there was no German ambassador in America, as Thomsen and Bötticher served as de-facto co-ambassadors (a somewhat awkward arrangement since Bötticher outranked Thomsen), while Dieckhoff continued to file reports from Berlin as well.

¹¹ There were, of course, *Abwehr* and SD intelligence networks and agents in the United States as well, but they had considerable difficulties overcoming FBI surveillance, and were more important in the latter phases of the war than from 1939-1941. On the FBI's success in destroying German intelligence networks

still reported on events in the United States through close analysis of newspapers and technical journals, the *Abwehr* took to simply summarizing Foreign Office dispatches in their daily intelligence digests that featured information on the United States, occasionally supplementing it with reports from the few competent *Abwehr* agents working in America. Significantly, however, although the *Abwehr* political intelligence digests effectively reproduced the somewhat bizarre interpretations of U.S. politics characteristic of Thomsen and Bötticher's dispatches from Washington, the *Abwehr* generally edited out the anti-Semitic invective that flowed freely throughout the Foreign Office reports. Although noteworthy perhaps in assessing the *Abwehr*'s attitude toward anti-Jewish policy (see Chapter 4), this editing in no way inhibited the flow of political narratives from German diplomats in the United States to Hitler and his advisors. Because of the largely redundant nature of *Abwehr* political and economic reporting on the United States from 1939-1941, their reports will not appear as extensively in this chapter as they have in others.¹²

Right for the Wrong Reasons: the “Un-Neutrality” of the United States

German bureaucrats tasked with providing information on the United States were not naïve or in any way oblivious to the anti-German tenor of American political discourse. They were adept at recognizing and describing the hostility of the United

in the United States and Latin America, see Raymond J. Batvinis, *Hoover's Secret War Against Axis Spies: FBI Counterespionage during World War II* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2014). On the *Abwehr*'s efforts to construct espionage nets in Latin America, see Thomas D. Schoonover, *Hitler's Man in Havana: Heinz Lüning and Nazi Espionage in Latin America* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2008) and Frye, 101-140. In the internal activity reports of RHSA VI G2 (USA) for 1940, the counterintelligence operations of the FBI and the subsequent difficulties for the RSHA's agent networks, featured prominently. “Rechenschaftsbericht über nachrichtendienstliche Arbeit des Referates VI G2 für das Jahr 1940,” [undated]. USHMM RG 14.016 M: BAB R 58/587.

¹² A complete run of these “Außen- und militärpolitische Nachrichten” reports from August 22, 1939 to May 26, 1942 exist in OKW/483-487, NACP RG 242, T-77, Roll 932-933.

States government (even in House and Senate isolationist circles) towards Germany and its sympathy for the plight of the European democracies. At the same time, German Embassy and Consulate personnel in Berlin and America alike generally attributed this anti-German turn to the malign influence of Jews and a fanatical personal hatred of Germany borne by President Roosevelt. Thus the astute and generally correct observation that “American neutrality” was a fiction was underpinned by assumptions and invective characteristic of the Propaganda Ministry’s *Parole der Woche* or the *Völkischer Beobachter*. The power of American Jewry, coupled with Roosevelt’s unyielding personal commitment to destroy Germany, could not be overcome. American intervention in Europe, first economically, but ultimately militarily, was inevitable.

It was certainly not a distortion of reality for German officials to bemoan the “un-neutrality” of President Roosevelt or the United States policy more generally in the late 1930s, especially after the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939.¹³ Roosevelt’s first “Fireside Chat” after Britain and France declared war on Germany on the evening of September 3rd found the President promising that the United States “will remain a neutral nation,” while emphatically qualifying “I cannot ask that every American remain neutral in thought as well...Even a neutral cannot be asked to close his mind or close his conscience.” This markedly contrasted with President Woodrow Wilson’s famed appeals for American citizens to remain “impartial in thought as well as action.”¹⁴ Roosevelt’s

¹³ Indeed, the word “un-neutrality” became popular in Foreign Office and RSHA reports that documented the relentlessly pro-Allied stance of the United States in economic, political and military affairs. The Foreign Office itself went so far as to produce an entire dossier at the Understate Secretary level titled “The Un-Neutrality of the United States, 1939-1941,” with numerous reports from Washington DC closely chronicling the extent of American aid to Britain, and other provocative actions and statements by Roosevelt. It is filed in the Berlin Archives of the German Foreign Office as PAAA R 29938.

¹⁴ Quoted in David M. Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 426-27.

words and deeds alike in the following months reflected his personal sympathies for the victims of German aggression, much to the consternation of widespread isolationist opinion in the United States. In public, he quickly pushed to amend the 1937 Neutrality Act to remove the embargo of weapons sales to belligerents in an effort to widen supply channels to the democracies. He argued for increased military spending appropriations and expansion of industrial capacity in the service of rearmament, calling for the construction of a “two ocean navy” and production outputs of 50,000 planes per year. Privately, by June 1940 Roosevelt imagined the United States as a full participant in the air war in Europe by the end of the year.¹⁵ After his 1940 reelection Roosevelt would famously speak of the United States serving as an “Arsenal of Democracy,” trading rights to bases in British imperial possessions for arms, and implementing Lend-Lease. American actions in the summer and fall of 1941 included the occupation of Iceland in order to better protect Allied shipping lanes in July, the joint release of what came to be known as the Atlantic Charter with Britain in August, and increasingly frequent shooting encounters with the *Luftwaffe* and *Kriegsmarine* in the Atlantic from September 1941 forward.¹⁶

None of these actions, or countless other perceived aggressions on Roosevelt’s part, went unnoticed by the RSHA, *Abwehr*, or Foreign Office. A particularly astute RSHA V-Mann drew parallels in April 1940 between American and Italian foreign

¹⁵ Kennedy, 450.

¹⁶ Tooze 489-90. For thorough overviews of Roosevelt and the United States’ pro-British and anti-German policies in the period 1939-1941, see Kennedy, 426-515; George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations Since 1776* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008) 517-37, *GSWW* VI: 11-26, and Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979). On Roosevelt’s domestic and foreign policy struggles with the isolationists, see Wayne S. Cole, *Roosevelt and the Isolationists, 1932-1945* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1983).

policy, in that both powers were “formally neutral” but openly favored and materially assisted one side over the other.¹⁷ An Amt VI report from August 1940 lamented “all U.S. measures [are] directed against German interests,” and that there were few prospects of the U.S.-German relationship improving.¹⁸ The fact that the RSHA managed to infiltrate the American Embassy in Berlin through a pro-Nazi German emigrant, and received daily reports of its activities, merely reinforced the already existing impression that the United States was irrevocably hostile to Germany.¹⁹ Besides providing an overwhelming flow of dispatches from the United States documenting the hostility of the American government toward Germany, the Foreign Office went so far as to compile extensive lists of unfair and anti-German American governmental transgressions and press reports.²⁰ *Abwehr* intelligence digests extensively reproduced these Foreign Office reports from the United States for military intelligence and operational and economic planning staffs, endorsing the Foreign Office’s conclusions.²¹ Where the German intelligence organizations erred, specifically in the case of the Foreign Office and the RSHA, was in attributing the American government’s manifestly anti-German attitude to

¹⁷ RSHA VI, “Auslandslagebericht,” 8 April 1940, pg. 7. USHMM RG 15.007M Reel 72, Folder 728.

¹⁸ RSHA VI, “Auslands-Meldungen,” 27 August 1940, pg. 6-7. USHMM RG 15.007M Reel 71, Folder 723.

¹⁹ Katrin Paehler, “Espionage, Ideology, and Personal Politics: The Making and Unmaking of a Nazi Foreign Intelligence Service,” (PhD diss., American University, 2004), 224.

²⁰ Woermann, “Aufzeichnung über unneutrales Verhalten der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika,” 3 August 1940; Sallet, “Unneutrales Verhalten der Amerikanische Presse,” 1 August 1940; Freytag, “Aufzeichnung- Unneutrale beleidigende herausfordernde Reden des Präsidenten Roosevelt,” 9 December 1941. PAAA R 29938 (Büro des Understaatsekretärs) Unneutrales Verhalten der V. St.v. Amerika vom November 1939 bis Dezember 1941.

²¹ These were occasionally supplemented by “agent reports” from *Abwehr* personnel operating in the United States or abroad.

the machinations of American Jewry and Roosevelt's fanatical personal obsession with the destruction of Germany, ideas that both mirrored and reinforced Hitler's own.²²

Reports from Foreign Office consulates and missions throughout the United States had long served to reinforce the impression of outsized Jewish influence in America.²³ Secret FBI recordings of German telephone calls to and from the Washington Embassy in 1941 revealed flourishing anti-Semitism, even among support personnel, such as chauffeurs and secretaries.²⁴ For German Consul in Chicago Wilhelm Tannenberg (later First Secretary in the Washington Embassy), in order to fully understand Jewish power in the United States, one needed only to look to the local movie house. Prompted by a *Chicago Daily Tribune* advertisement for Balaban & Katz, the most important movie theater company in the mid-West with some 100 theaters in Indiana and Illinois, the consulate's office filed a report in July 1936 on the disturbing implications of this Jewish-owned business' success. As was customary, Balaban & Katz possessed the right of preapproval for content shown in its theaters, which included films, advertisements, and newsreels. An independent board of 20 men and women, for which the content was prescreened, made such decisions. According to the report, it was well

²² Again, the *Abwehr* reports generally edited out the anti-Semitic invective from the Foreign Office in Washington, but still endorsed the picture of an evil cadre of advisors around Roosevelt as bent on the destruction of Germany. For a variety of factors, including Hitler's personal regard for Bötticher's reports and the fact that Foreign Office and attaché dispatches reached OKW before the clearly regurgitated *Abwehr* digests (each subsection of every report provided attribution to the relevant source of information – Foreign Office, *Abwehr* agent, wire service, etc.), the *Abwehr* reports were easily, and not incorrectly, dismissed as offering nothing substantially new on the United States. After December 1941 of course, as the Foreign Office's special position in the United States disappeared, these reports became more useful, but that is beyond the scope of this chapter.

²³ In 1937, for instance, the Foreign Office compiled an extraordinarily detailed report on the history, demographics, and influence of Jews on daily life in the United States, which was shared with Himmler and the SS. See "Das Judentum in den Vereinigten Staaten vom Amerika (1937), NACP RG 242, T-175, Roll 658.

²⁴ Norman J.W. Goda, "True Confessions: Allied Intelligence, German Prisoners, Nazi Murders," in *Secret Intelligence and the Holocaust: Collected Essays from the Colloquium at the City University of New York*, ed. David Bankier (New York: Enigma Books, 2006), 167.

known that three-quarters of this board were Jewish, presumably reflecting the will of its Jewish owners to impose Jewish values on American cinema. The German Consulate was perplexed that Jews could so publicly admit to such censorship while expecting “no adverse consequences” from non-Jews, let alone capture 75 per cent of the movie theater grosses in Chicago and the surrounding suburbs. The fact that Americans did not care about these displays of Jewish power only indicated that healthy anti-Semitic responses were being stifled by Jewish propaganda. The report lamented, “Tolerance of all faiths has become the buzzword.” Open displays of anti-Semitism had thus been marginalized through “fear of the economic power of Judaism and fear of being branded as intolerant and un-American.”²⁵

Foreign Office representatives in the United States also kept a close eye on communist movements, its linkages to American Jewry, and to Roosevelt’s government in the 1930s. In December 1937 the German Consulate in Cleveland, Ohio, reported on the worrying trend of increased strike activity, as “liberal-communist elements” had infiltrated the American Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) and were causing waves of massive strikes throughout the state. They were also working to incite the local black populations into demonstrating against the unrest as well by utilizing brochures “tailored to the mentality of the Negro.” None of this represented particularly outlandish misrepresentation of American labor unrest in the industrial heartland during the later

²⁵ Worse still, a recent political rally for the Republican Vice Presidential Candidate Col. Frank Knox in Chicago had prominently featured the blessing of a local Rabbi. Although some courageous Americans battled against Jewish influence, this was out of “personal antipathy” rather than “an understanding of the demoralizing effects of Judaism on the national community.” Unfortunately, these people tended to be cranks, whose other activities (including strident anti-government rhetoric, secret societies, and lynch law) marginalized them from the rest of American society. Tannenber, Deutsches Generalkonsulat Chicago Nr. 189/36, “Jüdischer Einfluss in dem Vereinigten Staaten,” 31 July 1936. PAAA R 105015 (Politisches Abteilung IX-Po36) Judenfrage (USA) 1936-1943.

phases of the Great Depression. Off the mark, however, was the report's attribution of the communist-inspired agitation, strikes, and racial unrest to the active work of the federal Works Progress Administration (WPA), which tied together communist agitation and government activity.²⁶ Equally bizarre were assertions from Polish sources passed through the German Embassy in Tokyo to Berlin in February 1938 that the Comintern had established some sort of doppelganger communist-run naval academy outside of Washington for the purpose of luring in and converting young naval recruits to the Bolshevist cause.²⁷ Although the German Embassy in Tokyo had some doubts about the veracity of the report decrying American "negligence" in putting down the communist threat, they flagged it as important and passed it along to Berlin nonetheless. While these examples did not explicitly mention Jews as drivers of American communism, numerous other messages did make that connection. A report from April 1938, for instance, explained that a group of "half-Jews" in Hollywood wanted to use their family connections in Germany to smuggle anti-German propaganda of "Jewish communist tendencies" into the country. The German Consulate in Los Angeles duly reported the names and addresses of these individuals' German relatives so that the Nazi security services could respond appropriately back home.²⁸

²⁶ Deutsches Konsulat Cleveland, Ohio, "Kommunismus in Ohio," 1 December 1937. PAAA R 104424 (Politische Abteilung V-Po19) Sozialismus, Kommunismus, Bolschewismus etc. in den USA, 1937-1939. The same file contains numerous similar reports from the German Consulate in Seattle, which was also a hotbed of communist activity.

²⁷ Deutsche Botschaft Tokyo to Berlin, "Außerungen des hiesigen Polnischen Botschafters zur leichtfertigen Haltung der Vereinigten Staaten gegenüber der bolschewistischen Gefahr," 23 February 1938. PAAA R 104424 (Politische Abteilung V-Po19) Sozialismus, Kommunismus, Bolschewismus etc. in den USA, 1937-1939.

²⁸ Deutsches Konsulat Los Angeles, "Kommunistische Propagandabroschüren und deren Einschmuggelung nach Deutschland," 13 April 1938. PAAA R 104424 (Politische Abteilung V-Po19) Sozialismus, Kommunismus, Bolschewismus etc. in den USA, 1937-1939.

Secretary of State Cordell Hull's proclamation wishing American Jews all the best for their new year celebrations in September 1938 prompted a report from the German Embassy in Washington questioning the deeper significance of Hull's address, since it could not be established that Hull offered similar encouragement to "the orthodox or oriental religious communities" in their new year celebrations.²⁹ Following *Kristallnacht*, the German consulate in Los Angeles reported on the machinations of Jewish Hollywood moguls and American big business to improve the situation of international Jewry through aiding Jewish emigration from Germany.³⁰ Such rescue efforts in response to German persecution merely served to confirm the impression of the exceptional influence of Jewish business leaders in America. Roosevelt's decision to recall the American Ambassador in Berlin following the pogrom hardly served to dispel the German Embassy in Washington's preoccupation with Jewish power. Instead, from the perspective of Ambassador Dieckhoff, the most unfortunate aspect of the pogrom in Germany was that it strengthened the hand of the Jews in the United States, since, in the words of an American acquaintance, "It is generally felt, even among well-wishers of Germany, that the recent events are the best thing that could have happened to the Jews because they arouse universal sympathy, and the worst thing that could have happened to Germany."³¹ In short, the violence and chaos of the pogrom made many potential anti-Semites nervous. As Dieckhoff cabled Berlin on November 15th,

²⁹ Kanzler (for Thomsen), "Glückwünsche Staatsekretäre Hull aus Anlass des jüdischen Neujahrfestes," 24 September 1938. PAAA R 105015 (Politisches Abteilung IX-Po36) Judenfrage (USA) 1936-1943.

³⁰ Gissling (Los Angeles) to German Embassy Washington, "Plan der Anseidlung von Juden in Niederkalifornien eine amerikanische Grundstuecksspekulation," 17 November 1938. PAAA R 105015 (Politisches Abteilung IX-Po36) Judenfrage (USA) 1936-1943.

³¹ Dieckhoff to Berlin, November 15th, 1938. *Documents on German Foreign Policy, Series D, Vol. IV: The Aftermath of Munich, October 1938-March 1939* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1951): Doc. 501. Hereafter *DGFP* Series D, Vol. IV.

The good prospects for a gradual spread of anti-Semitism have suffered a serious setback as a result of the Grünspan incidents; even the most bitter anti-Semites are anxious to dissociate themselves from methods of this kind. Yesterday in an old Protestant church in Massachusetts they went so far as to have a Rabbi preach for the first time, departing from a 300-year-old tradition, in order to show that in a situation like the present they stand by the Jews. This is perhaps a rather insignificant incident, but is typical of the feeling here.³²

Other such “insignificant incidents,” however, including a request from Reichsmarshall Göring that the Embassy investigate the rumor that American firms were considering firing workers of German origin and hiring Jews to replace them, and Dieckhoff’s reply that he too had read that “the Jewish firm of Macy’s in New York (a large department store) dismissed all employees with German names at the end of November and replaced them with Jews,” continued to preoccupy the German Embassy in Washington over the next month.³³ This exchange was followed by a report from Thomsen blaming the current turbulence in German-American relations on Jewish propaganda, noting that “The President is under strongest pressure from the radical and Jewish circles, which, in view of German measures against Jews and allegedly also in view of the rights and interests of American citizens of Jewish race, as well as discriminating measures against American trade, have demanded reprisals against Germany.” Although there were some American patriots working to counteract these voices calling for an increase in tariffs on German goods to 50 per cent, Thomsen reported that “According to present information it must be assumed that the President...will not shrink from employing the countermeasures demanded of him and

³² Dieckhoff to Weizsäcker, Nov. 15th 1938. *DGFP* Series D, Vol. IV, Doc. 502.

³³ *DGFP* Series D, Vol. IV, Docs. 509-510.

that hence Jewry will attain its object.”³⁴ The American reaction to *Kristallnacht* and reports of Jewish power in the United States served as important contextual background to Hitler’s famed “prophecy” speech of January 30th 1939 that explicitly threatened international Jewry with annihilation should it foment a new world war.³⁵ Both before and after the famed “prophecy” were two separate passages consistent with Foreign Office reports from the United States decrying the existence of “campaign of defamation” of “gigantic Jewish capitalistic propaganda through the press, the radio, and the films” and denigrating “warmongers” such as Duff Cooper and U.S. Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes for their anti-German attitudes.³⁶

In explaining the marked deterioration in American attitudes toward Germany after the German seizure of Czechoslovakia in March 1939, *Charge d’ Affairs* Hans Thomsen (the ranking German official in Washington after the retaliatory November recall of Ambassador Dieckhoff to Berlin) substituted anti-Roosevelt and anti-Semitic invective for reasoned analysis. The American government’s pronounced displeasure at the blatant German violation of the September 1938 Munich agreements signified “ever more clearly that President Roosevelt’s bid for leadership in matters of world politics is aimed at annihilating National Socialist Germany with all means available, and hence at nullifying the New Order in Europe.” Roosevelt’s speech to Congress pledging aid to Europe by “all measures short of war,” was a sham. “On threadbare pretext,” the United

³⁴ Thomsen to Berlin, December 17th, 1938. *DGFP* Series D, Vol. IV, Doc. 512.

³⁵ Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 392. Jeffrey Herf, *The Jewish Enemy: Nazi Propaganda During World War II and the Holocaust* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard university Press, 2006), 51-53. The “prophecy” was repeated in January 1941, and again in August and October, within the explicit context of what Hitler saw as American intransigence. Tooze, 424, 489.

³⁶ Apart from the usual conspiracy theories about Roosevelt’s Jewish advisors, Ickes was presumably singled out for special mention because of his proposal to allow Jewish refugees to relocate to Alaska following *Kristallnacht*. *Speech Delivered by Adolph Hitler Before the German Reichstag on January 30, 1939* (Washington, D.C.: 1939), 43-44; 61-62. The “prophecy” was uttered on pg 49 of the text.

States had already been waging an economic war against Germany for some time, “deliberately disregarding” its own economic interests in the process. Alternatively describing Roosevelt’s latest condemnations of Germany as “presumptuous” and motivated by an “overdose of arrogance,” and “inner weakness and perplexity in the face of the New Order in Europe,” Thomsen argued that Roosevelt was bent on placing America on a war footing by any means necessary, including the “ruthless” use of anti-German propaganda to inflame domestic passions.³⁷ Nor was Roosevelt acting alone in insidiously undermining the naturally isolationist sentiments of the American public. He was “being assisted by those forces which see their triumph, and their business, in the annihilation of Germany.” More specifically, “The propaganda of Britain, Jewry and the Communists in brotherly association [had] succeeded with the means at its disposal for influencing public opinion in press, radio and cinema, in stirring up the American people to a degree which is not even comparable to with the psychosis of the World War years, but far transcends it.” The “mentally dull” American people were susceptible to these slanderous depictions of Germany as the United States’ archenemy because of their complete lack of understanding of European affairs. The ever-dangerous communists (and Jews) who dreamt of fomenting a world war in order to increase American privation and Bolshevize the United States were, as always, “icy cold in their calculations,” and “utilizing the heat of the propaganda against Germany to cook their own soup.” Given

³⁷ Thomsen, “American Foreign Policy: Its Aims and Limitations,” 27 March 1939. *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945, Series D, Vol. VI: The Last Months of Peace, March-August 1939* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1956), Doc. 107. Hereafter *DGFP* Series D, Vol. VI. For earlier report on American reaction to the German invasion of Czechoslovakia, see Doc. 34.

these developments, the outcome 1940 election was looming as more important than ever before.³⁸

The same day, Hitler's former military adjutant Fritz Wiedemann, then serving as General Consul for San Francisco, also penned a memorandum to State Secretary Weizsäcker evaluating the power of Jews in America. Wiedemann stressed that if Germany wished to exert any influence on American policy at all, they need adopt a regional strategy, favoring the West and South in their messaging. This was because, "in the East the Jews govern, so there is nothing to be done there." There was room for maneuver in the American West, however, because patriotic Americans were chafing under the unscrupulous dominance of the Jews, who were making "the same mistakes here that the make everywhere else in the world: When they are in an authoritative position, they employ only those of their own race and throw the others out," and the non-Jewish citizens of Los Angeles had had enough of this nonsense.³⁹ There was much quiet support for German policies outside of Jewish-dominated American business and government circles.

As tensions rose in Europe in May, Thomsen wrote another lengthy memorandum for the Foreign Office on what could be expected from the United States if a war broke out between Britain and Germany. After providing a rather unrestrained analysis of the history of the "so-called Neutrality Act of 1937" which "did not deserve its name," Thomsen moved on to the familiar topic of Roosevelt and his Jewish advisors, who were "imbued with an unbridled hatred of the totalitarian powers." In spite of an isolationist

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Fritz Wiedemann to Weizsäcker, 27 March 1939. *DGFP* Series D, Vol. VI: Doc. 113. This echoed Ribbentrop's own thoughts on the United States' domination by Jews, especially in the Eastern region. See Friedländer, 7. On Wiedemann's fall from grace, see Weinberg, *World in the Balance*, 76-77; Kershaw, *Nemesis*, 105.

Congress bravely fighting for the truly peaceful desires of the American people, Roosevelt and “his Jewish and pro-Semitic confidants in public and behind the scenes” continued to perpetrate a slanderous propaganda campaign against Germany, and longed for the absolute destruction of the totalitarian powers. Faced with this relentless onslaught “fostered by Jewish and clerical circles,” German standing in American public opinion polls was bound to suffer eventually if these actions continued unchecked.⁴⁰ For its part, while omitting the anti-Semitism of the Foreign Office reports, the *Abwehr* summation of the world situation in November 1939 also drew attention to the “unhindered efforts under the influence of the press and embodied in Roosevelt and his circle of friends’ government to develop the mood in the United States in favor of the enemy powers and against Germany,” and the noted the importance of “the Republican opposition and American pacifism” as significant factors blocking the United States’ entry into the war.⁴¹

For his part, Bötticher informed OKW and the German General Staff about Jewish infiltration of the U.S. Army and U.S. politics alike. Summarizing the military implications of Roosevelt’s speech at the July 1940 Democratic Party convention in Chicago, Bötticher argued that Roosevelt’s nomination for a third term foreshadowed further American involvement in the war. Any protests by the Democratic rank and file would “not hamper Roosevelt in his designs,” because, “As the exponent of the Jews, who especially through Freemasonry control the broad masses of the American people, Roosevelt wants England to continue fighting and the war to be prolonged.” Roosevelt’s

⁴⁰ Thomsen, “The Foreign Policy of Roosevelt in the Event of a European War, in particular a War between Germany and Britain,” 17 May 1939. *DGFP*, Series D, Vol. VI: Doc. 403.

⁴¹ OWK A.Ausl./Abw. Nr. 0400/39g.Ausl.I, “Außenpolitische Übersicht: Entwicklung der außenpolitischen Lage im Monat November,” 2 December 1939, pg. 6-7. NACP RG 242, T-77, Roll 932, folder OKW/483.

replacement of the non-interventionist Secretary of War Harry Woodring, who had “rejected Jewish directives,” with the warmonger Henry Stimson in June proved as much. The odious “wire-pullers” surrounding Roosevelt were closely eyeing the development of German military operations against Great Britain in hopes that the English fleet would escape and continue the war from Canada. Much as Great Britain traditionally served as the paymaster of foreign mercenaries to work its will in Europe, the Jewish-backed Roosevelt depended on Great Britain to serve as America’s proxy in the war against Germany. Fortunately, patriotic Americans were fighting this Jewish dominance. In particular, Bötticher continued, “The circle about [Charles] Lindbergh has become aware of these developments and now tries at least to impede the fatal control of American policy by the Jews. Toward [Wendell] Willkie, the candidate of the Republican Party, Lindbergh’s attitude is to wait and see whether Willkie will be able to avoid the bondage of Jewry.”⁴²

In a memorandum on the course of American foreign policy under Roosevelt, exiled Ambassador Dieckhoff offered that Roosevelt’s personal psychology was at the heart of the matter, explaining that “the English ideological and the New York Jewish climates have together provided in Roosevelt from the very outset the predisposition for his negative attitude toward National-Socialist Germany.”⁴³ The only reason why Germany was not already at war with the United States was because of the manifestly pacifist character of U.S. public opinion, which, thankfully, had strong advocates in the isolationist wing of Congress. Foreign policy debates in the United States on how to

⁴² Bötticher to Berlin, “Telegram Nr. 1493,” 20 July 1940. *Documents on German Foreign Policy, Series D, Vol. X: The War Years, June 23 – August 31, 1940* (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1957), Doc. 195. Hereafter *DGFP* Series D, Vol. X.

⁴³ Dieckhoff, “Memorandum,” 29 July 1940. *DGFP* Series D, Vol. X: Doc. 252.

handle the increasing tensions between the Japanese and Great Britain in the Pacific, which could potentially threaten U.S. interests in maintaining the status quo there, were also given an anti-Semitic spin. In early August 1940, the RSHA interpreted widespread lamentations in the American press that Germany was encouraging Japan's aggressive stance as emanating from "New York Jew newspapers," motivated by their partisan desire to "offset the loss of English prestige" in America after the Fall of France.⁴⁴ The following week, the RSHA noted, "The agitation against Germany finds expression everywhere," singling out their favorite British target and tool of Jewish big business Duff Cooper's role in fomenting hate against Germany, which "of course is not perceived as hostile propaganda."⁴⁵

On August 8th, Bötticher described how "key offices" of the American military were in the hands of Jewish interests, with the posts of Secretary of War, Assistant Secretary of War, and Naval Secretary in the hands of "submissive personalities" under the influence of Roosevelt and the "very influential Jewish 'Colonel' Julius Ochs-Adler," recently appointed to the War Department. In other news, American Jews were behaving patriotically while secretly hoping to exploit the debate on universal conscription in hopes of forming a "militarized state, headed by Roosevelt as dictator," in order to "exploit" the new American dictatorship and might of the developing U.S. Army "for Jewish purposes."⁴⁶ The following February, Bötticher described the Lend-Lease authorization before Congress as emanating from "the pen of leading Jewish intimates of

⁴⁴ RSHA VI, "Auslands-Lagebericht," 6 August 1940, pg. 10-11. USHMM RG 15.007M, Reel 72, Folder 728.

⁴⁵ RSHA VI "Auslands-Meldungen," 13 August 1940, pr. 15-16. USHMM RG 15.007M, Reel 71, Folder 723.

⁴⁶ Bötticher, "Telegramm Nr. 1649," 8 August 1940. PAAA R 29938 (Büro des Understaatssekretärs) Unneutrales Verhalten der V.St.v. America vom November 1939 bis Dezember 1941.

the President,” and characterized its eventual passage as signifying that “the Jewish ideology will have prevailed to a very considerable extent in the United States.”⁴⁷

Such reports reinforced the anti-Semitic conspiracy theories of leading Nazi officials. Ribbentrop himself was so convinced that Jews controlled the United States that he endeavored to have Thomsen and other embassy officials appeal directly to American Jews to rein in Roosevelt’s belligerency in the summer of 1941. Although such an appeal was likely to prove futile since Jews the world over were aligned against Germany, Ribbentrop still thought it was at least worth a try. Ribbentrop thus directed Thomsen to remind American Jewry that if the United States found itself in a war, the result would surely be a vast and dictatorial expansion of the American state, resulting in a loss of control of Jewish businesses over the economy and state. Furthermore, the American people would surely understand that Jewish agitation was solely responsible for the United States’ intransigence. Echoing Hitler’s famed “prophecies” about international Jewry being punished for causing the outbreak of a new world war, Ribbentrop posited that “The end of the story will be that one day all the Jews [in America] will be beaten to death.” If the Jews could only understand this, Ribbentrop argued, then perhaps they might temper their warmongering.⁴⁸

Thomsen’s reply mirrored the incoherent contradictions in Ribbentrop’s own ideas that Jews as an all powerful force bent on the destruction of Germany might

⁴⁷ Bötticher, “Telegram Nr. 505,” 25 February 1941. *Documents on German Foreign Policy, Series D, Vol. XII: The War Years: February 1-June 22, 1941* (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1962), Doc. 88. Hereafter *DGFP* Series D, Vol. XII.

⁴⁸ Ribbentrop to Thomsen, Telegram Nr. 696,” 19 July 1941. *Documents on German Foreign Policy, Series D, Vol. XIII: The War Years: June 23-December 11, 1941* (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1954), Doc. 139. Hereafter *DGFP* Series D, Vol. XIII. These sentiments echoed those of anti-Semitic American opponents of the war such as Charles Lindbergh, in his famous “Who Are the War Agitators?” speech of September 1941. See Jesse Stellato, ed. *Not in Our Name: American Antiwar Speeches, 1846 to the Present* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2012) 113-118.

somehow be talked down from their innate hostility through vague threats that their power would decrease if the Jewish-controlled Roosevelt became dictator of the United States. After discussions with “influential leaders of the opposition,” to Roosevelt’s government, including an un-named Senator, Thomsen offered a lengthy disquisition on Jewish anxieties about the upcoming war that at once portrayed the Jewish community as unified and divided. Thomsen reported that the

intelligent and farsighted Jews shared the same fears that in case a scapegoat later had to be found for America’s entry into the war this would be the American Jews. In 1918 it was the big industrialists and Wall Street high finance; this time it would be the Jews. The emotionally exceedingly excitable American people would then not display the moderation and discipline of the German people, but would proceed against the Jewish warmongers with ruthless severity. Out of these considerations far-sighted Jewish circles are avoiding taking an active part in the warmongering and leave this to radical warmongers in the Roosevelt cabinet and to English propaganda. Indicative of this is that some of these Jews are trying to enter the America First Committee which is the leading militant instrument of American isolationists... The wealthy Jews are alarmed by the warmongering and the anti-business tendency of the “New Deal”, which is dominated by numerous, often penniless but all the more ambitious Jews. Also the opinions of Americans who have been here for many generations are increasing, to the effect that they no longer intend to allow themselves to be kept on political leading strings and be criticized by Jews who have newly immigrated such as [Roosevelt advisor and Supreme Court Justice] Felix Frankfurter, etc.

At the same time, American Jews were emboldened to continue their incitement against Germany because the actual threat of an American anti-Semitic backlash was low since “most important media of information such as press, radio, and film are ruthlessly controlled by Jews,” and “This control is made easier for them by the pro-Jewish policy of Roosevelt.”⁴⁹ So some Jews did fear for their future in spite of the fact that they had no reason to doubt their control over the United States. Fortunately for Ribbentrop and

⁴⁹ Thomsen to Berlin, “Telegram Nr. 2475,” 30 July 1941. *DGFP* Series D, Vol. XIII: Doc 150.

Thomsen, belief in the world Jewish conspiracy itself was not contingent upon resolving these extensive contradictions, as the conspiracy itself explained them.

For its part, RSHA foreign intelligence also inadvertently provided evidence undermining the notion that Jews enjoyed conspiratorial and absolute control of the American government, gleefully reporting in August 1941 that the “characteristic” appeal of Jewish groups to include enumerations of their human rights in American and British society in the Atlantic Charter had fallen on deaf ears.⁵⁰ Like the Foreign Office, however, the RSHA continued to cling to the narrative of an American government dominated by Jewish interests. At the same time, however, Bötticher cabled Berlin that the Atlantic Charter was a meaningless scrap of paper that would in no way effect the status quo no matter what bombastic pronouncements Churchill or Roosevelt provided, since American military preparations were incomplete. Furthermore, there was still substantial resistance to the Jewish conception of world affairs signified by the Atlantic Charter by true Americans. According to Bötticher and the RSHA, all-powerful Jewish interests were behind the Atlantic Charter, but the declaration was weak and meaningless and unable to achieve Jewish aims or protect Jews from opposition at home. Needless to say, Hitler wholeheartedly agreed with this analysis.⁵¹

⁵⁰ RSHA VI, “Auslands-Meldungen,” 14 Oct. 1941, pg. 21-22. USHMM RG 15.007M, Reel 72, Folder 725.

⁵¹ Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 407-08.



German Ambassador Hans-Heinrich Dieckhoff waits alone outside the office of Secretary of State Cordell Hull on November 22nd, 1938. Dieckhoff was paying a final visit to the Secretary before his return to Germany as a result of the mutual recall of Ambassadors following the *Kristallnacht* pogrom. He would never return to the United States, leaving Hans Thomsen, the *Charge d' Affairs* and Gen. Friedrich von Bötticher, the military attaché, as the ranking Germans in the Washington Embassy. LC-H22-D-5013, Harris & Ewing Collection, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.

Even when “experts” on the United States such as Ambassador Dieckhoff endeavored to correct the more outlandish inventions of the Nazi world-view, they wholeheartedly endorsed the notion of the complete domination of American politics by a Jewish collective bent on the destruction of Germany. In October 1941, Dieckhoff

wholeheartedly expressed his belief in the power of American Jewry in a memorandum to Foreign Office officials in the political and press departments criticizing the approach of German propaganda against the United States. Occasioned by an incident where a Boston radio station had specifically dismissed some of the more bizarre anti-Semitic tropes of German propaganda as ludicrous, Dieckhoff's missive urged the Foreign Office to stick closer to the truth in its statements about America. "We should not," Dieckhoff argued "in our counter-operations call Americans Jews who are irreproachably not Jews. If we claim that American personalities such as Roosevelt are Jews although every American knows that this is not true, we would badly compromise the entire thrust of our other correct statements about Jewish domination in the USA." When referencing Jewish power, therefore, it was best to only point to Jews in actual positions of authority, not obscure "loners or cranks" without influence such as the relatively obscure anti-German author Theodore Kaufman, or other such made-up Jewish bogeymen "who have no influence and who nobody knows."⁵² Drawing on his extensive experience with American politics, Dieckhoff endeavored to reorient the Foreign Office's press and propaganda messages toward a more accurate portrayal of Jewish power in the United States. Reality was, in this case, frightening enough.

Thus, in the form of a Socratic questionnaire meant to flummox those who doubted the extent of Jewish control in American government, finance, and industry, Dieckhoff named names. Roosevelt's inner circle, or at least the German impression of it,

⁵² Dieckhoff explicitly referenced the Propaganda Ministry's obsession with Theodore Kaufman, author of the anti-German tract *Germany Must Perish* as an example of obscure and powerless figures overshadowing the "real" influence of Jews in America. Dieckhoff, [Untitled Report on Propaganda Against the United States], 9 October 1941. PAAA R 105015 (Politisches Abteilung IX-Po36) Jüdenfrage (USA) 1936-1943. For more on Kaufman's role in German propaganda on the United States and the overarching world Jewish conspiracy aligned against Germany, see Herf, 110-115.

drew particular scrutiny. “Specifically,” Dieckhoff wrote, “I advise the following questions,”

Is not the president every day surrounded by Jews who advise him closely and with whom he associates closely and intimately? Is not Felix Frankfurter, who the President has made a member of the Supreme Court of the United States a year ago, one of his closest advisors in all aspects of internal and external policy? Is Felix Frankfurter not a Jew? Is Judge Rosenman, who undisputedly designs the speeches of the President, who stylizes all the speeches and has great influence, a Jew? Is not Cohen, who is always located in the vicinity of the President and advises him a Jew? Is not Mr. Morgenthau a personal friend of the President and a close neighbor of Hyde-Park, and is Mrs. Morgenthau not one of the most intimate friends of Mrs. Roosevelt, where they are together almost every day? Are not Mr. and Mrs. Morgenthau Jews?... Is not Chaim Weizman, the Zionist leader, who often visits the President and advises him, a Jew?

Many more questions followed. Also included in the list was Bernard Baruch, the “New York financier who played a fateful role in the U.S. entry into [the First World War], and is now again behind the scenes seeking to bring about U.S. entry into the war.” Herbert Lehman, the Governor of New York, “the most important and most populous state in the Union,” was Jewish, as were many influential State Department Officials in Washington.⁵³ Moreover, “many Representatives” in the House were Jews, especially Sol Bloom, chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee. Sidney Hillman, longtime American labor leader and associate director of the Office of Production Management, “who immigrated from Lithuania 30 years ago and at that time was called Gilman,” was a Jew exercising “decisive influence” in American rearmament, “steering” the economy to a war footing. Also of import were the family ties of leading government officials to Judaism, including Secretary of State Cordell Hull (“married to a Jewess”) and Italian-

⁵³ Dieckhoff did not specify as to how these “influential” State Department Jews apparently lacked influence in curtailing the State Department’s effort to subvert immigration quotas and visa issuances for Jewish refugees under the guise of espionage concerns from 1940-41. Richard Breitman and Allan J. Lichtman, *FDR and the Jews* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 174-79.

Catholic mayor of New York Fiorello LaGuardia (descended from Jews and enjoying the favor of New York Jews).⁵⁴ There was no shortage of Jews in high places responsible for driving the United States toward war with Germany.

Flawed Premises: Wading into American Politics

In spite of the claims that American Jewry and Roosevelt were all powerful and were slowly poisoning the minds of the American people in favor of intervention, Foreign Office officials in the United States still tried to delay American intervention for as long as possible. Thus, under *Charge d’Affairs* Hans Thomsen in Washington, the Foreign Office utilized “special methods...which seek to prevent the country from entering the war and to exert direct political influence” in the United States.⁵⁵ Intelligence reports and memoranda looked to the isolationist opposition, ethnic German enclaves, and the influence of American military leaders to stem the tide of intervention. The staff of the German Embassy in Washington in particular were convinced that if they only kept the provocations of the other intelligence offices (specifically the *Abwehr* and SD) working in the United States to a minimum and plied the aforementioned oppositional forces with money and pro-German propaganda, then American intervention could be averted until Germany was better prepared. Their often transparent and ham-fisted efforts to influence American domestic affairs were characterized by fundamental misunderstandings of the loci of political power that attributed far too much influence to

⁵⁴ Dieckhoff also repeated the long-held view that Hollywood was in Jewish hands, inciting Americans against Germany through “Jewish films” that were “one-sided and un-American.” The American Press was controlled by Jews too, not only through prominent journalists such as Walter Lippman and David Lawrence, but at the ownership level as well, as the owners of *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* were Jews. American radio was also generally “in Jewish hands,” which explained the often one-sidedly anti-Nazi positions of notable radio personalities, such as those of the “fanatic” Walter Winchell on CBS. Dieckhoff, [Untitled Report on Propaganda].

⁵⁵ Thomsen to Berlin, “Telegram Nr. 1362,” 5 July 1940. *DGFP* Series D, Vol. X: Doc. 112.

isolationist cliques. This attempt to influence American politics from the Embassy in Washington occurred at the intersection of intelligence and propaganda work, as long-serving German experts in the United States such as Thomsen and Bötticher attempted to use their understanding of American politics to deploy targeted (albeit dubiously effective) propaganda campaigns that would ensure the victory of a pro-German candidate in 1940.

It was always tempting for the SD, *Abwehr*, and other intelligence organizations to directly cultivate German nationals or naturalized Germans in America for espionage and intelligence purposes. In any case, regardless of the desirability of utilizing ethnic Germans in the United States to alter the pro-Allied bent of U.S. policy, patronizing such networks was difficult and expensive to maintain and, as Dieckhoff and Thomsen repeatedly argued, often more trouble than it was worth.⁵⁶ These operations, however, frequently ran abreast of FBI counter-espionage efforts, resulting in relations-damaging fiascos such as the outing and prosecution of the Guenther Rumrich spy ring in New York city in 1938, wherein the hapless *Abwehr*-backed Rumrich was arrested after trying to obtain 50 U.S. blank passports by posing as the non-existent assistant Secretary of State “Edward Weston.”⁵⁷ Even though the actual intelligence provided by the Rumrich network was of dubious value, the sensation of his arrest and trial on espionage charges heightened official American paranoia about fifth columnist activities. Further scandals

⁵⁶ On the difficulty of setting up and maintaining intelligence networks within the German immigrant community, see Cornelia Wilhelm, “Ethnic Germans as an Instrument of German Intelligence Services in the USA, 1933-1945,” in *Secret Intelligence in the Twentieth Century*, Heike Bungert, Jan G. Heitmann, and Michael, eds. (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2003), 35-57. For a broader discussion of German-American pro-Nazi political organizations in the United States, see Cornelia Wilhelm, *Bewegung oder Verein? Nationalsozialistische Volkstumpolitik in den USA* (Franz Steiner Verlag, 1998).

⁵⁷ Kahn, 327-28. Francis McDonnell, *Insidious Foes: The Axis Fifth Column and the American Home Front* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 49-71.

followed as the FBI penetrated and neutralized other *Abwehr* backed spy rings in 1939-1941, most famously the 33-member organization headed by Frederick Duquesne, which operated a short-wave radio transmission network on ship movements and cultivated espionage agents in America.⁵⁸

Open cooperation with the noisier pro-German elements in American society also proved undesirable. The famed German-American Bund for example, the successor organization to the 1933 Rudolf Hess-approved Friends of New Germany, was plagued by corruption, scandal, and a gross overestimation of its own importance, and was considered an embarrassment by German officials in the United States and Berlin alike. Besides the personal flaws of the Bund's abrasive, self-serving, and corrupt leader Fritz Julius Kuhn (who was ultimately jailed on tax fraud charges in 1939), the Bund was, for good reason, popularly derided in the United States as a "Trojan Horse" for Nazism, in spite of its tiny membership (less than 6000 in 1936) and lack of German financing. Ambassador Dieckhoff reported, for example, that of some 700,000 native Chicagoans with German roots, only 40,000 were members of any sort of German cultural club or association, and only 450 of those supported the Bund's Nazi cause.⁵⁹ Its largest-ever rally at Madison Square Garden in February 1939, where Kuhn spoke confidently on the malevolent actions of "President Frank Rosenfeld" and his "Jew-Deal," drew a capacity crowd of 20,000 supporters but was met with outrage across the American political

⁵⁸ The FBI report on the Duquesne ring has been released as a part of FOIA, and is available online at <http://vault.fbi.gov/Duquesne%20Spy%20Ring/Duquesne%20Spy%20Ring%20Part%201%20of%201/vie> w.

⁵⁹ Personally, Hitler despised Kuhn, considering him an embarrassment to the cause and a detriment to German interests in America. Fischer, 93-98. For a scathing report on Kuhn from the German Consulate in New York, see Borchers to Berlin, "Conviction of Bund Leader Fritz Kuhn of the German-American Bund," 8 Dec. 1939. *Documents on German Foreign Policy, Series D, Vol. VIII: The War Years: September 4, 1939-March 18, 1940* (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1954), Doc. 431. Hereafter *DGFP* Series D, Vol. VIII.

spectrum.⁶⁰ Although the reports on U.S. foreign policy from the German Embassy in Washington did not radically differ in content or tenor from Kuhn's ravings, Dieckhoff and Thomsen repeatedly argued that any actual or perceived German support for Kuhn (or any scandal involving *Abwehr* and SD agents with transparent ties to the Nazi regime for that matter) would only serve to alienate the truly valuable circles of political opposition in the United States. Moreover, very much in keeping with the memory of 1917, accusations of espionage or sabotage were a sure way to build a consensus for war in the United States.⁶¹ If Germany was to reap any reward for meddling in American politics, it must do so quietly and carefully.

While a consistent theme of Thomsen's reporting since 1938 was the idea that Roosevelt was single-handedly driving the United States toward war with Germany and that war was likely inevitable from the moment that Britain and France found themselves in a "life or death struggle with the totalitarian powers," he also suggested that the Republican opposition in Congress might be able to obstruct and delay the eventuality of war for quite some time. After all, in spite of Roosevelt's machinations, declaring war was the prerogative of the Congress, not the executive. By quietly patronizing isolationist elements in the House and Senate, Germany stood a very real chance of

⁶⁰ Hecklers frequently interrupted the speech, and a hostile crowd accosted uniformed attendees exiting the venue. The National Archives RG 131: Records of the Office of Alien Property has posted the audio of Kuhn's speech, seized from the Bund in 1942, online. <http://research.archives.gov/description/2803258>

⁶¹ Susan Dunn, *1940: FDR, Willkie, Lindbergh, Hitler – the Election amid the Storm* (New York: Yale University Press, 2013), 236. Thomsen to Weizsäcker, "Telegram Nr. 89," 25 January 1940. *DGFP Series D*, Vol. VIII: Doc. 569. Thomsen's continued stream of messages to Berlin about the incompetence of *Abwehr*, SD and other Nazi-affiliated agents in the United States after a number of espionage-related arrests eventually prompted an internal investigation by the OKW and Foreign Office into the activities of these agencies in the United States. Bötticher too urged against espionage activities. See *Documents on German Foreign Policy Series D, Vol. IX: The War Years: March 18-June 22 1940* (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1956), Docs. 13, 289, 299, 369, 411, 505; Vol. XIII: Docs. 81 and 266. Hereafter *DGFP Series D*, Vol. IX.

affecting the outcome of the next Presidential election, and perhaps delaying the inevitable.⁶² To further this aim, Thomsen and the Foreign Office patronized a number of isolationist representatives, senators, and causes, including the rabidly anti-Semitic freshman Congressman Jacob Thorkelson. Swept into the House of Representatives from Montana in the election of 1938, Thorkelson was singled out for praise by Thomsen as a man of “considerable personal courage” for his unflinching attacks on Jews, communists, and the British on the House floor. Thomsen both sent Thorkelson’s diatribes, frequently published in *The Congressional Record*, on to Berlin and financed their wider publication in the United States in an effort to bolster the isolationist movement.⁶³

Thomsen and the Embassy also broadly stood behind other leading isolationist (and often anti-Semitic) politicians including “famed flyer” Charles Lindbergh, Republican Senator Gerald P. Nye of North Dakota, and Democratic Senator Burton K. Wheeler of Montana. OKW intelligence reports approvingly described the latter as a “Mr. Smith Goes to Washington” type fighting “against the American plutocratic regime and the warmongers,” whose message was most popular among the “not yet Jewified intelligentsia.”⁶⁴ The German Embassy enjoyed a productive working relationship with these officials and others through intermediaries, often paying the costs of reproducing their isolationist speeches in runs of 100,000 or more, which the Congressmen

⁶² “The Foreign Policy of Roosevelt in the Event of a European War.” These points, in addition to Thomsen’s insistence that “ill-conceived” espionage operations could not be allowed to jeopardize German-American relations as they did in 1917 can also be found in Thomsen to Berlin, “Telegram Nr. 382,” 18 September 1939. *DGFP* Series D, Vol. VIII: Doc. 88 and Thomsen to Berlin, “Telegram Nr. 416,” 24 September 1939. PAAA R 105006 (Politische Abteilung IX - Po 23-1) Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika Neutralitäts Fragen vom 9.39 bis 11.39.

⁶³ Thomsen to Berlin, “Abgeordneter Thorkelson über kommunistische Umtriebe in Amerika,” 5 August 1939. PAAA R 104424 (Politische Abteilung V-Po19) Sozialismus, Kommunismus, Bolschewismus etc. in den USA, 1937-1939.

⁶⁴ “Bericht unseres Vertrauensmannes USA Nr. 123: Senator Wheeler – der Gegner Roosevelts,” Mitte August 1941. NACP RG 242, T-77, Roll 1438, folder OKW/1131.

themselves would mail out to constituents and other supporters. This kept the cost of the propaganda campaign low and was mutually beneficial for everyone, since American Congressmen were not required to pay for postage.⁶⁵ Later, Thomsen would report that both the America First Committee and the No Foreign Wars Committee enjoyed covert German financial and media support as well.⁶⁶

While covertly supporting these individuals and organizations with funds, Thomsen and the Foreign Office also endeavored to trade on their reputations as staunch American patriots to subtly channel pro-German propaganda to the United States. For years, the German Embassy and its official publication *Facts in Review*, distributed by the German Library of Information in New York, had endeavored to make the “true facts” of German foreign policy known in America through translating and mass-distributing speeches of Hitler and other leading personalities of the Reich.⁶⁷ In April and May 1940, however, the Embassy also undertook the task of publishing in the United States a number of selectively edited Polish documents captured in the Warsaw Embassy that purported to show Roosevelt’s responsibility for encouraging the outbreak of the Second World War through promises of military assistance to Poland. Upon their first release in Berlin in March, the documents had caused a media sensation in the United States, prompting Roosevelt and other administration officials to vehemently deny the charges, which in turn prompted further newspaper coverage and public interest in the documents

⁶⁵ Frye, 140.

⁶⁶ Thomsen to Berlin, “Telegram NR. 2813,” 24 December 1940. *Documents on German Foreign Policy, Series D, Vol. XI: The War Years, September 1, 1940 – January 31, 1941* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1961) Doc. 563. Hereafter *DGFP* Series D, Vol. XI.

⁶⁷ The Embassy funded, for example, the translation and printing of 200,000 copies of Hitler’s sarcastic April 28, 1939, speech directly addressing Roosevelt’s demand that Germany guarantee the sovereignty of some 30 nations. Thomsen to Berlin, “Telegram Nr. 240,” 24 July 1940. *DGFP* Series D, Vol. VI: Doc 709.

themselves. To fulfill the demand while scrupulously avoiding the appearance of actively waging an anti-Roosevelt propaganda campaign, Thomsen and the Embassy covertly funded and organized a group of American publishers to reproduce and distribute 100,000 copies of the document collection, indemnifying them against financial losses and government penalties should they be accused of spreading German propaganda materials. Rep. Jacob Thorkelson reprinted some of the documents in *The Congressional Record* at Thomsen's urging, and isolationist Senators, Congressmen, and newspapers promptly called for a thorough and public investigation of the Roosevelt administration's conduct in Poland.⁶⁸

Hitler too fully supported the idea of bombarding the United States with friendly propaganda in order to aid the isolationists in the upcoming 1940 conventions. On June 13th, accompanied by Ribbentrop, Hitler sat for a rare interview with a foreign correspondent, Karl von Wiegand, of the isolationist daily *New York Journal American*. Hitler appeared firm but far more restrained than in his major international speeches in front of the Reichstag, stressing Britain's responsibility for the continuance of the war and assuring his American readers that Germany had no quarrel with the United States. He added that Europe was for the Europeans and America for the Americans.⁶⁹ Thomsen duly had the interview translated into English and distributed 100,000 copies through the embassy bulletin *Facts in Review*. Through the use of confidential agents, he was also able to "induce" Representative Thorkelson to place the Führer's interview into the June 22nd *Congressional Record* to ensure its maximum effect amongst American

⁶⁸ Frye, 132-138. Dunn, 238.

⁶⁹ Friedländer, 95. Fischer, 121-22.

policymakers.⁷⁰ Unfortunately for Thomsen, this public relations coup was soon forgotten, given the sensational news of the French Armistice.

With the 1940 Republican and Democratic national conventions taking place in June and July, Thomsen and the Embassy funded a number of initiatives to insert isolationist planks into the Democratic and Republican platforms. Thomsen obtained permission from Berlin to disburse \$3000 to isolationist Rep. Hamilton Fish III (New York) to fund the travel expenses of dozens of radical isolationists from the House to Philadelphia so that they could testify to the convention's platform committee on foreign policy. In the midst of the convention, the German Embassy also covertly funded half the cost of dozens of full-page newspaper advertisements from the "National Committee to Keep America Out of Foreign Wars" demanding that the Republicans decry the "interventionists and warmongers" in the Democratic Party and urging the adoption of an isolationist platform. To further the isolationist cause, Thomsen also encouraged the activities of the "Make Europe Pay War Debts Committee" at the convention, always a classic means of reminding Americans how costly intervention in European affairs had been in 1917.⁷¹ Although the convention ended with the nomination of moderate internationalist Wendell Willkie instead of an isolationist candidate, Thomsen counted the propaganda campaign a success, noting that the delegates were able to get Willkie to pledge that "The Republican party is firmly opposed to involving the nation in a foreign war," and "The Republican party stands for Americanism, preparedness, and peace," which were essentially taken verbatim from the German-funded propaganda materials.⁷²

⁷⁰ Thomsen to Berlin, "Telegram Nr. 1290," 27 June 1940. *DGFP* Series D, Vol. X: Doc. 39.

⁷¹ Dunn, 105-107. Thomsen to Berlin, 12 June 1940. Thomsen to Berlin, 17 June 1940. Thomsen to Berlin, 19 June 1940. *DGFP* Series D, Vol. IX: Doc. 417, 441, 493.

⁷² Thomsen to Berlin, "Telegram Nr. 1345," 3 July 1940. *DGFP* Series D, Vol. X: Doc. 91.

**TO THE DELEGATES TO THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION
AND TO AMERICAN MOTHERS, WAGE EARNERS, FARMERS AND VETERANS**

STOP THE MARCH TO WAR!

STOP THE INTERVENTIONISTS AND WARMONGERS!

STOP THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY

**WHICH, WE BELIEVE, IS THE WAR PARTY IN THE UNITED STATES, AND
IS LEADING US TO WAR AGAINST THE WILL OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE!**

Delegates to the Republican National Convention at Philadelphia, you have the greatest opportunity in the history of your Party to serve your country and Party by keeping America out of foreign wars and affording the American people a clearcut vote on Election Day on the paramount issue of PEACE OR WAR.

On this issue the Republicans can sweep the Nation.

The Democratic Party, we believe, is the interventionist and war party and is rushing us headlong into war in efforts to quarantine and police the world with American blood and treasure.

The following quotations are from leading *Democratic Senators*, who in our opinion put their country above their party on the issue of war or peace:

Senator Edwin C. Johnson, of Colorado (June 15, 1940):

"The most important election ever to be held in the history of the world will occur in the United States of America in November. * * * I am not indulging in threats or idle talk or personal opinion, but unless one or the other of these great parties names a candidate who is not an interventionist, the millions of peace-loving people of this Nation will form a third party that will nominate such a candidate. A fair open referendum on the question of peace versus intervention must be had in November, for it is the overshadowing political issue of the generation. Each of these conventions will adopt party planks in their platforms which will pay lip service to peace but will not be worth the paper upon which they are written. The past record of the candidate and his known predilections are all that will count in November. Pledges made by candidates with fingers crossed will not fool the people this time. * * * Naturally, I hope and pray that the Democratic Party will be the peace party * * * but, if the Democratic Party fails to do its duty and makes the mistake of nominating an interventionist for the office of President, so far as I am concerned, my country will come before my party."

Senator Burton K. Wheeler, of Montana; in the Senate of the United States, June 20, 1940, on the appointment of Henry L. Stimson of New York and Frank Knox of Chicago to the Cabinet by President Roosevelt:

"I had hoped that the Democratic Party would be the peace party of the United States, and not make the foolish errors which have been made in the past, and that we would not drive the people, by hysteria and pounding, the same old way that they have been driven before. The men who met in the secret meeting in New York were the same group that carried on the propaganda to get us into the last war. They were using the same old slogans in the same old way. Now, instead of having them in New York and Chicago, we are to bring them down and put them in the Cabinet. * * *

"These two men were chosen, without doubt, because of all the interventionists in the Republican Party these two men have been foremost in that cause. * * * But the people of the country should know exactly what the nomination of these two gentlemen means and the significance of their selection. * * * These two appointments ought to be particularly pleasing to the warmongers, to those who think we ought to go to war; to those who think isolation means putting our heads in the sand. But it should not be pleasing to those who no longer feel that we are a colony of the British Government; it should not be pleasing to those who do not want to see American boys go across the water and be slaughtered upon the battlefields of Europe; it should not be pleasing to the peace-loving people of this country."

Senator Rush D. Holt, of West Virginia:

"I read in the newspapers three weeks ago that there was pressure from London to get Harry Woodring out of the Cabinet and it has suc-

ceeded. Why does London seemingly know more about our foreign policy than the United States Senate does? Did Lord Lothian tell the President when he conferred with him that Mr. Woodring was in the way? * * * Mr. Woodring's policy was to do everything for the Allies within the law and to look after America first, but the policy of the new nominee is to do anything for the Allies that is necessary and America be damned. * * * The President now has men who will do his bidding without question, because they are right along with him in conducting us along the path toward war."

Senator Bennett Champ Clark, of Missouri:

"I shall vote against their confirmation (Stimson and Knox) because they are both interventionist, not secretly, not clandestinely, but openly. The writings and speeches of both of them conclusively show that they favor a policy of American intervention. They are for war or for acts which amount to war, and are certain to precipitate war.

"* * * I hope never to see the day * * * when a son of mine will be the first member of my family * * * who will not engage in a war as a defender of the United States. * * * But, I will never cast my vote either to get into war or to take steps leading inevitably into war. * * * I will never cast a vote that will take us along step by step, inch by inch, and put us in the situation under the guise of measures short of war, to the point where we will be engaged in a war."

Senator David I. Walsh, of Massachusetts (June 21, 1940):

"If we want war, let us make an open declaration of war. Let us refrain from surreptitious acts which we like to think of as 'short of war,' but which all sensible people in the world know to be acts of war. There is no sentiment in this country in favor of the United States entering the war. * * * Therefore, I say let us be careful not to provoke war, not to invite it, not to go to the point where it is inescapable. This great Nation, with its millions of people and its great resources, is the only light of democracy left in all the world, the only beacon of hope for the preservation of civilization and humanity. To risk its destruction now, in the condition in which we know we are, would be terrible. * * * If you are preparing to undertake the policing of the world in the name of justice, you are committing your country and future generations to a policy of waging endless war throughout the world.

"* * * I do not hesitate to say that if this agitation (for war) from the men of property as against the men of no property continues in this country there will be developed a radical spirit which it will be very difficult to limit. * * * Oh, the tragedy of it, that a powerful group of men of property should be challenging the peace desires of the millions of poor people who toil and labor and sacrifice to whom war brings more poverty, whose children are made for generations to eat the bread of poverty by war."

Write or wire to your Delegates at the Republican National Convention, Convention Hall, Philadelphia, Penna., to support a clearcut peace or anti-war plank.

Also, write your Representative in Congress to stay in session; not to give President Roosevelt discretionary powers to proclaim a national emergency; and, above all, to vote to keep America out of foreign entanglements and wars.

THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE TO KEEP AMERICA OUT OF FOREIGN WARS
Convention Headquarters, Walton Hotel, Philadelphia, Pa.

Hon. Hamilton Fish, Chairman
Hon. Harold Knutson, First Vice Chairman
Hon. John J. O'Connor, Second Vice Chairman

Hon. Samuel B. Pettigill, Third Vice Chairman
Walter L. Reynolds, Secretary-Treasurer
Executive Committee, 50 members of Congress and former members

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TO THE DELEGATES
to the Democratic National Convention—to American Mothers,
Wage Earners, Farmers, and Veterans—

STOP THE MARCH OF WAR!

Stop the Interventionists and Warmongers!

DON'T let the Democratic Party, historically the Party of non-intervention, become the Party of intervention and war, against the will of 93 per cent of the American people.

The Republican Party at Philadelphia deliberately struck out of its platform a declaration against sending our boys to fight on foreign soil. Don't let the Democratic Party make the same mistake. It will be fatal in November.

Delegates to the Democratic National Convention at Chicago, you have the greatest opportunity in the history of your party to serve your country and party by keeping America out of foreign wars and affording the American people a clear-cut vote on Election Day on the paramount issue of peace or war.

That will be the big issue—maybe the sole issue—a referendum on war.

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"These two men were chosen, without doubt, because of all the interventionists in the Republican Party these two men have been foremost in that cause. * * * But the people of the country should know exactly what the nomination of these two gentlemen means and the significance of their selection. * * * These two appointments ought to be particularly pleasing to the warmongers, to those who think we ought to go to war; to those who think isolation means putting our heads in the sand. But it should not be pleasing to those who no longer feel that we are a colony of the British Government; it should not be pleasing to those who do not want to see American boys go across the water and be slaughtered upon the battlefields of Europe; it should not be pleasing to the peace-loving people of this country."



Senator Rush D. Holt, of West Virginia:

"I read in the newspapers three weeks ago that there was pressure from London to get Harry Woodring out of the Cabinet and it has succeeded. Why does London seemingly know more about our foreign policy than the United States Senate does? Did Lord Lothian tell the President when he conferred with him that Mr. Woodring was in the way? * * * Mr. Woodring's policy was to do everything for the Allies within the law and to look after America first, but the policy of the new nominee is to do anything for the Allies that is necessary and America be damned. * * * The President now has men who will do his bidding without question, because they are right along with him in conducting us along the path toward war."

Senator Bennett Champ Clark, of Missouri:

"I shall vote against their confirmation (Stimson and Knox) because they are both interventionists, not secretly, not clandestinely, but openly. The writings and speeches of both of them conclusively show that they favor a policy of American intervention. They are for war or for acts which amount to war, and are certain to precipitate war."

"* * * I hope never to see the day * * * when a son of mine will be the first member of my family * * * who will not engage in a war as a defender of the United States; * * * But, I will never cast my vote either to get into war or to take steps leading inevitably into war. * * * I will never cast a vote that will take us along step by step, inch by inch, and put us in the situation under the guise of measures short of war, to the point where we will be engaged in a war."



Senator David I. Walsh, of Massachusetts (June 21, 1940):

"If we want war, let us make an open declaration of war. Let us refrain from surreptitious acts which we like to think of as 'short of war,' but which all sensible people in the world know to be acts of war. There is no sentiment in this country in favor of the United States entering the war. * * * Therefore, I say let us be careful not to provoke war, not to invite it, not to go to the point where it is inescapable. This great Nation, with its millions of people and its great resources, is the only light of democracy left in all the world, the only beacon of hope for the preservation of civilization and humanity. To risk its destruction now, in the condition in which we know we are, would be terrible. * * * If you are preparing to undertake the policing of the world in the name of justice you are committing your country and future generations to a policy of waging endless war throughout the world."

"* * * I do not hesitate to say that if this agitation (for war) from the men of property as against the men of no property continues in this country there will be developed a radical spirit which it will be very difficult to limit. * * * Oh, the tragedy of it, that a powerful group of men of property should be challenging the peace desires of the millions of poor people who toil and labor and sacrifice, to whom war brings more poverty, whose children are made for generations to eat the bread of poverty by war."

Write or wire to your Delegates at the Democratic National Convention, Convention Hall, Chicago, Illinois, to support a clearcut peace or anti-war plan.

Also, write your Representative in Congress to stay in session; and, above all, to vote to keep America out of foreign entanglements and wars.

THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE TO KEEP AMERICA OUT OF FOREIGN WARS

Hon. John J. O'Connor of New York

Hon. Samuel B. Pettigill of Indiana

Hon. Martin L. Sweeney of Ohio

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Two German-Embassy funded newspaper advertisements appearing during the Republican (left) and Democratic (right) national conventions from the "The National Committee to Keep America Out of Foreign Wars," urging the adoption of isolationist language in both Party platforms. According to *Charge d' Affairs* Hans Thomsen, fomented isolationist declarations by both parties. The left ad originally appeared in *The New York Times*, 25 June 1940, pg. 19. The right ad is taken from *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, 15 July 1940, pg. 11.

Willkie's nomination received mixed appraisals from Thomsen. On the positive side, Willkie "greatly improve[d]" the chances of Republicans in the upcoming election because he possessed "a distinct leader-personality."⁷³ Moreover, Willkie was Roosevelt's "equal in popularity, demagogy, and rhetorical ability," and was far more youthful and vigorous than the "rapidly aging" and physically decrepit Roosevelt.⁷⁴ Yet in spite of the German Embassy's claims to have successfully inserted an isolationist plank in the Republican platform, Willkie was no isolationist, and thus his nomination was "unfortunate for us." It ensured that the American election would be dominated not by foreign policy differences but domestic policy concerns, since "neither [Willkie's] membership in the [isolationist] American Legion nor his pure German descent have so far had any influence in diverting him from his pro-Allied stance."⁷⁵ In fact, as an RSHA V-man had reported, although the Republican Party favored not entangling the United States in European wars, "The party expressed its sympathy for the oppressed and vanquished peoples and declared its readiness to assist them with all things except through active participation in the war."⁷⁶ In spite of all Thomsen and the Foreign Office's effort to strengthen and empower the isolationist voices in the Republican Party, Willkie too would run on an "all measures short of war" platform. Writing much later in reference to the commonalities in Willkie and Roosevelt's foreign policy positions, the *Abwehr* went so far as to say that it did not particularly matter who was elected President

⁷³ Thomsen to Berlin, 28 June 1940. *DGFP* Series D, Vol. X: Doc. 47.

⁷⁴ Thomsen to Berlin, "Telegram NR. 1358," 4 July 1940. *DGFP* Series D, Vol. X: Doc 108.

⁷⁵ Thomsen to Berlin, 28 June 1940. Fischer, 129.

⁷⁶ RSHA VI, "Auslandskurzmeldungen!" 29 June 1940, pg. 3-4. USHMM RG 15.007M, Reel 72, Folder 726.

in the United States.⁷⁷ For its part, RSHA VI was much more optimistic, noting that the success of presidential candidate Willkie should be regarded as “extraordinarily propitious.” A bonus was that Willkie’s sister, the wife of the U.S. Naval attaché at the American Embassy in Berlin, was considered “pro-German.”⁷⁸ Perhaps these family connections boded well for the future.

Meanwhile, the German Embassy’s meddling in the Republican National Convention had proven so effective that Thomsen sought and received permission to repeat the same efforts at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. Once again, Thomsen subsidized the travel of isolationist democratic representatives to the convention so as to instigate a fight over the foreign policy language in the Party platform. Once again The National Committee to Keep America Out of Foreign Wars (and the Embassy) purchased tens of thousands of dollars worth of advertising space in dozens of major newspapers to decry “warmongers and interventionists.”⁷⁹ And although the isolationists could not mount a serious challenge to Roosevelt’s nomination, the Democratic Party too resolved to keep the United States out of war unless attacked, and professed solidarity with all the freedom loving peoples of the world through all measures short of war. This time, however, Thomsen and the Foreign Office were fighting an uphill battle, as the vague foreign policy language originated from the Roosevelt himself, who did not wish to fight for reelection as a self-professed interventionist.⁸⁰ This, of course, did not stop Ambassador Dieckhoff from railing

⁷⁷ OKW Amt. Ausl./Abw. Abt. Ausland Nr. 01197/40 geh. Ausl.I, “Außen- und militärpolitische Nachrichten, 6 October 1940, pg. 1. NACP RG 242, T-77, Roll 933, folder OKW/485.

⁷⁸ RSHA VI, “Auslandskurzmeldungen!” 2 July 1940, pg. 3-4. USHMM RG 15.007M, Reel 72, Folder 726.

⁷⁹ Thomsen to Berlin, Telegram Nr. “1482,” 19 July 1940. *DGFP* Series D, Vol. X: Doc. 190.

⁸⁰ Dunn, 139-140.

against Roosevelt's acceptance speech as that of a dishonest warmonger. In a memorandum following the President's radio address on the evening of July 19th, the text of which Dieckhoff referred to as "an outrageous provocation," and "well worth reading," Dieckhoff remarked,

This speech may well be called a piece of foreign policy exhibitionism. With fanatical hatred the President declares the totalitarian countries to be "the enemy" and stigmatizes not only their domestic conditions, but above all the dangers of an external expansion of their ideologies and their bellicose foreign policy... The President points with pride to the fact that he had in good time recognized the danger from the totalitarian countries, and that he had at an early date taken a stand against these countries, that he had encouraged and strengthened resistance against them and had always stood for the view that in dealing with them the proper course was one not of yielding and appeasement, but only resistance. He calls this policy striving to preserve the peace, while it was actually encouragement of the encirclement of Germany and incitement to opposition, that is to war. Persistent continuation of such incitement is one of the chief aims of this speech, at least the part dealing with foreign policy... Never has Roosevelt's complicity in the outbreak and the prolongation of this war come out so clearly as in the speech [of July 19th].⁸¹

Although Thomsen and the Embassy continued to fund anti-Roosevelt propaganda up to and after the November 1940 election, Thomsen had singularly failed to shift the terms of the debate. Willkie's internationalism was so akin to Roosevelt's that Willkie became an important ally of the President after 1940, serving as both an unabashed proponent of Lend-Lease and the personal envoy of Roosevelt abroad in 1941-42.

⁸¹ Dieckhoff, "Memorandum," 21 July 1940. *DGFP* Series D, Vol. X: Doc. 199.



German *Charge d' Affairs* in Washington Hans Thomsen and Frau Thomsen leaving the German Embassy for a White House reception for the foreign diplomatic corps, December 14th, 1939. LC-H22-D-8014, Harris & Ewing Collection, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.

One of the reasons that the Germans placed such a high degree of importance on not only Willkie's candidacy but also of the stringent isolationism of figures such as Charles Lindbergh and organizations such as the America First Committee was the conviction that the popularity of these movements in the American electorate reflected the "real" feelings of the U.S. military as well. In his postwar interrogations by the American State Department, former Ambassador Dieckhoff referred several times to the "peculiar ideas" of his military attaché, who believed that anti-Jewish and anti-communist American Army officers "constituted the element in the United States that best understood Hitler and National Socialism," and generally sympathized with the Nazi

project. According to Dieckhoff, Bötticher sincerely believed that he could influence the American officers who would, in turn, exert significant pressure on the Roosevelt administration's foreign policy.⁸² Indeed, Bötticher's tendency to overestimate both the anti-Semitism and pro-German stance of American General Staff officers dated back to his friendly relationship with General Douglas MacArthur from 1933-36, and other regular contacts with a clique of Anglophobic, anti-New Deal, anti-Roosevelt officers in Washington.⁸³ His impressions that there existed substantial reserves of pro-German and anti-Semitic staff officers, however, while not completely unfounded, attributed far too much political influence to these cliques.⁸⁴ On August 25, 1939, Bötticher filed a report based on his own "comprehensive insight" into the workings of the American government, described the American Army Command as "today the stronghold of all that is best in American life," a group that "thinks independently" and was one of the last institutions working against the interests of the Jews.⁸⁵ Upon the outbreak of war, Bötticher wrote Berlin and the high command to strongly advocate for allowing the American General Staff to send official mission to Germany to observe the conduct of the war from the German point of view, so that they could combat mendacious British

⁸² DeWitte C. Pool, Head of Mission, "State Department Special Interrogation Mission – Hans Heinrich Dieckhoff," 15 November 1945. NACP RG 498, Entry UD-287, Box 1344. Although the postwar interrogations of Dieckhoff, Thomsen, and Bötticher found them all pointing fingers at one another in terms of who was the most delusional in their reporting on American affairs, the postwar consensus amongst Foreign Office experts on the United States was that Bötticher's ideas about the American officer corps had been particularly odd. There are contemporary indications as well, specifically the correspondence between Thomsen and Weizsäcker in *DGFP*, Series D, Vol. IX: Docs. 141 and 163.

⁸³ Weinberg, *World in the Balance*, 62. Fischer, 32.

⁸⁴ On anti-Semitism in the interwar American military, see Joseph W. Bendersky, *The "Jewish Threat": Anti-Semitic Politics of the U.S. Army* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 197-258.

⁸⁵ *DGFP* Series D, Vol. VII: Doc. 260.

propaganda circulating in American government circles and hopefully soften American attitudes towards Germany.⁸⁶

Three weeks later Bötticher reported the positive steps taken in cultivating support in the American officer corps for Germany against Roosevelt and the State Department, noting that figures with General Staff contacts such as Lindbergh and “famous flyer” Eddie Rickenbacker had added their voices to the pro-German position. As a result, “The question of organizing expeditionary troops for Europe has been shelved entirely.”⁸⁷ By December, he was convinced his plan was bearing fruit, noting that the American General Staff was demonstrating sympathy for Germany’s international position and war aims, and was actively working against Roosevelt’s “impulsive” war policy and the State Department’s “sterile policy of hatred.”⁸⁸ From August 1940 through August 1941, with permission from Berlin, Bötticher attempted to strengthen his connections with the War Department by sharing all of the cables he received from the *Luftwaffe* central office with Army Chief of Staff George Marshall’s intelligence advisor on Germany, Col. Truman Smith. Smith, a staunch anti-New Dealer, anti-Semite, and isolationist with extensive ties to Charles Lindbergh and other like-minded individuals within the U.S. Army Officer corps, would enjoy a close working relationship with Bötticher from 1939-1941, and was frequently mentioned by name in the attaché’s cables as a pillar of American patriotism.⁸⁹ The cables included bombing surveys and accounts of damage to Great Britain, so that Smith’s friends in the General

⁸⁶ Bötticher to Berlin, “Telegramm Nr. 323,” 7 September 1939. PAAA R 29685 (Büro des Staatssekretärs) Der Krieg vom 1 September bis 30 September 1939.

⁸⁷ Bötticher to Berlin, “Telegram Nr. 427,” 28 September 1939. Bötticher, “Opinions and Measures of the American General Staff after the First Month of War,” 1 October 1939. *DGFP* Series D, Vol. VIII: Docs, 151, 172.

⁸⁸ Bötticher to Berlin, “telegram Nr. 719,” 1 December 1939. *DGFP* Series D, Vol. VIII: Doc. 405.

⁸⁹ Bendersky, 230-31; 236-42; 274-75.

Staff and military intelligence could be kept abreast of the might and professionalism of the German war effort.⁹⁰ In a further effort to avoid undermining the political standing of German sympathizers in the American General Staff, but also of prominent isolationist figures such as Lindbergh, Bötticher urged Berlin to keep the Propaganda Ministry from reporting on them entirely or “only with the greatest restraint,” lest these individuals be branded fifth columnists.⁹¹ Indeed, Roosevelt greatly feared Lindbergh’s “moral superiority and purity,” in acting as a powerful force against Jewry and his “far reaching influence” in American military circles, and would employ any slander to undermine the political position of Lindbergh, Smith, and other American patriots.⁹²

In late September and early October 1940, Bötticher repeatedly cabled Berlin to reaffirm his views of the American General staff as a vital link to the Lindbergh camp and as an important countervailing force to Roosevelt’s warmongering. Concluding a memorandum to Berlin on the effects of the recently announced Tripartite Pact between Germany, Italy and Japan, on American military preparations (if anything, plans for an American embargo against Japan would “be more injurious to the Americans” than the Japanese!) Bötticher turned once again to his contacts in Washington and the continued importance of sharing German dispatches with them

The domestic struggle against the warmongers in America should continue to be waged via the General Staff, and this is also the way, I report confidentially, to reach Lindbergh and other great Americans. In America everything is decided through the forces working against each other from opposite poles. If we wish to continue supporting the forces which understand us it is desirable that you continue to send as detailed information as possible quickly and daily, if only in order to refute the

⁹⁰ Beck, 163-164. As Beck notes, Smith transcribed them into a thick War Department file titled “Digest of Telegrams Sent by the Air Ministry in Berlin to the German Military Attaché in Washington.”

⁹¹ Bötticher, “Telegram Nr. 1628,” 4 August 1940. PAAA R 29938 (Büro des Understaatssekretärs) Unneutrales Verhalten der V.St.v. Amerika vom November 1939 bis Dezember 1941.

⁹² “Telegram Nr. 1649,” 8 August 1940.

very active British propaganda. I again request, in addition to factual material, evaluations of the situation, which will enable me to enliven and intensify these very welcome conversations in such a way that I may thereby exercise a continuing influence.⁹³

Continuing his analysis four days later, Bötticher once again suggested his own influence on friendly (albeit unnamed, apart from Smith) American officers and pointed to exploitable divisions in the American government over the Tripartite Pact with Japan

In the [American] General Staff itself the opinions go all the way from the uncertainty of a small group as to whether they should now join up with England, to the belief of the circle close to me, which considers the fate of the Empire to be sealed and declares somewhat drastically that “you can’t go to bed with a corpse.” The influential Army Commander inclines toward this view... The opposed forces are again fighting one another, in general the State Department and Jewry on the one hand and the General Staff on the other. The outcome of this internal strife can at this time still not be predicted, particularly in view of Roosevelt’s impulsive conduct that is influenced by Jewry.⁹⁴

Bötticher also continued to stress the importance of his American General Staff contacts with the Lindbergh group as a firm bulwark well into 1941, writing personally (along with Thomsen) to von Weizsäcker and Chief of the German General Staff Franz Halder to urge against German propaganda placing too much emphasis on Lindbergh’s resistance to Roosevelt, for fear of Lindbergh being labeled a German agent by the American press. Indeed, an intermediary of Lindbergh called on Bötticher personally in late April to urge restraint in the German press. It was necessary to tread carefully with Lindbergh, since, according to Thomsen and Bötticher,

Lindbergh represents the best of the Americans, who are most important for us now and in the future. The contacts with him are maintained through a group in the General Staff which has the greatest importance as a counterweight against Jews and warmongers. Handling these contacts

⁹³ Bötticher to Berlin, “Telegram Nr. 2079,” 28 September 1940. *DGFP* Series D, Vol. XI: Doc. 123.

⁹⁴ Bötticher to Berlin, “Telegram Nr. 2107,” 1 October 1940. *DGFP* Series D, Vol. XI: Doc. 141.

and observing Lindbergh's suggestions does not only involve political matters, but also important military matters."⁹⁵

In the end, Bötticher's faith in his American friends proved misplaced, his influence on them grossly overestimated. When it came to the matter of assistance for Britain or American planning for the eventuality of war with Germany, Roosevelt generally brushed aside the objections of his dissenting military and political advisors.⁹⁶ Although Bötticher had tried to pass along information on German military planning in order to combat British propaganda and maintain the pro-German attitudes of the American officers, there was little reciprocity. While there were disturbing currents of pro-German and anti-Semitic sentiments in portions of the American officer corps in the 1930s, by 1941 the actual policy influence of such individuals on matters of international diplomacy was weak at best. The larger professional affinities for all things German possessed by notable U.S. military officers would prove more decisive in the rehabilitation of the German armed forces after 1945 than in guiding American policy from 1939-1941. After 1941, self-proclaimed "Secret Americans" such as Col. Smith (the moniker was a self-referential joke – the clique had to keep quiet or risk professional retaliation) generally limited themselves to complaining in private to former members of the American First Committee and leaking potentially-embarrassing secret information to Roosevelt's political opponents or the press.⁹⁷ At the same time as Bötticher was touting the American General Staff's dedication to fighting the warmongering Jewish forces in

⁹⁵ Thomsen and Bötticher to Weizsäcker and Halder, "Telegram Nr. 1176," 27 April 1941. *DGFP*, Series D, Vol. XII: Doc. 411. Dieckhoff duly responded that American policy did not work this way, noting that if American public opinion were firmly in favor of Roosevelt's war, then he would have it regardless of what his officers thought. This did not temper Bötticher's enthusiasm for the power of the American General Staff in subsequent reports, however.. Dieckhoff, "Memorandum," 6 June 1941. *DGFP* Series D, Vol. XII: Doc 600.

⁹⁶ Kennedy, 447-451.

⁹⁷ Bendersky, 303.

Roosevelt's government, they were completing top-secret talks with their British counterpoints on the ABC-1 war plans, the foundation of the "Europe First" strategy. Bötticher read about this development in the newspapers just like everyone else when the isolationist *Chicago Tribune* leaked the U.S. war plans on December 4th, 1941.⁹⁸

Evaluating American Military and Economic Potential

German intelligence reporting on American military and economic potential more generally dealt in equal parts imagination and reality. On the one hand, there was no disputing America's vast resource-base. At the same time, however, perceptions of a United States still reeling from economic catastrophe and political upheaval, and possessing an undermanned and poorly equipped military lent a specific politicized contextualization to the German intelligence services' reporting. German assumptions that labor unrest was undermining American rearmament, that full mobilization would bring industrial production to a standstill, that arms shipments to Europe would delay the rearmament of American forces, and that the poor state of the American military would require years to prepare for any intervention in European affairs significantly blunted the United States' potential. Indeed, it was for *political* reasons from 1939 forward that the German intelligence services consistently overestimated the amount of time before the United States would prove capable of influencing European affairs directly, while at the same time underestimating the impact of American military and economic aid to Britain from 1939-1941. This political narrative undermined otherwise reliable technical data and overshadowed the general perceptiveness of the German reporting on technical economic developments.

⁹⁸ Fischer, 139.

From the standpoint of raw technical intelligence on the United States, the German intelligence services did quite well at squeezing information out of the available sources. As in the case of Great Britain and the Soviet Union, the German intelligence staffs assigned to gather information on the United States perused all the publicly available information in newspapers and technical journals and reports on the American armaments industries. This information was supplemented by limited first-hand agent observations of factories, military bases, and port facilities by agents. Of particular interest to the intelligence service in the period 1939-1941 was accounting for the number of ships or weapons sold to Britain by the United States and specific and accurate details on any breach of the neutrality laws.⁹⁹ As a result, the foreign intelligence offices in Germany were able to extensively document just how “un-neutral” Roosevelt’s government was. At the same time, however, according to postwar interrogations of RSHA personnel, from 1939-1941 German intelligence also possessed accurate technical figures on the production of Boeing bombers, the development of the Norden bombsight, and other such valuable production figures for weapons and raw materials.¹⁰⁰ In April 1940, Canaris noted in an internal *Abwehr* memorandum his agency’s accomplishments in the United States thus far, including

- 1) A wealth of technical reports, mainly on the U.S. Navy: complete drawings of the newest warship types: aircraft carriers, destroyers...
 - 2.) Ongoing coverage of English / American negotiations on supply of arms, munitions, and war material (planes) from the USA to England.
- Overall economic reports from the United States from 1.4-31.12.39 (not press): 171.

⁹⁹ The FBI routinely captured or intercepted the lengthy “questionnaires” given to agents by the *Abwehr* and RSHA. See “Information Desired by the German Intelligence Services Concerning the United States and Canada,” 10 April 1941. NACP RG 65, Entry 136-P, Box 122, Folder 65-37193-Sec. 1, folder 2/2 (*Abwehr*).

¹⁰⁰ “CI Intermediate Interrogation Report (CIFIR) No. 52, Dr. Hans O’Gilvie,” 12 March 1946, pg. 5. NACP RG 319, Entry 134-A, Box 1, File XE 002666 RSHA Amt VI, Vol. 1, folder 2/2.

- 3.) Reports on departures of convoys to England and France.
- 4.) Ongoing reports of commercial traffic to and from the East Coast of the U.S.A.¹⁰¹

As a result, military planning organizations such as *Fremde Heere West* were kept abreast of the size, latest technological developments, and training methods of the United States armed forces and were able to effectively plan for the eventuality of war against American troops. Even in these reports, however, it was understood that the most important factor in planning for war with the United States were economic factors, the ability of the United States to rapidly manufacture, equip, and deploy arms in sufficient quantities to make a decisive difference in European affairs.¹⁰² It was the duty of the German intelligence services to accurately appraise both the German political leadership and the *Wehrmacht* economic planning staffs of American rearmament developments.

If all the information required to assess the goals and capabilities of American rearmament could be found in newspaper reports, speeches, and other public sources, German officials still found ways to downplay American military potential, sometimes through a stubborn refusal to believe the available data. When in May 1940 Roosevelt requested additional defense appropriations from Congress so that American factories could reach a production quota of 50,000 planes per year, there were accompanying squabbles in the German Embassy in Washington as to whether this was a realistic goal or mere propaganda. The German Embassy's resident economic expert Wilhelm Ernst

¹⁰¹ Chef Abw. I. Nr. 24/40, gez. Canaris, "Chefsache zur ausschließlichen Unterrichtung des Herrn. Außenministers," 25 April, 1940. BA-MA RW 5/118. Norbert Müller et. al., eds. *Materialien aus dem Bundesarchiv Heft 16 - Das Amt Ausland/Abwehr im Oberkommando der Wehrmacht: Eine Dokumentation* (Koblenz: 2007), Doc. 72.

¹⁰² For instance, a circumspect evaluation of the American Army in 1940 by FHW that closed with an evaluation of how Roosevelt intended to use American forces in service of his policies concluded that "the fulfillment of these tasks is dependent on the American rearmament industries, whose performance for the time being is growing slowly." OKH/FHW III, "Kurze Zusammenstellung über das Heer der Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika," 25 July 1940. NACP RG 242, T-78, Roll 443, folder H 2/14.

August Tannenbergs, who had served in various diplomatic posts in the United States since 1925, quickly consulted with Thomsen and the two dispatched a telegram to Berlin that evening emphasizing that while the 50,000 figure was possibly a slight exaggeration, the vast potential of American assembly-line production rendered the figure (along with similarly sweeping production goals of tanks and shipping) realistic. Tannenberg later remembered that this was an obvious conclusion, as a mere “perusal of the press and trade journals was sufficient” to understand the potential of American industrial plant. At an embassy conference the following morning however, Bötticher, who Thomsen and Tannenberg had been unable to reach the previous evening, “blew up.” He argued that no such telegram should have been sent, certainly not without his express approval as military attaché, and that the opinion expressed was in any case “absurd.” Bötticher maintained that planes, especially bombers were “too complicated” for assembly-line style production in those magnitudes, and that the President’s statement was “an exaggeration which went far beyond the real possibilities.” He immediately telegraphed Berlin contradicting Tannenberg and Thomsen’s report.¹⁰³ Similarly, when Vice President Wallace publicly announced that by 1942 the United States could produce six million tons of new shipping, Tannenberg telegraphed Berlin that this was no doubt possible. Bötticher promptly telegraphed the opposite message to OKW, which went straight to Keitel and was in Hitler’s hands well before the reports from Thomsen and other embassy staff had progressed through Foreign Office channels.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Dewitt C. Poole, Head of Mission, “State Department Special Interrogation Mission -Wilhelm Ernst August Tannenbergs,” November 5, 1945, pg. 4-6. NACP RG 498, Entry UD-287, Box 1344.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. Not that, as we have seen, the messages from Thomsen or Dieckhoff were necessarily more credible.

Such debates on the validity of Roosevelt's sweeping production quotas also played out in the upper echelons of Foreign Office leadership. Following Roosevelt's speech to Congress on the aforementioned 50,000 planes, Ribbentrop requested a briefing from long-time Foreign Office fixture Karl Ritter, then serving as a "special duty" ambassador liaising between the Foreign Office and the OKW, on the matter. Ritter remembered that Ribbentrop, characteristically, announced before Ritter had even begun speaking that Roosevelt's speech was a bluff. Even after Ritter proceeded to brief the Foreign Minister on the vast untapped potential of preexisting industrial and manufacturing plant, particularly in the automobile industry, that could be rapidly retooled to accommodate Roosevelt's production figures, Ribbentrop still insisted that such a leap in weapons manufacture would take years. When Ritter continued to protest, Ribbentrop went on to claim that no matter the industrial capacity of the United States, it would take years for military planners to settle on designs and models for the new weapons and acquire the expertise to mass-produce them.¹⁰⁵ Weeks later, Ribbentrop continued to assert his own personal "expertise" on the American economy and its war potential. In a testy series of phone calls with Ritter, an ill-tempered Ribbentrop expressed his opinion that Roosevelt's public claims about producing 40,000 tanks were once again a ridiculous fantasy. Even assuming the highest estimates from Ritter of 80

¹⁰⁵ Dewitt C. Poole, Head of Mission, "State Department Special Interrogation Mission – Karl Ritter," October 15, 1945, pg. 4. NACP RG 498, Entry UD-287, Box 1344. In reality, while technically daunting, the switch in the American automotive industry from producing civilian vehicles to weapons, planes, tanks, and other Army materials to supply all American forces in the field took less than 6 months after the retooling process began. The technical problems foreseen by Ribbentrop and Bötticher alike, that planes and tanks were more complex than civilian cars and thus would present problems for assembly-line style production were quickly overcome. Roosevelt's production quotas were quickly met or exceeded once the United States entered the war. See Richard Overy, *Why the Allies Won* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1995), 194-198. Hitler was also skeptical that such production quotas could ever be reached, and Göring was generally skeptical about the ability of America to intervene decisively in European affairs before the collapse of England. Weinberg, *World at Arms*, 153; 238.

thousand tons of American steel production per year, at two tons of steel per tank the entirety of American steel production would be allocated to tanks alone! Ritter was forced to remind the Foreign Minister that the figures from his office on American steel production were measured in the millions, not thousands, of tons. In response, Ribbentrop hung up the phone.¹⁰⁶

Even when the industrial figures from the United States were taken seriously, the political contextualization of this information by the German intelligence services, steeped in the dual vision of the United States as an economic powerhouse beset by political degeneration, effectively explained away American military and industrial potential. The structure of RSHA reports on the United States, which seamlessly integrated diverse topics ranging from Roosevelt's latest efforts to undermine American neutrality, British incitement, public opposition to these moves, and labor unrest in vital armaments industries offered a specious connection between rampant labor unrest and American opposition to the war.¹⁰⁷ These reports constructed a politicized narrative of the industrial advances in American rearmament, where the vast resources of America posed little danger to Germany because of the persistent industrial unrest of a radicalized, anti-war, labor force. Indeed, the extraordinarily diverse content of any given RSHA report, and the RSHA's tendency to devote significant attention to subjects of ideological interest, also muddied the picture of what exactly was most important about American rearmament. In a particularly bizarre digression, the RSHA VI intelligence digest for February 2nd, 1941, usually divided into country-specific sections included an additional

¹⁰⁶ "State Department Special Interrogation Mission – Karl Ritter," 5.

¹⁰⁷ While the scale and scope of American labor stoppages in 1940 and 1941 in armaments, and vital raw materials and transport sectors was extensive, these strikes originated more in fears of 1917-like wage-erosion in a strongly directed war-economy than in any specific opposition to war itself, in spite of the isolationist political leanings of a number of significant union leaders. See Kennedy, 638-42.

entry prior to that of the United States titled “Catholic Influence in the American Armed Forces,” which detailed the efforts of the San Francisco archdiocese to recruit Catholic men for the Army. The RSHA documented the call for 200,000 Catholic volunteers across the United States with its usual bureaucratic precision; the report carefully explained that 400 chaplains in possession of 300 altars, dispensing one and a half million prayer books and rosaries, would minister to these volunteers.¹⁰⁸

As in the case of Great Britain, RSHA reports on the United States frequently obsessed over public displays of neutral, isolationist sentiments in the American population in spite of its overall narrative interpretation that American Jewry and the Roosevelt clique enjoyed complete control over U.S. foreign policy. The rapid defeat of France had rendered any American notions of intervening in the war on behalf of England “obsolete,” in spite of the massive changes in American mood that indicated that 67 per cent of Americans now favored conscription (as opposed to 63 per cent opposed in December 1939).¹⁰⁹ In February 1941, Amt VI found hope in reporting that, in spite of Roosevelt’s efforts to poison America against Germany, a Gallup-Institute poll found only 15 per cent of respondents in favor of the United States entering the war, with 85 per cent against. This represented an increase from 12 per cent to 15 per cent since December, but was still under the all-time high of 19 per cent reached in the summer of 1940 after the collapse of France.¹¹⁰ This anti-war sentiment in the United States was further revealed by the difficulties faced by the U.S. Defense bond-purchasing program in

¹⁰⁸ RSHA VI, “Auslands-Meldungen,” 4 February 1941, pg. 23. USHMM RG 15.007M, Reel 71, Folder 724.

¹⁰⁹ RSHA VI, “Auslands-Lagebericht,” 2 August 1940, pg. 11. USHMM RG 15.007M, Reel 72, folder 728.

¹¹⁰ RSHA VI, “Auslands-kurzmeldungen,” 8 February 1941, pg. 4. USHMM RG 15.007M, Reel 72, Folder 727.

May, which drew much less public support than expected and had to solicit mass loans from the Treasury Department, proving “that the American people are not so quick to enthusiastically and unreservedly support government policy” on rearmament.¹¹¹ Two weeks later, Amt VI reported “90-100% of the American people are against the introduction of the convoy system and against any participation in the war.” The “evidence” for these sweeping claims was a series of press reports in isolationist newspapers that had asked isolationist Senators about the letters they received from isolationist constituents. But according to RSHA VI, these letters revealed the true feelings of the American people, unlike the findings of pro-intervention polling organizations like the Gallup-Institute that were “working in service of propaganda centers.”¹¹² Never mind that only three months earlier Amt VI had cited Gallup polling numbers that supported their conviction that Americans were broadly anti-war. This was followed in August by RSHA’s characterization of the vote on the extension of the military service law in Congress as “indicative of the general revolt against the warmongering government.” It passed by only one vote in the Senate, while outside a group of Washington women demonstrated forcefully against Britain’s “incitement propaganda.” This report also included appropriate quotations from prominent isolationist Senators Wheeler and Nye in support of the argument that America would never approve of war with Germany.¹¹³

¹¹¹ RSHA VI, “Auslands-Meldungen,” 27 May 1941, pg. 13-15. USHMM RG 15.007M, Reel 72, Folder 724.

¹¹² The *Chicago Tribune* was a favorite source of information, often described as a “leading organ of the American press,” unlike other newspapers like the *New York Times* or *Washington Post*, which were owned and operated by Jews. RSHA VI “Auslands-Meldungen,” 10 June 1941, pg. 12-13. USHMM RG 15.007M, Reel 72, Folder 724

¹¹³ RSHA VI, “Auslands-Meldungen,” 19 August 1941, pg. 15-17. USHMM RG 15.007M, Reel 72, Folder 725.

The RSHA extrapolated the results of such public opinion polls and quotations from the usual isolationists into a causal narrative interpreting labor unrest as both a broader symptom of Americans' dissatisfaction with Roosevelt's foreign policy and a check on American rearmament itself. Each RSHA report on the United States finished with a careful enumeration of strike activity in American armaments industries. Reports from May 1941 concluded

The strike situation remains unpleasant. In the armaments district of San Francisco, 11 naval shipyards have been shut down, causing a stoppage in construction of 74 vessels, including 27 new destroyers and 4 battle-cruisers, despite the urgent appeals from the government to the workers. Threatened strikes at General Motors should ensnare about 200,000 munitions workers.¹¹⁴

Presented in the context of the true cost of American aid to Great Britain and increased government oversight of arms production driving fears of longer working hours for less pay, the RSHA noted that in some cases the strikers were calling for 25 per cent wage increases to resume production of war materials.¹¹⁵ Chaos reigned. Pro-British propaganda and Roosevelt's warmongering was driving a cycle of radicalization, as anti-war worker resistance to the high inflation unleashed by the armaments boom resulted in increased "dictatorial" actions by the Roosevelt administration to contain the unrest, leading in turn to further demonstrations. RSHA VI reported in June that Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes had assumed "dictatorial control" over oil production and Roosevelt was considering unsavory new methods to break the striking opposition.¹¹⁶ Ickes' anti-German diatribes, Roosevelt's pro-British warmongering, and coercive strike-breaking

¹¹⁴ RSHA VI, "Auslands-Meldungen," 16 May 1941, pg. 11-12. USHMM RG 15.007M, Reel 72, Folder 724.

¹¹⁵ "Auslands-Meldungen," 27 May 1941, 12-13. USHMM RG 15.007M, Reel 72, Folder 724.

¹¹⁶ RSHA VI, "Auslands-Meldungen," 6 June 1941, pg. 17-19. USHMM RG 15.007M, Reel 72, Folder 724.

actions improved the situation somewhat in July 1941, but RSHA still enumerated that 2,458,000 working days had been lost so far in 1941, many in vital armaments industries.¹¹⁷

The labor situation continued to deteriorate in the summer and fall after this brief lull of improvement, however, presumably wreaking havoc in the American defense sectors. According to Amt VI, while the Army expanded to over 1.5 million men in August 1941, extensive strikes among a further 18,000 in the shipbuilding industry on both coasts were fatally delaying some 500 million dollars in defense contracts.¹¹⁸ In spite of the fact that the majority of media reports still emphasized that American rearmament was proceeding apace, the RSHA was careful to remind its readers that “one can always find people, like Senator Byrd recently, to point out the slow rhythm in war production and warn of illusions and exaggerations,” about American strength, particularly given Germany’s rapid advance in the Soviet Union and Japanese strength in the Pacific.¹¹⁹ Even as weapons factories churned out their wares at an ever increasing pace, the RSHA reports drew attention to ever-increasing labor unrest in American transportation networks, documenting in detail what they estimated as 900,000 to one million man strong strikes across fourteen rail unions in September 1941.¹²⁰ These reports were contextualized with the announcement that isolationists throughout the United States were consistently rallying support around their cause, including a scheme

¹¹⁷ RSHA VI, “Auslands-Meldungen,” 18 July 1941, pg. 10-11. RSHA VI, “Auslands-Meldungen,” 22 July 1941, pg. 15-17. USHMM RG 15.007M, Reel 72, Folder 724.

¹¹⁸ RSHA VI, “Auslands-Meldungen,” 12 August 1941, pg. 19-21. “RSHA VI, “Auslands-Meldungen,” 15 August 1941, pg. 24-26. USHMM RG 15.007M, Reel 72, Folder 725.

¹¹⁹ RSHA VI, “Auslands-Meldungen,” 5 September 1941, pg. 11-12. USHMM RG 15.007 M, Reel 72, Folder 725.

¹²⁰ RSHA VI, “Auslands-Meldungen,” 9 September 1941, pg. 14-15. RSHA VI, “Auslands-Meldungen,” 12 September 1941, pg. 25-27. USHMM RG 15.007 M, Reel 72, Folder 725.

by Rep. Fish in the House to submit a motion requiring a vote on a declaration of war with Germany just so it could be defeated by the expected 2:1 or even 5:1 margin.¹²¹ In spite of FBI interference and extensive federal regulation of war production, the RSHA unequivocally determined that bureaucratic inefficiencies and extensive strikes had significantly delayed the progress of American rearmament in 1941.¹²² This tendency of the RSHA to focus on the impeding factor of American labor radicalism dovetailed nicely with the long-held reporting of the Foreign Office on the strength of Communist movements in the United States.

If the RSHA reports highlighted the detrimental effects of constant labor strife on American rearmament, Foreign Office and *Abwehr* reports often acknowledged the grand scale of American rearmament efforts. They nonetheless undermined their importance for the German war effort through a focus on America's difficulties with Japan in the Pacific, the hindrances of American "un-neutral" arms shipments to Britain, and a misunderstanding of just how long it would take the United States to prepare for a decisive intervention in the war. Friedrich von Bötticher's frequent reports to Berlin from 1940-41 on American military strength were exercises in Janus-faced equivocation. He did not disparage the American armed forces directly because of his longstanding respect for and connections to American officers, particularly Col. Truman Smith. Instead, he force-fit the freely available facts demonstrating the growing power of the American military and the scope of U.S. war production into a highly politicized narrative stressing that the United States would not be ready to intervene in time to

¹²¹ RSHA VI, "Auslands-Meldungen," 26 September 1941, pg. 14-15. USHMM RG 15.007 M, Reel 72, Folder 725.

¹²² RSHA VI, "Auslands-Meldungen," 3 October 1941, pg. 19-20. USHMM RG 15.007M, Reel 72, Folder 725.

influence the outcome of the war in Europe. This view in and of itself contrasted markedly with Thomsen and Bötticher's general attitude that a Jewish-dominated American government was *already* intervening in the conflict the world over, seeking to take the place of the British Empire on the international stage through disingenuously propping up Britain for the benefit of American and world Jewry. Nevertheless, Bötticher's position on military affairs promised that Germany had ample time to complete the reordering of Europe before worrying about the Americans.

In September 1940, as the Battle of Britain raged and the German government contemplated a cross-channel invasion, Bötticher took the familiar position that the United States was twelve to eighteen months away from fielding an fully equipped and trained Army of 1.2 million men.¹²³ If not for Bötticher's continually sliding scale of predictions, this would appear a reasonable approximation of the truth; the actual operating strength of the U.S. Army reached nearly 1.6 million men in the summer of 1941. Yet the political context appended to estimates such as this was far more important, as Bötticher adopted the attitude that this hypothetical future deployment was less important than it seemed, because Great Britain would have long since been defeated and Germany would be better prepared to meet the American threat. In any case, even in late 1941 and early 1942, U.S. operations would be confined to the Western hemisphere. Even this was an optimistic prediction, since Bötticher argued, "The development of these forces may still take longer. Stronger support of the English and an increase in

¹²³ Bötticher to Berlin, "Telegram Nr. 1966," 14 September 1940. *DGFP* Series D, Vol. XI: Doc. 60.

deliveries of war material to them in the coming months are possible only at the expense of American rearmament.”¹²⁴

The conception of American armament production as a zero-sum game that did not take into account new or expanded industrial plant consistently plagued Bötticher’s evaluations. His dispatches, as we have seen, were reinforced by RSHA messages also emphasizing weaknesses in the American economy. Meanwhile, the *Abwehr* reports on the United States simply reproduced Bötticher and Thomsen’s dispatches from Washington. Even the limited number of confidential reports from V-Men in America that did contradict the notion of a slow rearmament portrayed these dissenting voices as unnecessarily alarmist. An *Abwehr* report from a “reliable source” from October 1940, for example, noting that the American government had completed all necessary preparations and was planning to enter the war within three months, merely confirmed negative stereotypes about the *Abwehr*’s undue pessimism.¹²⁵

Instead, Bötticher’s reports continued to drive the German picture on the United States. Curiously, given Roosevelt’s top-down production directives and the actual output of American industry from 1941 on, Bötticher argued in December 1940, “The real weakness of the American armament industry lies in its limited productive capacity for war material and planes, especially engines.” Furthermore, in spite of President Roosevelt’s May announcement of the output goal of 50,000 planes per year, according

¹²⁴ “Telegram Nr. 2079,” 28 September 1940. Nor was Bötticher alone in this assumption, as *Abwehr* reports (beyond the *Abwehr*’s reproduction of Bötticher and Thomsen’s dispatches from Washington) from 1940 were also preoccupied with the strain of fulfilling British armaments orders on America’s ability to equip and field its own units. OKW Amt. Ausl/Abw. Abt. Ausland Nr. 0143/40 geh. I. gez. Bürkner, “Außen- und militärpolitischen Kurzbericht Nr. 56,” 25 February 1940, pg. 3. NACP RG 242, T-77, Roll 932, folder OKW/484.

¹²⁵ This same report claimed that the United States’ opening salvo would include seizing port facilities in Latin America by force to prevent further exports of vital raw materials to Germany. OKW NR. 01222/40 geh. Ausl. I “Aussen- und militärpolitische Nachrichten,” 8 October 1940, pg. 2. NACP, RG 242, T-77, Roll 933, folder OKW/485.

to Bötticher, American industry was only equipped to outfit approximately 2 million men and produce 3,000 planes per month by spring 1942. Although significant, these numbers too were hollow, since “With this armaments industry the Americans cannot simultaneously meet in full the demands for war material from its own armed forces, England, Latin America, China, and other countries, even though production greatly increases from the Spring of 1941 on.” Whatever the economic potential of the United States, it would be hemmed in through political factors. Bötticher concluded,

In all decisions the Americans must take these basic factors into account in order that the demands on the armament industry may not be still further increased by an undesired extension of the war. Increasingly noticeable too, are England’s heavy ship losses, which are to be alleviated by the release of American ships. It would hardly be possible to support England if the Americans should precipitate a conflict with Japan in the Far East or embark on some other oversupplying of fleets, troops, etc. They will therefore probably try to protract the war until an armament industry has grown up which is able to meet the demands of American armament and to supply other countries, especially England. This goal can be attained only after a number of years and definitely not in 1941.¹²⁶

Although there was certainly some truth to Bötticher’s conclusions that the United States would continue to avoid an open rupture with Germany, the underlying assumptions about American war potential remained mistaken. Like other German leaders, including Hitler himself, Bötticher overestimated the deterrent effect of an expanding Japan on both American international relations and domestic rearmament. While the United States was in no position to intervene in Europe directly in 1941, its armaments industry was certainly capable of serving as the “arsenal of democracy” in the meantime without stalling America’s own rearmament. Providing vital aid to the British and the Soviet

¹²⁶ Bötticher to Berlin, “Telegram Nr. 2662,” 7 December 1940. *DGFP* Series D, Vol. XI: Doc. 475.

Union while holding off Japan in the Pacific and in Asia would not prevent the United States from intervening in Europe as Bötticher assumed.



German military attaché in Washington Lt. Gen. Friedrich von Bötticher speaking at the “Frühstück für die deutschen Flieger,” gathering, New York, 1936. Bundesarchiv N 323/148.
https://www.bundesarchiv.de/oeffentlichkeitsarbeit/bilder_dokumente/00751/index-9.html.de

Even Ambassador Dieckhoff, certainly no moderate on American political questions, endeavored to push back against what he saw as the cavalier attitudes toward American entry into the war. In an early January 1941 memorandum, Dieckhoff wrote, “One hears the view expressed at times that it is rather a matter of indifference to Germany whether the United States enters the war against us or not; America is already giving the British all the help she can. Her entry into the war would not represent any essential change in this respect. *This view is erroneous.*” He noted instead that in spite of reports highlighting American economic and military unpreparedness for war, the United States’ entry would immediately change the strategic calculus, much to

Germany's detriment. Expanded war powers would provide Roosevelt and his Congressional supporters more leverage over the political opposition and provide the circumstance for rapidly expanding industrial production by executive fiat, shortening presently anticipated delays in military deployment. Dieckhoff also predicted that, given America's political dominance in the Western Hemisphere, Germany would undoubtedly have to reckon with the full economic (if not military) resources of the of Latin America as well. Finally, given the present disposition of the Roosevelt government and its vast economic potential, any war between the United States and Germany would have no political solution; the only outcome would be total victory one way or the other. The only hope, Dieckhoff argued, was to buy sufficient time to avoid open hostilities altogether through rapidly defeating England while remaining "ice-cold" in the face of American provocations so as not to empower the warmongers or provide any justification for further American escalation.¹²⁷

This strikingly astute point-by-point refutation of the substance of Bötticher's reports (without specifically referring to the military attaché), which Weizsäcker supported as well, did not alter the content of Bötticher's evaluations in any appreciable way. In late February, Bötticher continued to downplay American war production, noting that substantial weapons shipments to Britain meant that the United States could not fill its own military orders, and claiming that the famed outcome of the "bases for destroyers" swap with Great Britain had merely been to spread a thin American military presence even thinner. With these delays in rearmament and increasing tension with the

¹²⁷ Emphasis mine. Dieckhoff, "Memorandum," 9 January 1941. *DGFP* Series D, Vol. XI: Doc. 633. For Weizsäcker's favorable reaction to Dieckhoff's memorandum, urging increased propaganda efforts to harden the divide between isolationists and interventionists, see Doc. 666.

Japanese, Germany certainly had little to fear from the United States in the near future.¹²⁸ In March, Bötticher greeted the official enactment of Lend-Lease with contempt, claiming that it was mere “propaganda” meant to “conceal the simple fact that the United States is today not yet capable of giving help that could decisively influence the course of the war, thus covering America’s actual weakness with a large gesture.” Lend-Lease was not a sign of Anglo-American strength or solidarity but instead an “admission of weakness” that had unfortunately, in Bötticher’s opinion, duped his Japanese and Russian counterparts in Washington, “...as if the providing of convoy ships by the Americans could influence the outcome of the war.” After all, while the program looked grand on paper, American factories were overwhelmed as it was, and none of the British orders would take effect until late 1942 at the earliest.¹²⁹ Britain needed weapons immediately, not dollars and credits. Bötticher would take the same position in late 1941 as the Americans began Lend-Lease shipments to the Soviet Union.¹³⁰ While Lend-Lease material aid did in fact not prove decisive until the later years of the war, Bötticher here entirely ignored the political significance of the program and what it meant for the expansion of the war economy in the present – Roosevelt’s administration actually used the bulk of initial appropriations to construct new armaments factories in America, vastly increasing armaments productivity for the near future while Britain continued to primarily purchase material on a “cash and carry” basis. This process would effectively narrow the much-discussed time lag between America’s political entry into the war and

¹²⁸ “Telegram Nr. 505,” 25 Feb. 1941.

¹²⁹ Bötticher to Berlin, “Telegram Nr. 802,” 26 March 1941. *DGFP* Series D, Vol. XII: Doc 212.

¹³⁰ Beck, 171-73, 178.

ability to intervene militarily, while also providing a readily constructed framework for material aid to the Soviet Union as well.¹³¹

Bötticher continued to draw questionable conclusions from the available evidence after the invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, couching his reports on economic expansion and rearmament in triumphalist political language. On July 6th, 1941, he informed Berlin

The wire-pullers around Roosevelt had planned to carry on the war according to the plan that the English along with other deluded people should fight and bleed for America until the time had come for ending the war by means of an intervention by America that no longer entailed any danger.

Thanks to the rapidly progressing invasion of the Soviet Union, however, Roosevelt's plan had been shattered. Because of the growing power of the Japanese in the Pacific and the sure triumph of Germany over the Soviet Union, the United States found itself "neither having the fleet to carry on the struggle against Japan in the Pacific and at the same time support the English in the Atlantic with adequate forces, nor will it have in the course of this year an adequate army or a suitable air force." Even if the requisite troops existed in good shape, and if the American economy fulfilled Roosevelt's overly optimistic production quotas, the United States lacked the shipping space to deploy its materiel.¹³² Several days later Thomsen granted that the American Army had already reached its planned strength for the year and was steadily expanding, but still pointed to a required period of "a few more months" for it to receive the necessary training and equipment. He also noted that because of the large arms deliveries to England (which in earlier reports he had claimed did not exist or were "propaganda") the U.S. air force

¹³¹ *GSWW* VI: 21-22.

¹³² Bötticher to Berlin, "Telegram Nr. 2098," 6 July 1941. *DGFP* Series D, Vol. XIII: Doc 80.

would not reach full strength for some time. Overall, the Americans would not be able to equip an entire operations-ready military force some time until the spring of 1943.

Having pushed off the possibility of meaningful American support for Britain and the Soviet Union at nearly two years into the future, Bötticher then issued a somber warning to Berlin. Noting that in past he had faithfully reported on the weaknesses of American rearmament, Bötticher now urged Berlin that it would be “easy to draw incorrect conclusions” on the faster pace of military buildup in the United States. Reassuringly, he urged Berlin “In cases of doubt...that my evaluations be used as a basis,” for resolving any discrepancies between conflicting reports.¹³³

Thomsen’s analysis of the American political and military situation was hardly better in the latter half of 1941. Thomsen greeted Roosevelt’s May 27th radio address proclaiming an “unlimited national emergency,” which featured an extensive section on the importance of maintaining “freedom of the seas,” with derision, writing Berlin that Roosevelt’s speech “cannot be otherwise interpreted than that the idea of an expeditionary force has been abandoned for good.” Given America’s lack of material preparation, Germany could not expect much from the dreaded arms convoys either, as the United States was facing a much more difficult situation than in 1917.¹³⁴ On August 7th, he dismissed the American Army as in only “the beginning phase of its being equipped and trained.” Moreover, Thomsen argued that America’s two-ocean navy would not be finished until 1946, and since existing shipping was thinly spread throughout the Atlantic and Pacific, sufficient tonnage did not exist to transport an expeditionary force to Europe as in 1917-18. Two days later, he reported that the vast majority of the American

¹³³ Bötticher to Berlin, “Telegram Nr. 2194,” 12 July 1941. *DGFP* Series D, Vol. XIII: Doc 99.

¹³⁴ Thomsen to Berlin, “Telegram Nr. 1539,” 27 May 1941. *DGFP* Series D, Vol. XII: Doc 560.

people “lacked the psychological predisposition for entering the war, just as the American Government lacks the practical prerequisites for actively waging a two-ocean war.¹³⁵ Thomsen failed to change his analysis of the situation when the *Chicago Tribune*’s leaked American military plans that detailed a “Germany-first” strategy in the event of American entry into the war on December 4th. Ever the optimist, Thomsen informed Berlin that, “The report confirms in its essentials the known fact that a full complement of American combat power is not to be expected before July 1943.” Even then, Thomsen argued, an effective American intervention (for which the political will did not currently exist) would come at great cost

The view constantly put forth by Lindbergh, Hoover, and the other leaders of the opposition is now also corroborated by the American High Command; namely that Germany can be conquered neither by dollars, American bombers, nor by American subversive propaganda, but at the most only by an American expeditionary force of several million men; and that activating it, arming and transporting it, would require enormous sums of money and would be attended by a serious shock to the American economy.¹³⁶

In making this prediction, Thomsen made no reference to the dramatic expansion of American war potential that had already taken place from 1939-1941. This included a nine-fold increase in Army personnel and more than a doubling of men under arms in the Navy and Marines, in addition to increased military production quotas for the following year.¹³⁷

¹³⁵ Thomsen to Berlin, “Telegram Nr. 2636,” 7 August 1941. Thomsen to Berlin, “Telegram Nr. 2675,” 9 August 1941. *DGFP* Series D, Vol. XIII: Doc. 185, 192.

¹³⁶ Thomsen to Berlin, “Telegram Nr. 4250,” 4 December 1941. *DGFP* Series D, Vol. XIII: Doc. 541.

¹³⁷ A sketch of the raw numbers of personnel is telling. In 1939, the U.S. Army consisted of 189,839 men, with a further 125,202 men serving in the Navy and 19,432 in the Marines. By the end of 1941, those numbers were 1,462,315; 284,427; and 54,359 respectively. Service in all sectors would increasingly double in each of the following two years as well. The strain on the American economy for all increases in 1939-1941 had been minimal. See <http://www.nationalww2museum.org/learn/education/for-students/ww2-history/ww2-by-the-numbers/us-military.html>.

When the Japanese provided that very political will at Pearl Harbor on December 7th and Hitler assured the survival of “Germany First” when he declared war on the United States on December 11th, Thomsen and Bötticher were both proven incorrect. American bombers began conducting operations over occupied Europe in August 1942. Even with the losses sustained at Pearl Harbor, the American Navy was quite capable of transporting the requisite troops to North Africa in November 1942 while engaging in simultaneous operations against the Japanese. The American economy acclimated rapidly to wartime mass production and delivered unprecedented material assistance to their British and Soviet allies while maintaining peace at home and equipping American expeditionary forces operating across the globe.

* * * *

Japan’s attack on the United States Naval base at Pearl Harbor came as a complete shock to the German intelligence services. Time zone differences aside, December 8th reports of the *Abwehr* were still repeating December 3rd dispatches from the German Embassy in Washington claiming, “we know that Japan harbors no aggressive intentions against the USA.”¹³⁸ The unexpected Japanese attack would usher in a renewed period of optimism for Hitler and the *Wehrmacht* high command after the unexpected setbacks of late November and early December in the Soviet Union. With the devastation unfolding in the Pacific, Anglo-American intervention schemes for all of 1942 had surely been thwarted. An OKW report from December 14th evaluating the result of the United States’ and Japan’s joining the war reproduced all the essential convictions of Hitler and the

¹³⁸ OKW Amt Ausland/Abwehr Abt. Ausland Nr, 02622/41 geh. I “Aussen- und militärpolitische Nachrichten,” 8 December 1941, pg. 2. NACP RG 242, T-77, Roll 933, folder OKW/487.

Embassy in Washington that Germany had more than enough time to settle its affairs in the Soviet Union before the United States could effect any change in the war situation.¹³⁹

In the end, Hitler's declaration of war on the United States was a political decision, not taken in close consultation with the German General Staff or OKW operations planners but driven by the political calculus of Japanese belligerency. In the immediate context, it was unimportant how many tanks, planes, ships, or divisions that the United States could field, given that the Americans could not field them for another year and would have to divide their forces between Germany and Japan when they did. Thus, besides the propaganda value of Germany's maintaining the initiative by declaring war on the United States before the United States could declare war on Germany, Hitler's decision was the logical culmination of years of German intelligence reports from Washington and his own dualistic views of the United States as an economic colossus weakened by racial and political degeneracy. Hitler's speech to the Reichstag on December 11th consisted of a lengthy attack on Roosevelt and the familiar themes of an American government controlled by the "entire satanic insidiousness" of the Jews, who had forced Germany into war with the United States.¹⁴⁰ Like the German intelligence services, Hitler appreciated the economic and military potential of the United States, but wagered that the Americans could be diverted from European affairs long enough to preserve a German victory in the East. In that American troops only landed in North Africa in November 1942, in Italy the following year, and in France in 1944, there was a certain truth to these predictions. As in the case of the German intelligence services,

¹³⁹ Geoffrey P. Megargee, *Inside Hitler's High Command* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2000), 170-171.

¹⁴⁰ Kershaw, *Nemesis*, 445-46.

however, the underlying assumptions that American political divisions would shackle its immediate economic contributions to the war effort proved profoundly mistaken.

CHAPTER 4

German Intelligence and the Race War in the East, 1941-1943

DR. KAUFFMANN: Did you ever think that your activity, too, and the activity of your fellow-workers was a cause for the great suffering of many people – let us say Jews – even though these people were innocent?

SCHELLENBERG: I cannot imagine that the activity of my office could cause any such thing. I was merely in an information service.

- Testimony of former RSHA VI chief Walter Schellenberg, IMT Nuremberg, January 4, 1946¹

Emerging from the wreckage of Nazi Germany in 1945, surviving members of the German intelligence services confined in Allied interrogation centers across Europe or facing criminal charges at international military tribunals took refuge in the same apologies as the vast majority of their former comrades in the SS, *Wehrmacht*, and German civil services. Their intelligence functions had been expressly nonpolitical. They had heard little, seen even less, and participated not at all in the atrocities perpetuated against European Jewry and other racial or political enemies of the *Reich*. To the extent that they acknowledged personal or institutional culpability for Germany's crimes, German intelligence officers claimed to be "small fry," mere cogs in the vast machinery of the state lacking the power to disobey orders from a clique of maniacal fanatics wielding absolute authority.² As Chapters 5 and 6 will explore, the clandestine services

¹ *Trials of War Criminals Before International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg, 14 November 1945 – 1 October 1946*, Vol. IV (Nuremberg, Germany 1947), 378-379. Hereafter IMT.

² In a particularly galling case, former *Amt VI* head Heinz Jost, a party-member since 1928 and Chief of the foreign intelligence branch of the SD from 1935 on, testified at his war crimes trial that he had not been aware of the Nazi Party's persecution of Jews in the years before the war. The incredulous prosecutor responded by asking if Jost had read any newspapers between 1933 and 1939. Testimony of Heinz Jost, *United States vs. Otto Ohlendorf et. al.* 23 October 1947. NACP RG 238, M895, Roll 3, pg. 1235-36. On the defendants' general claims of ignorance at the Nuremberg tribunal and successor trials, see Hilary Earl, *The Nuremberg SS-Einsatzgruppen Trial, 1945-1958* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 160-

of the United States often gave German political and military intelligence figures, particularly those that possessed expertise on the Soviet Union, the benefit of the doubt in assessing their criminality.

This chapter compares these postwar apologies to the actual historical record of the German intelligence services during the crucial years 1941-1943, as the bureaucratic rationale for the Holocaust took hold and before the dissolution of the *Abwehr*. The operations of the German intelligence services often blurred the lines between intelligence work and genocide. As a function of their reporting and counter-espionage duties, the German intelligence services played important direct and indirect roles in the Final Solution and other criminal activities as well. Historians have long held that the destruction and plundering of European Jewry, whatever the improvisations and conflicting initiatives from above and below, was a crime that was dependent on the systematic involvement of every facet of the German state.³ As institutions of the state, the German intelligence services were certainly implicated in its criminality. At the same time, the record of the German intelligence services is as variegated and complex as that of German society as a whole. Sins of commission and sins of omission alike precipitated the deaths of millions.

178; Kevin Jon Heller, *The Nuremberg Military Tribunals and the Origins of International Criminal Law* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 295-312; and Jonathan Friedman, "Law and Politics in the Subsequent Nuremberg Trials, 1946-1949," in *Atrocities on Trial: Historical Perspectives on the Politics of Prosecuting War Crimes*, ed. Patricia Heberer and Jürgen Matthäus (Lincoln NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 87-88.

³ The literature on this subject is of course too extensive to do justice to here. Important works include Lucy Dawidowicz's *The War Against the Jews, 1933-1945* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975) and Raul Hilberg's seminal *Destruction of the European Jews*, rev. ed. (Holmes and Meier, 1985). More recently, see Christopher Browning, *The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939-March 1942* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews: The Years of Extermination, 1939-1945* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2006), and Peter Longerich, *Holocaust: The Nazi Persecution and Murder of the Jews* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2010).

Since Nazism defined Jews as both foreign and powerful adversaries wielding tremendous worldwide influence, in many important respects reporting on Jews fell under the purview of the German foreign intelligence services.⁴ As we have seen in Chapters 1-3, when the German intelligence services reported on the political, economic, and military strengths and weaknesses of foreign states, they also gathered and processed information on “International Jewry.” The paranoid delusions of Nazi ideology transformed Jews into all-powerful specters opposing Germany at every turn. No matter their postwar apologies, the German intelligence services also contributed to the barbarities in the East. For the RSHA and Foreign Office intelligence organizations, Jewish malevolence manifested itself in the governments, industries, and media of foreign nations, fomenting hatred against Germany abroad. At the same time, wartime OKW and OKH reports (along with *Einsatzgruppen* and *Ordnungspolizei* units) increasingly saw “commissars,” “saboteurs,” “spies,” and “partisans” as Judeo-Bolshevist warriors bent on using all legal and illegal means available to destroy Germany. The German intelligence community, particularly officers of RSHA VI (foreign intelligence), also participated directly in murderous operations against Jews and other *Untermenschen* during the war as a byproduct of their wartime counter-espionage and security functions.

A Jewish War: Blaming International Jewry and Aiding Enemies of the Jews

In the period preceding the outbreak of the Second World War, German intelligence reports claimed to offer objective evidence of the malign influence of international Jewry in world affairs. In the case of the Soviet Union, the identification of

⁴ Richard Breitman, “Intelligence and the Holocaust,” in *Secret Intelligence and the Holocaust: Collected Essays from the Colloquium at the City University of New York* ed. David Bankier (New York: Enigma Books, 2006), 17-18.

Bolshevism with Judaism was a basic assumption which, when combined with longstanding stereotypes of Russo-Slavic weakness and the strategic impasse with Britain, both served to argue for and justify eastward expansion sooner rather than later. Coded signifiers for “Judeo-Bolshevism” encapsulated even the surprisingly petty matter of proper nouns, as all known Jews in the communist leadership were only referred to by their Jewish, rather than revolutionary, monikers.⁵ In the case of Great Britain and the United States, the German intelligence services filed continuous reports before and during the war detailing the hold of Jewish-Freemasonry and Jews respectively over the anti-democratic warmongering British and American foreign policies. They claimed that from movie houses to publishing houses to the White House, the Jews were the puppet-masters. These reports lent considerable support to Hitler’s conspiratorial worldview that the Jewish control of international affairs and Jewish-driven international hostility to Germany (rather than German aggression) had caused the war. Hitler’s repeated invocations of his January 1939 “prophecy” from 1939-1941 that a new world war would only result in the destruction of European Jewry were inexorably linked to the deteriorating international situation, as international Jewry surely lurked behind the otherwise incomprehensible alliance of capitalist and communist superpowers against Germany.⁶

⁵ Trotsky was never “Trotsky” but always “Bronstein,” and so forth. “Personnel ‘Tote’” [undated]. NACP RG 242, T-78, Roll 556, folder H 3/156.

⁶ Ian Kershaw, *Fateful Choices: Ten Decisions that Changed the World, 1940-41* (New York, Penguin Press, 2007), 433-34. Herf, *The Jewish Enemy: Nazi Propaganda During World War II and the Holocaust* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 92-137. Besides the Foreign Office and RSHA VI, other research agencies such as RSHA VII, spent a significant portion of their resources “proving” the existence of the Jewish conspiracy against Germany. See Dov Schidorsky, “The Library of the Reich Security Main Office and Its Looted Book Collections,” *Libraries & the Cultural Record* 42, no. 1 (2007): 21-47.

Such reports also lent credibility to the more radical and bizarre policy proposals emerging from the SD and Foreign Office Jewish departments from 1939-1941 that took the existence of a world Jewish conspiracy seriously, particularly in regards to the relationship between international Jewry and U.S. policy. In June 1938, the domestic SD intelligence offices responsible for Jewish affairs filed a number of reports suggesting that Jewish influence on Roosevelt was sufficiently strong as to perhaps aid Germany in solving its emigration problems. *SD-Inland* speculated that FDR could be convinced through an intermediary to allow 30,000 “under-privileged” Jews to settle in under-populated Alabama as some sort of “Rooseveltian” New Deal work project, if an international coalition of Jewish investors and bankers could raise the \$15 million in bonds to finance the endeavor.⁷ In the aftermath of the July 1938 Evian Refugee Conference, Jewish experts in the Foreign Office expressed confusion as to how little had been resolved at the conference, given the influence of Wall Street Jews on President Roosevelt.⁸ After 1939, as the war raged and anti-Jewish policy radicalized, Foreign Office experts on the United States (who certainly had no qualms about discriminating against and deporting Jews) cautioned against poor treatment of Jewish-American nationals in Europe, lest they bring their power to bear on U.S. policy and worsen an already tense diplomatic situation with the United States.⁹ Meanwhile, in the Foreign Office’s Jewish department, Franz Rademacher’s famous memorandum in early June

⁷ SD II 112 “Beabsichte Ansiedlung von 30.000 minderbereiten Juden in Alabama in USA,” 9 June 1939 and SD II 112, “Erschließung des U.S.A.-Staates Alabama, beabsichtigte Ansiedlung von 30.000 minderbemittelten Juden,” 3 June 1938. USHMM RG 11.001M.01 (Osobyi) Records RSHA Berlin, Reel 7, Folder 500-1-550.

⁸ SD reports to Himmler came to similar conclusions. For both the SD and Foreign office reports on the Evian Conference, see USHMM RG 11.001M.01, Reel 8, Folder 500-1-612.

⁹ Although any incident with any American foreign national had the potential to outrage and incite in the United States, such cautions were explicitly coded in the language of Jewish influence in Washington. See, for example, Dieckhoff gez. Woermann, DIII 1001, 1 March 1941 and Freytag, D III 2213, 3 May 1941. PAAA R 105015 (Politisches Abteilung IX – Po36) Judenfrage (USA) 1936-1943.

1940 proposing the deportation of European Jewry to Madagascar included a secondary option of leaving a significant portion of Eastern European Jewry imprisoned in the Lublin district as hostages to moderate the anti-German actions of the Jewish-controlled U.S. government.¹⁰

This pattern continued into 1941. In March the Foreign Office specifically linked measures against Jews to American policy developments, demanding that the announcement of new decrees concerning the denaturalization of Jewish citizens leaving the Reich and the expropriation of their property be announced the same day Lend-Lease took effect as a reprisal for an obviously Jewish-instigated policy.¹¹ In late September, reports from representatives of Alfred Rosenberg's Eastern Ministry stationed in Hitler's headquarters found the Führer contemplating retaliatory deportations of Jews from the *Altreich* and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia should the United States enter the war. One function of the first wave of (very public) deportations of German Jews to ghettos and killing centers in the East in October was to warn the Jews of the United States of the consequences for their brethren if they did not taper their warmongering in America.¹² The Foreign Office Jewish Department continued to emphasize reports of conspiratorial Jewish power in the United States well after Hitler declared war on the U.S. in December 1941, working closely with Himmler on initiatives to barter Jews of Western nationality for foreign currency or ethnic Germans in captivity in 1942-1943

¹⁰ Ian Kershaw, *Hitler 1936-1945: Nemesis* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000), 321.

¹¹ Saul Friedländer, *The Years of Extermination: Nazi Germany and the Jews 1939-1945* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2008), 265.

¹² Unlike later deportations of German Jews, these took place in full public view, with regime officials going so far as to offer comments on the evacuations to foreign media correspondents in Germany so as to maximize international press attention. Attributing the deportations as a punishment for American Jewry also served to reify the parallel domestic propaganda blitz portraying the Jewish population as the duplicitous wire-pullers behind bombing raids in Germany. Peter Longerich, *Heinrich Himmler*, trans. Jeremy Noakes and Lesley Sharpe (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 542-544. Longerich, *Holocaust*, 541 n. 4.

while at the same time spearheading the mass deportation of Jews to death camps in the East.¹³

After 1941, familiar narratives of Jewish power and influence abroad also continued to frame the RSHA's political and economic intelligence reporting in spite of the much vaunted reorganization and professionalization of the agency under Walter Schellenberg. A summary of British troop strength and deployment in April 1942 bemoaned the extensive influence of the YMCA in the British Army, which previous reports (including Schellenberg's own *Informationsheft G.B.*) had established as a hallmark of the Jewish-Freemason-plutocrat world conspiracy.¹⁴ RSHA VI reports described the politics of organized labor in the United States and Britain in terms of Russian-inspired "Bolshevization."¹⁵ The nefarious activities of prominent Jewish figures in the United States continued to feature prominently in Amt VI reporting as well. In a January 1943 report covering Roosevelt's postwar plans containing substantial American interference in postwar world affairs, for example, the RSHA described the recent appointment of "Jewish ex-Governor of New York Herbert Lehman," as director of foreign relief operations as "particularly characteristic." served as a stand-in for Jewish

¹³ See, for example, German Embassy Tarabya (Istanbul), "Anti-Jüdische Stimmen aus Amerika," 9 September 1943. PAAA R 105015 (Politisches Abteilung IX-Po36) Judenfrage (USA) 1936-1943. Friedländer, *Years of Extermination*, 583. Himmler, famously, would attempt to use the Hungarian Jews as bargaining chips with the Allies in 1944-45 as well, in hopes of brokering a peace settlement and improving his postwar prospects. On the activities of the Foreign Office Jewish Desk under Martin Luther, see Christopher Browning, *The Final Solution and the German Foreign Office: A Study of Referat D III of Abteilung Deutschland 1940-43* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1978) and Norbert Frei, Eckart Conze, Peter Hayes, and Moshe Zimmerman, *Das Amt und die Vergangenheit: Deutsche Diplomaten im Dritten Reich und in der Bundesrepublik* (Blessing Verlag: 2010).

¹⁴ RSHA VI "Allgemeine Auslandslagemeldungen," 16 April 1942, pg. 18. USHMM RG 15.007M, Reel 32, folder 729.

¹⁵ RSHA VI "Allgemeine Auslandslagemeldungen," 16 March 1942, pg. 21-22. USHMM RG 15.007M, Reel 32, folder 729. See also RSHA VI "Erkundung der Friedensbedingungen," 1 March 1943. USHMM RG 14.016M (BAB R 58/441).

power. Lehman's statements that "¹⁶ The dominant themes that had characterized RSHA VI reporting on the "Big Three" since 1940 continued unabated.

Newly featured in these reports and others from 1941 on, however, was RSHA VI's extensive coverage of the rise in global anti-Semitism as the justified and logical result of Jewish aggression, which, in turn, could only benefit the German war effort. Amidst the United States' outperforming its armament manufacturing quotas, Britain's stubborn refusal to surrender, and military setbacks in North Africa and the Soviet Union, Amt VI faithfully reported on the rise of anti-Semitism in Britain and the Dominions. On April 16, 1942, Amt VI noted "violent demonstrations against the Jews," in Montreal, Canada, "where Jews were beaten, Jewish shops destroyed and streetcars attacked with stones. The crowd shouted 'Down with the conscription! Down with the Jews!'" as proof that Canada was becoming "further enlightened on the Jewish question."¹⁷ Meanwhile, in Britain, Jews were distressed about "increasing anti-Semitism in the British population, particularly in the armed forces." This rise in anti-Semitism, Amt VI reported, was "nourished by the release of names of black-marketeers, many of whom are Jews."¹⁸ As the German military position continued to deteriorate in 1943, Amt VI also repeatedly offered beacons of hope for a negotiated settlement through underscoring the rise of openly anti-Semitic Allied political and military figures. RSHA VI reports out of Argentina in 1943, for instance, found hope in the "fact" that General Eisenhower was an

¹⁶ RSHA VI "Allgemeine Auslandslagemeldungen," 19 January 1943, pg. 17. USHMM RG 15.007M, Reel 32, folder 730.

¹⁷ RSHA VI "Allgemeine Auslandslagemeldungen," 16 April 1942, pg. 15-16. USHMM RG 15.007M, Reel 32, folder 729. Reports on the United States offered a similar narrative of righteous public backlash against the special privileges of Jews and the idea that the United States was fighting a "Jewish war."

¹⁸ RSHA VI "Allgemeine Auslandslagemeldungen," 1 May 1942, pg. 23-24. USHMM RG 15.007M, Reel 32, folder 729.

anti-Semite and had treated German PW's well.¹⁹ In 1944 RSHA VI's section chief on North American affairs, Theodor Paeffgen, submitted a memorandum from "an entirely trustworthy source" that made similar claims about 1944 Republican presidential candidate Thomas Dewey,

The informant held talks of a political nature with Dewey in the year 1938 that had as subject especially National Socialism and the Jewish question. Dewey hereby showed an instinctive antipathy to the Jews, while noting that many Jewish elements were to be found among the gangsters he had fought [as Manhattan district attorney]. This attitude is, according to the informant's view, traceable to Dewey's [distant] Irish ancestry as well as to his defeat in the 1938 campaign against the Jewish-Democratic candidate [Gov. Herbert] Lehman. The governor [Dewey] was even then reviled by the Jewish-steered press. As the informant declared, Dewey would, if he is named president of the U.S.A., hardly allow Jews into authoritative and important posts.

Dewey's opinion about Germany is indicated as friendly and appreciative, and the informant mentioned the possibility of an understanding between Germany and the U.S.A. under Dewey's presidency.²⁰

Beyond providing evidence reinforcing the existence of a world Jewish conspiracy, the German intelligence services participated indirectly in anti-Jewish actions abroad through support for anti-Semitic allies of Nazi Germany or anti-Semitic nationalist movements working to disrupt the British and Soviet Empires. The mixed record of the *Abwehr* is illustrative in this regard. On the one hand, as we have seen in previous chapters, *Abwehr* political and military intelligence digests declined to reproduce the frequent anti-Semitic outbursts in the Foreign Office dispatches that

¹⁹ Richard Breitman, "Nazi Espionage: the Abwehr and SD Foreign Intelligence," in *U.S. Intelligence and the Nazis* by Richard Breitman et. al. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 106.

²⁰ David Kahn, *Hitler's Spies: German Military Intelligence in World War II* (New York: MacMillan, 1978), 339-40. Not mentioned in the report by the "reliable" informant was Dewey's radio address in response to *Kristallnacht* in 1938, where he hoped of "appeal[ing] to world opinion to rebuke a dictatorship gone mad," and expressed disgust with the "sickening spectacle" of Jewish persecution in Germany. "Dewey and Smith Lead Series of Protests in Behalf of Reich Jews," *Baltimore Sun*, 12 Nov. 1938.

comprised a good part of their source material. In a typical example, the *Abwehr* intelligence digests from September 29th to October 6th, declined to reproduce any of military attaché Friedrich von Bötticher's extensive reports from that period on the American reaction to the Tripartite pact, which had been accompanied by the usual anti-Semitic invective against Roosevelt and commentary on the need for cultivating further relationships with anti-Jewish and pro-German elements in the American general staff. Instead, the entirety of the October 2nd section of the *Abwehr* report on the United States read, "Havana Conference was on 27 September approved by the Senate," while additional reports on September 29th, October 3rd and October 6th did not mention the effects of the Tripartite Pact at all.²¹ Overall, the legacy of Canaris and the famed resisters that found a home in the *Abwehr*, martyred by the regime after the failed July 1944 uprising, remains generally positive.²² Yet Canaris was in many ways a problematic figure, whose primary choice of avoidance and withdrawal was not enough to keep the *Abwehr* "clean." As Christian Gerlach's extensive studies on German atrocities in the East have indicated, even the "men of July 1944," including those in

²¹ OKW Nr. 01163/40 geh. Ausl. I., "Außen- und militärpolitischen Nachrichten," 29 September 1939, pg. 1; OKW Nr. 01165/40 geh. Ausl. I., "Außen und militärpolitischen Nachrichten," 2 October 1940, pg. 1; OKW Nr. 01168/40 geh. Ausl. I., "Außen- und militärpolitischen Nachrichten," 3 October 1940, pg. 1.; OKW Nr. 01197/40 geh. Ausl. I., "Außen- und militärpolitischen Nachrichten," 6 October 1940, pg. 1. RG 242, T-77, Roll 933, file OKW/485.

²² Ibid, 233-236. The most recent biography of Canaris is decidedly sympathetic to the plight of a vacillating, but generally honorable man disgusted by the crimes of the regime but unable to take any substantial action apart from maintaining records of Nazi criminality for posterity and allowing his subordinates to conspire against the government. There are also a number of (perhaps apocryphal) postwar reminiscences of those close to Canaris that he endeavored to stick out his tenure in the *Abwehr* doing as little as possible to keep the agency serviceable to the Reich, in order to prevent the SD from taking over completely, which ultimately happened anyway in 1943-44. Michael Müller, *Canaris: The Life and Death of Hitler's Spymaster*, trans. Jeffrey Brooks (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2007).

prominent *Abwehr* resistance circles, were not immune from wholeheartedly embracing and even participating in genocide and mass murder in the East.²³

Canaris' own political journey reflected the multiplicity of enthusiasms for and accommodations to Nazism amongst conservative elites. In 1918, Canaris was a radicalized naval veteran who wholeheartedly threw his support behind the postwar hard right. He aided and abetted the *Freikorps* and military units responsible for murdering prominent Spartacist revolutionary leaders during the January 1919 revolution.²⁴ Both before and after his appointment as head of the *Abwehr* in 1935, Canaris was a close friend of the Nazi Party ideologue Reinhard Heydrich and an enthusiastic supporter of Nazism itself in its early years, although, like many other military figures, Canaris never joined the Party. In 1938, however, Canaris did pen an essay for the Party-produced anthology *Wehrmacht und Partei*, a broad meditation on the valuable contributions of National Socialism to the ethos of the armed forces.²⁵ Canaris' piece, "Politics and the Armed Forces," established the continuities between Nazi ideology and the honor and duty of the German officer corps since the First World War, even reaching back further to continuities between Nazism and the ideals of Frederick the Great where appropriate. The *Wehrmacht's* tasks, as Canaris saw it, were fourfold: serving as a "model of the fulfillment of National Socialist ideology," as a "model for the fulfillment of the pure ideas of the Führer," as a "great educational school for the young men of the state," and

²³ Christian Gerlach, "Men of 20 July and the War in the Soviet Union," trans. Roy Shelton in *War of Extermination: The German Military in World War II*, ed. Hannes Heer and Klaus Naumann (New York: Berghahn Books, 2000), 127-145. Christian Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde: Die deutsche Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik in Weißrußland 1941 bis 1944* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 1999).

²⁴ Wolfram Wette, *The Wehrmacht: History, Myth, Reality* trans. Deborah Lucas Schneider (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 44. Mueller, 43-48. Documentation is murky and accounts vary, but range from claiming direct involvement (Wette) to destruction of incriminating evidence and aiding the murderers in their escape from justice. (Mueller).

²⁵ Richard Donnevert, a longtime Party member and subordinate to Rudolph Hess in the Deputy Führer's Office, edited the collection, which went through three editions between 1938 and 1941.

“embody[ing] the national community in exemplary form.” The German officer corps was essential to these missions, and “must lead the way in lived and realized National Socialism.”²⁶ For Canaris, the idea of a “nonpolitical” military elite rooted only in Christian faith in king and country had died in the trenches of the First World War and the subsequent upheavals of 1918. Only the expressly political patriotism and unity of the soldiers at the front had saved Germany from complete destruction in 1918-19, and these patriotic actions were the genesis of Nazism. Canaris continued,

The German soldiers and officers who experienced this new national community at the front sealed this new national consciousness with their own blood. But what is National Socialism? It is nothing else than what the Frontline soldiers experienced and endured at that time:

Fulfillment of duty, obedience, camaraderie, *with it the affirmation of the duty of national community*. Thus side by side with the founder and creator of this idea, Adolf Hitler, the German officer and soldier’s devotion [during the war] lay the foundation of a new Germany: The frontline soldiers of the World War were indeed the first National Socialists.
27

During the Weimar era, these men, the soldiers and officers that counted Hitler and other Nazi luminaries among their number, resurrected Germany’s honor through destroying the cursed and unnatural republic.²⁸ Presently, with the fusion of state, Party, and armed forces, the Wehrmacht was the “mailed fist of the German Reich,” and must appear to

²⁶ Wilhelm Canaris, “Politik und Wehrmacht,” in *Wehrmacht und Partei*, ed. Richard Donnevert (Leipzig: 1939), pg. 44-55. The essay is reproduced in its entirety in Norbert Müller et. al., ed., *Materialien Aus dem Bundesarchiv Heft 16 - Das Amt Ausland/Abwehr in Oberkommando Wehrmacht: Eine Dokumentation* (Koblenz, 2007), 151-152.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 153. In this section and throughout, Canaris repeatedly references the concept of a German *Völk*, a *völkische Gemeinschaft*, *Volks-gemeinschaft*, and *Vollksbewußtein*. The employment of these terms was common-currency on the German right from at least 1914 on, but under the Nazi regime such terms were explicitly coded with ideas of race purity. Victor Klemperer, *The Language of the Third Reich, LTI: Lingua Tertii Imperii – A Philologist’s Notebook* trans. Martin Brady (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013).

²⁸ *Ibid.*

other nations as “the strongest expression of National Socialist willpower and National Socialist force.”²⁹ Given this mission and its historical antecedents, Cararis concluded,

In conclusion, I especially would like to point out the necessity of close contact with the National Socialist movement. We always want to remember that National Socialism arose in the trenches and the shell craters of the World War and that its creator, our Supreme Commander, always was and remains a soldier. The more we familiarize ourselves with national socialist thought, all the more will we find that there is truly a genuine soldierly rationale. The slogans of the Party: obedience, comradeship, national community, commitment, readiness for action and loyalty are soldierly slogans. Soldierly principles have become [the guiding principles]...for the design of the entire life of our people. Whoever is a really good soldier will also be a good National Socialist. This line of thought must also be a guiding principle in the daily life of soldiers – particularly the officers.

It was the duty of all German officers and soldiers to subsume themselves to the greater “National Socialist soldierly mission,” and march alongside the Führer, “our supreme commander” toward victory.³⁰

²⁹ “Politik und Wehrmacht,” 156.

³⁰ Ibid, 158. The only hint of Cararis’ supposed disillusionment with National Socialism that is supposed to have developed well before this essay was written is, perhaps, a subtle rebuke to the *Führerprinzip* through a roundabout claim that the spirit of National Socialism is bigger than one man and belongs principally to the soldiers.



German intelligence personified: new commander of the German *Abwehr* Captain Wilhelm Canaris socializing with SS-*Gruppenführer* and head of the SD Reinhard Heydrich at an event at the former *militärärztlichen Akademie*, Invalidenstrasse 48, Berlin, 1935. BA Bild 183-H26899

In spite of his personal misgivings surrounding the outbreak of war in 1939 and his evident revulsion at the unfolding Holocaust, Canaris, like many others, prioritized his dedication to the war effort and duty to the *Führer* over any personal qualms about the nature of the path to victory.³¹ Furthermore, Canaris' "internal migration" (or the activities of the more active resistance circles of his closest subordinates) often had little effect in saving the elements of the *Abwehr* from participating in the regime's crimes.

³¹ This picture of a waffling Canaris, unable or unwilling to set himself against the regime, retreating into the fold of his faith and his diaries while benignly ignoring the efforts of a small number of his subordinates' to work against the criminal regime hews closely to the older interpretation of Canaris career as put forth in Heinz Höhne, *Canaris: Hitler's Master Spy* (New York: Doubleday, 1979) than to recent biographies such as Müller's that emphasize Canaris' resistance efforts and downplay his continued loyal service to the Reich.

Upon the outbreak of war in September 1939, Canaris demanded that his staff “maintain an unconditionally positive attitude” and spare no effort in loyally serving their Führer. When the first reports of the planned liquidation of Polish elites reached Canaris shortly thereafter, he apparently protested to Keitel but in such a vague and roundabout manner that no one at headquarters was sure exactly what Canaris was objecting to or why.³² Meanwhile, the *Abwehr*’s own secret field police under Wilhelm Krichbaum continued to work closely with *Einsatzkommandos* in Poland to identify and execute civilian undesirables.³³ At the same time, as the war progressed, Canaris directly acted in a number of instances to shield several Jewish acquaintances and *Abwehr* informants from persecution and deportation, procuring passports and funds so that they could continue their work against the Soviet Union from neutral countries.³⁴

Canaris was kept fully abreast of the regime’s genocidal vision of a post-Barbarossa Russia, since in addition to its military intelligence duties the *Abwehr* was slated to play a leading role alongside the Eastern Ministry in cultivating reliably anti-Soviet nationalist organizations to help administer the newly acquired Eastern territories. Two days before the invasion, the future head of the Reich Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories Alfred Rosenberg addressed a diverse group of government and military elites, including Canaris and Heydrich, on the racial and ideological basis of the upcoming campaign. Rosenberg also opined on the harsh but necessary implementation

³² Müller, 160-167.

³³ Alexander B. Rossino, *Hitler Strikes Poland: Blitzkrieg, Ideology, and Atrocity* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2003), 18-19. Canaris himself had approved the transfer of the *Geheime Feldpolizei* command to Krichbaum, an SS border police guard and Gestapo member since 1933, in August 1939 for the explicit purpose of liaising closely with the *Einsatzkommandos* and Gestapo execution squads. Many of the *Abwehr*’s secret field police themselves held rank in the *Kripo* and Gestapo. For “Willi” Krichbaum’s postwar career, see Chapter 5.

³⁴ Müller, 171-72; 209-14.

of the so-called “Hunger Plan” of starving to death millions of civilians in the East, maximizing the economic spoils for Germany of the soon-to-be-defeated Soviet Union.³⁵ Privately, Canaris was unenthusiastic, encouraging his deputies to add evidence of yet another dishonorable undertaking to his secret “Rarities File” of Party-sponsored criminal activities, along with news of regime-directed anti-Jewish measures in the East in June.³⁶

Whatever Canaris’s personal feelings, however, the *Abwehr* was increasingly forced to cooperate with the direct perpetrators of the regime’s criminal policies. The pre-invasion intelligence protocols issued by Franz Halder and OKW (see below) called for ever-closer collaboration between *Abwehr* field officers and SS and Security police *Sonderkommandos* tasked with identifying and eliminating “enemies” in the East in joint prisoner interrogation (and liquidation) operations. There was also always the opportunity for individual *Abwehr* officers to choose to engage in criminal activities directly. Major Hermann von Stransky, for example, the chief *Abwehr* liaison officer to the Romanian secret intelligence service (SSI), actively took part in anti-Jewish violence, working alongside the Romanian police and SSI in planning and implementing the murder of over 13,000 of Jews in the Iasi pogrom of June 27. Von Stransky apparently went so far as to brag about his involvement semi-publically at a banquet hosted by the

³⁵ BA-MA RW 4/760 Chef Amt Ausland/Abwehr Nr. 29/41 g. Kdos Chefsace Abw. II gez. Canaris, 30 May 1941, in *Das Amt Ausland/Abwehr in Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*: Nr. 97. Müller, 202-03. Adam Tooze, *Wages of Destruction: The Making and Breaking of the Nazi Economy* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006), 476-480.

³⁶ According to Müller, Canaris kept a secret dossier of reports about SS atrocities and criminal operations, referred to by his subordinates as the “Rarities File,” which he shared with the anti-Hitler circle led by Hans Oster. It was the closest Canaris came to active involvement in the anti-Hitler resistance.

SSI in December 1942, where witnesses also heard him remark on the need to “take care of” the Jewish community in Bucharest using similar methods.³⁷

As in the Polish campaign, Canaris complained to Keitel about OKW directives, particularly those in the summer and fall 1941 demanding “the harshest treatment” (systematic murder) of Red Army prisoners. Canaris specifically noted the reciprocal consequences for captured German soldiers, the potential enemy propaganda coup, and, most offensive to Canaris, “the very general orders... will lead to arbitrary killings and mistreatment, even if arbitrariness is formally permitted.” Canaris concluded “[The Abwehr] was not involved prior to the adoption of these arrangements. [The Abwehr] expresses serious concerns both from a fundamental point of view and for the adverse consequences certain to follow in political and military terms.”³⁸ Upon receiving further evidence of mass shootings of Jews in early December 1941, this time in Latvia, Canaris seems to have offered a protest to Hitler as well, although the documentary evidence on this matter remains incomplete. On December 10th, however, Canaris gave a lecture in Berlin to the heads of the various *Abwehr* field offices where he made a point to remind his subordinates that “Abwehr has nothing to do with persecution of Jews. The [Abwehrstelle’s] duties are to be carried out in a humane, respectable, correct and

³⁷ Radu Ioanid, *The Holocaust in Romania: The Destruction of Jews and Gypsies Under the Antonescu Regime, 1940-1944* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2000), 64-68. Müller, 205. The extent to which von Stransky and other German intelligence officials from the SD and *Wehrmacht* aided and abetted the Romanian regime in this and other pogroms remains a matter of some controversy given the historiographical sensitivity to any minimization of Romanian responsibility in these crimes. *Abwehr* and SD involvement is generally accepted, however, in Ioanid and Henry Eaton, *The Origins and Onset of the Romanian Holocaust* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2013), 143-47. See also “The Holocaust in Romania,” *Final Report of the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania Presented to Romanian President Ion Iliescu*, 11 November 2004, pg. 17, which notes Stransky’s presence. Available through USHMM online at <http://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/20080226-romania-commission-holocaust-history.pdf>

³⁸ Amt. Ausl/Abw. Nr. 9735/41 geh. Chef. Ausl. (Canaris) “Anordnung für die Behandlung sowjetischer Kriegsgefangener,” 15 Sept. 1941. NACP RG 238, T-988, Roll 5 (USSR Exhibit 356). “Testimony of Leopold Bürkner,” 9 November 1945 (Nurnberg), pg. 14-17. NACP RG 238, M1270, Roll 2.

soldierly manner. *Activity against Jews is no concern of ours.* We have nothing to do with it, hold ourselves aloof from it, do not criticize.” The same lecture, which was repeated again ten days later at an *Abwehr* conference, went on to remind *Abwehr* officers that they must continue to work closely with the Gestapo and SD on intelligence matters and “stick to [their] guns for victory.”³⁹ If Canaris did indeed speak out about the unfolding Holocaust, that was certainly no small feat of courage. At the same time, however, in the face of the Führer’s continued support for such actions, Canaris increasingly retreated from such overt actions into avoidance and indecision, disapproving of the regime’s criminality while not actively opposing it.⁴⁰

Even in attempting to compartmentalize the *Abwehr*’s intelligence functions and maintain an attitude of aloof disapproval in the matter of mass murder, Canaris’s *Abwehr* frequently provided direct aid to organizations actively pursuing genocide and ethnic cleansing in the service of the greater German war effort. Regardless of his inner convictions and limited protests, or the actions of individual unit intelligence officers serving at the front, during his tenure Canaris and the *Abwehr*’s foreign intelligence operations provided funding to virulently anti-Semitic individuals and organizations in their service to the Reich, including the notorious Grand Mufti of Jerusalem Mohammad Amin al-Husseini and Stepan Bandera’s Ukrainian nationalist organization.

Since 1932, the *Abwehr* had cultivated contacts within the radical Ukrainian nationalist organization (OUN), which systematically distributed anti-Semitic literature and freely engaged in politically motivated assassinations in Poland in the 1920s and

³⁹ Breitman, “Nazi Espionage: the *Abwehr* and SD Foreign Intelligence,” 99-100. Emphasis in original.

⁴⁰ Kahn, 234-36. Canaris even went so far as to delegate the duty of making situation reports to OKW to a subordinate by 1942 and increasingly seeking refuge in official duties outside Berlin. His absence, however, was noticed by his colleagues and ultimately fuelled suspicions about his questionable loyalty to the regime.

1930s.⁴¹ The radicalism of the Ukrainian nationalist contingent was certainly not unknown to the German High Command or Canaris, who envisioned a special place for a behind-the-lines OUN contingent in the 1939 Polish campaign. Providing arms and support under the operational codename “*Bergbauernhilfe*,” the *Abwehr* envisioned a broad OUN uprising in Eastern Poland that would cause havoc in the Polish rear, diverting valuable resources from the front.⁴² Although this operation duly took place in September 1939, Keitel and Ribbentrop also envisioned putting the Ukrainians to other uses. On September 12th, at a joint conference on Hitler’s private train attended by Keitel, Jodl, Ribbentrop, Canaris and Col. Erwin von Lahousen (the head of *Abwehr*’s sabotage operations in Poland), Canaris received orders to use the *Abwehr*’s contacts with the Ukrainian nationalists in Galicia to instigate a revolt directed principally against Galicia’s Jewish population. As Lahousen testified at the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg in November 1945,

Col. Amen: What, if anything, was said [at the meeting of 12 Sept.] about possible cooperation with a Ukrainian group?

Lahousen: Canaris was ordered by the Chief of the OKW [Keitel], who stated that he was transmitting a directive which he had apparently received from Ribbentrop since he spoke of it in connection with the political plans of the Foreign Minister, to instigate in the Galician Ukraine an uprising aimed at the extermination of Jews and Poles....After this discussion in the private carriage of the Chief of the OKW, Canaris left the coach and had another short talk with Ribbentrop, who, returning to the subject of the Ukraine, told him once more that the uprising should be so staged that all farms and dwellings of the Poles should go up in flames, and all Jews be killed.

Col. Amen: Who said that?

⁴¹ The fact that many OUN leaders were in fact married to Jews made little difference; the anti-Semitic rhetoric of the OUN markedly increased in the later 1930s. Timothy Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, 1569-1999* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 143-153.

⁴² BA-MA RW 5/699 g.Kdos.Abw.II/Ch. Gez Lahousen 15 July 1939; Nr. 20/39 Chef., gez. Lahousen, “Unternehmen Bergbauernhilfe,” 4 August 1939 in *Das Amt Ausland/Abwehr in Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*: Nr. 43 and 44.

Lahousen: The Foreign Minister of that time, Ribbentrop, said that to Canaris...I have not the slightest doubt about that. I remember with particular clarity the somewhat new phrasing that “all farms and dwellings should go up in flames.” Previously there had only been talk of “liquidation” and “elimination.”⁴³

This too (along with the planned shootings of the Polish intelligentsia and Jews) occasioned another protest to Keitel by Canaris that, as Lahousen explained at the Nuremberg trials, “One day the world will also hold the Wehrmacht, under whose eyes these events occurred, responsible for such methods.”⁴⁴ More important than Canaris’ protests in this case, however, was the Soviet NKVD, which because of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact held jurisdiction over the OUN’s operating area in Eastern Poland, and quickly and brutally put a stop to their operations. In the interim, some 7,000 OUN-affiliated Ukrainian nationalists murdered hundreds of Polish civilians.⁴⁵ The connections between the OUN and the *Abwehr* remained.

Under the pressures of Soviet occupation, the OUN split into a radically anti-Semitic branch under Stepan Bandera (OUN-B) that favored immediate Ukrainian independence and a slightly less radical organization under Andriy Melnyk (OUN-M) seeking sovereignty in the long-term under German sponsorship. Both favored continued collaboration with the Germans, although OUN-B would prove so troublesome in their desires for a sovereign Ukraine as to inspire a German crackdown and arrest of the leadership in July 1941. Prior to this, however, both OUNs still received arms, ammunition, and training from the *Abwehr* in German-occupied Poland in preparation for

⁴³ IMT II, 448. Canaris and Lahousen received written orders about the purposes of the Ukrainian uprising on September 14th as well, according to Müller, 164.

⁴⁴ IMT II, 447.

⁴⁵ Timothy Snyder, “The Causes of Ukrainian-Polish Ethnic Cleansing 1943,” *Past and Present*, no. 179 (May 2003): 206. Halik Kochanski, *The Eagle Unbowed: Poland and the Poles in the Second World War* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 120. Alexander Statiev, *The Soviet Counterinsurgency in the Western Borderlands* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 46-47.

the Barbarossa campaign.⁴⁶ So, the OUN-B marched into the Soviet Union alongside the *Wehrmacht* in June 1941, proclaiming Jewry to be “the vanguard of Muscovite imperialism in the Ukraine,” and openly calling for the extermination of the Jews.⁴⁷ Reaching Lvov on 30 June, the Ukrainians (under the watchful eyes of the *Wehrmacht*’s 295th infantry division) promptly initiated a pogrom that lasted until July 2nd, forcing thousands of Jews to atone for their innate communist sympathies by exhuming NKVD victims in the area and then forcing the Jews to lie down in the dug-up mass graves for their own execution. After the *Wehrmacht* finally put an end to the violence on the 2nd, the *Einsatzgruppen* moved in and began the killing anew with Ukrainian collaboration, before the Ukrainians once again took over the killing operations themselves a fortnight later.⁴⁸

Another long-time client of Canaris’ *Abwehr* was the Arab nationalist Grand Mufti Mohammed Amin al-Husseini and the various pan-Islamic nationalist networks that he inspired. There was no mistaking Husseini’s politics; he was a virulently anti-Semitic Arab nationalist, a peddler of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, and a frequent instigator of anti-Jewish riots in Palestine. The British expelled him from Palestine in 1937. For Canaris, he was a means of undermining British influence in the Middle East. As Klaus-Michael Mallman and Martin Cüppers have demonstrated, as early as July 1938 Keitel authorized Canaris to provide weapons shipments to the Grand Mufti in

⁴⁶ Grzegorz Rossolinski-Liebe, *Stepan Bandera: The Life and Afterlife of a Ukrainian Nationalist: Fascism, Genocide, and Cult* (Stuttgart, Germany: ibidem Verlag, 2013), 189-90.

⁴⁷ Richard Breitman and Norman J.W. Goda, *Hitler’s Shadow: Nazi War Criminals, U.S. Intelligence, and the Cold War* (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 2010), 74-75.

⁴⁸ Friedländer, *Years of Extermination*, 213-215; Longerich, *Holocaust*, 193-195.

hopes of aiding his (expressly anti-Jewish) uprising in Palestine.⁴⁹ The *Abwehr*-driven arms deliveries to the Mufti and his allies continued in 1941 via Spain in an effort to foment further Arab nationalist-inspired acts of sabotage and insurrection against the British in Palestine, Transjordan, Egypt and Iraq. After close consultation with the German Foreign Office, wherein Canaris agreed that “the primary political route to the Arab world should be via the Grand Mufti and his secretary,” the *Abwehr* shipped tens of thousands of carbines, hundreds of light machine guns, and the requisite ammunition for these weapons to the Mufti’s supporters.⁵⁰ Meanwhile, *Abwehr*-led and trained commandos in the region took part in the 1941 pro-Axis coup in Iraq and drew up plans to utilize an elite force of Palestinian-German “Brandenburgers” to blow up the Suez Canal in a broader attempt to undermine the British war effort.⁵¹ Following the British re-entry into Baghdad and victory over the coup in June 1941, the defeated pro-Axis elements initiated a bloody pogrom. Such efforts proceeded alongside Foreign Office propaganda to the Middle East from Berlin that included incitements over short-wave radio in 1941 and 1942 for the Arabs to rise up and murder the Jews.⁵² On December 8th, 1942 Canaris personally thanked the Mufti at a meeting in Berlin for his efforts in

⁴⁹ Klaus-Michael Mallman and Martin Cüppers, *Nazi Palestine: The Plans for the Extermination of the Jews in Palestine*, trans. Krista Smith (New York: Enigma Books, 2010), 11-13, 48-50. Jeffrey Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 32-33).

⁵⁰ Mallman and Cüppers, 64-66. According to Mallman and Cüppers, one mid-April shipment contained 15,000 carbines, 200 light machine guns, and 300 submachine guns, while another from mid-May (transported in 20 rail cars) included a further 15,000 carbines, 300 submachine guns, and ammunition.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 74-76. Per usual, *Abwehr* actions in the region were closely coordinated with the Foreign Office, *Wehrmacht*’s and Reich Ministry for Propaganda’s operations inspiring Muslim zeal in the region. See also Lahousen of the *Abwehr*’s discussions with the Foreign Office in PAAA R 29924 U.St. S. Pol. Nr. 496 gez Woermann, 5 June 1941 in *Das Amt Ausland/Abwehr in Oberkommando Wehrmacht*, Nr. 100..

⁵² Herf, *Arab World*, 112; 125-26. At this time, the Mufti too was in Berlin, where he publicly and privately exhorted the necessity of exterminating the Jews.

fostering the active support of the native Arab population for German objectives in the region.⁵³

RSHA intelligence also implicitly and explicitly supported genocidal causes and personalities outside of Germany. While often regarded as a footnote in the history of the Romanian Iron Guard, the January 1941 uprising of Horia Sima and his followers against the authority of Ion Antonescu merits further examination in this context. The official foreign policy of the Reich, as advocated by Hitler and Ribbentrop, was full support of the Antonescu regime; Hitler desired political and economic stability within Romania in order to ensure continued shipments of oil and other raw materials vital to the burgeoning preparations for war against the Soviet Union, as well as military cooperation in the upcoming campaign.⁵⁴ In spite of Hitler's repeated personal pledges to Marshal Antonescu that Germany only desired to deal with his government, and possessed no enthusiasms for the troublesome Iron Guard, RSHA IV under Heinz Jost was in fact awaiting any opportunity to aid the Romanian fascists.⁵⁵

The Legionaries Rebellion of January 21-23 was a bloody affair, resulting in sectarian violence against both government officials and popular anti-Semitic outbursts of violence amongst the general population. The American Foreign Minister in Bucharest,

⁵³ Mallman and Cüppers, 177.

⁵⁴ Detlef Vogel, "German Intervention in the Balkans," in *Germany and the Second World War*, vol. 3, *The Mediterranean, Southeast Europe and North Africa 1939-1941*, ed. Research Institute for Military History, Potsdam, trans. Dean S. McMurry, Ewald Osers and Louise Willmot (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 460-61.

⁵⁵ Dennis Deletant, *Hitler's Forgotten Ally: Ion Antonescu and His Regime, Romania 1940-44* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), 64. Longerich, *Himmler*, 505-06. "Interrogation Report on Schellenberg, 27 June – 12 July 1945," pg. 18. NACP RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, Box 112, file "Schellenberg, Walter," Vol. 2, folder 1/2. By this time it was evident that the political situation in Romania was deteriorating. The Iron Guard, under Horia Sima, since late 1940, was pursuing a policy of popular agitation, including rioting, pogroms, and political assassinations in its push for a greater place in the Romanian government. Also, although the historical record proves that Hitler's vows of loyalty expressed in such meetings were not binding in any sense, the subsequent course of events relating to this case, as well as the tight timeline for the Soviet invasion and the necessity of Romanian cooperation for that effort indicate that Hitler's pledges to Antonescu were indeed authentic.

in a message to Secretary of State Cordell Hull, described the aftermath in Bucharest, noting over 700 Jews murdered in the streets in the most brutal fashion over a period of three days, including a particularly gruesome episode where more than 60 Jews were skinned and hung from hooks in a local slaughterhouse.⁵⁶ A significant figure in planning and supporting the revolt, Otto von Bolschwing, was the SD representative in Bucharest at the time, who may have gone so far as to secure arms for the Romanian Legionaries.⁵⁷ Furthermore, once Antonescu successfully suppressed the insurrection, Andreas Schmidt, head of the German ethnic group in Romania, smuggled Sima out of Bucharest in the trunk of his car in order to prevent his capture by Antonescu loyalists.⁵⁸ According to a former member of the Legionary movement, while Hitler assured Antonescu of his full support against the rebellion,

The same Nazi Germany, through Major Geissler who headed their intelligence service in Romania, helped Sima [and other leaders of the revolt] to cross the Danube into Bulgaria at Giurgiu in February 1941. Sima and his group were provided by Geissler with German army uniforms and German papers.⁵⁹

Ribbentrop was reportedly irate, as was Hitler, given the utmost need to maintain a productive working relationship with Antonescu. Antonescu himself wrote a series of

⁵⁶ Telegram: The Minister in Rumania (Gunther) to the Secretary of State, January 30, 1941, U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1941, 2: Europe*, <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=goto&id=FRUS.FRUS1941v02&isize=M&submit=Go+to+page&page=860> (access date Jan. 14, 2015). These death tolls are disputed, with some scholars placing them at a more modest 120.

⁵⁷ Michael Wildt, *An Uncompromising Generation: The Nazi Leadership of the Reich Security Main Office*, trans. Tom Lampert (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), 398-399. See also, Andreas Hillgruber, *Hitler, König Carol und Marschall Antonescu: Die Deutsch-Rumänischen Beziehungen 1938-1944* (Wiesbaden, Germany: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1954), 120. Franz Halder's diary entry for December 3rd, 1940, recorded complaints from Antonescu that Germany was arming opponents of the government. *The Halder War Diary: 1939-1942*, ed. Charles Burdick and Hans-Adolf Jacobsen (Novato, CA: Presidio, 1988), 289.

⁵⁸ "Untitled, undated Report on the Political Career of Horia Sima: 1938-1950," pg. 5. NACP RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, Box 120, file "Sima, Horia," Vol. 1, folder 1/2, Box 120.

⁵⁹ "Operational Report: Legionary Movement, 1919 – Present," 30 December 1949, pg. 9. NACP RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, Box 120, file "Sima, Horia," Vol. 1, folder 1/2, Box 120.

testy letters to a chastened Himmler demanding the arrest and incarceration of the escaped Legionary rebels, a request Himmler ultimately obliged.⁶⁰ RSHA affinity for the Iron Guard, whose anti-Semitism at times rivaled that of even the Nazis themselves, drove Amt VI to pursue an independent foreign policy of sorts, serving as the self-appointed arbiter of ideological purity in the region and the very embodiment of Heydrich's ideal of an intelligence service in action, regardless of the diplomatic mess it left behind.

Commissars, Spies, Partisans, Jews: FHO and Army Intelligence Officers in the USSR

Recent scholarship has demolished the myth of the “clean” *Wehrmacht*. Far from operating with detached apolitical professionalism, the German officer corps was thoroughly penetrated by Nazi ideology and spent the war years actively indoctrinating front-line troops in the tenets of Nazism and serving as a partner to the SS and security services in implementing the regime's barbaric vision of a new European order. In the Eastern and Western theaters alike, the *Wehrmacht* initiated and participated in mass executions of civilians, systematic murder of prisoners, and the overall project of ethnic cleansing and genocide that characterized German occupation policy.⁶¹ Military

⁶⁰ “Interrogation Report on Schellenberg,” 18. Antonescu to Himmler, 25 February 1941. NACP T-175, Roll 129, File EAP-161-b-12/369, frames 2655225-7.

⁶¹ For only a few of the recent examples of thorough studies on *Wehrmacht* complicity with criminal aims and practices in the East, see Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung, *The German Army and Genocide: Crimes Against War Prisoners, Jews, and other Civilians in the East, 1939-1944* (New York: New Press, 1999); Walter Manoschek, “*Serbien ist judenfrei*”: *Militärische Besatzungspolitik und Judenvernichtung in Serbien 1941-42* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1993); Christian Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde: Die deutsche Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik in Weißrußland 1941 bis 1944* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 1999); Alexander Rossino, *Hitler Strikes Poland; Blitzkrieg, Ideology, and Atrocity* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2003); and Hannes Heer et. al. eds. *The Discursive Construction of History: Remembering the Wehrmacht's War of Annihilation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008). On

intelligence officers in the German Army (Ic) and *Fremde Heere Ost* certainly played a role in these crimes by providing justification for the conflation of Jews with partisan resistance forces and in some cases directly facilitating the liquidation of Jews, civilians, and Red Army officers.

OKW and OKH directives preceding the invasion of the Soviet Union laid the groundwork for close cooperation between military intelligence officers and the operations of the mobile killing units, particularly their role in maintaining order behind the lines through the liquidation of perceived enemies of the *Reich*. News of the *Einsatzgruppen*'s cleansing operations was clearly communicated to the *Abwehr* and army intelligence officers. On June 5-6, all *Abwehr* and army intelligence (Ic) officers up to the divisional level attended a conference in Berlin organized by Heydrich, Schellenberg, and the RSHA administrative branch (Amt II). The RSHA representatives informed the military intelligence officers of the mission of the *Einsatzgruppen* and stressed the importance of close cooperation between intelligence officers in the field and the *Einsatzkommandos*. Although executions and mass murder were not explicitly discussed, the RSHA administrators clearly informed their military counterparts that they

the "coordination" of the German armed forces and the radicalization of the *Wehrmacht*'s conduct in the East see Omer Bartov, *Hitler's Army: Soldiers, Nazis, and War in the Third Reich* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992) and Omer Bartov, *The Eastern Front 1941-1944: German Troops and the Barbarization of Warfare*, 2nd Ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001). Norman J.W. Goda's "Black Marks: Hitler's Bribery of His Senior Officers During World War II," *Journal of Modern History* 79, no. 2 (June 2000): 413-52 also sheds important light on Hitler's use of monetary and material rewards to ensure the complicity of the armed forces leadership in his vision of a new European order. On the evolution of the historiography on the *Wehrmacht* from the immediate postwar period to modern limitations, see Omer Bartov, "German Soldiers and the Holocaust: Historiography, Research, and Implications," *History and Memory* 9, no. 1 (Fall 1997): 162-188. For an important corrective to the widespread idea that the Western military operation zones in France and the low countries were devoid of the types of racially motivated atrocities proliferating under SS and OKW/OKH authority in the East, see Rafeal Scheck, *Hitler's African Victims: The German Army Massacres of Black French Soldiers in 1940* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006) and Christopher Neumaier, "The Escalation of German Reprisal Policy in Occupied France, 1941-42," *Journal of Contemporary History* 41, no. 1 (Jan. 2006): 113-31. Regrettably, there is so far no single study that focuses on the interaction between the military intelligence offices and these policies at the lower levels.

would be working jointly to round up “politically dangerous personalities,” including Jews, terrorists, German emigrants and political churchmen in order to bring about “the final elimination of Communism” in the East.⁶² On June 11th, Halder followed up with a memorandum to army Ic officers delineating the conditions for close cooperation between the *Abwehr*, Foreign Office, security police and SD in the upcoming campaign. The matter of direct cooperation between *Sonderkommandos* and the German army in the occupation zones was to be approved by army commanders on a case-by-case basis. Halder noted that the *Sonderkommandos* would pay special attention to “material, archives, records of anti-Reich and anti-Reich and subversive organizations, associations, groups, etc.” and “particularly important individuals (leading Emigrants, terrorists, saboteurs, etc.).” Furthermore, Halder wrote, the *Sonderkommandos* would “Explore and address the subversive and anti-Reich efforts, to the extent that they are not incorporated into the enemy military forces, as well as provide information to the commanders of the rear army areas on the internal political situation in their area of operations.”⁶³ From an intelligence standpoint it was the duty of the Ic officers to work closely alongside the security police task forces in the rear occupation areas at all times so as to collect and exploit any information of military value that might arise from the *Sonderkommando* actions against Reich enemies behind the lines. Finally, Halder once more emphasized the necessity of “close cooperation” between the military intelligence staff officers,

⁶² Müller, 202-06. Military commanders also intermittently added “Gypsies” to the list of innately oppositional forces in accordance with German racial policy. Horst Boog et. al. *Germany and the Second World War, Volume VI: The Global War*. Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, ed. trans Ewald Osers et. al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1019-1020. Hereafter GSWW Vol. VI.

⁶³ OKH Gen.SSt.d.H.-O.Qu.IV B.NR. 200/41 g.Kdos gez. Halder “Chefsache,” 11 June 1941, pg. 4-6. NACP RG 242, T-78, Roll 458, folder H 3/1. These final orders issued by Halder mirrored the consultative drafts negotiated in March and April by Heydrich and Quartermaster General of the German Army Eduard Wagner. Horst Boog et. al. *Germany and the Second World War, Volume IV: The Attack on the Soviet Union*, ed. Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, trans. Ewald Osers, Dean S. McMurray, and Louise Wilmott (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 491-493. Hereafter GSWW Vol. IV.

Sonderkommandos in the field, and the *Abwehr*'s counter-espionage operations, "Captured military papers, military-political or counterespionage materials which fall into the hands of the *Sonderkommandos* should immediately be forwarded to the Ic officer of the army command area or the responsible commander of the rear army area to arrange the necessary forwarding [to otherrelevant agencies, including the *Abwehr*]." Halder concluded with an underlined reminder that it was the "primary responsibility" of the Ic officers to ensure harmonious cooperation between the political and military intelligence units, effectively subordinating the *Sonderkommandos* to the Ic officers in the field.⁶⁴ This would prove decisive for establishing military intelligence involvement in the wholesale liquidation of Jews under the guise of combatting the commissar/partisan threat after the invasion.

On June 6th, Hitler issued the notorious "Directive for the Treatment of Political Commissars," calling for the prompt liquidation of all Soviet political officers taken prisoner while "opposing" the German armed forces in battle or in the rear areas. Commissars, as the bearers of "Asiatic-barbaric methods" of fighting, would not, by definition, conduct themselves in accordance with the laws of war and thus were an existential threat to the security of the *Wehrmacht*. Non-resisting commissars, or those performing purely administrative functions in the occupied Soviet *Oblasts* would be spared initially but quarantined from other prisoners, lest their innate capacity for resistance infect the general population.⁶⁵ The "Commissar Order" flowed naturally from (and specifically referenced) Hitler's "Barbarossa Directive" of 13 May, which demanded immediate execution of any Soviet civilian that "attacked" German soldiers

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ OKW WFst./Abt. L (IV Qu.) Nr. 44822/41 g.K.Chefs gez. Warlimont, "Richtlinien für die Behandlungen politischer Kommissare," 6 June 1941. NACP RG 242, T-78, Roll 458, folder H 3/1.

and exempted German soldiers from prosecution for “ideologically motivated” crimes against the Soviet population. The definition of “attack” in this case was cynically broad, encompassing perceived as well as actual threats or disobedience, including the posting of leaflets, failure to immediately comply with German instructions, and even unauthorized travel in the rear areas.⁶⁶

The rationale underpinning these blatantly criminal orders (both under international law and the previous standards of conduct of the German Army in earlier eras) was intimately connected to the operational planning of the Barbarossa campaign. Hitler’s comments March 1941 comments on the OKW draft of “Guidelines in special fields concerning Directive No. 21” pertaining to the invasion of the Soviet Union reflected his opinion that the upcoming war would be a war of ideologies in addition to a clash of arms. Appealing to security concerns as justification, Hitler called for the liquidation of the “Jewish-Bolshevik intelligentsia” in the USSR as a prophylactic measure, assuming this group would serve as the germ-cell of any significant resistance to Germany’s long-term occupation of the East. At the same time, the elimination of the Bolshevik political class, as Hitler saw it, would usher in the rapid disintegration of the fragile Soviet state. This reflected Hitler’s private comments of February that what mattered most in the opening phases of the war against the Soviet Union was “first of all to quickly finish off the Bolshevik leaders,” the substance of which was also repeated to the assembled General Staff on 17 March. For Hitler and the military commanders alike, more so than in previous campaigns, the harshest measures were necessary in combatting saboteurs, resisters, and guerillas in the Soviet Union because of the contagion of

⁶⁶ David Stahel, *Operation Barbarossa and Germany’s Defeat in the East* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 100-101.

“Jewish-Bolshevik ideology” present there. As a result, even *potential* resistors to the German occupation had to be handled “with iron severity” for security purposes. Since the German Army would be facing a pervasive ideological threat instead of narrowly defined categories of potential resistance groups, collective punishments, mass reprisal shootings and other atrocities would prove necessary expedients to pacification in the rear.⁶⁷

Fremde Heere Ost played an indirect, albeit important role in the *Wehrmacht*’s anti-commissar and anti-partisan mania in the spring and summer 1941. SD representatives informed FHO officers of the brutal treatment in store for Soviet commissars at a joint conference on 26 May 1941. In all circumstances, captured commissars were to be handed over to the SD for liquidation after interrogation by divisional or army intelligence (Ic) officers and FHO translators. In an explicit endorsement of the guiding principle of the Eastern campaign that Judeo-Bolsheviks were implacable enemies of the Reich, FHO hypothesized that the most valuable intelligence targets would be the non-Jewish commissars, since they were more likely to be fellow travelers (and thus willing to cooperate) than the fanatical Jews.⁶⁸ Prior to the attack on the Soviet Union, FHO also issued a number of circulars and leaflets on the Red Army that reproduced Hitler’s comments of June 5th emphasizing the “special character”

⁶⁷ GSWW Vol. IV, 238-39; 482-500. *Halder War Diary*, 336-339. The idea that the Soviet Union would rapidly fragment into its constituent nationalities with the least bit of German pressure was a flawed premise that called forth the old narrative of a “colossus with feet of clay.” It also underscored the strategic rationale of a number of later Zeppelin missions as well that endeavored to foment a nationalities insurgency that would destroy the USSR from within (see below). The German Embassy in Moscow, particularly Counselor Gebhart von Walther, had filed a number of reports in 1940 attempting to correct this misperception, stressing that in a defensive war the Stalin would not have to fear “any kind of signs of disintegration among the population or in the army on social or national grounds.” Walther also warned that the assumed economic benefits of the Soviet invasion would not be as easy to obtain as thought. His warnings went unheeded by both Hitler and the military intelligence elite, however.

⁶⁸ GSWW Vol. IV, 509.

of the Barbarossa campaign and the likelihood that the Soviets would resort to “means of insidious warfare” including the poisoning of wells and foodstuffs, night-attacks on German outposts, and brutal treatment of prisoners and the wounded. FHO also reinforced the widely held assumptions that the radicalism of the (presumably Jewish) political commissars would fuel endemic partisan resistance behind the lines and brutal Red Army tactics if left unchecked.⁶⁹

On June 10th and 11th, the Ic officers at army and army group level were notified as to the upcoming “special treatment” reserved for Red Army commissars so that they, in turn, could apprise their unit commanders and subordinates at division level on the situation. To aid the army and SD in their project of identifying and murdering commissars, FHO redistributed its literature on the Red Army that provided clear illustrations of military insignia, so that field units at the front and intelligence officers manning prisoner holding centers could rapidly identify the commissars and segregate them for interrogation and liquidation. As noted above, initially the non-military political commissars designated as part of the Soviet administration were initially spared, as were what the *Wehrmacht* referred to as non-resisting “*politruks*,” essentially low-rank political officers in training serving in the Red Army at the company level. On the basis of consultations with FHO, however, OKW broadened the anti-commissar decrees in August 1941 to apply to these groups as well.⁷⁰

Before turning the commissars over to the SD or security police units for liquidation, military intelligence officers first interrogated the doomed prisoners in order to extract any information of value about Red Army or partisan operations. In practice,

⁶⁹ GSWW Vol. IV, 322-323.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 1231.

“interrogation” was a euphemism for torture. And although it was the Ic officers that actually led the brutal interrogation sessions, the *Abwehr* and FHO were very much aware of these activities and exploited the resulting intelligence to their full potential while consistently demanding further exploitation of Red Army prisoners.⁷¹ For its part, OKH demanded reports every 10 days on the interrogation and liquidation program, so there remains ample evidence of the military intelligence officers’ complicity in the murders of commissars, Jews, and other supposed resisters. One such report of an intelligence officer in Transit Camp 230 in Vyazma by Ic Capt. Bernstein, for example, noted that as of January 1942, 200 Jews and 50-60 *politruks* had been handed over to the SD for liquidation, 40 Jews and 6-8 *politruks* by Bernstein personally. Another report from the *Abwehr* affiliated Secret Field Police Group 721 reported in February 1942 that it had recently handed over 28 Jews and 20 communists to the SD for liquidation.⁷²

Both the “Commissar Orders” and their outcome were symptomatic of the broader ideologically driven assumptions in German military and political circles that conflated Jews with Bolshevism and partisan resisters.⁷³ In perhaps its most notorious

⁷¹ Timothy Naftali, “Reinhard Gehlen and the United States,” in *U.S. Intelligence and the Nazis*, by Richard Breitman et. al. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 407-408 n. 7. Robert Gerwarth, *Hitler’s Hangman: The Life of Heydrich* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011), 193.

⁷² GSWW Vol. IV, 511-12; 1219, 1230-34. As Jürgen Forster notes here, such reports and others indicate the broad pattern of complicity and enthusiasm in the *Wehrmacht* for implementing the commissar order, down to the unit level, in spite of the relative freedom of maneuver to interpret the order more loosely.

⁷³ The often transparent use of the partisan threat as both a pretext and justification for the liquidation of Jews in the East has led to a sharp scholarly debate as to the extent that any type of authentic partisan movement on the Tito model can actually be spoken of in the Soviet territories in 1941 in spite of Stalin’s widely reported call for resistance behind the German lines. Matthew Cooper, *The Phantom War: The German Struggle Against Soviet Partisans, 1941-1944* (London: Macdonald and Janes, 1979); Andreas Hillgruber, War in the East and the Extermination of the Jews,” in *The Nazi Holocaust: Historical Articles on the Destruction of European Jews*, vol. 3, ed. Michael R. Marrus (Westport, CT: Meckler, 1989), 85-114; Hannes Heer, “The Logic of the War of Extermination: The Wehrmacht and the anti-Partisan War,” in *War of Extermination*, 95-99; Ben H. Shepard, *War in the Wild East: The German Army and Soviet Partisans* (Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 2004), 58-128. Jeff Rutherford, “‘One senses danger from all sides, especially from radical civilians’: The 121st Infantry Division and Partisan War, June 1941-April 1942,” and Erich Haberer, “The German Gendarmerie and Partisans in Belorussia, 1941-1944,” in

form, these assumptions were invoked as justification for the unfolding Holocaust in Himmler's handwritten notes from his 18 December 1941 meeting with Hitler, "Jewish question / to be exterminated as partisans."⁷⁴ According to postwar testimony, Himmler had informed *Einsatzgruppe B* commander Arthur Nebe as early as 8 July 1941 that "every Jew must be in principle regarded as a partisan."⁷⁵ In the Army too, since the outset of the invasion, the more radical commanders had persistently equated communists, Jews and partisans and used the pretext of security operations to implement anti-Jewish shootings and reprisals on their own accord. In September, an Army-Group Center organized seminar for military officers on combatting partisans prominently featured instruction from SS "experts" in the matter, including *Einsatzgruppe B* commander Nebe and SS Police Leader Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski, whose catechism "Where there's a partisan there's a Jew, and where there's a Jew, there's a partisan," won the day as the guideline for rear area pacification policy.⁷⁶ The same month, Keitel demanded "relentless and energetic measures especially also against the Jews, the main bearers of Bolshevism," orders given context by his near-simultaneous promulgation demanding "the strongest measures" against the Moscow-led partisan bandits.⁷⁷ These

War in a Twilight World: Partisan and Anti-Partisan Warfare in Eastern Europe, 1939-45, ed. Ben Shepard and Juliette Pattinson (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

⁷⁴ As Peter Longerich has argued, this did not represent a "fundamental decision" so much as a renewed confirmation of the justification for a policy in practice since the beginnings of the invasion. Longerich, *Holocaust*, 306 n. 5; *Himmler*, 552-553 n. 75. Hitler had admitted as much in the company of Göring, Bormann, and Lammers on July 16th, when he opined that Stalin's July 3rd call for partisan resistance "gives us the opportunity to exterminate anyone who is hostile to us." Browning, *Origins of the Final Solution*, 309-10.

⁷⁵ Longerich, *Holocaust*, 198.

⁷⁶ Kershaw, *Nemesis*, 466-67.

⁷⁷ While not explicitly directed against Jews, Army Commander in Chief Walther von Brauchitsch's "Richtlinien für Partisanenbekämpfung," of 25 October mirrored Keitel's demands for ruthless prosecution of the partisan war. In the context of the campaign, the explicit connection between Jews and partisans need not be elucidated in any case by late October; it was quite apparent to whom Brauchitsch was referring. Der Chef des Oberkommando der Wehrmacht WFSt/Abt.L (IV/Qu) Nr. 002060/41 g. Kdos gez.

attitudes made their way into the reports of the military intelligence units as well, as in the case of an Ic officer for the 221st Security Division who concluded in July 1941 that “total political and economic pacification” of the occupied territories depended on the “skillful utilization of the interethnic rivalry while at the same time eradicating Jewry.”⁷⁸

The extermination of Serbian Jews in 1941-42, which occurred primarily at the impetus of the *Wehrmacht* occupation and command authority in close cooperation and coordination with the Foreign Office and SS killing units, offers an important demonstration of the conceptual linkages between partisans and Jews occurring at both the command and unit intelligence levels. As in the case of the Eastern campaign more generally, the explicit identification of Jews with communists and camouflaged resistance organizations were endemic in the military leadership and well-established prior to the invasion of Yugoslavia. On April 2nd, 1941, four days before the German attack unfolded, Chief of the German General Staff Franz Halder urged the SS and security police units following the *Wehrmacht* into Yugoslavia to seize Jews and communists in occupied Serbia as potential “dangers to security.”⁷⁹ In the face of an actually emergent partisan resistance movement under Tito following Germany’s invasion of the Soviet Union in June, the German authorities in Belgrade were quick to implement reprisal shootings and demanded 40 hostages per week from the local Jewish community to discourage further partisan activities. As the situation deteriorated, a myriad of factors including the Foreign Office’s refusal to sanction the deportation of Serbia’s Jews to the

Keitel, “Kommunistische Aufstandsbewegung in den besetzten Gebieten,” 16 Sept. 1941. NACP RG 242, T-77, Roll 1429, folder OKW/1808. Oberbefehlshaber des Heeres, GenStdH/Ausb. Abt (Ia) Nr. 1900/41, gez. Brauchitsch, “Richtlinien für Partisanenbekämpfung, Browning,” 25 October 1941. USHMM RG 22.014M, Reel 18, folder 185. Browning, *The Origins of the Final Solution*, 282.

⁷⁸ Browning, *The Origins of the Final Solution*, 278.

⁷⁹ Ben Shepard *Terror in the Balkans: German Armies and Partisan Warfare* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 100-102.

East, a particularly brutal ex-Habsburg military occupation contingent, and the interplay between German military and SS and security police commandos in Serbia resulted in a persistent radicalization of anti-Jewish reprisal measures in the country. The end result, by December 1941 was that much of the male Serbian Jewish population had been liquidated under the guise of anti-partisan operations because of the persistent German tendency to target the unredeemable Judeo-Bolshevist hostages over the potentially valuable ethnic Serb community (although Serbs were certainly not spared from the atrocities).⁸⁰ When the policy evolved, however, into the concentration and extermination of Jewish women and children, however, military intelligence units continued to justify the operations as a security necessity. The military intelligence command (Ic) stationed in Salonika, which justified the deportation of 7,000 Jewish (and Gypsy) women and children to a concentration camp near Sajmište, where they were later gassed, writing “All Jews and Gypsies are being transferred to a concentration camp near Semlin... They are clearly informants for the rebels.”⁸¹

The supposed danger posed by the so-called Jewish partisans in the early stages of the campaign in the Soviet Union was belied by the Germans’ own careful statistical reporting. The first major German push into the Pripet Marshes by an SS Calvary Brigade on August 13 yielded the liquidation of 13,788 “plunderers,” mostly Jews, in what was certainly not an example of fierce combat; the only Germans killed were two

⁸⁰ Browning, *Origins of the Final Solution*, 334-346. German measures taken against the Serbian resistance movement included the famous 100:1 reprisal quota – 100 dead civilians for every murdered German soldier and 50 for every wounded German soldier. Lothar Rendulić, (Chapter 6), was one of these radicalized ex-Habsburg officers as well.

⁸¹ Walter Manoschek, “‘Coming Along to Shoot Some Jews?’ The Destruction of the Jews in Serbia,” trans. Roy Shelton in *War of Extermination*, 49.

unfortunates who drove over a mine.⁸² The *Einsatzgruppen* reports were also notorious for exactingly enumerating the numbers of Jews and communists liquidated on flimsy pretexts of partisan activity or partisan sympathies.⁸³ In May 1942, Army Group Center reported that it alone had liquidated over 80,000 people as partisans in its 90,000 sq. km occupation zone; to May 10th, there had been only 1,094 German casualties in the same area stemming from partisan activity, sabotage, or terrorism.⁸⁴ Recognizing these disparities, some intelligence officers did suggest alternative pacification policies in the East. *Fremde Heere Ost*'s Reinhard Gehlen certainly criticized the overly brutal and indiscriminate anti-partisan policies as detrimental to the German war effort in late 1942 and early 1943 and called for a more benevolent occupation geared toward minimizing civilian support for the partisans. "If the population rejects the partisans and lends its full support to the struggle against them," Gehlen argued, "no partisan problem will exist." Such ideas were still bound up in a racialized view of Russians, however, as Gehlen maintained the "objective inferiority" of the Russian citizen and viewed the wealth and spoke of the wealth and human capital of the Soviet Union as deserved "objects of exploitation" for the German conquerors.⁸⁵ Gehlen was similarly equivocal in a 1944 memorandum, where his support for the idea that captured partisans should be treated as prisoners of war and his renewed call for treating civilians equitably was somewhat

⁸² Browning, *Origins of the Final Solution* 282.

⁸³ See the report, for example for September 1941, "Tätigkeits und Lagebericht Nr. 5 der Einsatzgruppen der Sicherheitspolizei und der SD in der USSR, Berichtszeit vom 15-30.9.1941." USHMM RG 11.001M.01 Reel 183, folder 500-1-125.

⁸⁴ GSWW Vol. VI, 1012. To be clear, the Germans were indeed facing a significant, well-organized partisan opposition by late 1942, although it consisted of a patchwork of organizations including both anti-German and anti-Soviet nationalists and anti-German communists, heightened to some degree by the brutal occupation policies in the East.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 1015-1017. Shepard, *War in the Wild East*, 119.

undermined by the caveat that “particularly malicious acts” should be punished through reprisal shootings of prisoners and civilians.⁸⁶

Amt VI Fieldwork – *Einsatzgruppen*, and Operations Bernhard and Zeppelin

Military intelligence officers frequently found themselves abetting genocidal policies in the East through confirming the presumed linkages between Jewry, Bolshevism, and partisan activity. They also sometimes played a more direct role in identifying and torturing Jewish/Bolshevist commissars before turning them over to the SD for liquidation, or, in some cases, actively took part in or fostered atrocities against civilians and prisoners of war. RSHA intelligence officers, on the other hand, by the very nature of their institutional ethos, often directly perpetrated genocide in the field. Contrary to the postwar myth propagated by Amt VI heads Heinz Jost and Walter Schellenberg that RSHA VI was merely an information service removed from all facets of Nazi-inspired barbarity in the East, the leading cadres of Amt VI frequently led *Einsatzkommandos* alongside their peers from other offices. There was nothing “special” about Amt VI in this regard, in spite of its slightly older and less educated leadership profile in comparison with the other offices of the RSHA.⁸⁷ This was in keeping with Heydrich’s guiding mission that such service in the field was an opportunity to demonstrate the mettle of his new warrior bureaucrats under fire.⁸⁸ Moreover, the

⁸⁶ Shepard, *War in the Wild East*, 226.

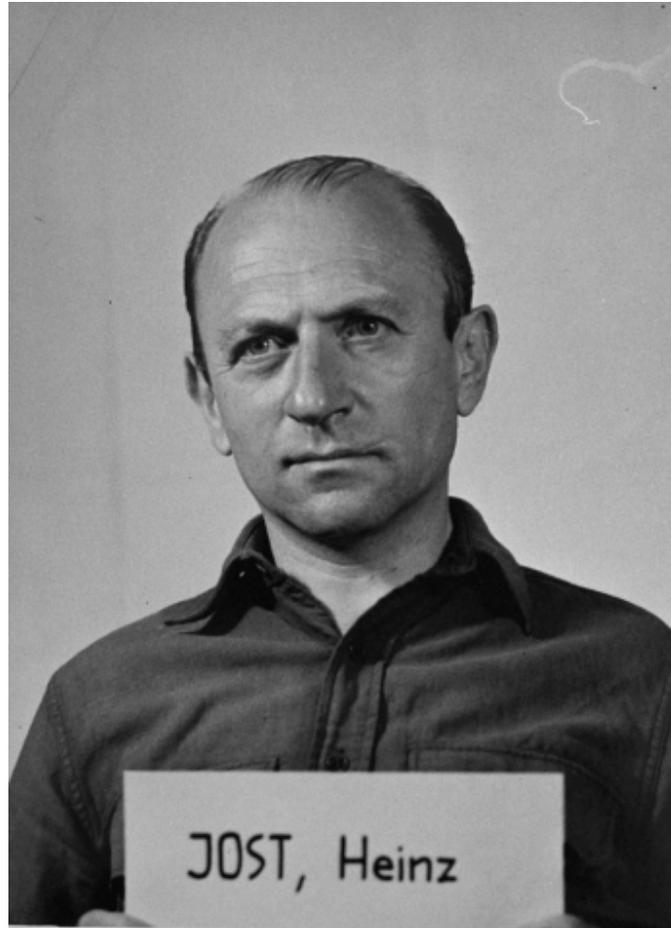
⁸⁷ On the intellectual and career profile of *Amt VI* officers, see Wildt, *Uncompromising Generation*, 205.

⁸⁸ Gerwarth, 136. Thus Jost’s postwar claims that he was promoted to command of *Einsatzgruppe A* in 1942 as punishment for personal differences with Heydrich rings especially false. If anything, such an assignment would more likely have been seen as an opportunity for Jost to redeem himself after the indignity of an internal corruption investigation and his replacement by his subordinate (Schellenberg) as head of *Amt VI* in 1941. Katrin Paehler, “Espionage, Ideology, and Personal Politics: The Making and Unmaking of a Nazi Foreign Intelligence Service,” (PhD diss., American University, 2004), 246-247.

murderous institutional ethos of the RSHA permeated Amt VI espionage operations as well, such as clandestine attempts to damage the British economy through forging millions in counterfeit banknotes (Operation Bernhard) and efforts to create chaos behind the Soviet lines through training and redeploying Red Army prisoners as anti-Soviet partisans (Operation Zeppelin).

By nature of their rank alone, the RSHA VI division heads and their deputies were certainly active participants in mass murder. Even before the war began, Heinz Jost, as Chief of SD-III *Ausland*, the forerunner to Amt VI, lent his expertise to the drawing up of a list of some 61,000 Polish intelligentsia, political, religious, and government officials for the *Einsatzgruppen* to target. At the same time, his deputy, Alfred Naujocks was responsible for staging the border incident at Gleiwitz on August 31, 1939, where a number of concentration camp inmates were dressed in Polish uniforms (provided by the *Abwehr*) and murdered outside a German radio station to provide justification for the German invasion.⁸⁹ After the ill-fated support of the Iron Guard in January 1941 and an internal corruption investigation, Jost was transferred to Rosenberg's Eastern Ministry in July 1941.

⁸⁹ Rossino, 16. Jürgen Runzheimer, "Der Überfall auf den Sender Gleiwitz im Jahre 1939," *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 10 (1962): 408-426.



Former head of RSHA VI (1939-1942) SS-*Brigadeführer* Heinz Jost, defendant at the 1947-1948 *Einsatzgruppen* Trial (United States of America vs. Otto Ohlendorf, et. al.). USHMM Photo Archive # 09936. Jost was tried and convicted for his role as commander of *Einsatzgruppe* A on the Eastern Front. Originally given a life sentence by the court for his crimes, Jost's recommended sentence was reduced to ten years as a result of the 1950-51 clemency program. He was paroled in 1952.

In the meantime, Jost's deputy Alfred Filbert (Also under investigation for improper use of internal funds) was in the Soviet Union commanding *Einsatzkommando* 9 of *Einsatzgruppe* B. His unit would have the dubious distinction of being the first to receive orders from Heydrich authorizing the murder of women and children as well as men, marking an important transitory step from mass murder to genocide in the East. Filbert enthusiastically complied. By the time of his recall to Berlin in October 1941,

Filbert's unit had murdered thousands of Jews.⁹⁰ Meanwhile, likely as an opportunity to redeem himself, Jost was assigned to command *Einsatzgruppe A*, then operating in the Baltic States and Belarus, from March 1942, resigning in September for health reasons. In spite of his rhetorical acrobatics on the witness stand at his postwar trial, the evidence that Jost had participated in mass murder, including mobile gassing operations, was deemed "irrefutable," by the military tribunal.⁹¹

Before his transfer to Amt VI in 1941, Walter Schellenberg was intimately involved in the conception of the RSHA and well versed in its institutional ethos, earning the reputation of dashing spy through his successful kidnapping of two British agents from the neutral Netherlands in 1939 and the unsuccessful scheme to kidnap the Duke of Windsor in Spain the following summer. In between, as "Gestapo" Müller's deputy in Amt IV, he had overseen the production of the infamous occupation manual and execution list for German troops in England, *Informationheft G.B.*, and halted Jewish emigration from France and Belgium in light of the developing "final solution." Moreover, Schellenberg had served as the lead negotiator and actual draftsman of the agreement between the RSHA, OKW, and OKH in 1941 that delineated the realms of cooperation in the liquidation of political enemies of the Reich in the Soviet Union. As head of RSHA VI, he received consistent reports from the field on the progress and activities of the *Einsatzgruppen* and routinely assigned his subordinates to fieldwork in

⁹⁰ Michael Wildt mistakenly refers to Filbert as "Albert Filbert" in his study. Wildt, *Uncompromising Generation*, 206-07. Alex J. Kay, "Transition to Genocide, July 1941: Einsatzkommando 9 and the Annihilation of Soviet Jewry," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 27, no. 3 (Winter 2013): 411-442.

⁹¹ Headquarters, Twelfth Army Group Mobile Field Interrogation Unit No. 4 "Preliminary Interrogation Report – Heinz Jost," 19 May 1945. NACP RG 498, Entry UD-265, Box 1309. Capt. Michael A. Musmanno, USNR, Presiding Judge, John G. Speight, Judge, and Richard D. Dixon, Judge, "Opinion and Judgment of the Tribunal," 3 April 1948, pg. 133-137. NACP RG 238, M-895 (United States of America vs. Otto Ohlendorf et. al.), Roll 35. Jost was sentenced to life imprisonment by the tribunal, presumably due to the fact that no witnesses could testify that he took a direct part in murdering Jews. He was released in 1952. Earl, 259; 293.

the East.⁹² Furthermore, he was directly involved in the planning of *Einsatzgruppe* Egypt and the murders that occurred as a result of Operations Bernhard and Zeppelin (see below).



Postwar FBI-file photo of former head of RSHA VI (1942-1945) SS-*Brigadeführer* Walter Friedrich Schellenberg. NACP RG 65 Entry 136-Z, Box 3, Folder “100-103569 Bulky 39, Schellenberg” folder 1/4. Ever the smooth-talker, in spite of his crucial role in the establishment of the RSHA in 1939 and extensive service as both the deputy of RSHA-IV boss Heinrich Müller and position as head of Amt VI after 1942, Schellenberg served only as a witness in the initial Nuremberg tribunals. When he was finally put on trial for his own crimes in the 1948-1949 Ministries Trial (United States of America vs. Ernst von Weizsäcker et. al.), it was as a minor defendant. Schellenberg was sentenced to six years, but was released in the 1951 clemency proceedings due to his failing health. He died the following year in Turin, Italy.

⁹² Although at this point the final solution was by no means defined, the fact that Schellenberg could meddle in immigration and resettlement questions indicates his importance as Müller’s deputy. Final Brief on the Criminal Responsibility of Walter Schellenberg, “Nuernberg, 10 August 1948, pg. 35-46. NACP RG 65, Entry 136-P, Box 4, File 100-103569 EBF 41, folder 2/2. See also RG 238, M897 (U.S. vs. Ernst von Weizsäcker et. al., December 20, 1947- April 14, 1949) Roll 6, “Cross Examination of Walter Schellenberg May 12-13 1948,” esp. 5203-05; 5327-29. Schellenberg was sentenced to six years in prison for his crimes and released after two due to ill health. He died a year later, in 1952, in Italy.

If RSHA VI officers such as Jost and Filbert were sent to the East because of their rank and experience in Berlin, then the career of Theodore Paeffgen demonstrates that the opposite path was certainly normal as well. Born in 1910 in Cologne, Paeffgen graduated from *Gymnasium* in 1928 and went on to study law in Geneva, Bordeaux, and Edinburgh from 1928-1936 before passing his final law exams in Düsseldorf in October 1936. Ambitious and desiring a career in the civil service, Paeffgen joined the Nazi Party and SA in 1937 and submitted an application to work for the Foreign Office twice, in 1937 and 1938, without success. He ultimately found steady employment with the SD *Hauptamt* in May 1938 under the supervision of Walter Schellenberg, where he demonstrated his ideological commitment and worked on organizational matters concerning the SD foreign intelligence service within the RSHA and its relationship to other national agencies. After the outbreak of war, Paeffgen was assigned to an *Einsatzkommando* in Metz, where he took part in the ethnic cleansing of Lorraine.⁹³ In June 1941, Paeffgen's administrative and field experience yielded a new position in RSHA II (Administration/Organization) with simultaneous appointment in RSHA VI A1 (Administration and Training). Officially designated an "Operations Intelligence Officer" he was tasked with systematically tracking the progress of the *Einsatzgruppen* in the Soviet Union via radio, collating the individual *Einsatzkommando* reports for distribution to other offices. These dispatches, known as "Operational Situation Reports," distributed throughout the document, documented the mass murder in the East. A typical

⁹³ AIC 1743, "Interrogation of Dr. Theodore Paeffgen," 10 September 1945, pg. i-ii. NACP RG 65, Entry 136-P, Box 183, Folder 65-56036-EB5 1/1. Wildt, *Uncompromising Generation*, 262. Longerich, *Himmler*, 497-498. In total, through stringent economic, racial, and political criteria some 100,000 citizens of Alsace-Lorraine were expelled as un-German undesirables, including some 22,000 Jews.

selection, from “Operational Situation Report USSR No. 27,” filed on 19 July 1941,
reads

Einsatzgruppe B:

Location: Minsk

Liquidation continues daily...It has been repeatedly observed that Jews
escape into the forests now and try to hide there.

EK 8 Location: Baranovichi

With the Vorkommando to Slutsk and Lachoviche. Special action was
carried out against 60 Communists.⁹⁴

In addition to tabulating the mass murder operations of individual units, the positional
information was vital because the radioed locations of individual Einsatzgruppen
following closely behind the *Wehrmacht* in some cases provided a better fix on the ever-
fluid front lines than individual army unit reports.⁹⁵ Following the elimination of his
position in late October, Paeffgen embarked on further field missions to the East, winding
up as Deputy Commander of the Security Police and SD in Bialystok in April 1942,
where he was active in the partisan war and reprisal actions there before a final
promotion to commander of RSHA VI D (Western Nations) in August 1942.⁹⁶
Paeffgen’s career path is an excellent example of the fluidity between office work and
fieldwork that characterized Heydrich’s warrior-bureaucrats in the RSHA.

⁹⁴ These remarkable reports are currently held on microfilm at NACP T-175, Rolls 233-235. Selections
have been published as Yitzak Arad, Schmuel Krakowski, and Schmuel Spector, eds. *The Einsatzgruppen
Reports: Selections from the Dispatches of the Nazi Death Squads’ Campaign Against the Jews July 1941-
January 1943* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1989).

⁹⁵ It appears that historians of the Holocaust owe Paeffgen a great deal, as many of the surviving
Einsatzgruppen Operational Situation Reports reports bear the distribution copy number corresponding to
Paeffgen’s office, and were not destroyed due to some administrative oversight. Ronald Headland,
*Messages of Murder: A Study of the Reports of the Einsatzgruppen of the Security Police and the Security
Service* (London: Associated University Presses, 1992), 48-50. A similar claim also appears in the NACP
finding aid for collection T-175.

⁹⁶ “Interrogation of Dr. Theodore Paeffgen,” 10 September 1945, pg. iii.

Other RSHA officers whose careers blurred the lines between intelligence work and genocide included Walther Rauff and Eugen Steimle. After a 13-year career in the German Navy, Rauff, born in 1906, joined the Nazi Party in 1937 and SS in 1938 before being assigned to SD headquarters the same year. Given his military experience, Rauff's position was in the administrative arm of the SD, working on the planning staff for wartime mobilization. After serving as a personal deputy to Heydrich and stenographer of the *Einsatzgruppen*, SD, and Security Police organizational meetings prior to the campaign in Poland, Rauff was granted a yearlong sabbatical to rejoin the Navy and serve at sea. Returning to the RSHA in 1941, Rauff was simultaneously appointed as head of RSHA II D and VI F, the technical sections of the agency responsible for supplying equipment to both SD spies and saboteurs but also the *Einsatzgruppen* in the East. In this capacity Rauff and his subordinates pioneered the science of mobile gassing units, designing specialized vans with redirected carbon monoxide exhaust, testing them on Soviet PWs and assigning them to *Einsatzkommandos* in the East.⁹⁷ Following this service, Rauff was tasked in July 1942 with commanding the *Einsatzgruppen* that would cleanse North Africa and the Middle East of Jewry after Rommel's final victory there. Although Rommel's defeat meant that his mission never got underway, Rauff's *Einsatzgruppen* extensively plundered and terrorized the Jewish community of Tunisia in 1942-43. Following the retreat from North Africa, Rauff served until the end of the war

⁹⁷ By summer 1942, Rauff had put 20 gas vans into the field. Mallman and Cüppers, 118-119. Kahn, 280-81. For a more in-depth examination of Rauff's biography, conversion to Nazism, role in the Holocaust, and comfortable postwar exile in South America, see Martin Cüppers, *Walther Rauff: In deutschen Diensten. Vom Naziverbrecher zum BND-Spion* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2013).

as commander of police and SD forces in northwestern Italy, where he commanded a number of brutal anti-partisan operations.⁹⁸

Eugen Steimle, a “Group” commander in RSHA VI from 1943 to September 1944, earned his promotion in the killing fields of the East. Born in 1909 in Neubulach, Eugen Steimle completed *Gymnasium* in 1929 and went on to receive university certifications in education and foreign languages by 1936. Steimle joined the Nazi Party in 1932 and the SS and SD in 1936, finding employment with the Stuttgart SD office. Recognized as a capable National Socialist by his superiors, Steimle was given command of *Sonderkommando 7a* in *Einsatzgruppe B* in the Soviet Union in late 1941, and *Sonderkommando 4a* of *Einsatzgruppe C* from August 1942-Jan. 1943, where he personally oversaw the murder of (at the very least) hundreds of Jews.⁹⁹ Embodying the logic of the racial war of extermination, Steimle testified in his postwar war crimes trial that he only ordered the execution of those committing established offenses against the laws of war, such as looting, sabotage, or partisan operations. At the same time, Steimle also admitted that he ordered the execution of individuals who he merely suspected of being partisans, without even a perfunctory investigation as to the veracity of these suspicions. In one instance, Steimle’s victims included a group of young girls who he testified, “were *about* to form a partisan group.”¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Schellenberg was intimately involved with the planning of this operation, meeting with Himmler to specifically discuss RSHA’s deployment in Egypt. Ibid, 116-117. *U.S. Intelligence and the Nazis*, 153.

⁹⁹ Earl, 104; 109; 121. Wildt, *Unbound Generation*, 365. See also, 307th Counter Intelligence Corps Detachment, Headquarters, Seventh Army, Western Military District, “Final Interrogation Report – Eugen Steimle,” 12 December 1945. NACP RG 498, Entry UD-252, File SAIC/X 7A-X.

¹⁰⁰ Emphasis mine. In this last instance, Steimle commanded the firing squad personally. Capt. Michael A. Musmanno, USNR, Presiding Judge, John G. Speight, Judge, and Richard D. Dixon, Judge, “Opinion and Judgement of the Tribunal,” 3 April 1948, pg. 168-69. NACP RG 238, M-895 (United States of America vs. Otto Ohlendorf et. al.), Roll 35. Steimle was found guilty of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and membership in a criminal organization. He was sentenced to death by hanging, but walked

Another direct way that Amt VI as an institution contributed to the systematic exploitation and eradication of racial enemies was through attrition in secret espionage operations. Perhaps the two most famous examples of the intersection of ideology and intelligence in RSHA VI are Operation Bernhard (directed against Britain) and Operation Zeppelin (directed against the Soviet Union). Governed by the principle that non-Aryan life was cheap, these two operations embodied the wartime radicalization of the RSHA as the expansion of the war effort to include direct attacks on European Jewry and Russian nationals increased the conceptual scope of espionage operations against enemies of the Reich.

RSHA VI's Operation Bernhard originated in the preparation for the invasion of Great Britain in 1940, when Hitler, Himmler, and others envisioned bringing about a total collapse of the British war economy through the mass circulation of forged British currency. Citing blatant violations of international law, the *Abwehr* and *Reichsbank* passed on the opportunity to run the operation, but *SD-Ausland's* technical office (RSHA VI F 4) enthusiastically went ahead with the program, although very little was accomplished under the relatively inept supervision of its first director, Alfred Naujocks. Himmler personally revived the program in the summer of 1942 under Bernhard Krüger (whose first name was designated as the moniker for the entire operation), this time with an emphasis on using the forged notes to replenish Nazi Germany's depleted foreign currency reserves to fund arms and other vital war material purchases from abroad, espionage operations, and RSHA agents and informants.¹⁰¹

out of Landsberg prison a free man in 1954 as part of a clemency agreement between West Germany and the United States. Earl, 294-95.

¹⁰¹ After the death of Heydrich on June 4th 1942, Himmler assumed direct command of the RSHA until appointing Ernst Kaltenbrunner to head the organization in January 1943. Later in the war the Germans

Like other secret programs in the wartime Reich, Bernhard was dependent on the availability of Jewish slave labor.¹⁰² Krüger set up the forging shop for British currency (which also produced passports and other foreign documents and anti-Semitic propaganda materials such as the postage stamps displayed below) in Barracks 19 of the Sachsenhausen concentration camp near Oranienburg. The RSHA identified Jewish inmates in camps throughout the Reich with the requisite professional skills – painters, engravers, electricians, and hairdressers (because of their deft fingers) – and transported them to Sachsenhausen for the forging operation. The first group included 28 Jewish men, although the forced labor program would expand to over 140 by the end of the war, working twelve hour shifts to ensure the printing presses were never idle. The engraving complex was isolated from the rest of the camp, surrounded by barbed wire and guarded closely. Krüger personally addressed the Jews upon their arrival, informing them of the great importance of their work, demanding utmost secrecy, and threatening them with death if they breached security or violated orders in any way. In early 1943, the RSHA officers perfunctorily murdered two prisoners who had fallen ill and had to leave the compound for treatment in the interests of maintaining secrecy.¹⁰³ In early 1945, Bernhard was transferred first to the Mauthausen concentration camp near Linz, Austria, and then to a slave labor V-2 rocket complex at nearby Redl-Zipf. As the war wound

would also attempt to counterfeit American dollars as well, but with much less success. Richard Breitman, “Follow the Money,” in *U.S. Intelligence and the Nazis*, 121-22. Kahn, 299-300. Kahn makes the unsubstantiated but still somewhat convincing claim that the Nazi leadership’s inspiration for the operation laid in admiration of Frederick the Great’s similar actions in the Seven Year’s War.

¹⁰² Indeed, a key source of RSHA funding for these operation and others was from the systematic plundering of Jewish assets, including the grisly expropriation of gold fillings and other valuables from murdered concentration and death camp prisoners. Kahn, 300-301.

¹⁰³ “Amt VI RSHA (Translated Extract of Gaullist Intelligence unit report), French Army, Attached to 3rd U.S. Army,” 1 July 1945, pg. 3. NACP RG 319, Entry 134-A, Box 12, File “XE125551 Subversive Organization Amt VIF RSHA.” See also the report on X-2 postwar interrogations of two Bernhard workers Georg Kohn and Jack Papler in NACP RG 226, Entry 108A, box 287, file LWX-29 identified in Breitman, “Follow the Money.”

down, the RSHA endeavored to cover its tracks, dumping millions in forged notes in nearby Lake Toplitz. As Jews with knowledge of clandestine (and illegal) operations, the engravers were next in line. As the Reich collapsed in May 1945, some 142 prisoners were force-marched from Redl-Sipf to Ebensee for liquidation, only to be rescued at the last moment by American troops arriving in the area.¹⁰⁴ All told, Bernhard had produced some 134 million British pounds sterling in denominations of 5, 10, 20, and 50£ notes, of which approximately 8 per cent were of sufficient quality to enter circulation. These funds had not lived up to expectations, since British and American officials quickly discovered and identified the forged notes and withdrew them from circulation, but the leftover currency did play an instrumental role in many Nazis' successful escapes from Europe after 1945.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, pg. 4.

¹⁰⁵ Ironically enough, the same forged currency that lubricated German "ratlines" was also clandestinely recovered by Jewish aid organizations that used it to fund illegal immigration to Palestine in the aftermath of the war. Key RSHA personnel in charge of Bernhard who had formed extensive networks to smuggle the currency to neutral countries, primarily Switzerland, were able to parlay their extensive knowledge of underground Nazi organizations into lucrative deals with postwar American military intelligence organizations terrified of German guerilla resistance organizations. Gerald Steinacher, *Nazis on the Run: How Hitler's Henchmen Fled Justice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 161-169. See also Kevin C. Ruffner, "On the Trail of Nazi Counterfeiters: Shifting from Wartime to Peacetime Intelligence Operations," *Studies in Intelligence* (2002), pg. 41-53.



Samples of the output of RSHA VI's Operation Bernhard: a forged Bank of England 10£ Note and some not so subtly altered anti-Semitic British postage stamps featuring the replacement of George VI's crown with a "KEwish Star (left) and two likenesses of Stalin, the last of which misspells "Jewish War." USHMM Photo Archive # 25689 and 95769.

Like Operation Bernhard in the West, RSHA VI C/Z's anti-Soviet project, Operation Zeppelin, represented the unity of ideology, intelligence, and atrocity.¹⁰⁶ The

¹⁰⁶ On the origins of Zeppelin, see Klaus-Michael Mallmann, "Der Krieg im Dunkelm. Das Unternehmen 'Zeppelin' 1942-1945," in *Nachrichtendienst, politische Elite, Mordenheit: Der Sicherheitsdienst des Reichsführers SS* ed. Michael Wildt (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2003) and Perry Biddiscombe,

genesis of Zeppelin lay in three overlapping enthusiasms of Heydrich, Schellenberg and Himmler in late 1941 and early 1942. According to Himmler, Hitler was dissatisfied with the intelligence reports that contributed to the underestimation of the Soviet Union in 1941 and hoped for the RSHA to contribute more to the overall intelligence picture in the East, particularly since it appeared that the war would last longer than Hitler had previously assumed. At the same time, Schellenberg and Himmler hoped to use the new intelligence gathering initiative to identify, incite, and assist nationalities uprisings in the Soviet Union that would mirror the (largely imagined at this point but developing) rise of anti-German Judeo-Bolshevist partisan bands stymying the *Wehrmacht's* progress in the East. Ideally, these uprisings would prove so widespread that the Soviet security forces would not be able to effectively counteract them, precipitating the collapse of Stalin's regime. Finally, an extensive intelligence gathering operation that would allow the RSHA to link-up with nationalist movements in the Caucasus and Central Asia provided the opportunity to undermine or supersede similar *Abwehr* operations against the British Empire in Afghanistan.¹⁰⁷ These typically grandiose visions of RSHA intelligence experts imagined an unstoppable force of tens of thousands of highly trained agents simultaneously transmitting information on conditions inside the Soviet Union while single-handedly undermining Stalin's war effort.

The millions of Soviet prisoners captured by the advancing *Wehrmacht* between 1941 and 1942 served as the perfect exploitable resources to pursue these grand ends.

"Unternehmen Zeppelin: The Deployment of SS Saboteurs and Spies in the Soviet Union, 1942-1945," *Europe-Asia Studies* 52, no. 6 (Sept. 2000), 1115-42.

¹⁰⁷ The genesis of Zeppelin can thus be seen in the first instance as parallel to the reorganization of *Fremde Heere Ost* under Gehlen in 1942, as responding to a previous deficiency of intelligence reporting on the Soviet Union from 1939-1941. In fact, the two groups enjoyed a productive working relationship, trading intelligence on the Soviet Union back and forth. As in the case of FHO under Gehlen, Schellenberg and Himmler's Zeppelin did not result in sweeping improvements to the situation. Mallmann, 325-328; Biddiscombe, 1116-17, 1122.

Since the invasion RSHA VI task forces, with the cooperation of Baltic German contingents, had accompanied the *Einsatzgruppen* in order to glean what information they could from Soviet prisoners on the Red Army and Russian political and economic developments.¹⁰⁸ Additionally, the German intelligence representatives attached to the *Einsatzkommandos* were tasked with cultivating Soviet prisoners that would identify Jews and communist officials in the camps for execution. German policy toward captured Red Army soldiers was itself murderous – between the deliberately starvation-level rations, forced labor, appalling living conditions, disease and execution squads, over 3 million Soviet prisoners died (or were murdered) in captivity.¹⁰⁹ Given the horrid conditions and few guaranteed paths to survival, many former Soviets cooperated with German police, military and economic occupation authorities. The Zeppelin directives approved by Hitler in January 1942 and issued in March and May by RSHA IV head Heinrich Müller and Zeppelin chief Heinz Gräfe of RSHA VIC formalized and expanded the prisoner exploitation program to encompass recruitment of agents in addition to

¹⁰⁸ In addition to the RSHA foreign intelligence office a conglomeration of Nazi orientalist, occupation policy, and ethnic studies think tanks such as the Berlin Wannsee Institute made use of this information in coming up with (implicitly and explicitly genocidal) policy recommendations for the Eastern territories. Counter Intelligence War Room, London, “Situation Report No. 8: Amt VI of the RSHA Gruppe VI C,” 28 February 1946, pg 12-13. NACP RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, Box 36, file “German Intelligence Service WWII Vol. 2,” folder 2/2. Arnold N. Silver, Headquarters 7707 European Command Intelligence Center, APO 757 US Army, “Counterintelligence Special Report 61: Interrogation of Heinrich (Heinz) Fenner,” 6 March 1948. NACP RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, Box 36, file “German Intelligence Service WWII Vol. 3,” folder 2/2. On the Wannsee Institute see CSDIC (WEA), “Appendix E to FR 31 Dr. Gerhard Willy Teich: The Wannsee Institute,” 21 Jan. 1946. NACP RG 319, Entry 134-A, Box 6, File XE 003374 Operation Zeppelin.

¹⁰⁹ This constitutes approximately 60 per cent of all Red Army prisoners taken during the war. Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 174-186. In the early phases of the war, not only Jews, but also Muslims were targeted for immediate extermination. This supposedly arose because of Heydrich and Müller’s ignorant assumptions that only Jews were circumcised, with selections proceeding on that basis in the prisoner of war camps. This practice was brought to a halt in September 1941 only after strenuous protests from Canaris’ deputy Lahousen on the grounds that the mass execution of Muslims along with Jews was making it difficult to procure valuable sources and collaborators from the Turkic republics. David Motadel, *Islam and Nazi Germany’s War* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 170-71.

intelligence gathering. The decrees directed all representatives of the German State Police, Security Police, RSHA, *Einsatzkommandos* and prisoner of war authorities active in the *Generalgouvernement* and the occupied Soviet Union to identify potential agents. Even ethnic-Russian communists were acceptable. A May 1942 memorandum on Zeppelin recruitment advised these officials to

pay attention to the presence of those who belong to communist opposition groups, that is, communists who are in ideological opposition to Stalin (Leninists, Trotskyites, etc.) and report them forthwith upon detection...As these will hardly report on their own for fear of being liquidated, they must be identified by suitable informants if necessary.¹¹⁰

Much like the *Einsatzgruppen* themselves, the trained Zeppelin task forces shadowed the advance of the *Wehrmacht* in the East and enjoyed complete cooperation with the German army.¹¹¹

After completing basic interviews and questionnaires documenting their background, ethnicity, and political allegiances, the volunteer-agents were photographed and transferred to one of the many training centers throughout the Reich and occupied eastern territories. Typical of the lofty and unrealistic goals of RSHA VI, these camps were not merely dedicated to the finer points of giving technical assistance to anti-Soviet groups, but rather preoccupied with converting the Soviet volunteers into model National Socialists. Here, according to the program's protocols, "Soviet man" would "undergo a psychological upheaval" through exposure to the wonders of German-European culture

¹¹⁰ At this point, Zeppelin would accept a wide range of anti-Stalinists to cause trouble behind the lines, including Trotskyites and Leninists, and supporters of Bucharin. RSHA VI C/Z B.-Nr.51056/42 (Gräf), "Unternehmen 'Zeppelin'," 15 May 1942. USHMM RG 14.016M (BAB) R 58/142. Wildt, *Uncompromising Generation*, 335.

¹¹¹ Internal memoranda from 1943 referencing specifically referred to the degree of cooperation with local *Wehrmacht* units and supply offices as "extremely satisfying." List to RSHA VI C/Z Berlin, "SS-Sonderlager Linsdorf/Ostsudeten," 2 Feb. 1943. USHMM 14.016M (BAB R 58/142). Wildt, *Uncompromising Generation*, 337-38.

and thorough indoctrination in Nazism's take on the major issues of the day.¹¹² Of particular importance was instilling an uncompromising view of why the war against Bolshevism was a necessity for the freedom of the world, and clearly presenting linkages between Bolshevism, international Jewry, and the misfortune of various Soviet ethnic groups under Stalin. A May 1942 memorandum on the training methods of Zeppelin agents from the administrative branch of the RSHA II (administration) provided a sample 10-day course to aid in molding the recruits into "independent and resilient" operatives. Each day, the Zeppeling agents woke at 6:00am and were allotted a half-hour for morning exercises, breakfast, and barracks cleaning respectively. Following this, each day was filled with educational lectures, films and discussions in addition to exercise,

Day 1:

8:00 – 10:00 Lecture: "National Socialism"
10:00 – 11:00 Film Screening: Two Propaganda Films in Russian
(a) Peasants (b) Workers
12:00-14:00 Lunch and Mid-Day Break
14:00-15:00 Exercises (Formation Drill)
15:00-17:00 Discussion of Lecture and Films...

Day 3:

8:00 – 10:00 Lecture: "The Jews and the Rest of Humanity" (Part 1)
11:00 – 13:00 Film: "The Eternal Jew" (in German)
13:00 – 15:00 Lunch and Mid-Day Break
15:00 – 16:00 Exercises (Formation Drill)
16:00 – 18:00 Lecture: "Jews and the Rest of Humanity" (Part 2)¹¹³

¹¹² The German overseers were explicitly warned to do their utmost to treat their charges with respect during this difficult process of re-education, regardless of their racial background. In practice, however, the Mongols, Turkic peoples and Tartar groups were generally treated better than the ethnic Russian, Ukrainian, and Belorussian nationalities whose nationalist movements had no future under German imperial and occupation policy. VI C/Z-Prop. 51056/42g. gez. Lumm, "Schulungsplan für Aktivisten," 5 May 1942, pg. 2-3. NACP T-175, Roll 642, Folder EAP 173-b-16-12, frame 1580. See also NACP T-175, Roll 642, Folder EAP 173-b-16-12/97a, frame 1487. For more on Zeppelin training methods, see Headquarters, USDIC, United States Forces in Austria, APO 777, "Preliminary Interrogation Report: Zinke, Theodor," 22 Sept. 1945. NACP RG 457, Entry A1-9035, Box 3, file IF 518+A+B+S-62,957.

¹¹³ "Schulungsplan für Aktivisten," 1-5.

The training process proved difficult for a variety of reasons, however, mostly stemming from German misunderstandings of their Soviet volunteers. According to postwar interrogations, the RSHA overseers found that due to the severity of Soviet repression and purges, that they did not find too many examples of nationalists, anticommunists, or useful intelligentsia among the Red Army prisoners; most Zeppelin volunteers were illiterate peasants. In a fit of pique that perhaps revealed more about German prejudices than the Zeppelin agents under their command, postwar interrogations of Heinrich Fenner, former chief of Zeppelin Command South, discussed the extensive training in personal hygiene practices and manners the Soviets required, and how attempts to transform them into National Socialists proved “ridiculous.”¹¹⁴ Although ideologically flexible enough to entertain the idea of using the lesser races of the East in service of Germany, the guards and administrators notably favored the recruitment of non-Russians and non-Ukrainian minorities, since these groups would be more helpful in causing chaos deep behind Russian lines and in the provinces.¹¹⁵ This posed unique problems for training, however. The effects of carefully prepared ideological lectures supplemented by exposure to German news broadcasts were wasted on agents who did not speak a word of German.¹¹⁶ When the Germans endeavored to distribute written propaganda material to the “Turkmen” volunteers, its effect was lost because the Germans refused to issue it in Cyrillic type, instead using Latin characters in hopes of

¹¹⁴ Interrogation of Heinrich Fenner, pg. 4.

¹¹⁵ The Ukrainian and Russian nationalists in particular had proved particularly troublesome even at this early point in the German occupation, and would-be collaborators in the OUN and other such organizations in Belorussia had already been severely repressed by German forces intent on exercising absolute authority in the new Eastern territories. As for the ethnic “Russian Liberation Army” under Vlassov, Himmler and Hitler would only sanction its formation after 1944, far too late to make any appreciable difference in the outcome of the war. Bidiscombe 1123-24.

¹¹⁶ Interrogation of Heinrich Fenner, pg. 4.

strengthening a pre-Russification nationalist reawakening that depended on language and dialect knowledge that the majority of the volunteers simply did not possess.¹¹⁷

Occasionally the RSHA was duped out of great sums of money when volunteer agents offered to assassinate high-ranking Soviet officials for exorbitant sums, only to take the cash and disappear.¹¹⁸

A training method that Zeppelin agents did seem to enjoy, however, were educational trips to Berlin, where they were schooled in the finer points of German culture and repeatedly shown how little damage the Allied bombing had caused. Carefully supervised but “convivial” parties followed these outings where the Zeppelin agents were introduced to RSHA officers from the home office in Berlin. Volunteers from the Central Asian republics were also given special private tours of the Berlin mosque, although the fact that they did not speak German and were often not Muslims often put a damper on their appreciation for German tolerance of Islam.¹¹⁹ Broader attempts by RSHA VI to co-opt the Kazakh nationalist movement through the usual appeals to a Nazified version of Islam fell flat when it was discovered that most of the Kazakh volunteers for Zeppelin were actually atheists. German hopes to instill inter-ethnic cooperation in the Central Asian republics were dashed because of insurmountable language barriers between the nationalities in the camps.¹²⁰ Still, the primacy of ideology

¹¹⁷ Biddiscombe 1126-27.

¹¹⁸ Interrogation of Heinrich Fenner, pg. 3.

¹¹⁹ The great potential of an Islamic-German alliance was a pet-project of Schellenberg, who was also the driving force behind Himmler’s enthusiasms for the famous Bosnian-Muslim SS division in 1943-44 and personally addressed the recruits of the SS mullah school in Dresden upon its inauguration in 1944. Meanwhile, it was the foreign intelligence experts of RSHA VI C13 that identified relevant passages in the Koran that could be used to reinforce the bonds between Hitler and Muslim recruits. Motadel, 233-244, 276-282. Herf, *Arab World*, 199-200.

¹²⁰ Indeed, little came of German attempts to inspire anti-communist and anti-Semitic pan-Islamic movements in Zeppelin, due to the general dearth of Muslim volunteers in the program, although Zeppelin

in Amt VI placed a premium on these efforts towards solving Germany's problems through the careful application of Nazi ideology, often at the expense of operational preparation.

In addition to its firm roots in the racist ideological tenets of Nazism, Operation Zeppelin was characteristic of the unity of National Socialist theory and practice in RSHA operations more generally. Although the *raison d'être* of Zeppelin was not the murder of European Jewry, it was as firmly rooted in the racial hierarchies of the race war on the Eastern Front. As with other SS operations, Zeppelin was highly dependent on equipment, materials, and funding expropriated from the Jewish victims of the Holocaust. Lectures at the Zeppelin training centers included thorough education on the links between Bolshevism and international Jewry, and international Jewry and the oppression of Soviet nationalities. Many eager volunteers for the program did not require such instruction on the finer points of anti-Semitism, however, as the early pool of Zeppelin personnel was purposefully drawn from the ranks of Soviet internees that enthusiastically identified Jews and communist officials to German *Einsatzgruppen* in the POW camps so that their own lives might be spared. Zeppelin training centers were a model of Nazi racial theory in practice as the various Soviet nationalities were strictly segregated from one another both as a matter of principle and to prevent what the Germans assumed would be savage infighting between the groups.¹²¹ Any operatives with Jewish blood who were somehow overlooked in the initial screening process were simply murdered if their ancestry was discovered, as in the case of a recruit from the

officers repeatedly attested in the postwar period that they were making headway with Islam in the latter phases of the war, only to run out of time. Interrogation of Heinrich Fenner, pg. 4-5.

¹²¹ A Zeppelin training installation near Auschwitz, for example, was exclusively for Caucasians, while a small training facility in the Warsaw suburbs housed "Turkestanis" only. "Situation Report No. 8," pg. 14-17. Mallmann, 344.

Turkmenistan region who was transferred from his training facility to Auschwitz for “special treatment” in 1943. The German administrators themselves remained cordial but appropriately aloof from the *Untermenschen*. The Germans and their Soviet agents working in Operation Zeppelin were by no means “brothers in arms.”¹²²

As American war crimes commissions recognized in the aftermath of the Second World War, RSHA intelligence officials were culpable for “crimes against humanity” in the course of their secret operations on the Eastern Front. Similar to the case of the Jewish concentration camp inmates forced to participate in Operation Bernhard, the ethnically Russian “volunteers” were deemed disposable assets. Training was poor, equipment was in short supply, and missions were often ill conceived or outright suicidal. One special operation, for instance, envisioned parachuting a contingent of Zeppelin agents deep behind Soviet lines around the port city Archangel, wherein they would embark on a mission of inciting revolts in prisoner of war camps around the city, freeing thousands of Germans who would in turn engage in widespread guerilla warfare in the Soviet Union (again on the Soviet partisan model). Another ill-conceived venture, Operation *Ulm*, called for parachuting 60 Zeppelin agents into the Urals to single-handedly destroy the power grid for the region, destabilizing the bulk of Soviet war production there. How such a group was to survive after the completion of its task literally thousands of kilometers from the front was not a consideration.¹²³ *Ulm* was only abandoned when the *Luftwaffe* itself balked at the likely costs in fuel, aircraft, and German casualties likely to result from flying 60 men that deep behind the lines. For a typical Zeppelin mission in 1942, personnel losses generally exceeded 80 per cent;

¹²² Mallmann, 341-344. Biddiscombe 1125-26.

¹²³ “Situation Report No. 8,” 17-18.

Schellenberg considered the reduction of losses to 20 per cent in 1944 a significant achievement.¹²⁴ Even the agents returning from successful missions in the East were often liquidated for “security purposes” on special orders from Schellenberg if they were deemed of no further use to the program.¹²⁵ After all, they were only Slavs, Mongols and Tatars.

War crimes proceedings against Walter Schellenberg for his culpability in the Final Solution and other crimes against humanity revealed the perfunctory manner in which Zeppelin agents were liquidated at Auschwitz’s infamous Block 11.¹²⁶ Kazimierz Smoleń, a Polish political prisoner in Auschwitz from 1941-1945 whom the camp police forced to work in and around Block 11 during his internment, testified that from 1942 to 1944 approximately 200 Russians of Operation Zeppelin were liquidated at Auschwitz.¹²⁷ Special representatives of the SD brought in the Russians in batches of ten or so, forgoing the usual admittance procedures at Auschwitz-I. Former Zeppelin agents were not assigned prisoner numbers, and the Political Department did not generate any files or paperwork on them beyond that already kept by Amt VI. Although the background of

¹²⁴ Biddiscombe, 1124.

¹²⁵ Kahn, 360.

¹²⁶ Located in Auschwitz I, Block 11 was a prison within the camp where inmates were held or executed under the purview of the camp political department, subordinate to the SD. Within Block 11, the harsh and brutal interrogation/torture sessions with the aid of hellish contraptions such as the “Boger Swing.” The first gassing experiment with Zyklon B utilizing Russian prisoners of war and camp inmates took place in an improvised chamber in the basement of Block 11 in September 1941. Outside Block 11 was the notorious “death wall” where political prisoners were executed by firing squad. On the role of Block 11 and the political department within the broader Auschwitz complex, including the early gassing experiments, see Israel Gutman and Michael Berenbaum, eds., *Anatomy of the Auschwitz Death Camp* (Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 1998). Much eyewitness testimony and information on the Auschwitz political department and Block 11 arose from the 1963-1965 West German Frankfurt-Auschwitz trial. See Rebecca Wittmann, *Beyond Justice: The Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), and Devin O. Pendas, *The Frankfurt-Auschwitz Trial, 1963-1965: Genocide, History, and the Limits of the Law* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

¹²⁷ Smoleń, as a long-time internee with invaluable knowledge of the camp administration, was a key witness in many subsequent war crimes trials. He served as director of the Auschwitz state museum in Poland from 1955 until his retirement in 1990. Associated Press, “Kazimierz Smoleń, 91, Director of Auschwitz Memorial Site.” *New York Times*, 28 January 2012, pg. D8.

each prisoner and their activities for Amt VI remained secret, the reason provided to the camp administration for the Russians' arrest was "person in possession of secret information," sometimes accompanied by an annotation of the code word "Zeppelin," which the Auschwitz Political Department staff became familiar with over time. To the end, the former Zeppelin agents were kept ignorant of their situation, as Smoleń testified, "I am convinced that they did not, on their arrival, have the slightest idea of what awaited them...After having been taken in, these people never left Block 11; they were murdered by a shot into the neck within four or five days." A number of personnel files for agents of Zeppelin maintained at RSHA headquarters and a direct order from December 1942 demanding the liquidation of incurably tubercular Russians in the program confirmed Smoleń's testimony. In all cases, the documents bore the familiar Nazi euphemism for murder, "special treatment."¹²⁸

* * * *

This chapter has offered a brief survey of the myriad ways that the German foreign intelligence services, regardless of their institutional ethos, contributed to the Nazis' projects of extermination in the East.

Prewar Foreign Office and RSHA VI political intelligence reports from Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union confirmed the conspiratorial world-view endemic in the SD, Foreign Office Jewish Department, and Nazi political hierarchy more generally that international Jewry was an existential threat to German survival. FHO and Ic officers' reports conflating Jews with Bolsheviks, commissars, partisans, spies,

¹²⁸ "Final Brief on the criminal responsibility of Walter Schellenberg," 54-61.

bandits, terrorists, and saboteurs reinforced these conspiratorial obsessions on the Eastern front, and lent military justification to the wholesale extermination of assumed oppositional groups. Even when these same officers recognized the practical disadvantages stemming from the systematized barbarity of the “anti-partisan struggle” their preoccupation with grossly inflating the potential threat of communist bandits won the day.

While Canaris’ equivocated in the face of organized mass murder and the *Abwehr*’s intelligence reports edited out the anti-Semitism of their source material, many of the *Abwehr*’s thousands of employees willingly cooperated with the barbaric objectives in the East. As a military institution dedicated to a German victory over the Soviet Union the *Abwehr* (no matter the resistance-minded inclinations of the senior staff), like the SS, supplied critical material support and expertise to radically anti-Semitic opponents of the Soviet and British imperial projects such as Stepan Bandera and the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem. Along with the army military intelligence officers, *Fremde Heere Ost*, and the SD, the *Abwehr* also exploited the intelligence on the Eastern front derived from the brutal torture and murder of Soviet prisoners of war.

The RSHA, of course, embodied the most radical elements of German intelligence’s complicity in ideologically-driven atrocities, with Amt VI commanders and personnel lending material and institutional support to the activities of the *Einsatzgruppen*, in many cases actually leading *Einsatzkommando* units themselves. Even the day-to-day counterespionage and sabotage operations of RSHA VI were deeply steeped in Nazism’s racial hierarchies and contempt for the lives of Nazism’s racial enemies, however, as Jewish and Soviet *Untermenschen* were repeatedly press-ganged

into anti-British and anti-Soviet espionage operations, only to be murdered when their services to the *Reich* were no longer required.

The wartime activities of the German intelligence services often completely contradicted the self-exculpating postwar testimony of former intelligence officers who, intent on saving themselves and still dedicated to the destruction of world communism, were content to blame the atrocities on an unprofessional and fanatical Nazi Party elite. As a result, many of these same individuals with criminal pasts, particularly those with a self-avowed expertise in Soviet affairs, would find their way into postwar service with American and West German intelligence networks. Their poor advice, and widespread efforts to continue to repress knowledge of their wartime complicity in the Reich's crimes would prove a liability for the Western powers, as the ultimate public revelations of their wartime activities (which periodically continue today) shocked the Western world. It is to their story that we must now turn.

CHAPTER 5

General Gehlen's Intelligence Service, 1945-1971

“There is no discernible alteration of his view of the world as it existed twenty years ago. Much of our conversation was an almost verbatim replay of our last conversation...As I took my leave to drive through darkness and driving sleet back to Munich I had the feeling that this might be the last business conversation with Gehlen – that time had finally overtaken this warrior of the Cold War. How history will judge him is not now clear; certainly he will not be judged as a man who had doubts or equivocated.” – James Critchfield, CIA Memorandum for the Record: Meeting with Reinhard Gehlen, January 20, 1971¹

By all accounts, General Reinhard Gehlen was personally uninspiring, every bit the stereotype of the stuffy German General Staff Officer. Although he was industrious and performed his duties conscientiously, Gehlen was not particularly charismatic or brilliant, and he did not speak a foreign language. Prior to his 1942 appointment as head of *Fremde Heere Ost* he had no previous intelligence background. Even then, Gehlen had no experience with intelligence gathering, operations, or counter-espionage duties, as FHO primarily collated and analyzed information already gathered by *Abwehr* and *Heere* field intelligence units. Unlike a number of his wartime colleagues, he also had no discernable connections to the anti-Nazi resistance movements. Apart from his swift rise in the General Staff during the war (he was supposedly one of only a few staff officers to earn a promotion to Brigadier General without serving at the front) and despite ringing endorsements from Generals Franz Halder and Heinz Guderian, Gehlen's wartime performance was consistently mediocre.² Yet it was Reinhard Gehlen who, under

¹ James Critchfield, “Memorandum for the Record: Meeting with General R. Gehlen, Berg am Starbergersee, 20 January 1971,” 27 January 1971. NACP RG 263: Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, Entry ZZ-18, Box 40, File “Gehlen, Reinhard” Vol. 6, Folder 1/2.

² David Kahn, *Hitler's Spies: German Military intelligence in World War II* (New York: DeCapo, 1978), 429-442. Richard Breitman, et.al., *U.S. Intelligence and the Nazis* (Washington DC: National Archives Trust

American sponsorship, came to dominate West German foreign intelligence until the late 1960s.

From recently declassified American intelligence records, actual reports of the *Bundesnachrichtendienst* (BND), and the underutilized personal writings of Reinhard Gehlen himself, this chapter argues that Gehlen's rigid *Weltanschauung*, repeatedly compromised his presumed value to the West. It centered on the inevitable "showdown" between irreconcilable communist and anticommunist camps and on assumptions of Russian malevolence and inferiority. While Gehlen's continued employment of ex-Nazis (many of whom barely masked their records of wartime atrocity) is an issue of central importance to the history of the Gehlen Organization (GO) and BND, the postwar failures of Gehlen's foreign intelligence service also represent the consequences of a stringent anti-Soviet ideology, although largely discredited by wartime events, surviving. Gehlen's uncompromising world-view and paranoia wrought scandal and rampant Soviet penetration of his intelligence service. At the same time, the old biases that corrupted German intelligence during the war (particularly Gehlen's own *Fremde Heere Ost*) continued to shape his postwar intelligence work and anti-SPD domestic interventions, much to the frustration of his American counterparts in the CIA and the West German government in Bonn.

Numerous scholars and journalists have noted the continuities in personnel and ideas from the Nazi-era intelligence agencies to the Gehlen Organization and BND while questioning the effectiveness of both postwar organizations. Early 1970s works by *Der*

Fund Board for the Nazi War Crimes and Japanese Imperial Government Records Interagency Working Group, 2004), 378.

Spiegel's Heinz Höhne and Hermann Zolling as well as popular author Edward Spiro (pseudonym E. H. Cookridge) provided a dismissive view of Gehlen and his intelligence service, noting numerous blunders and consistent employment of ex-Nazis with decidedly unsavory pasts.³ Typical East German propaganda pieces, thinly disguised as history, were even more vitriolic in condemning the employment of Gehlen by the American and West German governments as further evidence of Western fascism resurgent.⁴ Despite Höhne and Zolling's interviews of a number of BND employees and access to leaked documents, these works suffer from a lack of archival documentation. Later publications that better established the American roots of the Gehlen Organization, its questionable personnel decisions, and institutional failures, benefitted from limited declassifications of American files under the Freedom of Information Act. However, these works were still not privy to the complete documentary records of U.S. Army Intelligence, the CIA, or the BND.⁵ The recently published memoirs of James Critchfield, a CIA officer intimately involved in American cooperation with and oversight of the early Gehlen Organization and its creation, contributed little new information to the historical record.⁶

³ Heinz Höhne and Hermann Zolling, *The General Was a Spy: The Truth About General Gehlen and His Spy Ring* (New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1972), simultaneously published in London as *Network: The Truth About General Gehlen and His Spy Ring*. These works, translated from the German *Pullach Innern*, were based on a series of investigative articles on the BND that had run in *Der Spiegel* the previous year. E. H. Cookridge, *Gehlen: Spy of the Century* (New York: Pyramid Books, 1973). Pro-Gehlen Western potboilers, such as Charles Whiting's *Gehlen: Germany's Master Spy* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1972) are equally unreliable.

⁴ See, for example, Albrecht Charisius and Julius Mader, *Nicht länger geheim; Entwicklung, System und Arbeitsweise des imperialistischen deutschen Geheimdienstes* (Berlin: Descher Militärverlag, 1969).

⁵ Christopher Simpson, *Blowback: America's Recruitment of Nazis and Its Effects on the Cold War* (New York: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1988). Mary Ellen Reese, *Reinhard Gehlen: The CIA Connection* (Fairfax, VA: George Mason University Press, 1990).

⁶ James Critchfield, *Partners at the Creation: The Men Behind Postwar Germany's Defense and Intelligence Establishments* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2003).

At the same time, more recent examinations of the Gehlen Organization and BND, occasioned by the mass declassifications of American archival holdings under the 1998 Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act have primarily concerned American knowledge of and response to Gehlen's employment of former Nazis, as opposed to the inner working of the GO/BND itself.⁷ The work of the current German historical commission appointed to write an official history of the BND through extensive examination of its archives (*Forschungs- und Arbeitsgruppe „Geschichte des BND“*) will not be fully available until late 2016, and also appears to have focused predominantly on the additional employment of and contacts with ex-Nazis and the activities of the BND in well-known events such as the *Spiegel* Affair, the East German Rising of 1953, or the Prague Spring.⁸

A strict focus on the RSHA and SS elements in the Gehlen Organization and early BND obscures the broader implications of these relationships for the effectiveness of Gehlen's intelligence. Chapter 2 indicated that on the topic of Soviet aims and ambitions or the capabilities of the Red Army, RSHA VI and military intelligence agencies such as FHO both worked from ingrained prejudices of innate Soviet inferiority as well as other negative ethnic stereotypes. Chapter 4 showed that wartime criminality in the intelligence agencies was not confined to the RSHA alone. This rabidly anticommunist ethos carried over from the wartime German *military* intelligence services into the

⁷ *U.S. Intelligence and the Nazis*, specifically Timothy Naftali's, "Reinhard Gehlen and the United States," 375-418. Based on the limited information released to the German media, it seems that the current German commission of historians investigating the BND's past, modeled on the Foreign Office commission that produced *Das Amt und die Vergangenheit*, will primarily concern itself with the Nazi pasts of prominent BND employees.

⁸ See the official website of the BND's historical commission via the BND at http://www.bnd.bund.de/DE/Organisation/Geschichtsaufarbeitung/geschichtsaufarbeitung_node.html and the private website of the commission itself at <http://www.uhk-bnd.de>.

Gehlen Organization and BND, especially Gehlen's personal ideology, with detrimental effects on these organizations.

From his command of *Fremde Heere Ost* under Hitler (1942-1945) to the "Gehlen Organization" (GO) under the U.S. Army (1945-1949), Central Intelligence Agency (1949-1956), and West German *Bundesnachrichtendienst* (1956-1968), Gehlen's aims were remarkably consistent. Indeed, until his death in 1979, Gehlen saw himself as an "apolitical" German patriot, waging an unbroken war against the Soviet Union in defense of Germany and the West. This carried over into Gehlen's postwar work with the United States and his leadership of the emergent West German foreign intelligence service. In both cases, Gehlen's personal ideology decisively stamped the organizational ethos of the GO/BND and its reporting. As a result, the new West German foreign intelligence service under Gehlen exhibited ideological continuities with the Nazi past, particularly in the reproduction of flawed and misleading assessments of Soviet strength and intentions. At the same time, Gehlen's uncompromising anticommunism in the name of Germany's salvation proved, ironically, a liability to West German security. His resistance to government oversight, questionable personnel decisions, and interventions in domestic politics followed from his uncompromising conviction that an inevitable and totalizing war of ideologies between East and West loomed ahead. Through turning to the anti-Soviet experts of the previous regime in an effort to gain the upper hand, Gehlen facilitated the rampant penetration of the BND by the Soviet KGB and eroded West German and American confidence in his abilities.

The Intelligence Prophet: *Fremde Heere Ost* in American Hands

If *Fremde Heere Ost* under Eberhard Kinzel consistently failed to effectively estimate Red Army strength, disposition, and operational capabilities, Reinhard Gehlen's appointment as head of the organization in April 1942 was not necessarily transformative. While *Fremde Heere Ost* under Gehlen was able to produce a number of excellent analyses of the operational difficulties that the Wehrmacht would face in the "Citadel" campaign of 1943, it still failed to accurately foresee the extent and strength of Soviet counterattacks. Likewise, the lead-up to the 1944 Soviet "Operation Bagration," which resulted in the complete destruction of German Army Group Center and the driving of German forces from Eastern Poland and Belorussia, was a major intelligence failure. FHO was caught completely by surprise due to both Soviet deception efforts and FHO's consistent tendency to underestimate the leadership and offensive capabilities of the Red Army.⁹ Under Gehlen, FHO proved consistently over-optimistic about the prospects for German success while simultaneously underestimating Soviet military capabilities and operational skill. Although FHO's work in identifying the disposition of Soviet forces at the front was consistently better than its operational analyses, biases existed there too. FHO often wrongly identified Soviet units as smaller than they actually were or wrongly judged them incapable of offensive actions.¹⁰ Hitler specifically referenced these failures when he relieved Gehlen of command in April 1945.

⁹ David Thomas, "Foreign Armies East and German Military Intelligence in Russia, 1941-45," *Journal of Contemporary History* 22, No. 2 (Apr. 1987), 285-288. Gehlen wrongly designated many of the attacking Soviet units as combat ineffective, or incapable of attack.

¹⁰ Thomas, 289-291. These failures were not only due to a lack of pertinent information but to analytical failures and biases, as individual army intelligence units at the front, working from the same information available to FHO, were able to draw the correct conclusions, only to be ignored by FHO. Although slightly more sympathetic to Gehlen's accomplishments, Magnus Pahl draws similar conclusions in his expansive organizational study *Fremde Heere Ost: Hitlers militrische Feindaufklrung* (Ch. Links Verlag: Berlin, 2012).

Even so, Gehlen soon presented himself as an intelligence sage to the United States, willing to provide his extensive knowledge of the Soviet Union and hidden collections of Red Army order of battle files to aid the West in what he saw as an inevitable struggle against world communism. Gehlen's unwavering postwar claims about his past all conformed to widespread U.S. Army preconceptions of the political and military deficiencies of the Nazi state. Gehlen provided accurate and correct information on Soviet intentions, U.S. officials thought, only to be ignored by Party amateurs. A delusional Führer treated Gehlen unjustly for speaking truth to power. The fact that American intelligence apparently had little knowledge or understanding of FHO's wartime activities or deficiencies (unlike its voluminous files evaluating the efficacy of the *Abwehr* and SS intelligence) also helped in this regard.¹¹ Yet the postwar rehabilitation of Gehlen as spymaster *par excellence* was hardly a foregone conclusion.

The circumstances surrounding Reinhard Gehlen's surrender to the Americans in May 1945 still remain unclear. At some point in early 1945, Gehlen ordered his subordinates in *Fremde Heere Ost* to discretely remove important files to various locations in the Bavarian Alps. In postwar interrogations, Walter Schellenberg claimed that Gehlen also solicited the cooperation of Himmler and the RSHA in forming a well organized joint military-SS resistance movement along the lines of the *Werwolf* initiative, to which Himmler reacted negatively.¹² Gehlen's interest in taking to the mountains as a

¹¹ Jens Wegener, "Shaping Germany's Post-War Intelligence Service; The Gehlen Organization, the U.S. Army, and Central Intelligence, 1945-1949," *The Journal of Intelligence History* 7:1 (June 2007): 42-43.

¹² Chief, Foreign Division M to Chief of Station Karlsruhe, "Interrogation of Dr. Walter Friedrich Schellenberg," 18 April 1950. NACP RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, Box 38: File "Gehlen, Reinhard" Vol. 1, Folder 1/2. Schellenberg quoted Himmler as saying, "This is complete nonsense...it is typical of the high class general staff officer to sit in [headquarters] nursing postwar plans instead of fighting." Schellenberg also claimed that he and Gehlen had a congenial relationship, as Gehlen sympathized with Schellenberg's ambition of a "Geheime Meldedienst," a unified intelligence service. While Schellenberg was certainly not the most trustworthy of sources, this incident would fit the broader pattern of Gehlen seeking approval from

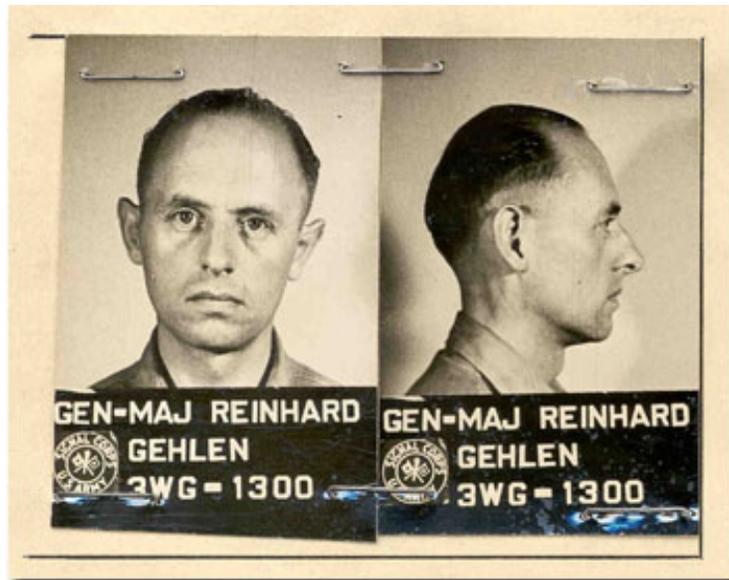
part of a broader German guerilla resistance certainly seems plausible, considering Gehlen's other projects in early 1945. They included a far-fetched scheme to annihilate a large portion of the Red Army's equipment and troops by incinerating them in a ring of *Luftwaffe*-induced forest fires along the Görlitz-Guben line (from which no escape or surrender would be possible).¹³ Gehlen later claimed that the entire Schellenberg episode was merely a ruse to justify the movement of his files and his continued contact with FHO personnel after his dismissal. He maintained that he was saving the files for the explicit purpose of cooperating with the Americans.¹⁴ Whether or not Gehlen was salvaging these records for the express purpose of aiding the West in the "inevitable" reckoning with the Soviet Union, his statements suggest that continuing his own part in the crusade against communism through leading some sort of reconstituted German intelligence service was a determining factor.¹⁵ In Allied custody Gehlen portrayed himself as an invaluable expert on the Soviet Union, eager to pass on his hard-won expertise on the methods and tactics of communist aggression.

superiors for his postwar activities – after his capture by the Americans, he was confined in the same complex as Admiral Karl Dönitz and reportedly sought and received his permission as Germany's President to collaborate with the Americans.

¹³ Reinhard Gehlen, "Entfäschung von Großwaldbränden als Kampfmittel," 3.3.1945. NACP RG 242, T-78: Records of Headquarters, German Army High Command, Roll 493, Folder H3/1148a.

¹⁴ "Statement of Reinhard Gehlen on Schellenberg Story," [Undated], in Kevin Ruffner, *Forging an Intelligence Partnership: CIA and the Origins of the BND, 1945-1949, A Documentary History* (CIA History Staff Center for the Study of Intelligence, 1999), 53. NACP RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, Box 30, File: CIA and the Origins of the BND 1945-49 Vol. 1, Folder 1/3. Wolfgang Krieger, "German-American Intelligence Relations, 1945-1956: New Evidence on the Origins of the BND" *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 22, no. 1 (2011): 31-32. The CIA concluded after a thorough investigation that there was no way to reconcile the two accounts.

¹⁵ "Statement of Gerhard Wessel on Development of the German Organization," [Undated], *Forging an Intelligence Partnership*, Vol. 1, Folder 1/3. pg. 1-3.



Gehlen captured. U.S. Army interrogation file photo, Public Domain.

Gehlen's initial interrogation by the U.S. Army reveals the persistence of the conceptual biases that undermined his wartime reporting. When Gehlen was questioned on a narrow subject, as in a June 24th interrogation about the specific administrative organization and responsibilities of the Soviet intelligence service, he provided direct and thoughtful answers.¹⁶ However, in a more general exchange on the tactics and leadership of the Red Army, Gehlen's old anti-communist and anti-Soviet pre-conceptions quickly emerged. The key premise in this interrogation was that Red Army leadership principles were indicative of "Russian character peculiarities" and innate differences in Eastern and Western mentalities. There was a "discordant Russian psychology," defined by an emotional volatility that often undermined sound intellectual judgment. The novels of Dostoyevsky, which were defined by such characters, were illustrative in this regard. Western Europeans "thought" while Russians "felt," causing

¹⁶ Apart from the questionable digression that night-time Soviet troop movements and troop dispersals in forests during the day in spite of severe cold (a deceptive intelligence mechanism meant to camouflage intentions) was only possible because of the "inborn tenacity" of the Russian soldier and his natural ability "to make good use of nature." Seventh Army Interrogation Center, "Notes on the Red Army – Intelligence and Security," 24 June 1945, in *Forging an Intelligence Partnership 1945-1949*, Vol. 1, pg. 53.

Russian military leaders to act with indecision, overestimating or underestimating their tactical position based on ever-shifting attitudes of euphoria and despair.¹⁷

Beyond this psychological dualism, the innate distrustfulness of Russians also allegedly proved decisive in their leadership qualities. Russians were “ruled by distrust,” which both explained the emergence of the totalitarian security apparatus in the Soviet Union (distrust toward one another) and served as “the roots of the proverbial Slavic shrewdness,” marked by “tendencies to conspire, to be crafty, and to avoid the straight road towards his goals wherever possible.”¹⁸ In military matters, Russian “distrust” resulted in the much-reviled dual-command “commissar system,” which confused channels of order and led to poor performance and an absence of initiative in the already stubborn and distrustful Russian leadership. As Gehlen’s analysis of Soviet military leadership morphed into the standard apologia of German military officers on the Eastern Front, he asserted that only the systematically poor strategic decisions of Hitler proved enough of a shock to break the stubborn inertia of the Red Army command structure, fostering moderate innovation and the adaptation of “modern” military principles.¹⁹ The interrogation concluded with the somewhat contradictory observation that while Russian military leaders were rightly regarded as “primitive” and alien to Westerners in their ideas and methods, they should not be underestimated.²⁰

Gehlen’s capture garnered little initial interest in American military intelligence circles, but U.S. Army Captain John R. Boker, a junior officer also recently assigned to

¹⁷ Seventh Army Interrogation Center, “Notes on Red Army Leadership and Tactics,” 21 June 1945, 1-2. NACP RG 238: M1270 – Interrogation Records Prepared for War Crimes Proceedings at Nuernberg, 1945-1947, Roll 24 (Gehlen).

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid, 3-8.

²⁰ Ibid, 12.

Gehlen's camp at Wiesbaden, was an exception. Boker, already anti-Soviet and anticipating a long Soviet occupation of Eastern Europe and the Balkans, chafed under what he perceived as Washington's lackadaisical attitude toward exploiting German intelligence services' networks and knowledge of the Soviet Union. Having already attempted to keep a *Luftwaffe* air reconnaissance unit intact and producing analytical reports on the Soviet Air Forces only to be rebuffed by British authorities, Boker sought out Gehlen for a friendly discussion on the possibilities of reconstituting *Fremde Heere Ost's* documents and personnel in service of the United States. Although Boker had no authority to make such an offer, he was ultimately able to convince a small number of fellow officers and his immediate superiors, most importantly General Edwin L. Sibert, the Assistant Chief of Staff 12th Army Group Intelligence Section (G-2), that Gehlen's group was worth further attention.²¹ Operating "outside of normal POW channels," Boker quietly set about transferring Gehlen's associates and hidden document caches to Wiesbaden, and by July put the group to work on reports with titles such as *Soviet Tank Production*, *Strength of the Soviet Army*, *Soviet Manpower Study*, and *Estimate of Probable Soviet Demobilization Policy*.²²

These reports, circulated through Sibert's G-2 office, were not shared with the OSS. They showed enough promise to prompt orders for transfer of the FHO document collection to Fort Hunt, Virginia, in August 1945 for further analysis by G-2

²¹ *U.S. Intelligence and the Nazis*, 379-380. Derek R. Mallett, *Hitler's Generals in America: Nazi POWs and Allied Military Intelligence* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2013), 138-139. Wegener 46-47. According to a March 1970 interview with Sibert, this was his decision alone, as he did not clear the employment of Gehlen and his associates with General Bradley, General Eisenhower, or General Smith. "Report of Interview with General Edwin L. Sibert on the Gehlen Organization" 26 March 1970 in *Forging an Intelligence Partnership 1945-49*, Vol. 1, Folder 1/3, pg. 43.

²² John R. Boker, Jr. "Report of Initial Contacts with General Gehlen's Organization," 1 May 1952, in *Forging an Intelligence Partnership 1945-1949*, Vol. 1, Folder 1/3, pg. 24-27.

headquarters. After much political maneuvering, Boker and Sibert received permission to send Gehlen and a group of his close associates to keep the Germans and the documents together. Much to Gehlen's dismay, G-2's primary interest in this "Bolero Group" at Fort Hunt remained the retrieval and analysis of FHO's records themselves, not in extended collaboration with its personnel.²³ In Virginia, Gehlen's officers initially spent their time on small-scale press evaluation, producing some limited studies on Soviet military potential and organizing and updating FHO files (primarily Red Army order of battle information and unit identification) in coordination with other German prisoner projects. By March 1946, however, the Bolero Group was preparing more extensive studies on Soviet combat capabilities and evaluating reports on the Soviet Union produced by Allied intelligence sources and the Pentagon itself. Gehlen and others characterized these developments as signifying a long-awaited "winning over" of their American supervisors. The conditions of the Germans' internment at Fort Hunt reflected an emergent American deference and collegiality, evolving from virtual imprisonment in a classified building (known only as P.O. Box 1142) to supervised shopping trips to Washington D.C., picnics along the Potomac, and the privilege of using the Bolero Group's top-secret courier pouch network to send food and clothing to family members back in Germany.²⁴

²³ Kevin Conley Ruffner, "CIA and Nazi War Criminals and Collaborators Chapter 1-10: Draft Working Paper," April 2003; Chapter 9, pg. 4-5. NACP RG 263: Entry ZZ-19, Box 29, Folder 1/2. For a shorter article by Ruffner that outlines the main arguments of these chapters on Gehlen, see "A Controversial Liaison Relationship: American Intelligence and the Gehlen Organization," *Studies in Intelligence* (1997): 69-84, in NACP RG 263: Entry ZZ-19, Box 61, Folder "Studies in Intelligence: American Intelligence and the Gehlen Organization."

²⁴ Ibid. "Statement of Heinz Danko Heere," 8 April 1953, in *Forging an Intelligence Partnership 1945-1949*, Vol. 1, Folder 1/3, pg. 12-13. *U.S. Intelligence and the Nazis*, 380-381.

By July 1946, in accordance with U.S. Secretary of State Byrnes' insistence that all German prisoners in the United States should be repatriated to Germany, the work at Fort Hunt wound down and Gehlen and his men were sent home.²⁵ Fortunately for Gehlen, the Army was suitably impressed with Bolero's production to return Gehlen and his colleagues to Germany with orders not only to reconstitute the analytical intelligence office of FHO but also merge it with previously existing *ex-Abwehr* espionage networks under G-2 supervision (designated "Keystone") to form a new foreign intelligence and espionage network. According to G-2, this new group operating under Gehlen's leadership in Oberursel (designated "RUSTY") would prove invaluable in monitoring Soviet activity "on the ground" in Central and Eastern Europe, since their access to still existing German intelligence informants and well-organized files on Red Army operations would augment American intelligence on the Eastern Occupation Zone.²⁶ To facilitate the production of useful evaluation reports on Soviet strength and activities, the Army provided Gehlen's operation with FHO and other documents previously stored at Fort Hunt and American news and intelligence digests from the War Department and Army G-2 intelligence, as well as Russian periodicals.²⁷

All told, from 1945-1946 Gehlen's group produced some 354 studies, reports, evaluations, comments, and notes totaling over 4,250 pages, including 38 studies on Russian order of battle and a further 23 studies on Russian intelligence and

²⁵ Gehlen and his men returned to Germany on a PW ship, posing as scientists. "Statement of Heinz Danko Heere," 13; Mallett 164.

²⁶ Ruffner, "Draft Working Paper, 1-10," Chapter 9, pg. 8-10.

²⁷ Gehlen's initial remittance for these services was 900 RM per month, equivalent to Halder's salary as head of the German writing section (See Chapter 6). Lt. Col. John R. Dean, Jr. to Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, USFET, "Plan for Inclusion of the BOLERO Group in Operation RUSTY," 2 July 1946, in *Forging an Intelligence Partnership 1945-1949*, Vol. 1, Folder 2/3, pg. 96-97.

counterintelligence operations.²⁸ Once again, Gehlen's continued cooperation with the West was informed by his conclusion that that the world would be divided between American-style democracy and Soviet dictatorship, and that Germany had to choose one or the other side, as neutrality was impossible. Siding with the Soviets would mean the unthinkable, "a communist Germany combined with gradual loss of her national characteristics to a predominant Slavic influence." Choosing the West held "the possibility of preserving the remaining basic intellect and strength of the German people."²⁹ He argued (rather astutely) that the USSR had entered a period of aggressive regrouping in that it was still explicitly committed to world revolution and would attempt to win foreign policy victories over the Allies at every turn. But it was presently more concerned with centralizing control over a "security zone" buffer in Central and Eastern Europe and would only start the inevitable open war with the West if it sensed weakness. Here again, Gehlen stressed the underlying assumption of Soviet cunning (sensing weakness in Western coalitions) and primitiveness (only understanding and responding to acts of brute strength).³⁰

The British and Americans had long run joint interrogation programs of captured German officers. By 1945-46 they included full-fledged intelligence-reporting programs based in Fort Hunt, Virginia (The "Hill Project"), and Allendorf, Germany (the U.S. Army Historical Division Writing Program).³¹ The United States Air Force's "Wringer" Project sought out German POWs to provide targeting information for potential air

²⁸ Maj. Gen. W.A. Burrell, G-2, to Lt. Gen. Hoyt S. Vandenberg, Director of Central Intelligence, "Operation RUSTY- Use of the Eastern Branch of the Former German Intelligence Service," 1 October 1946 in *Forging an Intelligence Partnership 1945-1949*, Vol. 1, Folder 2/3, pg. 112-115.

²⁹ Ibid, 110.

³⁰ Ibid, 133-144.

³¹ Mallett, 133-167. See Chapter 6 for a closer study of the Historical Division's Foreign Military Studies Program.

strikes on the Soviet Union.³² A similar interrogation program operated jointly between the Americans and British, Operation “Apple Pie,” sought out former RSHA officials to provide information on Soviet and Eastern European economic and industrial matters.³³ At the same time, the American-sponsored smuggling of German scientists to the United States, “Operation Paperclip,” is notorious for ignoring and even obfuscating the Nazi pasts of its subjects, as was Allen Dulles and the OSS’s interventions to shield some German intelligence figures from prosecution in exchange for their pro-American actions of 1944-45.³⁴ Many of these projects (the Historical Division’s German writing program and of course Operation Paperclip were exceptions) had little, if any, long-term impact on American military strategy or capabilities.³⁵ The Army’s work with Gehlen in 1945 and 1946 did not dramatically shift American military intelligence against the USSR, although such a shift would eventually take place as general relations between the United States and Soviet Union deteriorated in 1946-1947.

Initial U.S. Army collaboration with Gehlen came in a period of intelligence uncertainty. The dissolution of the OSS in accordance with President Truman’s executive order of 20 September 1945 deprived the U.S. Army of a key source of intelligence and, along with demobilization, depleted its G-2 and Counter Intelligence

³² Horst Boog, “The WRINGER Project: German Ex-POWs as Intelligence Sources on the Soviet Union,” in *Secret Intelligence in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Heike Bungert, Jan G. Heitmann, and Michael Wala (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2003), 83-91.

³³ NACP RG 319, Entry ZZ-6, Box 12, File D180216: Operation Apple Pie.

³⁴ Annie Jacobsen, *Operation Paperclip: The Secret American Program That Brought Nazi Scientists to America* (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 2014). Kerstin von Lingen, *Allen Dulles, the OSS, and Nazi War Criminals: The Dynamics of Selective Prosecution* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013). The most famous instance of this type of intervention was Allen Dulles’ influence in protecting notorious SS-figures (including those complicit in the deportation of Italian Jews) who had taken part in Operation Sunrise, the secret negotiation preceding the surrender of German forces in Northern Italy. This was done as both a reward for their cooperation and to keep the German-American talks secret from the Soviets.

³⁵ Mallett, 166.

Corps (CIC) of valuable personnel.³⁶ The Truman administration had mixed views about a centralized postwar American intelligence service, adding to the uncertainty.³⁷ Meanwhile, Allied intelligence's 1945 preoccupation (mistakenly, it turned out) with the possibility of extensive German partisan resistance, particularly in the "Alpine redoubt" of the American Occupation Zone, led to the attempted infiltration and penetration of any such potential resistance circles, particularly in and around Munich. As the OSS disbanded and the Army drastically curtailed its personnel in Europe, former German intelligence service functionaries were sought after as ideal informants on such (largely imaginary) resistance groups.

By 1947 the U.S. was seeking much more information on the Soviet Union, and former members of the German intelligence service already known to Army intelligence endeavored to fill that role. The newly formed Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) came to rely on these same networks by 1948.³⁸ Regardless of the actual permeability of the early "Iron Curtain," American patronage of previously established German networks was more expedient than endeavoring to construct entirely new American sources of intelligence in the Eastern Bloc, particularly after no such widespread penetrations of the Soviet Union had been attempted during the war. By definition, however, these German intelligence connections were most extensive amongst the remnants of Eastern European fascist or proto-fascist groups, including elements of the Arrow Cross, Iron Guard, Ustaše, Ukrainian ultra-nationalists, and the short-lived Russian "Vlasov Army."³⁹ Such

³⁶ Wegener, 44-46.

³⁷ Michael Warner, "The Creation of the Central Intelligence Group," *Studies in Intelligence* 39 (no. 5: 1996), 111-120.

³⁸ Ruffner, "Draft Working Paper, 1-10," Chapter 3, pg. 73-74.

³⁹ Richard Breitman and Norman J.W. Goda, *Hitler's Shadow: Nazi War Criminals, U.S. Intelligence, and the Cold War* (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 2010), 53-97. See, for

direct forays into these unreliable networks in occupied Germany and Austria often ended in frustration. Germans affiliated with the Nazi intelligence services sought to overcome the material deprivations and criminal prosecutions of *Stunde Null* through selling information to the Western Allies, much of it fabricated. When reflecting on this period years later, a CIA officer described the chaotic growth of “paper mills” that ensued when “it seemed that every down-at-heel veteran of the Abwehr, the Gestapo, RSHA Amt VI, and all the Fascist organizations of Central and Southern Europe was peddling fabricated information sources to national spy networks,” who “were elbowing and shoving each other to buy the stuff, like so many women in Macy’s basement on the day after Christmas.”⁴⁰ Gehlen’s Organization was but a single part of this broader intelligence-gathering initiative, but one deemed superior to the many fraudulent “paper mills” operating at the time.

Losing Control: From RUSTY to ZIPPER to *Bundesnachrichtendienst*

The Army’s increased appetite for reports resulted in a rapid expansion of Gehlen’s operation. In order to fulfill the exponential need for new personnel, the organization recruited haphazardly. As inducements, G-2 provided new recruits with money and other scarce goods, such as rations or auto transport, in addition to assistance

example, the files of GO/BND employee Dr. Fritz Arlt, who had as a member of RSHA VI had connections with both the Bandera OUN and Vlasov Army, and Gyorgy Kollenyi, former Hungarian military attaché and member of the Arrow Cross Party. NACP RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, Box 4, File “Arlt, Fritz” and Box 68, File “Kollenyi, Gyorgy.”

⁴⁰ Kevin Ruffner, “The Case of Otto Albrecht Alfred von Bolschwing: Prussian Nobleman, SS Officer, and CIA Agent,” *Studies in Intelligence* (1998), 61. The two most significant “peddlers” working for the United States at various points were Otto von Bolschwing and Wilhelm Höttl, both former SS-men. See *U.S. Intelligence and the Nazis*, 265-292; 347-354.

in avoiding established de-nazification procedures.⁴¹ Rapid expansion of Gehlen's organization, which included some 4,000 administrative personnel, agents, and informants by 1948, rendered close monitoring by the largely demobilized Army increasingly difficult. During the Army's control of the GO, no more than ten Americans worked over Gehlen at any one time, few of whom had prior intelligence experience.⁴² More importantly however, the Gehlen Organization had grown too expensive to maintain. In 1946 Gehlen's operations were already costing the Army \$42,367 in cash and over \$5,000 in material rations every month, which itself was only sufficient because of the GO's self-financing through black-market profiteering. As the occupation wore on and the new German currency brought economic stabilization and the relative depreciation of American dollars, that cost would only balloon. The Germans soon were requesting yearly allocations at \$2.5 million.⁴³ In the context of postwar demobilization and slashed appropriations, G-2 turned to civilian intelligence agencies to share the cost. A G-2 report to Director of Central Intelligence (CIG), Lt. General Hoyt Vandenberg in October 1946 stressed that RUSTY was "very reliable," "definitely reliable," and had both provided valuable intelligence on the Red Army and helped unmask Soviet agents in the U.S. zone.⁴⁴ Sibert himself stressed the importance of Gehlen's organization for American military intelligence, given the postwar elimination of the OSS and Gehlen's

⁴¹ Ruffner, "Draft Working Paper, 1-10," Chapter 9, pg. 10-12.

⁴² This small number of dedicated personnel also helps put the Gehlen Organization's true value to the U.S. in perspective, even in the crucial period of East-West tensions in Europe from 1947-1948. Wegener, 49-50.

⁴³ *U.S. Intelligence and the Nazis*, 385.

⁴⁴ "Operation RUSTY - Use of the Eastern Branch of the Former German Intelligence Service," 124-129.

extensive experience and head start in establishing a working alternative. He described RUSTY's work as "one of USFET's most prolific and dependable sources."⁴⁵

Even so, the Army faced much initial skepticism by the OSS's successor organizations, most notably the War Department's Strategic Services Unit (SSU, 1945-1946), and civilian Central Intelligence Group (CIG, 1946-1947), both institutional predecessors to the 1947 CIA. As early as January 1946, SSU warned the Army against its emerging reliance on FHO-derived intelligence, questioning the reliability and war records of German staff officers.⁴⁶ Internal CIG reports on G-2's October offer to split the cost of the Gehlen organization produced scathing assessments of RUSTY, noting "a practice of drawing broad conclusions from inadequate evidence and a strong tendency to editorialize."⁴⁷ Even in describing the "usefulness" of Gehlen's work so far, the CIG assessment was unsparing,

Following a somewhat protracted period of preparation, Operation Rusty commenced its actual intelligence gathering activities in April 1946 and to date has confined these almost entirely to the Russian-occupied zone of Germany. During this period its production, from between 500 to 600 "sources", has consisted of 400-odd comparatively low-level and entirely tactical reports, plus seven others which, by subject matter, can be classified as strategic. Other than in the field of unit identification, little new or particularly valuable information which cannot be produced through relatively easy and routine intelligence operations has thus far been obtained. The few strategic reports are, for the most part, broad interpretations of material which is generally available to the foreign press. There is no evidence whatsoever which indicates high-level penetration into any political or economic body in the Russian-occupied zone.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Ruffner, "Draft Working Paper, 1-10," Chapter 9, pg. 18.

⁴⁶ Ruffner, "Draft Working Paper, 1-10," Chapter 9, pg. 8.

⁴⁷ Draft to Deputy A, "Operation Rusty," 16 October 1946 in *Forging an Intelligence Partnership 1945-1949*, Vol. 1, Folder 2/3, pg. 159.

⁴⁸ Galloway to DCI, "Operation Rusty," 17 October 1946, enclosing Heidelberg Field Base to Chief, IB, "Agent Net Operating in the Bamberg Area," with attachment, 17 September 1946, in *Forging an Intelligence Partnership 1945-1949*, Vol. 1, Folder 2/3, pg. 159-66. *U.S. Intelligence and the Nazis*, 385-387.

In spite of these problems, in March 1947 Samuel Bossard recommended continuing the CIG's sponsorship of Gehlen, but stressed the need for more strict supervision of the group and expressed significant reservations about the consequences of working closely with "the most reactionary and nationalistic Germans who find their only way for a future Germany" lay in temporary collaboration with the United States.⁴⁹ Bossard's recommendation was overruled.

In December 1948, the CIA commissioned James Critchfield, a decorated U.S. Army Colonel and new recruit, to investigate the Gehlen Organization a final time. Unlike in previous reports, Critchfield did not raise personnel or penetration questions, blamed all the usual deficiencies of RUSTY on the Army, and wholeheartedly recommended the CIA adoption of Gehlen's agency.⁵⁰ Critchfield even included a section written by Gehlen himself (followed by a similar letter in January 1949) that rehashed the usual talking points about the vital importance of his organization for American interests in a hostile world irrevocably divided between civilization and barbarism and expressing confusion with the CIA's reticence in joining his struggle.⁵¹ Still, the Critchfield report expressed concern over the fact that Gehlen's operation had expanded far beyond its charter in that it was conducting significant penetration operations abroad and regularly infiltrating and monitoring "known communists"

⁴⁹ [Bossard] to [Galloway], in *Forging an Intelligence Partnership 1945-1949*, Vol. 1, Folder 3/3, pg. 340-351.

⁵⁰ *U.S. Intelligence and the Nazis*, 389.

⁵¹ Chief, MOB [Critchfield] to Chief, OSO, "Report of Investigation-RUSTY, With Annexes," *Forging an Intelligence Partnership 1945-1949*, Vol. 2, Folder 1/ 2 pg. 120-122. [Critchfield] to Chief, FBM, "Letter to General Hall, With Enclosures," 10 February 1949, *Forging an Intelligence Partnership 1945-1949*, Vol. 2, Folder 2/2, pg. 162.

domestically as well.⁵² Even so, the CIA accepted Critchfield's recommendation and arranged to take over the GO, now codenamed "ZIPPER," on July 1st 1949, with Critchfield himself serving as the organization's American liaison.

The deteriorating international situation ultimately drove the CIA to take on a supervisory role. At the time of the Army's initial requests for CIG cooperation in 1946-47, Western relations with the Soviet Union were worsening, but still relatively stable, and the CIG/CIA was reluctant to risk institutional capital on a flawed operation to spy on a wartime ally. After all, the American Joint Chiefs of Staff directive 1067 (JCS 1067), the cornerstone of American occupation policy that specifically called for the "total dissolution of all military and paramilitary organizations, including the General Staff," was not rescinded until July 1947, months after the advent of the Truman Doctrine and announcement of the Marshall Plan.⁵³ Critchfield's December 1948 report came in the aftermath of the Soviet coup in Czechoslovakia and the ongoing Berlin Blockade, wherein it was important to maintain awareness of the disposition and strength of Soviet troops on the German border and provide early warnings of a Soviet ground invasion of Western Europe. These considerations were informed by Gehlen's stellar performance in providing valuable signal intelligence to the Americans during the blockade, including detailed cryptanalysis of Soviet air traffic and providing targeting folders for American air operations should the Berlin crisis devolve into a shooting war.⁵⁴ The need for such an early warning operation only increased with the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950,

⁵² *U.S. Intelligence and the Nazis*, 389-390.

⁵³ Wegener, 53.

⁵⁴ Krieger 34-35. Wegener 54-57.

which many Western military leaders thought presaged a Soviet invasion of Western Europe.⁵⁵

There was, however, another motivating factor in the reports calling for the CIA to take control of RUSTY. The May 1947 Bossard Report noted that the GO had “become less a clandestine intelligence operation directed by American authorities than a potential resistance group supported and led by the U.S. government,” and concluded that the withdrawal of American support “could constitute a source of political embarrassment to the U.S. government and a security menace to American overt [and] covert activities in Germany.”⁵⁶ Even the otherwise warm Critchfield report remarked that the Americans were now dealing with a fully-fledged, independent German intelligence agency that could not be easily dismantled.⁵⁷ A February 1949 follow-up report on the pending CIA takeover, stressing the importance of maintaining a “dispassionate” administrative view of the GO in light of the “intelligent, purposeful, and strong willed” Germans, included the admonition that “They are going to be a monumental handful regardless of how things develop.”⁵⁸

The technical reports produced by the Gehlen Organization at the time, particularly concerning Soviet troop movements and unit identifications in the Eastern Zone, were impressive. One scholar has gone so far as to refer to the years 1945-1953 as a “golden age” of Western espionage against the Soviet Zone/East Germany due to the careful first-hand observations of Soviet military movements, but also the successful

⁵⁵ Krieger, 37.

⁵⁶ Emphasis in original. Bossard to DCI, “Operation RUSTY,” 29 May 1947, in *Forging an Intelligence Partnership 1945-1949*, Vol. 1, Folder 3/3, pg. 360-361, 401-402.

⁵⁷ “Report of Investigation-RUSTY, With Annexes,” pg. 52.

⁵⁸ Emphasis in original. Chief, FBM to COS, Karlsruhe, “Gehlen Organization,” 2 February 1949, in *Forging an Intelligence Partnership 1945-49*, Vol. 2, Folder 2/2, pg. 142.

cultivation of human intelligence resources in the East. Prominent informants included, among others, Helene Barczatis, the personal assistant of GDR Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl; Walter Gramsch, head of the traffic department in the East German *Deutsche Verwaltung für Handel und Versorgung* and close colleague of *Stasi* chief Ernst Wollweber; and Hermann Kastner, chairman of the GDR liberal-democratic party (LDPD) and onetime GDR Deputy Prime Minister.⁵⁹ Rampant defections to the East and the extensive communist penetration of the Gehlen Organization from its earliest years ultimately compromised them all.⁶⁰

Even Gehlen's supporters, such as G-2 Capt. Eric Waldman, conceded that early reports, while valuable from a tactical standpoint, often lacked broader importance. Waldman noted that in this early period, from 1945-1949 he could only recall a single "intelligence coup," a report that the Soviet Union would seek to include a discussion of China on the 1947 Council of Foreign Ministers Moscow Conference agenda, which, Waldman conceded, "was almost certainly [only] an educated guess."⁶¹ Other reports credited Adolf Heusinger, chief of Gehlen's evaluation group from 1947-1951, future member of the Ministry of Defence's "Blank Office" devoted to preparing for German rearmament from 1950-1955, and eventual Inspector General of the *Bundeswehr*, and not

⁵⁹ Throughout the formal existence of the Gehlen Organization, its most significant activities were directed against East Germany. By 1957, 40 percent of the 1,245 personnel at Pullach were occupied with East German matters; a similar proportion of the 6,750 Pullach BND employees in 1989 remained assigned to the GDR. Erich Schmidt-Eenboom, "The Rise and Fall of West German Intelligence Operations Against East Germany," in Thomas Wegener, Kristie Mackrakis and Helmut Müller-Enbergs, eds. *East German Foreign Intelligence: Myth Reality and Controversy* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 34-36.

⁶⁰ Ibid. Barczatis was uncovered by the *Stasi* in 1955 and executed in 1956. Kastner and Gramsch fled to the West.

⁶¹ "Debriefing of Erich Waldman on the U.S. Army's Trusteeship of the Gehlen Organization During the Years 1945-1949," 30 September 1969. *Forging an Intelligence Partnership 1945-1949*, Vol. 1, Folder 1/3. pg. 50.

Gehlen himself, for the consistent quality of early tactical reporting.⁶² Critchfield told Gehlen in 1950 that while his tactical collection and military evaluation work was up to par, ZIPPER was “considered definitely second class in any intelligence activity of a more difficult or sophisticated nature.”⁶³

Continued criticisms revolved around the lack of institutional control. The inadequately supervised GO consistently meddled in denazification procedures and local politics, causing repeated scandals in the American Zone. In perhaps the most notorious instance, Gehlen intervened on behalf of a certain Fritz Fischer, recruited by Gehlen in 1946 and purportedly ranking fourth in Gehlen’s hierarchy by 1948. A close friend of Gauleiter Adolf Wagner, Fischer served as the head of the Bavarian *Staatsoperette* under the Nazis, joining the Nazi Party in 1933 and the SA in 1938. During the war, he routinely denounced his fellow citizens to the Gestapo, but gained significant notoriety in the region for a rape accusation in 1940 that was not prosecuted only because of Wagner’s intimidation of the local courts. The entire controversy erupted anew when Fischer absconded from a local *Spruchkammer* tribunal in April 1948 under German (and American) protection, escaping yet again his justly deserved punishment. Acting on Gehlen’s behalf, U.S. Army Capt. Waldman approached the local denazification branch and announced that Fischer would not be returned to German custody, lest “the morale of the other key members of the organization [be] greatly injured and the prestige of American intelligence lowered in their eyes.” OMGUS was ultimately forced to

⁶² [Undated, Untitled, Biography of Heusinger]. NACP RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, Box 50, File “Heusinger, Adolf,” Folder 1/2.

⁶³ Ruffner, “Draft Working Paper, 1-10,” Chapter 9, pg. 34.

intervene and ensure Fischer's prosecution.⁶⁴ For the CIA, this episode served as both an example of Gehlen's lax judgment in personnel management and recruitment and G-2 officers' questionable deference to Gehlen.



An evening out: New York, 1951. From left to right: Heinz Herre, Mrs. Critchfield, John R. Boker Jr., James R. Critchfield, Mrs. Boker, Reinhard Gehlen.

http://www.bnd.bund.de/DE/Einblicke/Geschichte/Geschichte_Ueberblick/Timeline_node.html.

The CIA could not rein in Gehlen's extra-curricular political activities. As full West German sovereignty approached, Gehlen set about solidifying his position at head of a unified intelligence service. He maintained contact with extensive underground Nazi movements, including non-sanctioned right-wing shadow militias.⁶⁵ He used the overlapping connections of many Gehlen Organization personnel with the Theodore

⁶⁴ Chief, Munich Operations Base to Acting Chief of Station, Karlsruhe, "RUSTY," 7 July 1948. *Forging an Intelligence Partnership 1945-1949*, Vol. 2, Folder 1/2. pp. 12-13.

⁶⁵ This recent revelation is a product of the current historical commission investigation. Klaus Wiegrefe, "Files Uncovered, Nazi Veterans Created Illegal Armies," *Spiegel Online*, 14 May 2014. <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/wehrmacht-veterans-created-a-secret-army-in-west-germany-a-969015.html>

Blank Office to push the rearmament question. He cultivated a wide network of government bureaucrats and *Bundestag* deputies, distributing financial kickbacks and leaking to them information highlighting the extreme dangers posed by the Soviet Union and (illegal) compromising surveillance of opposition politicians, particularly in the SPD.⁶⁶ Gehlen's maneuvering was successful enough to ensure that, when West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer announced to the Allied High Commission intentions to establish a domestic intelligence service, the Office for the Protection of the German Constitution, Gehlen's name was at the top of the list. This occasioned a flurry of CIA correspondence on the inadvisability of such an appointment, noting that Gehlen was too powerful to be allowed such a post in addition to his present duties, and including the personality evaluation,

He is intensely and self-consciously "ideological" in his outlook. [Although he spends much time reading on various topics]...his lack of academic training deprives him of critical judgment, with the result that he is sometimes taken in by these warmed-over and carefully garnished variations of fascism, corporate democracy, and the like, so popular in Western Europe at this time.⁶⁷

Put off by Gehlen's reputation and methods, the British strongly recommended an alternative candidate for the post.⁶⁸ In any case, Gehlen's continued jockeying for position in a remilitarized West Germany, combined with his obstinacy and refusal to submit to CIA directives, seriously strained his working relationship with the CIA. In

⁶⁶ Krieger, 39. Chief of Station Karlsruhe to Chief, Foreign Division M, 11 January 1950. *Forging an Intelligence Partnership 1949-1956*, Vol. 1, Folder 3/3, pg. 331-334.

⁶⁷ Gordon N. Stewart to Benjamin Shute (Director of Intelligence, U.S. Army), "Reinhard Gehlen, 20 March 1950. *Forging an Intelligence Partnership 1949-1956*, Vol. 1, Folder 3/3, pg. 341

⁶⁸ *U.S. Intelligence and the Nazis*, 395.

1951 the CIA seriously considered his firing him, but ultimately decided in favor of mediation.⁶⁹

As the Gehlen Organization became more closely affiliated with the Adenauer regime (providing reports to Adenauer beginning in 1951 but still remaining under CIA financial support until its official legitimation in 1956), geography bolstered the already formidable trend towards inadequate oversight and supervision. Unlike the other agencies of the nascent Bonn government, the GO/BND remained headquartered at Pullach, some 570 km from Bonn. An American equivalence would result in the Central Intelligence Agency conducting its operations from suburban Cleveland, Ohio.⁷⁰ Due to both its distance and also its relationship with the CIA, Adenauer could not supervise Gehlen's activities to the same degree as he did the Foreign Office up to 1955, for example, where he overcame considerable continuities in personnel and ideas from the Nazi period through his repeated personal interventions in Foreign Ministry affairs.⁷¹ The end result was a highly insular foreign intelligence service irrevocably stamped by Gehlen's personal convictions and management style.

⁶⁹ Richard Helms to AD/SO, "German Leadership of ZIPPER," 27 March, 1951, *Forging an Intelligence Partnership 1949-1956*, Vol. 1, Folder 3/3, pg. 383-392.

⁷⁰ Even today, the BND had not yet made the move to either Bonn or Berlin, although a new central complex in Berlin is currently under construction. Hans-Henning Crome, "The 'Organization Gehlen' As Prehistory of the 'Bundesnachrichtendienst,'" *The Journal of Intelligence History* 7, no. 1: (June 2007), 34.

⁷¹ While Adenauer obviously could not have chosen to personally control the foreign intelligence service himself, the comparison is still apt because the proximity of other governmental agencies to Bonn (and somewhat non-governmental operations such as the Blank Office and other rearmament organizations) allowed for more rigorous supervision by both Adenauer and the Bundestag and a closer monitoring of the activities of former Nazi elements. Thomas W. Maulucci, Jr., *Adenauer's Foreign Office: West German Diplomacy in the Shadow of the Third Reich* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2012). For more general accounts of Adenauer's crucial role reintegrating Nazi elements into the new West German state, see Jeffrey Herf, *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1997) and Norbert Frei, *Adenauer's Germany and the Nazi Past: The Politics of Amnesty and Integration*, trans. Joel Golb (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

Intelligence in Practice: Political Assessments

The CIA reacted with skepticism to the GO's broader interpretations of the world situation, often written personally by Gehlen and delivered through intermediaries to CIA heads Walter Bedell Smith and Allen Dulles. Responding to a Gehlen report of March 1952 on expectations of Soviet behavior in the near future, for example, Smith thanked Gehlen for a "precise and well-written overall estimate" of the political situation that shared many parallels with CIA conclusions. Smith, however, noted that Gehlen "did not take the space to develop" his more sweeping assumptions. For example, Gehlen characterized the future of international relations as a "powder-keg" that could explode at any time, but failed to explain how the present moment was any different from past experiences where the Soviets had resisted embroiling themselves in general warfare with the West. Smith concluded his reply to Gehlen by expressing interest in further reports provided Gehlen revise his estimates or receive evidence that could bolster his conclusions.⁷²

Gehlen provided a more extensive report, *Thoughts on the World Situation*, for Allen Dulles in July 1953 that painted an even more pessimistic portrait of current events. Apparently occasioned by Stalin's death in March, Gehlen's sweeping overview of Soviet policy from 1945-1953 and the future directions it might take in light of the new Soviet leadership and the June uprisings in East Germany once again reflected his tendencies toward unsubstantiated generalizations. For Gehlen, the basis of the world situation from the war's end to Stalin's death was the triumph of the East over the West in terms of drive and exploitation of the "political initiative." Since the West was

⁷² Bedell Smith to Reinhard Gehlen, 9 May 1952. NACP CREST: CIA-RDP80R01731R000500270030-9.

repeatedly forced to react to Soviet provocations, it had not heretofore been able to set the political agenda and confront the East on its own terms; a united stand by all Western countries (as in the previous struggle against Fascism) backed by the threat of military force was the only way for the West to regain the political initiative. At the same time, the likelihood of the Western powers taking the correct “offensive” course had been weakened because “well camouflaged Soviet agents” who influenced events toward pro-Russian outcomes had penetrated all European governments and political parties. Indeed, “The Russian foreign policy is consequently in a perpetually successful advance in all parts of the world, with the exception of the interior of the United States, where a decline is recorded through the government's trials against the communist contamination.” Only the United States remained free, presumably through executive branch loyalty-reviews and purges, FBI vigilance, and McCarthy’s investigations.⁷³ Stalin’s death and the disorganization in the new Soviet ruling clique, as evidenced by the haphazard handling of East German political developments provided, in Gehlen’s view, an opportunity for the West to exploit Soviet weaknesses and reassert the initiative through a united, confrontational, stance. There were only two superpowers, and so sides had to be chosen. The United States was fated to lead the Western world, and all countries that claimed neutrality or advocated a separate path between the two powers were objectively favoring Russian interests. Even with the death of Stalin, Gehlen claimed, there was no coming to terms with the Soviet Union, because of the inherently aggressive nature of a totalitarian system, “There is a law which lies in the dynamics of this totalitarian (as in general in any

⁷³ Reinhard Gehlen, “Gedanken zur Weltlage,” 6 July 1953, pg. 1-2. NACP CREST: CIA-RDP80R01731R000500270025-5.

really totalitarian) System, that the policy must be expansive, if the system does not give up on itself and lay the roots of its own downfall.”⁷⁴

Surprisingly, the selfish and shortsighted policies of Great Britain were judged the primary obstacle to such a united Western line. Indeed, Gehlen claimed the

Britain is building its political conceptions in part on antiquated political ideas, overtaken by developments. Similar to before the 2nd World War against Hitler’s Germany, it sees in the Soviet system and its policies no decisive danger to the English Isles and the Commonwealth. In any case, its policy is heavily influenced by the thesis that war with the Soviet Union is not a threat for many years to come....the basis of British foreign policy until now was to make the attempt to try to recover positions in Europe and the world lost through and after the war, to force out the United States’ influence from European areas and others formerly influenced by England to the extent and in a form that is not traditional, putting at risk the friendship and cooperation between Great Britain and the United States. Only very recently the idea appears to have gained space to seek (at the expense of the United States, Germany, and the freedom of the European satellite states of Russia) an effective compromise with the Soviet Union [lasting into the future], in the hope of achieving an irreproachable settlement in the English interest on the Eastern Front and an opening or expansion respectively in trading opportunities for the entire Soviet Bloc and Red China, thereby in turn strengthening the economic power of the Commonwealth and suspending the incipient detachment process of non-white countries from the Commonwealth⁷⁵

If the Churchill government’s mistaken “Locarno-style” normalization of relations with the Soviet Union paved the way for a unified but neutral Germany in the heart of Europe, war would surely be the result.⁷⁶ Weakened U.S. influence in Europe due to British machinations caused France to go its own way in foreign policy as well, while the unclear European situation generated by a quarrelling Britain, France, and United States destabilized Italian foreign policy as well. West Germany was ready to serve as a model

⁷⁴ “Gedanken zur Weltlage,” pg. 3-4.

⁷⁵ “Gedanke zur Weltlage,” pg. 6.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 11.

European nation to the Eastern satellite states, but it too was in need of stronger U.S. leadership to aid it in creating a militarily defensible sovereign state in the face of British and French equivocation and widespread Soviet influence.⁷⁷

At the same time, the “white races” bungling of the “colonial question” after the war, most notably in Britain and France, had stoked anti-western sentiments in the undeveloped world and opened the door to rampant Soviet penetration of colonial freedom movements, particularly in the “Negro-societies” of Africa.⁷⁸ The situation in the Far East was no better. India was in peril of migrating to the communist sphere as well, while the “deft hand” of the Russians in Asia would result in close Chinese-Soviet cooperation in Indochina and Korea, endeavoring to draw the West into further “bloodletting” there.⁷⁹ Overall, Gehlen’s world-view assumed an intricate web of anti-American animus. Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union, and China were firmly aligned against the West, while the British were working alongside the Soviets to limit American influence in Europe. This and all substantial foreign policy disagreements among Western governments were themselves the byproduct of widespread Soviet penetration and political wire pulling.

Unsurprisingly perhaps, Gehlen’s report was met with only silence on the American side. After three months, the head of the CIA liaison group at Pullach reported in a message to the Frankfurt mission that Gehlen “has been somewhat put out that he has never had any reaction,” and suggested that in the interest of maintaining good working

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ “Gedanken zur Weltlage,” pg. 5.

⁷⁹ “Gedanken zur Weltlage,” pg. 9-10.

relations Gehlen should receive a message of thanks.⁸⁰ The Deputy Directory of CIA intelligence received a similar memorandum in November noting that “a personal letter over the signature of the Director containing an appreciative evaluation of the study,” would be “more than welcome” and perhaps go a long way in maintaining the smooth working relationship between Gehlen and the CIA.⁸¹ Dulles and the office of the Deputy Director duly produced a reply in mid-December, which went through at least two longer drafts, before settling on a brief, four-sentence final note to Gehlen on December 19, which thanked him for a “stimulating and helpful” study. Omitted from the final draft was an extensive reaction to the report. The CIA agreed with Gehlen on some of the broader points (that Russia was likely to continue to press for concessions in spite of the new leadership), but firmly rejected Gehlen’s anti-British and anti-Yugoslav views and reminded Gehlen that U.S. foreign policy recommendations stood outside the purview of the foreign intelligence field.⁸² Gehlen’s wide-ranging meditations were not nearly as important to his American partners as the actual unit identification data that the ZIPPER provided on the Red Army.

Gehlen’s missives continued well into the mid-1950s, reaffirming the need to take a “hard line” with the Soviet Union in foreign policy while guarding against the fifth columnists in social democratic political parties. Indeed, Gehlen’s obsession with ferreting out communist spies in the German government (although not in the BND itself)

⁸⁰ Chief of Base, Pullach to Chief of Mission, Frankfurt, “Utility’s Study Prepared at Request of [] for Aschham.” 8 October 1953. NACP RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, Box 38, File “Gehlen, Reinhard” Vol. 2 Folder 1/2.

⁸¹ Memorandum For Deputy Director (Intelligence), “General Reinhard Gehlen’s Letter Containing His Views on the World Situation,” 6 November 1953. NACP CREST: CIA-RDP80R01731R000500270023-7.

⁸² Dulles to Gehlen, “1st Draft.” NACP CREST: CIA-RDP80R01731R000500270022-8. Dulles to Gehlen, “2nd Draft.” NACP CREST: CIA-RDP80R01731R000500270021-9. Dulles to Gehlen, “ER4-8883.” NACP CREST: CIA-RDP80R01731R000500270019-2.

alienated former colleague Adolf Heusinger of the Blank Office by 1955, just as it transitioned into its new role as Ministry of Defense. According to CIA reports, Gehlen's absolute conviction (with some justification) that a *Rote-Kapelle* type Soviet spy network existed in Germany had led him to conduct a number of unauthorized and unfounded investigations into Heusinger's staff, confirming worries in Bonn that Gehlen was too comfortable meddling in domestic matters well outside his competence.⁸³ Gehlen's indirect influence on Blank Office rearmament policy was indeed considerable, as Heusinger and others credited Gehlen with projecting a climate of stringent anti-Bolshevism and furthering the wartime culture of political denunciation, equating questioning or disagreement with rearmament as communist-inspired malfeasance. Theodore Blank's predecessor as high advisor on Adenauer's rearmament and defense initiatives, Count Gerhard von Schwerin, had also reported similar misgivings about Gehlen's interference in domestic politics and the rearmament question.⁸⁴

Reacting negatively to Eisenhower's broad disarmament proposals at the July 1955 Geneva Summit, which Soviet Premier Bulganin had viewed most favorably, Gehlen complained to a CIA officer, "in the realm of international politics one should never tell a Russian that one will not shoot him," an editorial position that also appeared

⁸³ "Chief, Eastern European Division to Chief of Operations, "Gehlen's Relationship with Heusinger and Spiedel," 7 June 1955. NACP RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, Box 50, File "Heusinger, Adolf," Folder 2/2. While there was significant penetration of the West German government by East German agents, as we will see, Gehlen was often wrong in his accusations, focused more on discrediting political opponents than in uncovering actual East German or Soviet spies than in rooting them out, and uninterested in investigating his own organization with similar zeal. For the extent of Stasi penetration of West German government, see the memoirs of former head of Stasi foreign intelligence Markus Wolf. Markus Wolf and Anne McElvoy, *Man Without a Face: The Autobiography of Communism's Greatest Spymaster* (New York: PublicAffairs, 1997).

⁸⁴ Alaric Searle, *Wehrmacht Generals, West German Society, and the Debate on Rearmament, 1949-1959* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), 105-110.

in his official reports to the CIA and to Adenauer.⁸⁵ An early March 1956 conversation with CIA representatives found Gehlen extraordinarily pessimistic about the future of the West, perceiving socialist advances in Italy and France as but a first step in the odious resurgence of “Popular Front” governments in Western Europe. While he believed that the German population was “quite unsusceptible to communism,” Gehlen was convinced that communist penetration of West Germany, presumably in SPD circles, “assumes enormous proportions fully understood by no one.” Should such a center-left neutralist or anti-Adenauer government emerge that was “vulnerable to political penetration and eventual control by the East,” Gehlen would “feel morally justified in taking all possible action, including the establishment of an illegal apparatus in the Federal Republic, to oppose elements in Germany supporting a pro-Soviet policy.”⁸⁶ “Pro-Soviet” was, of course, a broad definition.

GO/BND reporting on Khrushchev’s February 25th “Secret Speech” at the 20th Party Congress of the Soviet Union and its turbulent aftermath, which spanned the GO’s April 1 transition from CIA to West German control, reflected similar tendencies toward drawing overly broad conclusions from discrete events. In February and March reports on the 20th Party Congress, the GO was able to convey the contents of Khrushchev’s message quite clearly, but provided little contextualization. There was no consideration of the fact that the “secret” nature of the speech (which Khrushchev in fact ordered copies printed and read to communist functionaries across the Soviet Bloc) may have reflected a genuine break with the more bellicose Stalinist diplomatic pronouncements in

⁸⁵ “Notes for Inclusion in ‘Letter from the Field’,” 5 August 1955. NACP RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, Box 38, File “Gehlen, Reinhard” Vol. 2 Folder 1/2. George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations Since 1776* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 670.

⁸⁶ Chief of Base, Pullach to Director, KUBARK (Attn: Robert A. Ascham), “13 March Conversation with Utility,” 15 March 1956. NACP RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, Box 38, File “Gehlen, Reinhard” Vol. 2 Folder 1/2.

addition to the repudiation of terror and violence, or that it was part of a longer-term process of Khrushchev's consolidation of power and support for his domestic reform agenda, in spite of the fact that the GO had followed the evolution of "collective leadership" in the Soviet Union closely since 1953.⁸⁷ Instead, focusing nearly exclusively on the foreign policy aspects of the speech, the German intelligence digests treated the Khrushchev's message (and other fairly routine pronouncements at the 20th Party Congress) as evidencing a radical break with the past in a different sense, highlighting the dangerous potential of the Khrushchev's line as a new weapon in communist foreign policy.

Already on February 22, the Gehlen Organization characterized the proceedings of the conference as more open-minded and realistic in its ideological pronouncements than in Stalin's time, and praised Khrushchev's "bid for political reason," excitedly reporting that "multiple paths of building socialism are possible!"⁸⁸ The attack on Stalin in the coming days, however, caused the GO to report that a monumental change may have taken place in Soviet ideological thinking, but not for the better. Khrushchev's rejection of Stalin's cult of personality and dictatorial methods and acknowledgement of divergent paths to socialism did not signify genuine reform efforts, but rather another cynical Soviet attempt to undermine Western security. Such rhetoric would naturally appeal to non-communist social democratic and trade unionist political parties in Western

⁸⁷ For an excellent contextualization of the Khrushchev's mixed motives for embarking on a program of de-Stalinization, the deliberations that informed the Secret Speech, and its unforeseen aftermath, see William Taubman, *Khrushchev: The Man and His Era* (New York: Norton, 2003), 270-99.

⁸⁸ Übersicht Nr. 8/56: 22.2.1956. BAK: B 206/862, 0063-0064. Already this contradicted the previous week's report of the usual Soviet provocations and "peaceful coexistence" propaganda. Übersicht Nr. 7/56: 14.2.1956. BAK: B 206/862, 0054-0057.

Europe, and other non-communist anticolonial movements around the world, providing a renewed platform for leftist unity. As the BND reported in early March 1956,

Not a word of these theses is spoken unintentionally. They appeal to the “friends of peace” throughout the world to urge against “the war interests of the capitalist monopolies” just as they call for the working classes around the world to induce the final overthrow of the capitalist system via an alliance with the communists and the left-wing socialists (“united action of the working classes”).

In other words: Khrushchev makes communism presentable as a supposedly peaceful world movement, not necessarily aiming for violent coups...⁸⁹

An intelligence assessment from later the same day continued to emphasize the ulterior motives behind Khrushchev’s announcement that multiple paths to socialism were possible

This ingratiating approach of Soviet communism directed to the Socialists, neutrals, and colonial peoples around the world will now be reinforced consistently by Soviet agitation and propaganda...Soviet propaganda in Paris is [already] maneuvering to that effect, that the toleration of “different roads to socialism” should clear the way for a reconciliation of all radical left-wing intellectuals in the world, and that Moscow has in mind a new Internationale which could unite all Marxists.”⁹⁰

Such unity implied electoral success, and perhaps the return of the dreaded “popular front” governments, or SPD resurgence in West Germany. The official recognition of multiple paths to socialism was thus a cynical ploy to “use the workers of the world to fight against the security policy of the West,” specifically West German rearmament.⁹¹

Political turmoil in France in the following weeks as news of the speech reached the Western European public only convinced the GO of their correct interpretation of events.⁹² Following this logic, the GO reports produced a narrative wherein the Soviets had arranged for both the secret plenary session and the later publication of Khrushchev’s

⁸⁹ Übersicht Nr. 9/56: 29.2.1956. BAK: B 206/862, 0076-0078. Übersicht Nr. 10/56: 7.3.1956. BAK: B 206/862, 0086.

⁹⁰ Übersicht Nr. 10/56: 7.3.1956. BAK: B 206/862, 0085.

⁹¹ Ibid, 0086.

⁹² Übersicht Nr. 11/56: 14.3.1956. BAK: B 206/862, 0092-0095.

speech for the ultimate purpose of inflaming Western workers, leftist intellectuals, and trade unionists to seize power through democratic means, ushering in a final death blow to world capitalism.

This broader narrative of Soviet duplicity contrasted sharply with the BND's reporting on events "on the ground" in Hungary and Poland as their respective reform-inspired uprisings reached their climax in October and November. Indeed, the BND's weekly account of the uprisings, which included careful analysis of the divisions in the Soviet leadership over how to respond, the different levels of cooperation the Soviet Union could expect from between Władysław Gomułka and Imre Nagy, and the higher likelihood of a Soviet military deployment in Hungary compare well with general historical accounts of the crises.⁹³ As usual, the careful consideration of Soviet troop movements in the Eastern Bloc, but especially in the GDR, were strengths in the reports. Such reports on the day-to-day nuances of the crises in Poland and Hungary and the shifting Soviet response did not dissuade the BND, however, from its previous assessment of the reform efforts as a cynical foreign policy ploy. Instead, the Soviet response to the unwelcome uprisings in Eastern Europe in 1956 merely confirmed the BND's conception of the 20th Party Congress program as one primarily meant to serve "an offensive role in the non-communist field of operations," since actual reform within the Eastern Bloc appeared so unwelcome.⁹⁴ In this case (and others) the BND's problematic consideration of Soviet statements and actions within the narrow confines of foreign policy alone caused it to draw questionable conclusions from correct intelligence

⁹³ Übersicht Nr. 42/56: 24.10.1956. BAK: B 206/863, 0169-0173, 0178-0179. Übersicht Nr. 43/56: 30.10.1956. BAK: B 206/863, 0184-0192. Übersicht Nr. 44/56: 24.10.1956. BAK: B 206/863, 0193-0198, 0202-0206. Kowalski 180-182, 191-193. Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (New York: Penguin, 2006) 311-318.

⁹⁴ Übersicht Nr. 42/56: 24.10.1956. BAK: B 206/863, 0169.

data, much as Gehlen's own assessments did. Yet the most significant liability of the GO/BND was not in the usual anti-communist biases in the intelligence reports, but in the structural composition of the organization itself.

Nazis and Communists: Embarrassments and Penetrations

The United States' early reliance on Gehlen and the rapid expansion of his intelligence organization in the first years of the Cold War rendered some continuity with the Nazi past inevitable. The extensive GO/BND Pullach compound just south of Munich was the former *Reichssiedlung Rudolph Hess*, an isolated complex originally intended as a model settlement for prominent Nazi officials and their staffs and families; Gehlen's office was Martin Bormann's old bedroom.⁹⁵ Of course the former *Fremde Heere Ost* files themselves, some 26,000 record cards describing Red Army units and their designations updated and used consistently into the 1960s, quite literally represented extensive continuity with wartime anti-Soviet operations.⁹⁶ Most problematic, however, for both contemporaries and historians alike were the personnel continuities from the wartime intelligence organizations, specifically from the SS and RSHA. Both during his tenure and in his retirement, Gehlen maintained that such elements represented only a small fraction of his employees. For example, in 1954 the CIA analyzed 600 "Zipperite" files and found only 76, or 13 percent, had some connection to SA, SS, SD, or NSDAP membership or links to war crimes investigations. These numbers were consistent with Gehlen's own reporting on the subject, which in December 1953 counted 51 of 1102

⁹⁵ Crome, 34. "Notes From Field Trip 19 November – 2 December 1963 – Gehlen and the BND," pg. 1. NACP RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, Box 38, File "Gehlen, Reinhard" Vol. 4, Folder 1/2.

⁹⁶ Armin Wagner, "BND Military Espionage in East Germany, 1946-1994," in *East German Foreign Intelligence*, pg. 221-222.

employees as having previous ties to the *Waffen* or *Allgemeine SS* or SD. This, according to Gehlen, represented a better record than other German governing bodies, most notably the *Bundestag* itself, where 26.5 percent of the deputies had ties to the Nazi Party.⁹⁷

Even so, the CIA, concerned with the possibility of American political embarrassment, identified a number of “egregious cases” that Gehlen should purge immediately.⁹⁸ First on the list was Arwed Flegel AKA Alfred Friedman, who had served in the SS since 1933. Flegel escaped from postwar confinement at Neuengamme in February 1946, where he circulated in various right-wing Nazi revivalist and extreme anti-Bolshevist circles until his re-arrest in September 1946 after forging discharge papers.⁹⁹ Also listed was Willy Heinrich Friede, who joined the Nazi Party in 1930 and served in the SA and as a deputy Gauleiter and Inspector General of the Hitler Youth in Western Germany. One of Gehlen’s top men in Rome, Friede never de-nazified, and “did not desire to.” He was also a Soviet double agent, reportedly turned because of his past.¹⁰⁰ The most “egregious case” that the CIA recommended for expulsion, however, was Konrad Fiebig AKA Konrad Fiedler, Fischer, and Funke, who had served as a criminal commissar in the Breslau Gestapo. CIC had already recommended Fiebig’s arrest in 1946 for his involvement with SS *Sondergericht* judiciary murders. He remained employed by Gehlen until 1962, however, when he was investigated and

⁹⁷ EE/FI to COPS, “ZIPPER/Nazi Elements” 20 January 1954. NACP RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, Box 38, File “Gehlen, Reinhard” Vol. 2, Folder 1/2. “Former Nazis and SS Membership in ZIPPER,” 1954 in *Forging an Intelligence Partnership: CIA and the Origins of the BND, 1949-1956* Vol. 2, Folder 1/2, pg. 494-497.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 497-499.

⁹⁹ NACP RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, Box 36, File “Flegel, Arwed.”

¹⁰⁰ NACP RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, Box 37, File “Friede, Willy Heinrich.”

indicted for the murder of some 11,000 Jews in his capacity as a member of *Einsatzkommando 9* in Belorussia.¹⁰¹

These few examples were only symptoms of a larger problem. The “Eastern experts” of the former SS and SD had often participated in war crimes, due to the very conception and functions of RSHA intelligence operations during the war. A CIA report of November 1948 alarmingly reported the discovery that Gehlen had assembled an extensive group of Soviet “experts” at an estate on the Starnberger See outside of Pullach, all of whom had served in Alfred Rosenberg’s *Ostministerium* and accumulated “probable strong Nazi records.”¹⁰² From 1947-1950, the Gehlen Organization employed Otto von Bolschwing, a notorious intelligence peddler who had served as an SD agent in the Middle East, reporting on the activities of freemasons and Jews in the mid-1930s before working with Eichmann to expropriate Jewish property in post-*Anschluss* Austria. From 1940-41 he served as Himmler’s SD representative to the German Embassy in Bucharest, where he cultivated contacts in the Iron Guard. Bolschwing lent support to the Iron Guard uprising of January 1941 and its accompanying pogrom, sheltered wanted Guardists in the German Embassy in the aftermath and aided in their escape to Germany. He spent the remainder of the war personally profiting from the expropriation of Jewish assets.¹⁰³

As Richard Breitman and others have indicated in their careful investigations of the CIA files of Gehlen Organization personnel, the list goes on. Walter Kurreck served in the genocidal Einsatzgruppe D and Operation Zeppelin. Alexander Doloezalek, a

¹⁰¹ NACP RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, Box 36, File “Fiebig, Konrad.”

¹⁰² [] to COS, Karlsruhe, “RUSTY,” 18 November 1948. *Forging an Intelligence Partnership 1945-1949*, Vol. 2, Folder 1/2. pp. 31.

¹⁰³ *U.S. Intelligence and the Nazis*, 343-346. “The Case of Otto Albrecht Alfred von Bolschwing,” 62-63.

trusted BND employee into the 1960s, worked in the SS Race and Settlement Office during the war; his unit organized and recycled the clothing and property of Jews deported to the death camps.¹⁰⁴ Former SS officer Erich Deppner served as the commandant of the Westerbork concentration camp in 1942 and facilitated the deportation of Dutch Jewry to the extermination camps. He also personally oversaw the execution of a number of Soviet POWs interned in the Netherlands and participated in anti-resistance reprisal murders. Employed by Gehlen since at least 1952, Deppner commanded *Dienststelle* 12, tasked with infiltrating East Germany from Berlin, until his arrest and prosecution for war crimes in 1960. After the trial, Gehlen permitted Deppner to continue working from home until 1966 in order to avoid negative publicity.¹⁰⁵ Dr. Emil Augsburg formerly assisted in directing the RSHA-sponsored Wannsee Institute, a policy planning think-tank that provided (implicitly murderous) secret reports and recommendations to Himmler and other Party officials on Soviet population and resettlement questions. He was also deployed for “special duties” in the East. Augsburg worked for the BND until 1966, in spite of his well-known Nazi past and presence on Polish war crimes lists.¹⁰⁶ The notorious former RSHA VII (ideological research) boss and *Einsatzkommando* officer Dr. Franz Alfred Six also found postwar employment with Gehlen, in spite of the 20-year sentence he received at the Nuremberg *Einsatzgruppen*

¹⁰⁴ *U.S. Intelligence and the Nazis*, 383.

¹⁰⁵ NACP RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, Box 23, File “Deppner, Erich.” A.P. Report, “Bavarians Grab Slayer Suspect,” July 5, 1960. *U.S. Intelligence and the Nazis*, 383. Michael Wildt, *An Uncompromising Generation: The Nazi Leadership of the Reich Security Main Office*, trans. Tom Lampert (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010), 254.

¹⁰⁶ Augsburg worked for U.S. CIC prior to his GO/BND employment, so his past was well known to American officials as well. “Historical Analysis of 20 Name Files.” Also NACP RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, Box 5, File “Augsburg, Emil.”

trial for his murderous activities in the East.¹⁰⁷ At an April 1944 gathering of Foreign Office consultants on the Jewish question at Krumhubel, Six approvingly reported that the “physical elimination of Eastern European Jewry would deprive Jewry of its biological reserves,” and urged that the Jewish question “be solved not only in Germany but also internationally.”¹⁰⁸ Finally, Walter Rauff was recruited by the BND in 1958 from his ratline exile in Latin America, where he was tasked with gathering intelligence on Castro’s Cuba. During the war Rauff had designed and tested gassing vans in 1941-42, and from 1942-43 commanded an *Einsatzgruppen* unit in North Africa. Originally formed for the purpose of cleansing Egypt and Palestine of Jews, Rauff’s unit was instead deployed to cleanse Tunisia of its 85,000 Jews after the German defeat at El Alamein. Once again, the rapid advance of the Allies prevented mass murder in Tunisia as well, but Rauff still had time to implement a five-month reign of terror, forced labor, and plunder of the Tunisian Jewish population.¹⁰⁹

Yet the type of anti-Soviet/anti-communist worldview reflected in Gehlen’s private missives and urgings, and, to a somewhat lesser extent, in the reporting of the BND itself owed more to the longstanding prejudices of the German military classes than to a specifically “Nazi” conception of anti-Bolshevism. Gehlen’s BND, for instance, spent much effort from the late 1950s on cultivating a mutually beneficial, albeit uneasy, working relationship with Mossad (the Israeli national intelligence service), exchanging

¹⁰⁷ He also reportedly worked from home to avoid publicity. NACP RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, Box 121, File “Six, Franz Alfred.” Richard Breitman, “Historical Analysis of 20 Name Files from CIA Records,” <http://www.archives.gov/iwg/declassified-records/rg-263-cia-records/historical-analysis-by-breitman.pdf>

¹⁰⁸ Capt. Michael A. Musmanno, USNR, Presiding Judge, John G. Speight, Judge, and Richard D. Dixon, Judge, “Opinion and Judgement of the Tribunal,” 3 April 1948, pg. 150-51. NACP RG 238, M-895 (United States of America vs. Otto Ohlendorf et. al.), Roll 35.

¹⁰⁹ Klaus-Michael Mallman and Martin Cüppers, *Nazi Palestine: The Plans for the Extermination of the Jews in Palestine* (New York: Enigma Books, 2010), 170-74; 204-206. In this instance, the BND knew exactly who they were dealing with. <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/ss-colonel-walter-rauff-west-german-intelligence-protected-fugitive-nazi-a-788348.html>.

information and contacts in Africa, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe.¹¹⁰ Of more importance was the uncompromising and single-minded nature of Gehlen's anti-Soviet worldview, which informed his hiring decisions and management style, most importantly in the matter of employing anti-Soviet intelligence experts from the Nazi regime in an effort to leave no resource untapped in the fight against the all-powerful and ever-watchful communist foe. Although Gehlen's employment of a significant number of former SS and RSHA officers with odious pasts well into the 1960s inspired and continues to inspire outrage, the most significant consequences of this lax personnel policy for the GO/BND was the marked susceptibility of such groups to Soviet overtures and penetrations. Double agents and defectors undermined both the operational effectiveness and standing of the BND in the Federal Republic while providing ample ammunition for hostile GDR propaganda.

As early as January 1947, Gehlen's group reported to G-2 the varied and extensive methods undertaken by the Soviets to blackmail, recruit, or otherwise extract artists, scientists, technicians, and military officers with specialized knowledge or high propaganda value. A favorite method involved preying upon individuals with Nazi pasts, who were either barred from employment in the West because of denazification

¹¹⁰ Such intelligence cooperation proceeded separately from West Germany's political and military engagement with Israel, and is best generalized by a wary and suspicious partnership of mutual benefit that, as a new cohort of West German officers filled out the BND leadership in the 1960s, evolved into a full-fledged partnership. Many Mossad members, themselves Holocaust survivors or close relatives of survivors and victims, had misgivings (to say the least) about working closely with the BND, particularly given Gehlen's well-known tendency to employ former Nazis. Ironically, however, Gehlen's Nazi contacts proved the most valuable commodity the BND could offer Mossad, as many former Nazis had escaped to the Middle East and North African after 1945, and could provide valuable information to Mossad via their former colleagues in the BND. Likewise, particularly after the Felfe scandal, Mossad's Eastern European sources proved invaluable to a shattered BND (see below). From Gehlen's point of view, cooperation with Mossad also served to further distance the BND from its dependence on French, British, and American sources as it transitioned from an American satellite service into the independent intelligence service of West Germany. Shlomo Shpiro, "Shadowy Interests: West German-Israeli Intelligence and Military Cooperation, 1957-1982," in Clive Jones and Tore T. Petersen, eds. *Israel's Clandestine Diplomacies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 169-76.

proceedings or frightened of exposure.¹¹¹ These ex-Nazi groups were even more vulnerable to penetration, because SS and SD intelligence personnel maintained associations with one another in the postwar period and Soviet “spotters” were widespread in prison camps and inter-Allied war crimes commissions. In this sense, as a later CIA report lamented, the future West German intelligence and security services were penetrated even before they were created.¹¹² Yet Gehlen generally avoided taking even the most rudimentary precautions until the 1960s, when much damage had already been done (see below). The CIA was unable to aid in vetting the Organization’s staff because Gehlen often refused to reveal the true names of his personnel. CIA efforts to convince Gehlen to incorporate polygraph screenings also proved futile.¹¹³ On multiple occasions, the U.S. Army CIC’s reporting on the Gehlen Organization noted instances of Gehlen appointing new employees to sensitive intelligence positions without conducting a background check.¹¹⁴ Once employed, personnel files were not centralized at Pullach or systematically examined by administrators, but rather kept at whatever *Dienststelle* had hired the agent, as a precaution against a future Soviet invasion of West Germany and occupation of Pullach.¹¹⁵

More alarming from a security standpoint, however, was the development of “cliques” within the Organization and BND, pitting the former General Staff and *Abwehr* officers against compartmentalized groups of former SD personnel who were

¹¹¹ “Counterintelligence Report 176: Operation RUSTY,” 14 February 1947. NACP RG 319: Entry 134-A, Box 143A, File – “Operation RUSTY ZF010807W” Vol. 2, Folder 3/3.

¹¹² “KGB Exploitation of Heinz Felfe: Successful KGB Penetration of a Western Intelligence Service,” pg. 20-21 NACP RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, Box 35, File “KGB Exploitation of Heinz Felfe,” Folder 1/2.

¹¹³ *CIA and the Origins of the BND, 1949-1956 Vol. 1*, xiv.

¹¹⁴ Region III, 66th CIC Group, APO 787, US Army Summary of Information, “Gehlen Organization,” 13 July 1955. NACP RG 319: Entry 134-A, Box 140A, File – “Gehlen Organization ZF015120WJ” Vol. 1, Folder 2/4.

¹¹⁵ *U.S. Intelligence and the Nazis*, 383-84.

increasingly resentful of what they viewed as the former's presumptuousness and arrogance. A U.S. Army report on the Gehlen Organization in April 1955 noted a "difficult" personnel situation wherein "The authoritative positions within the organization have been taken over by old-time former Genral Staff people...who because of a traditional class consciousness, are presumptuous and frequently arrogant and insulting to the non-General Staff people."¹¹⁶ These former SS and SD officers were most prominently represented in the regional and central counter espionage offices (*General Verwaltung "L"* or GV-L), presumably because of their policing backgrounds. As a result, according to the internal CIA post-mortem of the Felfe affair

[GV-L] was especially vulnerable because it was heavily staffed by former SS and SD personnel who in order to maintain their jobs were obliged at least proforma to conceal their background, and who still suffered to some extent from old social and professional caste rivalries which kept the former Abwehr and FHO officers in ascendancy. In reaction to this situation there had generally developed in GV "L" a sort of mutual aid society of ex-SS and SD personnel for self-protection and professional advancement. This group was particularly susceptible both to simple blackmail and to the somewhat more complicated approach of revenge or vindication.¹¹⁷

In addition to the aforementioned Willy Friede, many other former SD and SS elements in the Gehlen Organization were highly susceptible to Soviet or East German blackmail and recruitment. The defections of Wolfgang Paul Höher (head of the West Berlin GV-L office) and Hans Joachim Geyer (a handler of East Berlin agents) in 1953, both with Nazi pasts, were particularly damaging, compromising hundreds of

¹¹⁶ Region III, 66th CIC Group, APO 787, US Army Summary of Information, "Gehlen Organization," 26 April 1955. NACP RG 319: Entry 134-A, Box 140A, File – "Gehlen Organization ZF01512OWJ" Vol. 1, Folder 2/4.

¹¹⁷ "KGB exploitation of Heinz Felfe," 20-21.

operatives.¹¹⁸ Equally important for East German successes in unmasking Gehlen's informants in 1953 was the reporting of Ludwig Albert, wartime head of a *Geheime Feldpolizei* unit, referred to by Gehlen as one of Germany's most able criminologists. Head of the GV-L desk in Frankfurt from 1950-53 and longtime MfS/SfS informer, Albert was uncovered only in 1955 when a search of his apartment revealed expensive Persian rugs and caches of microfilming equipment.¹¹⁹

Such problems persisted well into the 1950s and 1960s, even after Gehlen claimed to have reorganized and investigated the counter-espionage units in light of the 1953 defections. Bruno Klaus, a former Gestapo officer and RSHA VI Bulgarian expert, was dropped in 1957 because of suspected Soviet loyalties.¹²⁰ Emil Augsburg also faced suspicions of working for the Soviets at the time of his dismissal in 1966. More unwitting "moles" included the hapless Franz Göring, former assistant to Walter Schellenberg, who went out drinking with an old comrade in 1959, passed out, and awoke to find the BND files he kept at home missing, and a note from his drinking partner inviting Göring to defect.¹²¹ Others, such as former SS regiment leader and *Geheime Feldpolizei* officer Wilhelm Krichbaum, who headed the GO/BND office at Bad Reichenhall after 1951,

¹¹⁸ *U.S. Intelligence and the Nazis*, 400-401. Schmidt-Eenboom, 39. These revelations also fueled the East German and Soviet propaganda narrative that Gehlen's group and other unsavory Western elements instigated the 1953 June uprisings. See, for example, U.P. Report, "Reds Uncover East German Underground: Vast Organization Plotted Uprising, Communists Say," *The Los Angeles Times*, 1 November 1953.

¹¹⁹ He committed suicide while in custody awaiting interrogation. Ironically, his simultaneous employment by the American CIC as a mole on the Gehlen Organization provided some cover for his East German work. "Biography of Ludwig Albert;" and "Memorandum for the Record: Ludwig Albert," 17 August 1976. NACP RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, Box 1, File "Albert, Ludwig." See also Norman J.W. Goda, "The Gehlen Organization and the Heinz Felfe Case: The SD, the KGB, and West German Counterintelligence," in *A Nazi Past: Recasting German Identity in Postwar Europe* ed. David A. Messenger and Katrin Paehler (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2015), 283-84.

¹²⁰ NACP RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, Box 66, File "Klaus, Bruno."

¹²¹ "Historical Analysis of 20 Name Files."

were only posthumously exposed as Soviet agents.¹²² Of course, there were other defectors to the Eastern Zone or moles that were not members of the GO/BND, and not all of these defectors had Nazi pasts. The bizarre case of staunchly anti-Nazi and non-communist Federal Office for the Protection of the German Constitution (BfV) head Dr. Otto John absconding to East Berlin in 1954 clearly demonstrated this.¹²³ GO/BND employees with extensive Nazi pasts, however, regardless of how effective they were at hiding them, were certainly overrepresented in penetration and defection cases.

The extensive penetration of GV-L by the Soviet spies in the Heinz Felfe circle, which constituted perhaps the most serious breach of BND security in its history, is most illustrative. Born in 1918 in Dresden, Felfe showed aptitude for his future police career as early as age 13, where he served as a volunteer in a German border guard unit. Felfe joined the SS in 1938, the *Kriminalpolizei* soon after, and by 1943 was serving in the

¹²² Ibid. Schmidt-Einboom, 39.

¹²³ John had been a staunch anti-Nazi both before and during the war years, ultimately joining the *Abwehr* and operating in the Oster resistance circles as a liaison to the Allied governments and militaries. He claimed involvement in the July 1944 uprising, although records show he was in Spain at the time, where he stayed for the duration of the war. After the war, he parlayed his wartime contacts into work with the British, aiding the Allied prosecutions of former German generals, including the Manstein trial, for which he earned a negative reputation in ex-military and nationalistic circles. He ultimately was sponsored by the British to head the new BfV in 1950 after a number of other candidates withdrew, although he proved to be a poor administrator. He was evidently disturbed by the maneuverings of the Adenauer government to rearm, and the resurgence of former “militarists” such as Gehlen and other *Wehrmacht* elements that had played no role in the resistance, particularly Gehlen’s maneuverings to discredit John in hopes of bringing BfV operations under his own control in a unified German intelligence service. The pressures of his office, combined with his idealism, drinking problems, and an emotional breakdown led him to defect to East Germany shortly after the 10-year commemoration of the July 20th Plot in Berlin. Although he gave a sensational press conference, where he appeared to mouth East German propaganda points about militarism and Nazism resurgent in the Federal Republic, his convictions appear to have been genuine. After growing disillusioned with the East German regime’s unification propaganda, he re-defected to the West in December 1955, where he bizarrely explained away his first defection as resulting from being drugged, abducted, and brainwashed. He was duly prosecuted for treason and served four years in prison. It is difficult to assess the damage John caused to West German security interests. Contemporary newspaper accounts reproduced East German propaganda claims that John compromised hundreds of agents, but John maintained that he had not divulged any specific names. There are indications that the John defection merely served as a pretext for rounding up members of the domestic opposition, implicating them in Western espionage activities merely for propaganda purposes. Delmege Trimble, “The Defections of Dr. John,” CIA Center for the Study of Intelligence, Declassified 2007. Accessed 07-07-14. https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/kent-csi/vol4no4/html/v04i4a01p_0001.htm

RSHA VI Switzerland and Holland desks, ending the war in British captivity after service in a *Waffen* SS unit. In 1946, the British recruited Felfe, an intelligent, cold, and “natural spy,” to infiltrate and report on KPD student groups in the Bonn area, wherein he was frequently allowed to attend mass student rallies and convocations in the Soviet Zone, and to visit his mother in Dresden. The British ultimately dismissed him in April 1950 for “personal security reasons,” which included trying to sell information to both East and West German elements and for refusing to inform on other former members of the SS/SD.¹²⁴ Felfe joined the Gehlen Organization in 1951, however, and quickly rose to oversee all GV-L operations in West Germany, a position he maintained until his arrest in 1961.

Felfe was actually a part of a larger spy-ring, comprised of other former RSHA personnel with Dresden contacts. In addition to the aforementioned Willy Kirchbaum and Felfe, the group included Erwin Tiebel, a former SD and RSHA VI man from Dresden who was on war criminal lists for performing executions in conjunction with his wartime policing duties, and Hans Clemens, also from Dresden and a former RSHA VI officer in Italy who had participated in reprisal murders there.¹²⁵ Their previous contacts with one another and continued association after 1945 were crucial factors in their recruitment to the Soviets, who apparently turned Clemens’ wife in Dresden sometime between 1946 and 1948, then Clemens and Kirchbaum, who in turn recruited Felfe in 1951, who went on to recruit others. In their various interrogations in the early 1960s, these men still identified as anti-Soviet, but offered a number of explanations for why they operated

¹²⁴ The British evidently did not provide this information to the BND until 1961, or the CIA until 1962. “KGB Exploitation of Heinz Felfe,” 21-24.

¹²⁵ “KGB exploitation of Heinz Felfe,” 25-26. Clemens was turned over to the Italians by the Allied Occupation authorities and stood trial for the murders in 1948; he invoked the “legal order” defense and was acquitted.

against the West, including both personal animus and past membership in criminal organizations or activities. According to the CIA report on Felfe and his accomplices, Clemens, who was introduced to the Russian “Col. Max” by his wife on a visit to Dresden in 1950, recounted that at their initial meeting in Dresden

Col. Max debriefed Clemens on his life history and present contacts, lectured him on his culpability as an SD criminal, probed his feelings of confusion and resentment, listened constructively while Clemens delivered himself of a long pent-up statement of his hatred for the Americans. (They had been twice the cause of German defeat, etc., had smashed his home town and caused the death of at least five of his relatives). Max at this point took Clemens on a tour of bombed-out Dresden and, at the tide of Clemens’ emotional reaction, offered him an opportunity of revenge against the Americans.¹²⁶

If Felfe’s own interrogations are to be trusted, Col. Max took a similar tack with him as well, following his introduction to Felfe via Clemens’ wife

[Upon Felfe’s second visit to Col. Max] Max went more deeply into questions of motivation and access. He took Felfe on the tour of Dresden and discussed at some length the need for Soviet-West German understanding. He stressed the theme of criminality of SS membership and the fact that Felfe would need Soviet protection to keep his new job and to keep his record hidden.¹²⁷

Indeed, U.S. Army CIC reported as early as October 1954 some Gehlen Organization personnel were growing increasingly suspicious of Felfe, both due to his inquisitive and erratic behavior within the Organization and because of his prominent position as head of an SD “clique,” although they did not share this information with the CIA.¹²⁸ Ultimately, however, the continued existence of the Felfe ring into 1961 was a product of Gehlen’s

¹²⁶ Ibid, 20-21. *US Intelligence and the Nazis*, 405.

¹²⁷ “KGB exploitation of Heinz Felfe,” 22-23. It is possible, as the CIA report notes, that Felfe was in fact recruited by the Soviets much earlier and thus altered the times and dates of his conversations with “Col. Max,” but the report does not question the motivations for why Felfe collaborated with Russian intelligence.

¹²⁸ Region III, 66th CIC Group, APO 787, US Army Summary of Information, “Gehlen Organization,” 29 October 1954. NACP RG 319: Entry 134-A, Box 140A, File – “Gehlen Organization ZF01512OWJ” Vol. 1, Folder 3/4.

unwillingness to thoroughly investigate the background and activities of his own employees. Reporting on the Felfe breach in 1977, the CIA lamented, “There are many ways by which Felfe might have been unmasked earlier than he was. Even a thorough name check might have done the trick.”¹²⁹

The damage caused by Felfe’s spy ring was staggering. According to an internal CIA report, Felfe’s influence within GV-L, long tenure, and wide-ranging access to BND administrative records compromised all BND counter-espionage operations, all BND headquarters personnel and a significant number of field officers, 100 CIA staffers, over 65 operations, and 15,000 individual documentary items. It lessened the CIA’s confidence in future liaison relationships with the BND. Public ridicule and loss of confidence in the BND in West Germany itself and subsequent domestic political turmoil only added to American perceptions that the BND had suffered “damage of the broadest scope.”¹³⁰

Worse, the Felfe scandal coincided with Adenauer’s suspicions that the BND had compromised the government’s preparations to seize incriminating evidence in the *Spiegel* affair, and proved quite damaging to Gehlen’s influence in Bonn.¹³¹ George C.

¹²⁹ “KGB exploitation of Heinz Felfe,” 3.

¹³⁰ Memorandum for Deputy Director (Plans) via Assistant Deputy Director (plans),” Heinz Felfe Damage Assessment,” 7 February 1963, pg. 1-2. NACP RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, Box 34, File ‘Felfe, Heinz: Damage Assessment Report.’”

¹³¹ The BND’s exact role in the *Spiegel* controversy remains unclear. Before his departure as Minister of Defense in December 1962, Franz Josef Strauss apparently convinced Adenauer that *Spiegel* had been informed of the upcoming investigation by a BND official, a Col. Adolf Wicht, and had thus destroyed incriminating evidence prior to the offices’ occupation by state investigators. From the available evidence, it seems that Gehlen was personally blamed for yet another security breach. See Hans-Peter Schwarz, *Konrad Adenauer: German Politician and Statesman in a Period of War, Revolution, and Reconstruction, Volume 2: The Statesman, 1952-1967*, trans. Geoffrey Penny (Berghan Books, 1997), 639-640. *Der Spiegel* itself did not indicate any forewarning from the BND or any other government agency in its 50-year retrospective on the affair. Christoph Gunkel, “50 Jahre SPIEGEL-Affäre Jagd auf ‘Libelle’,” <http://www.spiegel.de/einestages/50-jahre-spiegel-affaere-jagd-auf-rudolf-augstein-a-947722.html> but did suggest more extensive BND involvement than previously acknowledged in Georg von Bönisch, Gunter Latsch, and Klaus Wiegriefe, “Unrühmliche Roll,” *Der Spiegel*, 17 September 2012,

McGhee, the U.S. Ambassador to West Germany, reported to Dulles in July 1963 that an unpleasant meeting with Adenauer had found the 87 year-old Chancellor increasingly annoyed, referring repeatedly (albeit somewhat disingenuously given Adenauer's previous support of Gehlen) to Gehlen's "stupidity and incompetence" and claiming that it was only Gehlen's political connections and the support of Allen Dulles and the CIA that had led Adenauer "to put up with him for all these years."¹³² A further meeting between Adenauer and McGhee in August, where the Ambassador stressed the CIA's defense of Gehlen's character, resulted in Adenauer's reply that "he had never doubted [Gehlen's] integrity but entertained certain doubts about his intelligence, which seemed born out by the Felfe case." Summarizing Adenauer's position for Dulles, the Ambassador continued

He said he was fully aware that at the outset most German agencies had been forced by circumstances to call upon former Nazis to get started, and that this had been done with his approval. It had been his policy, however, and his expectation that such individuals would be dispensed with as soon as soon as they could be replaced. In the Felfe case a dubious character had been kept on for ten years and had been given insight into matters outside his proper competence.¹³³

As a result, Adenauer was left with great doubts about Gehlen's capabilities, and also those of the BND more generally. Although he would not remove Gehlen at the present moment, Gehlen's stock in Bonn was "low." The international media openly speculated that Gehlen would be fired or "retired" in short order.¹³⁴

<http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-88656052.html>

¹³² Bonn to Director, "Classified Message," 12 July 1963. NACP RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, Box 39, File "Gehlen, Reinhard" Vol. 3 Folder 2/2.

¹³³ Bonn to Director, 13 August 1963. NACP RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, Box 39, File "Gehlen, Reinhard" Vol. 3 Folder 2/2.

¹³⁴ Ibid. See, for example, Arthur Olsen, "Retirement Seen for Top Bonn Spy: Gehlen Seen Compromised by Soviet Penetration," *The New York Times*, 14 July 1963, pg. 5; Drew Middleton, "Mistrust Plagues Allied Espionage: Soviet Infiltration Causing Suspicion Among Services," *The New York Times*, 21 July

Even Gehlen recognized the permanence of the damage done to his reputation by the *Spiegel* Affair and the revelatory exposures of communist penetrations in the BND. CIA reports from 1964 and 1965 found Gehlen shut out of government circles and increasingly isolated in Pullach; Chancellor Erhard did not solicit his opinion on the Soviets or general foreign developments as Adenauer once had, and would likely fire him after the next election.¹³⁵ Within the BND, Gehlen's somewhat disgruntled colleagues described him as "burned out" and incapable of fulfilling his administrative duties, obsessing over minor decisions and refusing to delegate, allowing the organization to flounder. Gehlen also reportedly developed anti-American attitudes, and was convinced that CIA cliques had conspired with unfriendly elements in Bonn to bring about Adenauer's displeasure and Gehlen's increasing isolation. Should his past service to Germany and remaining political connections prevent his removal as head of the BND, the younger professionals in the BND were eagerly awaiting the date of his upcoming federally mandated retirement age, set to arise in April 1967.¹³⁶ In the meantime, the CIA estimated that more than 200 BND employees resigned or were dismissed in the aftermath of the Felfe scandal for concealing elements of their wartime activities which, when considered along with the other compromised GO/BND employees from the 1940s

1963, pg. 4; Gerd Wilcke, "Bonn Double Agents Betrayed 95 to Reds," *The New York Times*, 24 July 1963, pg. 1.

¹³⁵ "Contact Report," September 9 1964. NACP RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, Box 40, File "Gehlen, Reinhard" Vol. 4 Folder 1/2. "155/Gehlen, Reinhardt. [] with @Willien," 28 June 1965. NACP RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, Box 39, File "Gehlen, Reinhard" Vol. 4 Folder 2/2

¹³⁶ "Contact Report, [] and @Seidel" 25 October 1965. NACP RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, Box 39, File "Gehlen, Reinhard" Vol. 4 Folder 2/2. Although @Seidel was Gehlen's brother-in-law and rather put-out about the direction of the agency and his lack of personal bureaucratic advancement, his complaints were consistent with other reports coming out of the BND at the time.

and 1950s already dismissed or retired, certainly rendered Gehlen's repeated claims of employing few ex-Nazi personnel problematic.¹³⁷

Gehlen's Weltanschauung: Memoirs of a Spymaster

Gehlen's retirement in 1968 it marked the end of a four-decade intelligence career. Unwilling to give up his lifelong struggle against communism, however, he produced a detailed political testament that endeavored to save Germany once more from its foreign and domestic communist enemies. This memoir was, and continues to be, the most forthright and extensive exploration of the *Weltanschauung* that had for so long shaped the Gehlen Organization and BND.

On September 5th, 1971, the *New York Times* announced that former BND chief Reinhard Gehlen had completed a memoir and was shopping the global rights to the manuscript to several English and American publishing houses for a reported \$400,000-\$500,000. In the meantime, the conservative German publication *Die Welt* had already discretely acquired serialization rights for \$250,000. The *New York Times* narrowly lost out on the opportunity to serialize the manuscript in English due to Gehlen's fury over their publication of the "Pentagon Papers" earlier in the summer, which in his view had gravely compromised American national security.¹³⁸ The entire affair befitted an ex-spymaster, as Anglo-American publishers traveled to Germany in secret to view and

¹³⁷ Even so, the larger worry was not so much those who had concealed their pasts as those who had extensive contacts with the Felde network; these two categories often overlapped. *CIA and the Origins of the BND, 1949-1956 Vol. 1*, xiv. Schmidt-Eenboom, 39. For a fascinating first-person perspective on the BND internal investigations and purges of the mid 1960s, see Kerstin von Lingen, "Oral History Interview with Hans-Henning Crome," 3 December 2010, USHMM RG 50.486*0069, <http://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn50130>

¹³⁸ See Dispatch to Chief/EUR "Subject Catrabe: Views and Comments on Catrabe Reorganization," 24 September 1971; NACP RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, Box 40, File "Gehlen, Reinhard" Vol. 6 Folder 2/2.

authenticate the manuscript while a covert typesetting operation by *Die Welt* preserved its exclusive serialization.¹³⁹ While both BND and CIA officials were aware that Gehlen had been working on the memoirs for some time, he did not vet them with either institution prior to their publication.

Gehlen had several motives for producing a memoir. The *New York Times* suggested that the success of Albert Speer's 1969 memoir, *Inside the Third Reich* had inspired Gehlen to cash in himself. A CIA representative visiting Gehlen around this time found the former General "in excellent health, good spirits," and "obviously looking forward to getting his hands on a chunk of dough."¹⁴⁰ Private statements by Gehlen furthered the public impression that he rushed the book into print in response to repeated attacks on himself and the BND in the center-left news magazine *Der Spiegel*, most recently in an extended series of articles in the summer of 1971.¹⁴¹ Most importantly, however, Gehlen's memoir was meant to serve as a political testament of sorts, a corrective to what Gehlen saw as the worrisome deviations in recent Western attitudes towards the Soviet Union epitomized by West German Chancellor Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik* and appeals to détente more generally. Gehlen's editor at World Books (which won the bidding war for publication of the memoir outside Germany), Peter Ritner, revealed that "[Gehlen] thinks of himself as an honest man with a need to protect Western civilization. He thinks the West has become lazy, self-indulgent, self-pitying."

¹³⁹ Ibid. Gehlen's literary agent Volker Hansen, could certainly be trusted to keep silent too, as he was the son of Gehlen's longtime friend and colleague General Ottomar Hansen, former *Bundeswehr* Chief of Personnel. Both had cooperated with the BND even though they were not officially members. Henry Raymont, "Memoirs Tie Bormann to Soviet: General Gehlen Says Hitler's Top Aide was Kremlin Spy," *New York Times*, Sep. 5, 1971; pg. 25. Henry Raymont, "World Gets Rights to Memoirs by Gehlen and Loses an Editor," *New York Times*, Sep 25, 1971; pg. 19.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. Memo for [Omitted], "Discussions with Dr. Schneider," 17 Sept. 1971. NACP RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, Box 40, File "Gehlen, Reinhard" Vol. 6 Folder 2/2.

¹⁴¹ Ibid. Also Barbara A. Bannon, "A Publishing Controversy: The Espionage Career of General Gehlen," *Publisher's Weekly*, Jan. 3, 1972; pg. 33.

In private conversations with CIA contacts, Gehlen confirmed that he was not writing a polemic, but the memoir intended to criticize recent developments in West German and American diplomatic and security policy.¹⁴²

The structure of Gehlen's book bore this out. In addition to the standard life history and reminiscences of experiences in the service of *Fremde Heere Ost*, the Gehlen Organization, and the BND, large portions of the memoir mused broadly on the past, present and future of communism and its continuing dangers to all peoples of the world. This is particularly true in the English-language version of the text, which expanded over the course of the following year as Gehlen meditated on the initial reception of his work in *Die Welt*, while providing more details on some matters that would otherwise have fallen within the bounds of German secrecy laws. World Publishing dispatched the English translator, a young David Irving, to meet with Gehlen regularly in order to facilitate such additions to the book.¹⁴³ As a result, the English edition of Gehlen's memoirs provides the clearest window into his lifelong anti-communist *Weltanschauung*, which had self-avowedly existed in unchanged form since the late 1930s. The original title of the German edition itself, *Der Dienst: Erinnerungen 1942-1971*, was a provocation, implying Gehlen's stringent and consistent anticommunist but otherwise

¹⁴² Bannon, 34. Critchfield "Memorandum for the Record," 20 Jan. 1971, 3.

¹⁴³ Bannon, 34. Henry Ramont, "Bonn Controversy Complicates Publishing of Gehlen Memoirs," *The New York Times*, Sep. 10, 1971. Chief of Station [Omitted] to Chief EUR, "Spiegel Scores English Translation of Gehlen Memoirs," 31 May 1972; NACP RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, Box 40, File "Gehlen, Reinhard" Vol. 6 Folder 2/2. David Irving, at that time a somewhat respected scholar known for both his seemingly encyclopedic knowledge of Nazi-era documents (and for his personal contacts with ex-Nazis reluctant to turn their papers over to mainstream historians) would eventually become notorious for his tendentious interpretations. By the 1980s, Irving had moved on to full-blown Holocaust-denial. It seems, however, that the regular meetings with Gehlen and notoriety of the project largely spared the English edition from the tendentious and disingenuous translations for which Irving would later become famous. In this case, Irving's talents of embellishing an already existing primary source seem to have been put to good use under Gehlen's supervision for the English edition of his memoir.

“apolitical” patriotism. In service of Hitler, the Americans, or West Germany, Gehlen’s self-conception was of a non-ideological defender of the West in an uninterrupted struggle against the Soviet Union. Given the explicit political purpose of the memoir and its significant additions, a careful reading of the English-language edition of Gehlen’s *The Service* offers a clear picture of the anticommunist *Weltanschauung* that drove his intelligence career and so profoundly stamped the Gehlen Organization and BND.

At the time, however, the political manifesto included in the work was overshadowed by furor over the possibility of an ex-spy-chief publicly making sensational revelations. Gehlen’s insistence, for example, that secret contacts behind the Iron Curtain (for which he refused to produce documentation) had informed him that Hitler’s former head of the Nazi Party Chancellery and private secretary Martin Bormann was a Soviet spy who had escaped to the USSR in 1945 to advise the Soviet government on Germany, leaked prior to publication and garnered much negative media attention.¹⁴⁴ Unlikely bedfellows ex-Grand Admiral Karl Dönitz and Nazi-hunter Simon Wiesenthal referred to the Bormann revelations as “nonsense,” while *The Times* judged the much-awaited serialization of Gehlen’s work in *Die Welt* a “damp and diminutive squib.”¹⁴⁵ The fact that Gehlen refused to testify under oath in Germany about the veracity of his Bormann assertions lent little credibility to the memoirs more generally when they arrived in English translation a year later. Both *The Los Angeles Times* and *The Washington Post* found *The Service* “disappointing,” full of self-justification and lacking

¹⁴⁴ At least some of the negative reviews, particularly in the Scandinavian press, as well as other articles criticizing Gehlen, were planted by East German communist elements to discredit the Gehlen and the BND more generally. See Michael F. Scholz, “Active Measures and Disinformation as Part of East Germany’s Propaganda War, 1953-1972,” in *East German Foreign Intelligence*, 127-128.

¹⁴⁵ “Bonn Controversy;” “Memoirs Tie Bormann to Soviet;” Roger Berthoud, “Gen. Gehlen Adds Little to Bormann Spy Theory,” *The Times*, Sept. 12, 1971, pg. 5; C.L. Sulzberger, “This Ghost Didn’t Go East,” *New York Times*, Nov. 12, 1971, pg. 47.

candor or sufficient documentation for its claims.¹⁴⁶ In the *New York Review of Books*, Neal Ascherson judged the memoirs “whining” and “interminable,” characterizing Gehlen as “a political idiot,” still possessing “the views of a moderate Nazi.”¹⁴⁷ Critics in both Germany and the U.S. blasted the book as a “whitewash” of the BND’s past, while others found a fascinating and “impenitent” apologia of a self-avowed technocrat, who cared little about his political allegiance so long as his overarching war against communism proceeded unmolested.¹⁴⁸ A common theme throughout was incredulity that such a figure was permitted to play such a prominent role in West Germany for so long.

¹⁴⁶ Sanche de Gramont, “Recollections of a Superspy,” *The Washington Post, Times Herald*, Jul 2, 1972, pg. BW2; Robert Kirsch, “The Book Report: Beyond Gehlen’s Memoirs,” *Los Angeles Times*, Apr. 3, 1972, pg. E2.

¹⁴⁷ Neal Ascherson, “Our Man in Pullach,” *New York Review of Books*, June 1, 1972, pg. 3-5.

¹⁴⁸ “The Impenitent,” *The Economist*, Sept. 9, 1972, pg. 61; Robert Kirsch, “The Book Report: Germany’s Legendary Spy,” *Los Angeles Times*, Jul. 20, 1972, pg. G14.



David Levine, “Reinhard Gehlen,” in *New York Review of Books*, June 1 1972, pg. 3. This caricature, appearing alongside Neal Ascherson’s review, acutely captures popular attitudes towards Gehlen in the 1970s. The large ears, an exaggeration of Gehlen’s natural appearance, combined with the narrow, rat-like face, yield an impression of untrustworthiness. The oversized Wehrmacht uniform implies both Gehlen’s continuities with the Nazi regime, and his inabilities to “measure up” to his job as chief of an intelligence service.

Like any memoir, *The Service* was full of self-justification and questionable analysis. Typically of a former *Wehrmacht* officer, Gehlen placed the blame of the lost war squarely on Hitler’s shoulders, blasting the dictator for his amateurish meddling in military affairs, including both his direction of individual campaigns and his responsibility for driving the “newly liberated” Soviet people back into the arms of Stalin through untenably repressive and brutal occupation policies. Thus Hitler and Himmler undermined the battlefield successes of the “professional” and “clean” military

establishment, which had no role in wartime atrocities.¹⁴⁹ According to Gehlen, Hitler fired him in 1945 because, “There is nobody less popular than a prophet of misfortune whose predictions have been proved true in every detail.”¹⁵⁰ Gehlen also portrayed himself and his subordinates as near omniscient through the years, predicting every significant event on the Eastern Front from 1942 to the exact date of the 1967 Six Day War in Israel, except for the 1961 construction of the Berlin Wall, which according to Gehlen was a *process* rather than an immediate development in any case.¹⁵¹ Along the way, he titillated the reader by revealing the allegedly heretofore-secret communist ties of notorious German political figures ranging from Martin Bormann to the Brandt administration.¹⁵² Throughout, he downplayed the Gehlen Organization and BND’s reliance on ex-Nazis, describing such accusations as the defamatory propagandizing of the East German state media and their insidious allies on the West German left, presumably *Der Spiegel*.¹⁵³ As for the Felfe scandal, Gehlen maintained that he had known all along that Felfe was a spy, and took the proper precautions to make sure he was given no information of value to funnel to his communist handlers. Indeed, Felfe was a valuable lesson for all Western intelligence services in dealing with communist moles,

¹⁴⁹ Reinhard Gehlen, *The Service: The Memoirs of General Reinhard Gehlen*, trans. David Irving (New York, World: 1972), 70-77, 83-92. Such “blunders” included of course the assault on Stalingrad and ignoring unfavorable intelligence reports surrounding the “Citadel” campaign but also more curiously Hitler’s direction of the 1941 Battle of Kiev, which yielded unprecedented numbers of Soviet prisoners and was by all accounts a smashing success. Gehlen’s view seems to be that the otherwise Moscow-bound resources “wasted” around Kiev in 1941 mimicked the future wasted resources of later campaigns and Hitler’s preoccupation with “economic” rather than “political” targets. Given FHO’s actual wartime record, these assertions were disingenuous at best.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁵¹ For thoughts on the Berlin Wall, see *The Service*, 239-240; for 1967 war see pg. 276. Such claims also included being the first or only intelligence organization to: learn of the execution of Lavrentiy Beria (pg. 169-170), obtain a copy of Khrushchev’s “Secret Speech,” (pg. 229), and learn of the Sino-Soviet split (pg. 234). Many of these claims were dismissed as “wishful thinking” or outright fantasy in the CIA review of the manuscript.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 70-71, 356-358.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 166-67; 184-85; 203.

as Gehlen reiterated “At the conclusion of the Felfe affair, we circulated a comprehensive report of our findings to all our allied intelligence services in the West so that they could learn from our experiences – I will not say from our mistakes.”¹⁵⁴ Serious critics and historians rightly dismissed Gehlen’s work as unreliable, characterizing his writings as those of an out-of-touch and absolute “Cold Warrior,” overlooking the fact that behind the justifications and exaggerations lay a methodical presentation of a consistent world view that revealed much about the operational mentality of Gehlen’s BND.

The foundation of Gehlen’s *Weltanschauung* was a totalizing dichotomy pitting the just and free capitalist societies against the immutable evils of world communism. For Gehlen, “the modern world [was] divided into two diametrically opposed camps,” as “The political contradictions between East and West are coupled with an unceasing conflict of ideologies from which nobody has either the right or the means to escape...It is prosecuted at every level of human life, and in every field of activity.”¹⁵⁵ The stakes in this struggle remained unchanged since the revolution of 1917, because the primary goal of Soviet communism in 1917, 1941, or 1971 was always world revolution and the consequential destruction of the free world. As a result, Gehlen, much like other anti-communist *Wehrmacht* officers, wholeheartedly supported the war against the Soviet Union in 1941. Thirty years later, he maintained that Hitler’s decision to attack the Soviet Union was a “correct” preemptive strike, a defensive measure against an inevitable Soviet assault.¹⁵⁶ The expansion of Soviet rule to the Eastern Bloc nations in

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 247-52.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, 74; 283-284. As we see below Gehlen thought the importance of the Sino-Soviet split was exaggerated. He also tacitly assumed that the “non-aligned movement” was only a puppet of communist interests.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 26. Of course, no such plans had existed on the Soviet side. Stalin, by all accounts, had strained wholehearted accommodation with Nazi Germany in 1941 in order to avoid the Soviet Union being tricked

the immediate postwar period, bookended by its “brutality” in Czechoslovakia in 1948 and 1968, merely served as confirmation that the Soviet drive for world-revolution remained paramount.¹⁵⁷ Worse, the Soviets were able to insidiously pursue their policy to undermine the West through a cynical manipulation of Western democratic institutions: international communist parties, national communist governments, trade unions, sham non-governmental organizations, and Soviet diplomatic missions abroad all served to advance the Russian “spider’s web spun by communists over the whole globe” through launching “ruthless attacks on the Western mind from behind a cover of harmless activity, and thereby bring about the decline and fall of Western society.”¹⁵⁸ Western fifth-columnist communist parties in France and Italy posed a significant threat; even the minute British communist movement was able to exert significant influence via the masquerade of peace-loving NGOs and trade unions on the Labour Party’s political platform.¹⁵⁹ The Moscow-directed softening of European communist party lines in the turn toward “Peaceful Coexistence” was merely a sham to dupe left-center and Christian pacifist groups into cooperating with Moscow to undermine the righteous anticommunist regimes in the West through Popular-Front-type coalitions of the left.¹⁶⁰ Gehlen’s

into a devastating war with Nazi Germany that could only serve to benefit Great Britain and other capitalist powers. So long as Hitler was accommodated, it would be illogical for him to attack the Soviet Union. While Stalin did authorize defensive preparations, the “preventative war” explanation for Barbarossa has been systematically discredited. For a good summary of the situation, see Robert Gellately, *Lenin, Stalin, and Hitler: The Age of Social Catastrophe* (New York: Knopf, 2007), 401-406. On Stalin’s thorough acquiescence to German demands and refusal to provoke, even in the face of overwhelming evidence of Hitler’s bellicosity, see David E. Murphy, *What Stalin Knew: The Enigma of Barbarossa* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

¹⁵⁷ Gehlen, 103, 284-287. According to Gehlen, this Russian-dominated Soviet imperial project had deeper roots in the ambitions of the czars and omnipresent “pan-Slavism.”

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 313-314. Such groups included the World Peace Council, the International Association of Democratic Lawyers, the World Federation of Scientific Workers and the International Federation of Resistance Fighters.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 323-325.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, 340.

concern with the malevolent hand of communism lurking behind leftist political movements in the West (including détente) left little room for complication or nuance in international affairs. As a result, he (and his agency) tended to ignore or underestimate the importance of the “non-aligned movement” or Sino-Soviet split, let alone the highly individualized national communist politics of the “Third World” more generally.

The real-world implications of Gehlen’s *Weltanschauung* frequently took on implicitly apocalyptic overtones, even with the benefit of hindsight. Tellingly comparing Castro’s Cuba in 1961 to Czechoslovakia in 1938, for example, Gehlen was adamant that President Kennedy should have ordered a full military invasion in support of the “Bay of Pigs” uprising. Gehlen claimed that the United States, by militarily “crushing” Castro, would have both bolstered the *cordon sanitaire* against Latin American communism and avoided the Cuban Missile Crisis eighteen months later.¹⁶¹ Combined with Gehlen’s proscription that Britain, the United States and France should have enacted “determined and immediate countermeasures,” against East Germany in August 1961 in response to their construction of the Berlin Wall, it is difficult to conclude that a 1962-level crisis would not have occurred anyway in spite of Gehlen’s assertions that “the Russians would never let things go too far,” perhaps with more dire results given increased Western resistance.¹⁶² In any case, Gehlen argued, the non-nuclear solution to the 1962-crisis was

¹⁶¹ Ibid, 237-238.

¹⁶² Ibid, 360. The possibility of escalation in 1961 would have been all the more likely if, as a number of Kennedy advisors at the time and many historians since have argued, acceding to the construction of the Berlin Wall was partly a way for Khrushchev to defuse tensions over Berlin. See Herring, 705-710; John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: Penguin, 2007), 114-115; David Clay Large, *Berlin* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 446-456. For a somewhat more melodramatic but still insightful exploration of the potential dangers of the 1961 Berlin Crisis, see Frederick Kempe, *Berlin 1961: Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Most Dangerous Place on Earth* (New York: Putnam, 2011). In any case Gehlen’s assurances here that things would not have gotten out of hand roundly contradict the rest of the book’s assertions that the Soviet Union was a hyper-aggressive power that would stop at nothing to destroy the Western way of life.

in fact a victory for Moscow since, even though the missiles were “supposedly” withdrawn from Cuba, Castro’s very existence would serve to transmit the communist virus throughout the Southern hemisphere, causing great damage to U.S. interests in the long term.¹⁶³

Likewise, Gehlen saw the American intervention in Vietnam as a necessary defense of Indochina against both Chinese and Russian incursions; should the American effort fail, the world faced the specter of communist triumphs not only in all of Indochina but also in South Korea, Taiwan, and Indonesia. Yet Gehlen decried the “half-measures” that defined U.S. military policy in Vietnam “out of ill-conceived regard for world and public opinion.” Presumably the most powerful army in the world with the largest nuclear arsenal and most advanced air force capabilities could do better than a gradual escalation. Comparing the American position in Vietnam to the bogged-down partisan warfare of the *Wehrmacht* on the Eastern Front after the initial failure of Barbarossa, Gehlen advised the use of complete and overwhelming force to resolve the matter “whatever the cost,” much as in the 1940 invasion of France, presumably even at the risk of escalating the conflict to open war with the greater communist powers in the region.¹⁶⁴ For Gehlen, such failures of nerve on the American side played directly into Soviet hands, as he saw a concerted strategy orchestrated by Moscow to draw the U.S. into such small regional conflicts as often as possible (the Middle East would be next) to drain its resources, prestige, and will to keep up the anti-communist fight.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ Gehlen, 340.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, 265-267.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, 343-345.

Because the Soviet Union's foreign policy goals had not appreciably changed at any time before or after World War II, Gehlen had no patience for Western movements toward "co-existence" or "détente," particularly Willy Brandt's and the West German left's *Ostpolitik*. For Gehlen, the insurmountable divisions between East and West nullified any possibility of productive negotiations, since it was impossible to divorce communist foreign policy from Marxist-Leninist ideology. No matter the sincerity of Western efforts to engage the Soviets diplomatically, the strength of communist ideology meant that, "political and social conceptions are understood differently by Communists and non-Communists." As a result, the communists were able to cynically deploy terms like "coexistence" or "détente," while continuing their zealous drive to undermine and destroy the West. To ignore this reality in pursuit of misguided attempts to engage a communist government in any sort of binding diplomatic negotiation or agreement was the height of folly and naiveté, a concern shared by elements of the BND more generally.¹⁶⁶ For the Soviets, *Ostpolitik* was an *offensive* weapon. Any Western concessions would psychologically shatter the still inwardly resisting Eastern European populations behind the Iron Curtain, finally allowing for complete "bolshevization" there while undermining NATO and Western solidarity.

At the same time, nominal diplomatic accords in Europe would provide the breathing room for the long-term communist plan of raising fifth columns in the West through "penetrating the minds of the working classes as well as of the intellectuals

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 287-293; 354-359. Sigard Hess, "German Intelligence Organizations and the Media," *The Journal of Intelligence History* 9, no. 1 (June 2010): 81. In 1970, elements of the post-Gehlen BND quite openly interfered in domestic politics by leaking reports to the CDU (which subsequently made their way to the Swiss press) on talks between the Willy Brandt-led SPD and the Italian communist party. Apparently the SPD had seen a dialog with elements of the Western communist parties as a crucial step towards improving relations with the Eastern Bloc. The leak occasioned a vociferous debate on the merits of *Ostpolitik*.

within the capitalist countries.” Such insidious operations had recently led to the Soviet triumph of democratically electing the first Marxist regime in Latin America in Chile.¹⁶⁷ Much like Hitler’s past refusal to accept ideas contrary to his own beliefs, Gehlen claimed, Chancellor Brandt and the SPD more generally preferred “wishful thinking” to reality. Much as in the 1940s, the consequences for Germany would prove catastrophic in the long term.¹⁶⁸ Privately, Gehlen asserted that the SPD was “engaged in a systematic effort to alter the social structure of Germany, gradually developing a new class struggle.” This was part of a nefarious “Moscow-controlled effort to subvert German society,” a twenty-year plot centered around then-current FRG President Gustav Heinemann, founder in 1952 of the short-lived neutralist *Gesamtdeutsche Volkspartei* (GVP) before joining the SPD, who Gehlen claimed had been paid-off by the Soviets during the occupation. Also prominently involved in this communist plot, prior to her 1969 death, was co-founder of the GVP Helene Wessel, with former KPD member and then-current chairman of the SPD Parliamentary faction Herbert Wehner portrayed as the “master brain” pulling the strings. Needless to say, the roots of Willy Brandt’s *Ostpolitik* also lay with this cabal, in which his strong connections to the Italian communist party (supposed evidence of which was leaked to the CDU by elements of the BND after Gehlen’s retirement) played a leading role.¹⁶⁹

One may debate the efficacy of *Ostpolitik* and the extent to which Brandt’s dealings with East Germany prolonged the life of the GDR and entangled West Germany diplomatically with a government with an atrocious human rights record that would

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 294-296.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, 291. See also a discussion of “Hitler’s *Ostpolitik*” on pg. 103.

¹⁶⁹ Critchfield, “Memorandum for the Record,” 20 January 1971, 1-2.

provide support to enemies of the West German state, including the Red Army Faction. Still, Gehlen's reading of the situation was grossly incorrect. Far from a Trojan-horse operation to undermine the West, both the East German and Soviet governments approached *Ostpolitik* as a practical solution to normalize political and economic relations in Europe in the context of ever worsening Sino-Soviet tensions.¹⁷⁰

The sham of détente, Gehlen concluded, boded ill for the future of the West. Peril loomed because the vast majority of the Western peace-loving public, who, both in the past and in the present, had failed to understand the true danger of communism and, “the West can fight this virus from the East only by a strategy of *political offense*.” The negotiations characteristic of détente efforts were not completely misguided, so long as Western politicians understood that “the Soviet mentality” blocked rational tit-for-tat compromise. Only uncompromising demands from the West from a position of unassailable strength would yield results. While the uprisings of 1956 and 1968 were encouraging signs that the Eastern European populations had not been irrevocably lost to communism, the advent of the “Brezhnev Doctrine,” would minimize any outward manifestations of resistance to the Soviet system. Likewise, the nominal independence of the nationalist “deviations” in Yugoslavia and China would likely be short-lived, as the Soviet Union would undoubtedly use the 1970s to reassert control over all communist nations (by force of arms if necessary) in preparation for the ultimate clash with the United States.¹⁷¹ Given the finality and inevitability of this last confrontation with world communism, perhaps as early as the 1980s, the free world's only hope of surviving was a union of all Western countries into a single political and military entity around the NATO

¹⁷⁰ M.E. Sarotte, *Dealing with the Devil: East Germany, Détente, and Ostpolitik, 1969-1973* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), esp. 164-166, 176-177.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid*, 362-369.

alliance (including Franco's Spain) but with overtures to Turkey and Israel as well. There was "no time to lose," in mounting this defense against "this virus from the East," and of course the intelligence services of the West would have a significant role to play. Regardless of contemporary political trends toward East-West rapprochement, Gehlen concluded

If we ask, has the Soviet Union become less dangerous, I can only answer emphatically that it has not. The Soviet Union is not a stable power, solely concerned with domestic affairs and the maintenance of its possessions; it is, rather, a politically dynamic and aggressive world power which will stop at nothing to reach its objectives and secure its aims... The methods and tactics of Soviet campaigning have been refined; but the will to attack everything we hold most dear, and particularly our freedom of thought and action, remains unchanged.¹⁷²

Gehlen was pessimistic about the future. He spent a portion of his final years searching for a new home in South Portugal, keeping with the BND's long-held plan of evacuation to an Iberian redoubt in the event of a Soviet invasion of Western Europe.¹⁷³

* * * *

In 1972, a classified review of Gehlen's memoirs and other recently released titles on the history of the BND appeared in *Studies in Intelligence*, the peer-reviewed publication of the CIA's Center for the Study of Intelligence. In comparison to the "tendentious and inaccurate" East German *Nicht Laenger Geheim*, the error-ridden "sheer garbage" of Hühne and Zolling's *The General Was a Spy* or Cookridge's merely "inaccurate" *Gehlen: Spy of the Century*, Gehlen's memoir was deemed "worthwhile reading" for any American intelligence officer assigned to Germany. While the anonymous reviewer praised the detailed descriptions of Gehlen's work with Foreign Armies East and noted

¹⁷² Ibid, 370-71.

¹⁷³ Secret Cable 281024Z, Subject: Utility, Jan. 1972. NACP RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, Box 40, File "Gehlen, Reinhard" Vol. 6, Folder 2/2.

the BND's accomplishments in collecting economic and military intelligence on East Germany, he also characterized Gehlen's broader claims of political intelligence successes as "either wishful thinking or self delusion," giving the work a final verdict of "a gentleman's C-plus." Since in the reviewer's opinion, both Gehlen and his detractors overemphasized the importance of the BND's reporting for shaping western Cold War policy, the review concluded with a blunt summation of Gehlen's post-1945 intelligence work,

Without disclosing too many "house secrets" I think it is safe to say that his organization...did not play a role of any appreciable influence in the Cold War. Certainly major U.S. policy makers never saw his product; indeed had probably hardly heard of him. The U.S. leaders from 1946 onwards needed no advice from Gehlen on the menace of Soviet imperialism. Besides, the political intelligence product of the German service left much to be desired. So far as the German government was concerned, Adenauer needed no pushing from Gehlen either, and from 1962 onward, due primarily to the Felfe and Spiegel affaires the influence of the BND on Bonn foreign policy was close to zero.¹⁷⁴

Indeed, at the time of Gehlen's retirement in 1968, Western spy novelists, communist authorities, and West German Government officials had long ridiculed the inefficiency of the Gehlen Organization and BND.¹⁷⁵

The true legacy of the Gehlen Organization lies more in what it represented than what it accomplished in the field. While the GO and BND served a useful initial purpose in identifying Soviet units and their disposition in East Germany and their intelligence summaries as to goings-on in the Eastern Bloc were certainly useful to Adenauer in the 1950s (the previous strengths of *Fremde Heere Ost*), Gehlen's forays into political

¹⁷⁴ "The Service: The Memoirs of General Reinhard Gehlen by Reinhard Gehlen. Book Review by Anonymous." *Studies in Intelligence* 16: No. 3 (1972). Declassified 1996. Accessed 1/24/14. https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/kent-csi/vol16no3/html/v16i3a06p_0001.htm

¹⁷⁵ David Binder, "Gehlen is Retiring as German Intelligence Chief," *New York Times*, January 16, 1968, pg. 16.

reporting and grand strategy proved beyond the pale for his American partners. Domestically, the GO/BND was in no way “non-political,” as both its charter and Gehlen claimed; it was expressly interested in battling communism broadly defined, and participated in multiple intrigues against the SPD and its politicians, and the German center left more generally.

There was no *Stunde Null* in 1945 for Reinhard Gehlen and broader segments of the German intelligence services. Apart from a few weeks in the mountains and POW camps, the Gehlen group continued its work against the Soviet Union, and maintained considerable continuities in both personnel and ideas from the Nazi Period through the Allied Occupation interregnum and into the new Federal Republic. In expanding from a wartime information analysis branch to a full-fledged postwar intelligence agency, Gehlen looked to former General Staff Officers, but also to *Abwehr* and RSHA-men with policing and counter-intelligence experience whose pasts rendered them easy targets for Soviet and East German penetration. Unlike in other governing institutions, however, a lack of careful institutional control compromised the objectives of the organization, turning the popular perception of the BND into the very worst of the capitalist West instead of the shining bastion of democratic order that Gehlen hoped for. As Gehlen’s influence in Bonn waned, and his non-technical reports became increasingly ignored, the GO/BND’s “drawing a line under the past” presented issues beyond morality, ethics, justice, and memory. These unacknowledged continuities of both Nazi personnel and Gehlen’s vociferously anti-communist ideology had damaging foreign policy consequences as well.

CHAPTER 6

History as Intelligence: Wehrmacht Officers and the U.S. Army Historical Division, 1945-1956

“Recent evaluation of the reports produced by the interrogation of German commanders who were opposed to our forces has established beyond doubt the great value of these studies...This project is considered an unparalleled opportunity in military history which will be of greatest value to the service and to the country for many years.” – U.S. Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson to Commander-in Chief, European Command: February 11, 1947

“In the absence of adequate German records, the reports of these German commanders of their operations are proving to be not only reliable but the only information we will ever have as to what occurred on the German side. This is our one opportunity to prevent our own military history from being one-sided.” – Army Chief of Staff General Dwight Eisenhower to German Military Governor General Lucius D. Clay: August 30, 1947¹

This chapter examines the growth and activities of an organization whose relationship to intelligence gathering is, at first glance, ambiguous. Between 1946 and 1956 under the leadership of former Chief of the German Army General Staff Franz Halder, over 700 former field and staff officers of the German Armed Forces High Command (OKW), German Army High Command (OKH) and Waffen-SS closely collaborated with the U.S. Army Historical Division to complete some 2,500 manuscripts describing the *Wehrmacht*'s experiences in World War II.² The Historical Division

¹ Quoted in “Valedictory Remarks,” James F. Scoggin Jr. Sig C to Chief, Historical Division SSUSA, 17 October 1949. NACP RG 549: Records of the United States Army, Europe – Historical Division, Entry A1 2202AC: Foreign Military Studies, General Correspondence, Box 5, File II-11 Scoggin-Mahin.

² Ronald Smelser and Edward J. Davies II, *The Myth of the Eastern Front: The Nazi-Soviet War in American Popular Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 65. On the existence of the smaller, parallel Naval Historical Team and its importance for American intelligence and West German rearmament, see Christian Greiner, “Operational History (German) Section und Naval Historical Team” in *Militärsgeschichte: Probleme – Thesen – Wege (Band 25)* ed. Militärgeschichtlichen Forschungsamt (Verlags Anstalt Stuttgart, 1982) and David R. Snyder, “Arming the ‘Bundesmarine’: The United States and the Build-Up of the German Federal Navy, 1950-1960,” in *The Journal of Military History* 66, no. 2 (Apr., 2002): pp. 477-500.

sought out former German field commanders and General Staff Officers for this Foreign Military Studies Program first and foremost as eyewitnesses and decision-makers who could shed valuable light on German operations and strategy during the war. Over time, however, the program evolved from merely recording the past to seeking and offering advice for the future in a new Cold War framework. As relations between the United States and the Soviet Union deteriorated, a significant number of later studies came to focus on the Soviet Union in the context of “lessons learned” from the failed German invasion and occupation of the East, the character and operational methods of Red Army forces, and recommendations in case of war between the U.S. and Soviet Union.

The records of the U.S. Army Historical Division and Foreign Military Studies Program held at the National Archives in College Park, MD, I suggest that FMSP publications are also representative of the problem with the United States’ reliance on avowedly “objective” and “professional” German military men after 1945.³ In spite of their lack of Nazi Party affiliation, German officers’ writing and reporting on the Eastern Front frequently reproduced all-too-familiar National Socialist tropes of racism and anti-Bolshevism while canonizing the myth of a “clean” Wehrmacht.⁴ The reports produced by the German officers were not merely exercises in myth-making, however, but also highly technical operational studies. American officers deemed this German operational experience against the Soviet Union valuable in the context of an emergent “Iron

³ While a small number of the reports were published by Donald S. Detwiler as the multivolume *World War II German Military Studies: A Collection of 213 Special Reports on the Second World War* in 1979, the original manuscripts at the National Archives provide nearly 2,300 additional reports, valuable commentary by American supervisors and information on administrative matters as well.

⁴ German officers continued such myth making in memoirs, journals, and popular histories after the winding down of Historical Division operations in the 1950s. See Ronald Smelser and Edward J. Davies II, *The Myth of the Eastern Front*, 90-157; Ronald Smelser, “The Myth of the Clean Wehrmacht in Postwar America,” in *Lessons and Legacies VIII: From Generation to Generation*, ed. Doris Bergen (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2008); and Wolfram Wette, *The Wehrmacht: History, Myth, Reality*, trans. Deborah Lucas Schneider (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

Curtain” in Eastern Europe and communist advances in the Far East. As a result, they endeavored to incorporate into American doctrine the “objective” and “professional” operational lessons offered by the German writers while ignoring the more overt falsehoods and self-justifications in the manuscripts. Such distinctions between objective operational experiences and biased political assertions within the studies are however, largely artificial. Racist, social-Darwinist, and anti-Soviet beliefs undergirded the “strictly operational” German lessons that informed the evolution of U.S. Army doctrine from 1947 to the 1950s.

Existing scholarship has already identified the work of former *Wehrmacht* officers on the U.S. Army Historical Division’s history of the Second World War as a significant moment in the construction of a number of widely-publicized and interrelated myths about the conduct of the war in the East. These myths emphasized the *Wehrmacht*’s lack of Nazification or participation in criminal activity, the strategic genius of the German General Staff and officer corps in contrast to the National Socialist “amateurs,” and the need for a continuing Western crusade against communism.⁵ Some historians, most notably Alaric Searle, have demonstrated the importance of the American Historical Division, along with the Gehlen Organization and Theodor Blank Office, in serving as a platform for a “politicized minority” of ex-*Wehrmacht* officers to quietly influence the

⁵ In addition to Smelser and Davies, see Rolf-Dieter Müller and Hans-Erich Volkmann, *Die Wehrmacht: Mythos und Realität* (München: Oldenbourg, 1999); Bernd Wegner, “Erschriebene Siege. Franz Halder, die ‘Historical Division’ und die Rekonstruktion des Zweiten Weltkrieges im Geiste des deutschen Generalstabes” in *Politischer Wandel, organisierte Gewalt und nationale Sicherheit: Beiträge zur neuen Geschichte Deutschlands und Frankreichs*, ed. Ernst Willi Hansen, Gerhard Schreiber, and Bernd Wegner (München: Oldenbourg, 1995); James A. Wood, “Captive Historians, Captivated Audience: The German Military History Program, 1945-1961” in *The Journal of Military History* 69, no. 1: (Jan. 2005), 123-147, and Gerhard L. Weinberg, “Some Myths of World War II: The 2011 George C. Marshall Lecture in Military History,” in *The Journal of Military History* 75, No. 3 (July 2011): 701-718. This “myth-making” is apparent from the earliest interrogations by the Shuster Commission in July 1945. See, for example, NACP Microfilm Publication M1035: MS# ETHINT-20, *An Interview with Wilhelm Schiedt – Hitler’s Conduct of the War*.

debate on West German rearmament behind-the-scenes.⁶ Yet in their work for the Historical Division these German Officers did much more than wage a war for the hearts and minds of future generations or influence West German rearmament policy. Works such as Kevin Soutor's path-breaking 1993 article on the German writing program have established that German operational knowledge, particularly conceptions of combined arms integration and mobile defense, were adopted by U.S. Army planning staffs and service schools in preparation for a future war with the Soviet Union.⁷ These previous studies however, did not interrogate the ideological assumptions behind such examples of German "operational knowledge" in so far as they differ from the process of "myth-making." As American-Soviet relations rapidly deteriorated after 1945, the German officers of the Historical Division passed on their myths of an honorable German military, but also their highly prejudiced operational assessments of the Soviet Union and their perceptions of the necessary requirements to militarily defeat it. Thus in the first of many examples of postwar cooperation and doctrinal exchanges between the U.S. and German militaries, this "politicized minority" of German officers working for the Historical Division also came to have an indirect but substantial voice in the evolution of U.S. Army Doctrine after 1947 and in the new West German *Bundeswehr* as well.⁸ What

⁶ Alaric Searle, *Wehrmacht Generals, West German Society, and the Debate on Rearmament, 1949-1959* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003). This private influence corresponded to the public involvement of veterans' organizations such as the *Verband Deutscher Soldaten* in West German rearmament policy. Such groups, while seemingly buying into a democratic political framework, exhibited a surprising degree of intellectual continuity with Nazism, particularly on the issues of European integration and anticommunism. See Jay Lockenour, *Soldiers as Citizens: Former Wehrmacht Officers in the Federal Republic of Germany, 1945-1955* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2001).

⁷ Kevin Soutor, "To Stem the Red Tide: The German Report Series and Its Effect on American Defense Doctrine, 1948-1954," in *The Journal of Military History* 57, No. 4 (Oct. 1993), 653-688.

⁸ On practical cooperation between the U.S. and German Armies, see Ingo Trauschweizer, *The Cold War U.S. Army: Building Deterrence for Limited War* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2008); James S. Corum, ed., *History of Warfare, Vol. 64: Rearming Germany* (Boston MA: Brill, 2011); and

started as history-writing at Allendorf and Neustadt from 1946-1948 and at Königstein after 1948 increasingly became a significant American intelligence resource.

Reaching for Objectivity: Consulting German Commanders

On 19 May 1945, United States Undersecretary of War Robert P. Patterson dispatched a commission of historians to Europe to interrogate leading German POWs in hopes of obtaining historical information on German military operations and policy during the war.⁹ Arriving in July and setting up initial headquarters in Bad Mondorf, Luxembourg, the commission, chaired by Hunter College President Dr. George N. Shuster, was comprised of experts in the fields of foreign relations, industrial mobilization, economic development, and the Nazi state. Maj. Kenneth W. Hechler served on the commission as military intelligence liaison for the U.S. Army. Undersecretary Patterson charged the “Shuster Commission” with obtaining, “information about [German] military operations, particularly high level discussions and decisions which is [sic] unlikely to have been committed to paper.” Such information, “although related to material of immediate interest” of the American military’s General Staff intelligence organizations (G-2), “would be distinctly different from the immediate subject matter of Military Intelligence.”¹⁰

The work of the Shuster Commission extended previous wartime measures that granted American military historians unprecedented access to both official documents

Andrew J. Birtle, *Rearming the Phoenix: U.S. Military Assistance to the Federal Republic of Germany, 1950-1960* (New York: Garland, 1991).

⁹ “The German Manuscript Collection,” Lt. Col. Howard P. Hudson, 30 November 1949, pg. 7-8; NACP RG 549: Records of the United States Army, Europe – Historical Division, Entry A1 2202AC: Foreign Military Studies, General Correspondence, Box 2, File I 6 Hudson Final.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

and officers in the field during Allied campaigns. In the 1940s, the U.S. Army's "official" history of the First World War still lay unfinished, in spite of significant access to enemy and American documents, officers, and governmental resources after 1918. In order to avoid a similar delay in the production of the U.S. Army's history of the Second World War, the Army General Staff created a separate Historical Division in July 1943. The Historical Division included some 500 personnel, stationed both in Washington and "on the ground" in the European Theater of Operations, and their initial mandate included some 120 volumes to be completed within 5 years of the war's conclusion.¹¹ The Army recruited these officers, enlisted men, and civilians based on their academic background in historical studies and related subjects. These historians had access to orders and General Staff documents and permission to interview American officers who had participated in the campaigns.¹² Ideally, captured enemy documents and pertinent G-2 (non-classified intelligence) and War Crimes Branch information would quickly be incorporated into pre-existing narrative accounts after the war, greatly streamlining the production of an official history.

Throughout the summer of 1945, Major Hechler enthusiastically reported the successes of the Shuster Commission's initial interrogations of notorious German military figures Hermann Göring, Walter Warlimont, Wilhelm Keitel, Alfred Jodl, Albert Kesselring, Karl Dönitz and Johannes Blaskowitz, to Col. Marshall, his immediate superior in Paris. The sixteen initial reports covered nine days of intensive discussions

¹¹ AP Report, 25 May 1946 "World War II History to Fill 120 Volumes," appeared in undated edition of *Stars and Stripes*; NACP RG 549: Records of the United States Army, Europe – Historical Division, Entry A1 2202AC: Foreign Military Studies, General Correspondence, Box 3, File II 2 Publicity.

¹² Proposed Transcript, "AFN Radio Program 'Let's Talk It Over' for 3 May 1946"; NACP RG 549: Records of the United States Army, Europe – Historical Division, Entry A1 2202AC: Foreign Military Studies, General Correspondence, Box 3, File II 2 Publicity.

with the captured Germans prepared by the commission, already convinced of its own importance and necessity. These reports emphasized the great potential of the interrogation program while consciously omitting or minimizing any evidence to the contrary. By 1949, given the widely assumed success of the Foreign Military Studies Program, Hechler, who held a PhD in history from Columbia University, wrote openly and proudly on his role in concealing any problems with the budding interrogation program from his superiors in Paris. In his report on the July 20th 1945 interrogation of Admiral Karl Dönitz, for example, Hechler realized that the Admiral “simply did not know what he was talking about,” as many of his statements, particularly on matters related to the Normandy campaign, contradicted German documents already in American hands. Hechler therefore decided to leave all of Dönitz’s incorrect ideas and musings out of the transcript, lest the “wolves back in Paris” doubt the efficacy of the interrogation program.¹³ Hechler admitted similar adjustments to the interrogations of Hermann Göring, notorious among his captors for his bombast and insincerity. This series of “transcripts” submitted to Paris headquarters by Hechler were hardly transcripts at all but instead conversations summarized after the fact, heavily edited, with no accompanying original text in German. These methods would confuse Historical Division personnel in 1946-47 when these early works were compiled for wider distribution.

Close personal relationships that developed between the interrogating team and the German prisoners, a pattern that would reproduce itself in the Operational History

¹³ Major Kenneth W. Hechler, “The Enemy Side of the Hill: the 1945 Background on Interrogation of German Commanders,” Historical Division, Washington D.C.: 30 July 1949, pg. 43-44. NACP RG 549: Records of the United States Army, Europe – Historical Division, Entry A1 2202AB: Records Concerning Foreign Military Studies, Box 7. The editors of these interviews, which became the ETHINT manuscripts, went so far as to write a study of their own, ETHINT 81 *An Interview with An Editor* that implored interrogators and interviewers to be more careful in verifying the content of their submissions and maintaining German transcript originals.

(German) Section as well, comprised the Shuster Commission's work. Hechler found former Chief of the OKW Operations Staff Alfred Jodl "enthusiastic" and "amusing" to speak with. Talking with Field Marshal Albert Kesselring was "a genuine thrill" because "[Kesselring] was a philosopher as well as a commander." Hermann Göring's boisterous sense of humor was of course legendary, but Hechler also found him charming and generous – Göring graciously autographed his own hand-drawn map of a rejected plan for the assault on Gibraltar, replete with Blitzkrieg arrows into Africa, and presented it to Hechler as a gift.¹⁴ In addition to favorable impressions of Dönitz's character (if not his politics) and Kesselring's grace and humor, Shuster himself came to have a "special regard" for General Heinz Guderian and in his memoirs sadly reflected on the "blunder" of postwar Allied efforts to punish a good soldier repeatedly "degraded" by imprisonment and criminal trials. Hechler and his fellow interrogators were not interested in obtaining information about war crimes or other criminal activities, but only "historical" information, minimizing potential instances of unpleasantness in the talks.¹⁵

The interrogation techniques of the Shuster Commission were geared towards building good relationships and open exchanges about a wide variety of events with the prisoners, setting aside any personal distaste for politics and proceeding with the task at hand with "a completely open mind." "No matter whether the PW has raped...and killed defenseless women and children," Hechler reflected, the most important matter for the

¹⁴ "Enemy Side of the Hill," 76-82.

¹⁵ George N. Shuster, *The Ground I Walked On: Reflections of a College President* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1961), 225-228. The documentary evidence is ambiguous as to whether or not the Germans interrogated by the Shuster Commission were promised that their statements in these particular interrogations would not be used against them at trial, although such grants of immunity against "self-incrimination" for statements given to the Historical Division was certainly the norm later on.

interrogator at hand was “whether that PW ha[d] a good story to tell.”¹⁶ Such was the model for later collaborations between German officers and the Historical Division.

There were, however, dangers to American objectivity in such approaches. For example, Walther Warlimont (who would later be convicted of war crimes for his involvement in the murder of Soviet POWs) and Hechler became particularly close at Montsdorf.

Hechler reflected “I unashamedly admired the man, enjoyed talking with him, showed him that I regarded it as a privilege, and sometimes even saluted him at the close of a conversation.”¹⁷ Lashing out at his former enemies (presumably in Paris) who criticized this congenial approach to interrogating a “filthy [man] who cannot be trusted farther than you can throw a piano,” Hechler had no apologies to make, openly proclaiming that “what started out an act in order to get information soon ceased to be an act because I was getting such a kick out of the experience. If this be treason, make the most [of it]!”¹⁸

In spite of these early problems, the Shuster commission successfully argued for the importance of a continued and broader interrogation program. As a result, in August 1945 Col. Marshall notified the Historical Division’s field historians of the Shuster Commission’s initial success and asked the field historians to use their knowledge of American military operations to develop lists of questions that the Shuster Commission could use in their interviews of high-ranking German POWs.¹⁹ As a result of this wider investigation, the list of German officers worthy of interviews was expanded to include German High Command (OKW) staffers and officers of the German General Staff (OKH) as well. Historical Division junior officers and NCOs undertook trips to various

¹⁶ “Enemy Side of the Hill,” 111.

¹⁷ “Enemy Side of the Hill,” 88-89.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ “German Manuscript Collection,” 7-8.

POW camps in the U.S. Zone of Occupation in order to uncover additional Germans of interest to the Historical Division.

In October 1945, Col. Marshall wrote his counterpart in the War Crimes Branch, underscoring the value of the captured German officers to the Historical Division and requesting the transfer of high-ranking German generals from War Crimes Branch to the Historical Division for the purpose of constructing a separate German history of military operations in Europe.²⁰ Finding the information provided by the captured Germans on the history of the 1944 Normandy and Bastogne campaigns particularly valuable, Col. Marshall requested another expansion to include the “systematization of interrogation of German army commanders and staffs,” through transferring all German officers of interest to the Section to centralized POW camps, where they could work directly with U.S. historians and documents, allowing for the speedy integration of oral interrogations into historical works.²¹

American officers in the Historical Division conceived of this “innovation” of defeated German officers taking part in the production of recent history as a noble and democratic pursuit. Thus, in December 1947, Dr. Hugh M. Cole of the U.S. Army Historical Division could confidently proclaim at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association that the 500 narratives already produced with the help of the German officers constituted “one of the most important contributions to the history of World War II.”²² Also speaking in 1947, Col. Harold E. Potter, then Chief Historian of

²⁰ “German Manuscript Collection,” 9.

²¹ “German Manuscript Collection,” 11. Characteristically, in 1948 Alfred Toppe, writing on behalf of Franz Halder and the German “Control Group” in charge of the operations at Königstein, would claim that all of this had been the German prisoners’ idea.

²² The talk was later published verbatim as Hugh M. Cole, “Writing Contemporary Military History,” *Military Affairs* 12, no. 3 (Autumn 1948). See also “Historical News,” *The American Historical Review* 53,

the European Command, reflected, “Never before, have the military leaders of a defeated nation been encouraged or even permitted to advance their own views in such detail.”²³ Writing in 1949, Lt. Col. Howard P. Hudson of the Historical Division described the consultation of enemy prisoners for historical studies as “a situation unique in American military history,” and “a situation of the past that may never occur again.” Hudson lauded Army historians’ great efforts to write a “complete” history of World War II in Europe that, in the interests of objectivity and thoroughness, would “deal with the enemy side of the story.”²⁴ More practically, the expansion of prisoners’ duties to include active participation in the shaping of the American military’s history of World War II was conducted in the optimistic spirit of augmenting and even replacing the limited German documentary material available to American historians, much of which was unorganized or destroyed by the Germans or Allies in the final stages of the war.²⁵

Working under stringent deadlines, however, American military historians soon realized that the method of oral interrogation was insufficient for tapping the vast and detailed knowledge of their German subjects. As a result, the Historical Division experimented with allowing the German officers access to maps and other captured documents so that they could then write brief accounts on their own of campaigns in which they took part, turning over these written briefs to the Historical Division for

no. 3 (Apr. 1948), pp. 658-662. Similar assertions were triumphantly made about the Nuremberg Trial data as well. See, for example, Robert M. W. Kempner, “The Nuremberg Trials as Sources of Recent German Political and Historical Materials,” in *The American Political Science Review* 44, no. 2 (June 1950), pp. 447-459.

²³ “Draft of Press Release,” Robert C. Malendy, June 1947. NACP RG 549: Records of the United States Army, Europe – Historical Division, Entry A1 2202AC: Foreign Military Studies, General Correspondence, Box 3, File II-Publicity.

²⁴ “German Manuscript Collection,” 1.

²⁵ “German Manuscript Collection,” 2.

processing.²⁶ Following further successes in the fall of 1945 in the completion of American histories, the War Department reorganized and expanded the interrogation program on January 3rd, 1946, creating the Operational History (German) Section, a subordinate branch of the Historical Division under the direction of Col. Charles W. Pence. The directives of the new section were not only to continue interrogations of German officers for the purpose of clarifying American military history projects, but also to create new source material that would fill gaps in German documents. The Operational History (German) Section was to accomplish these goals not through interrogations, but through German officers' independently producing their own reports that American historians would later translate, edit, and verify.²⁷

From History to Intelligence: Allendorf, Neustadt, Königstein

This early freedom granted to the German writers by the Historical Division, given for both practical and collegial reasons, was a significant turning point, and symptomatic of a broader change in American attitudes toward German POWs. Driven by a deteriorating international situation and fear over the size and intentions of the Red Army, the U.S. Army reversed its wartime tradition of suspicion and distrust of former *Wehrmacht* officers, ushering in a new period of collegiality and interest in collaboration.²⁸ While the reports produced by the German writers in 1945-46 were still mostly limited to personal recollections of strategy and tactical operations in which American forces were involved, this early degree of freedom allowed the German writers

²⁶ "German Manuscript Collection," 12.

²⁷ "German Manuscript Collection," 14-15.

²⁸ Derek R. Mallett, *Hitler's Generals in America: Nazi POWs and Allied Military Intelligence* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2013), 181.

free-reign within broad, topical, parameters set by the Historical Division. Later, when the Historical Division turned to the topic of the Eastern Front, this freedom would allow the German writers to focus most explicitly on what they thought the Americans “needed” to know about the Soviet system. Thus, by 1947, the German writers would have the freedom to speculate within their reports on the strengths and weaknesses of the Soviet system in the past *and* present.

In order to fulfill the directives for expansion, the Operational History (German) Section required more German officers. Yet no comprehensive list of German officers during the war existed in 1946. German officers and their papers were scattered throughout the complex and varied system of POW camps in the four zones of Allied occupation, and throughout Europe more broadly. From 1946 through 1947, junior officers of the Operational History (German) Section travelled from camp to camp in Germany, Austria, Italy, the Benelux countries, Denmark, Britain, and even West Africa. These Americans distributed questionnaires to captured German officers that, in enquiring extensively about rank, service, and operational history, identified subjects of potential interest to the Historical Division. A representative account of one such trip, undertaken by Capt. Frank C. Mahin in March 1946 to the Third Army region in Bavaria, reported the completion of 335 forms of which perhaps a fourth were of initial interest to the Division.²⁹ If the officers were willing to start work immediately, the Operational

²⁹ “Third Army Trip,” Capt. Frank C. Mahin to Major H. P. Hudson, 5 March 1946, pg. 2; NACP RG 549: Records of the United States Army, Europe – Historical Division, Entry A1 2202AC: Foreign Military Studies, General Correspondence, Box 1, File I 1 Trips – Miscellaneous.

History Section representative supplied them with maps, pencils, paper, and an assignment on the spot.³⁰



German General Officer PW's Working with Ardennes Sub-Division, Historical Division, "Florida House" Oberursel, 23 February 1946. Seated: Genmaj. Wagener (Chief of Staff Army Group "B"); Gen. d Art Lucht (Command Group 11th Army); Genlt. D. Waffen-SS Priess (Command Group I SS Pz. Corps); Genmaj. Denkert (Command Group 3rd Pz. Gren. Div.). Standing: Lt. C.K. Howard (Chief, Ardennes Sub-Section); Mr. C.J. Hornung (Chief Interpreter); Maj. H.P. Hudson (Deputy Chief, Operational History (German) Section); Genmaj. Frhr. V. Gersdorff (Chief of Staff 7th Army); Genlt. Bayerlein (Command Group Pz. Lehr Div.); Gen. d. Inf. Hitzfeld (Command Group LXVII Corps); Gen D. Pz. Tr Frhr. V. Luettwitz (Command Group XLVII Pz. Corps); Genmaj v. Waldenburg (Command Group 116th Pz. Div); Genmaj. Kokott (Command Group 26 V G Div). NACP RG 549: Records of the United States Army, Europe - Historical Division, Entry A1 2202AG: Foreign Military Studies Photographs of German Officers, Box 35, Folder "at Allendorf."

³⁰ "Report on Trip to Headquarters BAOR and Munsterlager," Maj. Daniel T. Murphy to Col. C.W. Pence, 5 May 1947, pg. 3; NACP RG 549: Records of the United States Army, Europe – Historical Division, Entry A1 2202AC: Foreign Military Studies, General Correspondence, Box 1, File I 1 Trips – Belgium.



American Officers and Staff of the Historical Division, "Florida House," Oberursel, Germany, 23 February 1946. From Left to Right: Mr. B.E. Groseclose (Central Germany Sub-Section); Lt. C.K. Howard (Chief, Ardennes Sub-Section); Maj. Howard P. Hudson (Deputy Chief, Operational History (German) Section); Col. Harold E. Potter (Chief, Historical Division); Col. Charles W. Pence (Chief, Operational History (German) Section); Lt. James F. Scoggin, Jr. (Chief, Central German Sub-Section); Mr. F.M. Ludden (Chief, Northern France Sub-Section); Mr. G.J. Hornung (Chief Interpreter). NACP RG 549: Records of the United States Army, Europe - Historical Division, Entry A1 2202AG: Foreign Military Studies Photographs of German Officers, Box 35, Folder "at Allendorf."

In January 1946, the Historical Division had employed 23 Germans, writing exclusively on German counter-operations against American forces. By July 24, 1946, the Historical Division had "processed" 1,342 General and General Staff Officers, and 315 of these had already submitted reports to the Historical Division or been interrogated by Historical Division personnel. At this point, a total of 549 General and General Staff Officers were still currently working for the Historical Division: 222 at the centralized Allendorf Camp and 327 dispersed throughout other camps.³¹ As the program ballooned in size, the Operational History (German) Section gave the German officers increasing freedom to write on subjects of their own choosing within broad parameters set by Historical Division, including all German campaign operations, military organization and occupation policies and, eventually, recommendations for future global anti-communist operations.

³¹ "Report on Operational History (German) Section," Major Howard P. Hudson, Deputy Chief, to Chief, Historical Division, USFET: 24 July 1946, pg. 30-31, 41. NACP RG 549: Records of the United States Army, Europe – Historical Division, Entry A1 2202AC: Foreign Military Studies, General Correspondence, Box 2, File I 6 Hudson Final.

The initial operations of the program in January 1946 were confined to a small facility, “The Florida House” at Oberursel, near an American Central Intelligence Group base and just north of Historical Division headquarters at Frankfurt am Main.³² In order to centralize the operations of the growing number of German authors, the Historical Division took control of a larger POW camp at Allendorf, east of Marburg. This remained the central location of writing operations until after July 1947, when the smaller group of authors not working from home was relocated to nearby Neustadt, until this camp too closed in June 1948.³³

Lt. Col. Hudson wrote, “the historical officers found that they had inherited a backlog of complaints and gripes,” from the officers’ previous imprisonment by the Army, including complaints about delayed parole/denazification proceedings, furloughs and visitation rights, mail allowances, food, clothing, and many more.³⁴ Although drab in its appearances, the camp at Allendorf was designed and administered to cater to the German officers’ needs and sensibilities, so as to keep morale (and therefor productivity) at a high level. The single-story concrete buildings were divided into three-room apartments, containing latrine facilities (shower facilities were available elsewhere in the

³² Oberursel was also the initial gathering place for the members of the Gehlen Organization; each program was aware of the other, and the German employed by the Historical Division repeatedly requested permission to make contact with the Gehlen group so as to pool resources, particularly on projects dealing with the Soviet Union. See Searle, 30.

³³ “German Manuscript Collection,” 19-20. The decrease in size was commensurate with both the winding down of the general history of battles and the denazification process, but may have also reflected the postwar budgetary squeeze brought about by Congress. See David Spudson, “Government Historical Program,” *The Washington Post*, June 29, 1947, pg. B4.

³⁴ “German Manuscript Collection,” 17. The various complaints are detailed in NACP RG 549: Records of the United States Army, Europe – Historical Division, Entry A1 2202AC: Foreign Military Studies, General Correspondence, Box 6, File III-1 Welfare. Perhaps the most “serious” complaint was made against the battalion of Polish guards who initially maintained security at Allendorf. Besides verbally abusing the German officers the Poles on one occasion in July 1946 apparently became intoxicated and took pot-shots at the camp buildings after dark, frightening a number of German inmates. American guards replaced the Polish guards soon after the incident.

camp), cots, tables and chairs. The German occupants were allowed to decorate their own rooms, adding slight comforts as they saw fit, including fresh flowers that grew in the camp in good weather. There was no separate Mess Hall, so the officers took their meals in their rooms, which allowed them to maintain an internal hierarchy by rank. The German officers enjoyed an on-site cinema and concrete swimming pool, while volleyball, soccer and American baseball complemented the normal physical exercise of long walks about the camp. The camp prisoners were entitled to send and receive one letter per week, could have a single visitor per week, and could send their income from the Historical Division to their families if they wished.³⁵ A camp news service, covering both radio and print media, allowed the officers to keep abreast of current events.³⁶ Overall, the “inmates” at Allendorf and later, Neustadt, found their time with the Historical Division much more accommodating than their previous captivity in general confinement, where they repeatedly faced “derogatory” or “slandorous” treatment at the hands of their American guards and the daily affront of sharing quarters with the “common criminals” of the Nazi Party.³⁷

³⁵ Payment ranged from 450-750 RM per month (750 RM was reserved for Franz Halder only, as head of the program) for those in the camps, and 100 RM per week for those Germans who were given special permission to work from home or paroled out of the camps. As the American occupation wound down, the majority of writers were processed through denazification tribunals and sent home to continue their work. Later, at Neustadt, the writers would receive permission to have their families come reside with them at the camp.

³⁶ Similarly relaxed conditions existed also at Neustadt after early 1947, so much so that an SS-man escaped the camp during one of the liberal leave periods granted to prisoners, causing a brief duration of restricted privileges there, “Report on Operational History (German) Section,” 33-35. Alfred Toppe, *The Story of A Project: The Writing of Military History at Allendorf and Neustadt* (Königstein on the Taunus: November 1948), pg. 43-44, 101-102. NACP Microfilm Publication M1035: MS#C-042.

³⁷ *Story of A Project*, 38. Toppe commented, “Everyone who had to leave again, did so with the deepest regret and with an expression of thanks for the time spent in Allendorf.”



Camp Allendorf, Germany, housing former German officers engaged in the Historical Project. NACP RG 549: Records of the United States Army, Europe - Historical Division, Entry A1 2202AG: Foreign Military Studies Photographs of German Officers, Box 35, Folder "at Allendorf."

Characteristically, the German officers at Allendorf and Neustadt despised their “vilification” in the popular press as militarists and resented their mandatory denazification. As honorable soldiers, they insisted that they had little or no choice in their actions, and that responsibility for Germany’s crimes lay with the “real” offenders in the upper echelons of Nazi governance – a frequent subtext in the reports they produced. Seeing themselves as “men of honor,” the officers at Allendorf went on strike in 1946 upon hearing of the death sentences handed down at Nuremberg. The “judicial murder” of Alfred Jodl in particular caused great distress among the German officers, as they

identified personally much more with his predicament than with that of Wilhelm Keitel.³⁸

The German officers greeted their own denazification proceedings in 1947-48 with similar disdain. “Generals with Generals,” a story on those judicial proceedings outside of Neustadt filed by the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* in March 1948 captured the officers’ feelings in this regard. The newspaper reported on the difficulties faced by Herr Dr. Frey, the Bavarian Prosecutor of the Neustadt *Spruchkammer*,

As compensation for the work he had done so far [at Neustadt], Dr. Frey recently received a letter out of the camp in which ‘one for many’ told him that ‘he were the biggest scoundrel and that the gallows were already completed on which he would soon be hanged.’ This message was tactfully put into an envelope edged in black.³⁹

Reflecting on the “automatic arrest” categories in a German-authored history of the Foreign Military Studies Program, one German General characteristically referred to the Allied obsession with justice as “a legal absurdity” originating from minds “that knew less about military matters than a pig about poetry.”⁴⁰ The chief non-material complaint of the German officers in Allendorf and Neustadt was what they viewed as a persistent “smear campaign” of the Allies and the media focused on the officer corps’ complicity in the Third Reich’s crimes. The problem was compounded given the widespread awareness of Germans working in the Historical Division that members of the Gehlen

³⁸ *Story of a Project*, 45. For a specific manifestation of these complaints, see “Field Marshall Ritter von Leeb to Commander-in-Chief, 3rd U.S. Army (from Steinlager Allendorf) 1 April 1946. NACP RG 549: Records of the United States Army, Europe – Historical Division, Entry A1 2202AC: Foreign Military Studies, General Correspondence, Box 6, File III-1 Welfare. The 1949 conviction of Erich von Manstein for war crimes provoked a similar slow-down, orchestrated by the “home workers” for the Königstein project, as did the 1950 trial of Alexander von Falkenhausen in Belgium.

³⁹ “Generals with Generals,” *Süddeutsche Zeitung* 22 (March 1948).

⁴⁰ *Story of a Project*, 87-88. While the issue of the criminality of the officer corps, when coupled with the occupation administrations’ assaults on veterans benefits, led to much resentment of the Allies it did have the unforeseen event of politically binding German officers to the new West German state. See James M. Diehl, *The Thanks of the Fatherland: German Veterans After the Second World War* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 54-86.

Organization had long since been paroled, and were working voluntarily, while the Germans at Allendorf remained prisoners of war or civilian internees.⁴¹

In spite of these “affronts” to their decorum and dignity, many German officers found great satisfaction in their role as historians of the Second World War. In a February 1947 letter to his wife, General Staff *Oberstlt.* Ernst Linke was enthusiastic about his collaboration with the Historical Division, as it allowed him to “remain close to his profession” and make use of his years of valuable experience, as he was not optimistic about other employment prospects after his release.⁴² Other officers saw their service with the Historical Division as a valuable gift to posterity, and appreciated the democratic spirit that allowed them to tell “their side of the story.” Still others saw their collaboration with the West as a necessary defense against the hostile forces of communism. No matter their motives, so long as the initial screening of the German officers uncovered a willingness to participate and useful operational experience, the officer was usually accepted into the program.

In this initial screening process, the Americans made no distinction between war criminals and lesser POWs or *Wehrmacht* and SS. The Historical Division only took the potential historical value of a given subject into consideration. For example, throughout May 1946 the Operational History (German) Section energetically pursued the opportunity to recruit *Generalmajor* Fritz Kraemer, former Chief of Staff of the 1st SS

⁴¹ “Memorandum of Conference with Capt. Mahin and Scoggin,” 13 March 1947. NACP RG 549: Records of the United States Army, Europe – Historical Division, Entry A1 2202AC: Foreign Military Studies, General Correspondence, Box 6, File III-1 Welfare. Some of the officers, apparently without irony, repeatedly protested that such continued internment violated the protocols of the Geneva Convention.

⁴² Censor Report – Ernst Linke to Frau Gerda Linke, 13 February 1947. NACP RG 549: Records of the United States Army, Europe – Historical Division, Entry A1 2202AF: Foreign Military Studies Personnel Files of German Officers, Box 1, Untitled Folder (Censor Reports Filed with 201 Files).

Panzer Division *during* the process of his indictment and ultimate conviction for his role in the famed “Malmedy Massacre” of American prisoners during the Battle of the Bulge.⁴³ Other high-ranking early targets of the Historical Division included Walther von Brauchitsch, Franz Halder, Heinz Guderian, Lothar Rendulic, Hermann Reinecke, Albert Kesselring, and Erhard Milch, in spite of their anticipated “permanent loss to the Historical Division” as a result of forthcoming war crimes trials (and assumed convictions). This pattern would continue into 1948-49 as well: Albert Kesselring continued to contribute studies from his Italian prison cell after being given a life sentence for the execution of civilians there, while a *Chicago Daily Tribune* article of January 1948 cited the U.S. Army as announcing that no matter the result of the denazification trials at Neustadt, the Germans would continue their employment with the Historical Division.⁴⁴ The Historical Division in turn delayed these individual tribunals as long as possible in order to keep the German officers classified as interned prisoners of war instead of civilians, keeping them in the camps and at work. At the same time the Americans viewed this as a reward for their German colleagues, since PW status allowed substantially higher ration allocations for the officers than for the German civilian population.⁴⁵

⁴³ “Field Trip Report,” Lt. William a Sutton to Col. C.W. Pence 16 May, 1946. NACP RG 549: Records of the United States Army, Europe – Historical Division, Entry A1 2202AC: Foreign Military Studies, General Correspondence, Box 1, File I 1 Trips – Miscellaneous. In this case, the Historical Division obtained agreements from War Crimes Branch that regardless of the outcome of the trial, Kraemer would be made available for interrogation. Kraemer received 10 years in prison for his involvement in the massacre. Meanwhile, according to the report of Major Kenneth Hechler, Kraemer’s careful work on the Ardennes campaign helped “prove” the historical program’s success, winning additional administrative backing.

⁴⁴ “2 German Generals Writing Memoirs of War Face Trial,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Jan. 11, 1948, pg. 13. Associated Press, “Kesselring Back in Jail,” *The Baltimore Sun*, Dec. 15, 1948, pg. 14. Kerstin von Lingen, *Kesselring’s Last Battle: War Crimes Trials and Cold War Politics, 1945-1960*, trans. Alexandra Klemm (Lawrence, KN: Kansas University Press, 2009), 150-151.

⁴⁵ Mallett, 179.

The deferential treatment of the German officers in the writing program also influenced the International Military Tribunal and the successor trials of individual *Wehrmacht* officers. In the cases of both “major” and “minor” German war criminals of interest to the Operational History (German) Section, the Historical Division placed internal priorities on delaying indictments and material witness testimony until completion of historical work. Although it is difficult to assess the exact effects of the Historical Division’s advocacy, in August-September of 1946, the Historical Division obtained assurances from Capt. Rapp, the deputy of Gen. Telford Taylor in the Office of Chief Counsel for prosecuting war crimes, that calls for witness appearances and indictments for any Germans cooperating with the Historical Division would be delayed “until the last possible moment.”⁴⁶ With the exception of the major offenders tried at Nuremberg, the Historical Division had priority over other interrogation, intelligence, and war crimes offices in requisitioning German POWs.⁴⁷ At the same time, the unfettered access granted to some less than trustworthy German officers in the writing program to original *Wehrmacht* records and correspondence held great potential to effect the outcome of war crimes tribunals. Former Panzer Group Commander and Historical Division collaborator (1945-1947) General Leo Geyr von Schweppenburg remembered, for instance, that it was possible “to allow one or the other piece of incriminating evidence that could have been used at the Nuremberg trial to disappear,” claiming, “The Americans even helped out.”⁴⁸ Setting aside Schweppenburg’s assertion that American officers were themselves complicit in destroying incriminating evidence, the collegial

⁴⁶ “Report of Trip, 28 August-5 September” Col D.T. Beeler to Col. C.W. Pence, 6 Sept. 1946. NACP RG 549: Records of the United States Army, Europe – Historical Division, Entry A1 2202AC: Foreign Military Studies, General Correspondence, Box 1, File I 1 Trips – Miscellaneous

⁴⁷ “German Manuscript Collection,” 17-18; “Report on Operational History (German) Section,” 29-30.

⁴⁸ Quoted in Wolfram Wette, 233.

atmosphere and close personal friendships formed between the Germans and the American officers of the Operational History (German) Section, the relative freedom the German officers enjoyed at the writing centers, and the universal antipathy of the German writers towards the Allied tribunals provided ample opportunities for tampering with the documents. Deferential treatment of *Wehrmacht* officers was also in keeping with the widespread sentiment in both the U.S. Army and the German population more generally (in spite of the IMT's best pedagogical efforts to the contrary) that the SS ideologues and Party officials were the "real" criminals, while the military men remained steadfastly professional and coped the best they could under the Nazi dictatorship.⁴⁹

Very much aware of how the existence of such a program could be interpreted both in the United States and in occupied Germany, the Operational History (German) Section endeavored to keep any "special treatment" of German staff officers engaged in historical work out of the press. As a result, the Historical Division managed a media blackout of the Allendorf/Neustadt camp work until late 1947, when the leaking of the story was deemed inevitable as a result of the establishment of local denazification tribunals for the German officers left in the camp.⁵⁰ Even so, in a September 27, 1947, briefing to press correspondents at Neustadt, the Assistant Chief of the Operational History Branch, Maj. Daniel T. Murphy, urged the correspondents to remember that a media black-out on the Germans' work remained in effect and issued a final order to "not

⁴⁹ The decision to not treat the German High Command as a "criminal organization" was seminal in this regard. Jan Erik Schulte, "The SS as the 'Alibi of a Nation'?: Narrative Continuities from the Nuremberg Trials to the 1960s," in Kim C. Priemel and Alexa Stiller, eds. *Reassessing the Nuremberg Military Tribunals: Transitional Justice, Trial Narratives, and Historiography* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012) and Valerie Hébert, *Hitler's Generals on Trial: The Last War Crimes Tribunal at Nuremberg* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2010).

⁵⁰ "Recommendations for the Press at Neustadt" Maj. Daniel T. Murphy (Asst. Chief, Operational History Branch) to The Chief Historian, 29 September 1947. NACP RG 549: Records of the United States Army, Europe – Historical Division, Entry A1 2202AC: Foreign Military Studies, General Correspondence, Box 3, File II-Publicity.

attempt to get a story on what the defendants are doing or how they are doing it,” lest “that certain quarters could seize upon this sort of thing and expand it beyond recognition.”⁵¹

In spite of these pleas from Maj. Murphy, the Neustadt writing program garnered more and more attention, with articles and reports on the program filed in *Stars and Stripes*, *Radio Frankfurt*, *Herald Tribune Bureau*, *Neue Zeitung*, *Marburger Presse*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Frankfurter Rundschau* and other print and radio outlets. The most sensitive issue for the Historical Division was the “misinformed” or “exaggerated” characterizations of the relatively opulent lifestyles enjoyed by the German officers at Neustadt in comparison to the average civilian citizen of the Western Zone at the time. Such reports in the *Frankfurter Rundschau* and *Süddeutsche Zeitung* in particular lingered on the fact that the Germans at Neustadt, some of them potential war criminals, were well paid and received extra rations, had access to unlimited electricity and coal, and were allowed to maintain a “military culture” in the camp.⁵² In an informal internal evaluation of the print and radio coverage across the occupation zones, *Oberstleutnant* Kurt Gerber, who listened to Russian, British, and US Zone radio broadcasts and provided summaries of current events to the other writers in the camp noted “a steady increase of news” about the camp, which “German politicians or some other unknown circles attempted...to exploit...from a political angle.” In the Soviet Zone specifically,

⁵¹ Ibid. Similar concerns had existed as early as July 1946, when Maj. Hudson responded negatively to Col. Pence to an inquiry about press access to the camp. See “Publicity for This Project,” Major Howard P. Hudson to Colonel Pence, 3 July 1946. NACP RG 549: Records of the United States Army, Europe – Historical Division, Entry A1 2202AC: Foreign Military Studies, General Correspondence, Box 3, File II-Publicity.

⁵² See “Generals with Generals,” *Süddeutsche Zeitung* 22 (March 1948) and “Generals Write History,” *Frankfurter Rundschau*, March 27, 1948.

Gerber reported that “the conditions are only presented from the viewpoint of political propaganda,” and “There can be no question of an accurate description anywhere.”⁵³

An example of the “propaganda” referenced in Gerber’s report included the nascent SED press of the Eastern (Soviet) Zone, which in a November 3rd *Berlin am Mittag* column entitled “Boom in German Generals” decried the collaboration of the Americans and German officers as indicative of Western militarism. The editorial scathingly described the German officers as “experienced specialists on the subject of how wars are precipitated, in order to finally lose them,” speculating that “hav[ing] bitten out all their teeth in the East only seems to make them appear still more valuable in the eyes of some Americans who are particularly lusting for war.” The editorial further predicted that such collaboration would result in otherwise politically compromised elements of the German officer corps “ris[ing] politically cleared like ‘phoenix from the ashes,’” and openly questioned producing “a history of the war written by those who have every reason to surround their spectacular defeats with some sort of a myth,” noting that the officers had likely already filled the Americans’ heads with nonsensical lies and falsehoods that attributed the German defeat solely to Hitler’s mistakes.⁵⁴ Such characterizations of the nefarious activities of the American Army and former *Wehrmacht* officers became regular fodder for Soviet propaganda more generally, which particularly focused on Franz Halder’s leading role in the program, with stories picked up

⁵³“Reports on This Camp Published in the Press and Heard Over the Radio,” Kurt Gerber, Neustadt: 11 November 1947. NACP RG 549: Records of the United States Army, Europe – Historical Division, Entry A1 2202AC: Foreign Military Studies, General Correspondence, Box 3, File II-Publicity.

⁵⁴ “Boom in German Generals” Under “Our Opinion” *Berlin am Mittag*, 3 November 1947. NACP RG 549: Records of the United States Army, Europe – Historical Division, Entry A1 2202AC: Foreign Military Studies, General Correspondence, Box 3, File II-Publicity. Of course, while the SED-backed press was somewhat prescient in predicting that the work of the German officers would prove inaccurate and serve as a vehicle for political rehabilitation, these insights are undermined by the newspaper’s attribution of all American collaboration with former German officers to a proto-dictatorial conspiracy of their avowed enemy the Social Democratic Party and its chief, Kurt Schumacher.

in 1948 and 1949 in *Pravda*, *Allgemeiner Deutscher Nachrichtendienst* (the state news agency of East Germany) and *TASS* (the telegraph agency of the Soviet Union).⁵⁵

The East German press was not the only party concerned about the reliability of the Germans working for the Historical Division – the British Historical Section of the War Cabinet Office also questioned the accuracy of German reports, and was not interested in any joint cooperation with the German officers. A Historical Division internal memorandum summarizing a meeting between representatives of the U.S. Army Historical Division and the Historical Section of the War Cabinet in London on April 18th, 1952, annotated with the laconic conclusion “we can expect nothing from the British,” offers valuable insight into the contrasting American/British attitudes towards the cooperating German officers. Both Brian Melland (Senior Member of the Historical Section of the Cabinet Office) and Andrew B. Acheson (Executive of the Historical Program of the War Cabinet Office) reacted with surprise and suspicion to an American offer to “furnish the best qualified German authors” to undertake joint projects with the British based on the reports of former *Wehrmacht* officers, even when the American representatives offered to pay all expenses to accommodate the Germans’ travels to Britain to inspect captured records there. At this point, the British delegates reiterated that they were interested in the history of World War II, and that they had little use for such collaboration given that “the main efforts of the Foreign Military Studies Branch

⁵⁵ The Associated Press and United Press also covered such accusations from the Soviet Union and East Germany, along with Halder and the U.S. Army’s responses. See, for example, United Press Report, “Russians Uncover U.S. German Spy Ring, Says Pravda,” in *Daily Boston Globe* March 31, 1948, pg. 1; and Associated Press Report, “Halder Denies Meeting with German Chiefs,” in *Chicago Tribune*, Nov. 26, 1949, pg. 13. In NACP Microfilm Publication M1035: MS#P-029e the Control Group at Königstein also complained about the rampant rumors that they were working on a secret plan for West German rearmament in November/December 1949. See, for example, Harold A. Williams, “Ex-Nazi Chief Works for U.S.,” *The Baltimore Sun*, Apr. 12, 1950, which referenced popular rumors that “the Generals are drawing up plans for a new *Wehrmacht*.”

were directed towards obtaining *operational information* rather than in *historical* pursuits,” and, as a result, the German officers would prove of “little value” to British interests.⁵⁶ In the opinion of the Historical Section of the War Cabinet Office, the U.S. Historical Division no longer did much history writing, instead producing future-focused, results-driven, operational studies designed to have contemporary policy ramifications. Much to the shock and confusion of the American delegates, the British “expressed complete disinterest in obtaining operational information,” while making clear that “they had a very low opinion of...the manuscripts prepared by the former German generals.” The British delegation closed the meeting with the intimation “that the German generals could not be trusted” in any capacity, and that if the British government desired any historical studies, they were quite capable of researching their own records.⁵⁷ After six years of close cooperation with the German officers, the Americans of the Historical Division had little understanding of how or why anyone could question the reliability of the reports produced by “their” Germans.

This focus on operational information at the expense of historical information that so concerned the British is apparent in the limited number of individual German reports that dealt with the Soviet Union in 1947, but is even more pronounced in the studies produced after the relocation of the project from Neustadt to Königstein in May 1948.

⁵⁶ Emphasis mine. T.W. Bauer, “Memorandum for the Record: Visit to the Historical Section, War Cabinet Offices, Britain,” 28 April 1952. NACP RG 549: Records of the United States Army, Europe – Historical Division, Entry A1 2197: Records of the Special Staff Historical Division – General Correspondence 1952-53, Box 1142: File 300.6 – Inter Office Memos.

⁵⁷ Ibid. This British institutional distrust of German motives also extended to the repeated demands of the West German government to reacquire all German archival records still in Allied hands, in which Acheson and Melland also played a role. See Astrid M. Eckert, *The Struggle for the Files: The Western Allies and the Return of German Archives After the Second World War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012). This skepticism also applied to West German rearmament as well, which could (to some degree) also be attributable to a lack of close cooperation with German groups lobbying for rearmament as in the U.S. case.

Originally, the work of the Historical Division was supposed to end with the final the denazification trials at Neustadt in early 1948; having been processed by the courts, the last of the officers in “automatic-arrest” categories were free to leave the camp. Yet again, however, Col. Potter intervened to prolong the existence of the program, given what he and the Historical Division generally regarded as the high quality of work produced by the German writers. After close negotiations with both his superiors in Washington and Franz Halder, who had taken command of the German writers at Neustadt in July 1947, Col. Potter was able to strike a deal to continue the Germans’ work for an additional year. Given that local *Spruchkammer* had processed all the German internees (and reflecting postwar budgetary constraints), this new iteration of the military studies program was to consist of only a select “Control Group” of officers based in the Taunus district of Königstein (a short journey from Historical Division headquarters in nearby Frankfurt am Main) who would coordinate writing projects amongst a larger group of “home workers,” spread throughout the Western zone. Of course, Halder took control as “Chief” of the new operation, and was able to handpick the other members of the Control Group, as well as the home workers.⁵⁸ Halder’s selections for leadership positions in the Control Group included Hans von Greiffenberg (former Chief, Operations Branch OKH and Chief of Staff Army Groups Center and A); Leopold Bürkner (former chief of *Abwehr* “Foreign”); Burkhardt Müller-Hillibrand (former Chief, Organization Branch OKH); Oldwig von Natzmer (formerly Chief of Transportation in OKH Section); Hellmuth Reinhardt (former Chief of Staff of General Army Office/Army High Command – Replacement Army); Alfred Toppe (longtime personal friend of

⁵⁸ Alfred Toppe, *History of the Koenigstein Phase of the German Historical Project: Jun. 48-Apr. 49* (May 1949), pg. 4-5. NACP Microfilm Publication M1035: MS#P-029a. Home workers were considerably cheaper to employ than permanent residents at an installation such as Neustadt.

Halder, former Chief, Supply and Administration Branch) and Alfred Zerbel (former Chief, Training Branch, OKH).

Although this iteration of the German writing program was only supposed to last a year, the Historical Division deemed the results worthy enough to continue collaborating with this select segment of the Allendorf/Neustadt operation until 1961. In terms of raw numbers, the military studies program shrank from the 549 writers involved in 1946 to the eight (later five) members of the Control Group and a rotating staple of 40-50 writers at any one time. In Halder's eyes, the highly centralized "scientific work of intrinsic value" produced by the Königstein Control Group was a great improvement over "the mass production methods" of Allendorf/Neustadt, because the highly professional Control Group could "go further than a mere summing up of facts," instead producing work of practical contemporary use.⁵⁹ As a result, diminution in numbers did not lead to a corresponding diminution of output or influence. Instead, the move from Neustadt to Königstein ushered in the most important phase of the "intelligence" on the Soviet Union produced by the German writers.

In January 1952, the quarterly administration reports sent from the Control Group at Königstein to Historical Division headquarters began differentiating between "Strictly Historical Studies" and "German Experiences in World War II." Since requests for studies originated from the Historical Division and were then passed on to the Control Group and writers this change in focus from historical to operational studies coincided with additional U.S. interest in such reports. For instance, the Historical Division received a cable from the Chief of Military History in Washington in December 1952,

⁵⁹ Ibid pg. 2, 27.

commissioning a “historical study” on the specific topic of “consumption and attrition rates attendant to military operations of German Army Group Center ’41 campaign on Eastern Front,” which, contextually, reflected more of an interest in contingency planning for a Western invasion of the Soviet Union than in historical matters.⁶⁰

Since a significant number of these operational studies were commissioned long before 1952, the division between “historical” and “non-historical” projects in the administrative reports should be seen as the culmination of U.S. interest in such reports rather than the beginnings of purely operational studies. As early as November 1947, for example, then Army Chief of Staff Eisenhower wrote to OMGUS head General Lucius Clay requesting a shift in emphasis in the German writing program from historical writings to more specialized studies of interest and value to Army planning staffs and the service schools.⁶¹ Among the reports themselves, there are significant thematic continuities in studies on the Soviet Union commissioned from 1947 through the 1950s. As a result, the only truly “historical” studies amongst the Germans’ reports were on Western-front oriented topics.

Continuing the Crusade Against Bolshevism

What actual information did the Americans receive and what was the scope and content of these reports? How biased could the writings of these amateur German historians be in the face of constant American supervision? No matter what personal

⁶⁰ Chief of Staff U.S. Army from Chief Mil History SGD Ward to CINCUSAEUR for C/Hist, “Secret Priority Message,” 24 December 1952. NACP RG 549: Records of the United States Army, Europe – Historical Division, Entry A1 2199: Records of the Special Staff Historical Division – Cables, Box 1152: “Cables 1952-Secret.”

⁶¹ Wood, 142.

relationships and mutual appreciations had developed throughout the course of the program, there were still substantial administrative checks in place. As Col. Potter reported in response to press questions about the validity of reports produced by “his” Germans, “We have many doublechecks [sic] against inaccuracies. For example, U.S. Divisions and all higher headquarters maintained daily action diaries. In addition, we are in possession of quantities of captured German documents that contain day by day situation reports.”⁶² A substantial appendix to Operational History (German) Section Chief Howard Hudson’s 1949 report on the development of the Operational History (German) Section further expanded on the question of reliability. First, Hudson noted that approximately 75% of the manuscript collection (in 1949) consisted of narrative accounts of various campaigns, where there was “little reason” for the German author to falsify information. Secondly, all the Germans participated on a volunteer basis and were assured that their statements would not be used against them in criminal proceedings (unlikely in any case, given the avoidance of any topics touching on military criminality), further enhancing their credibility in Hudson’s eyes. Finally, there were ample American records and captured German documents available to crosscheck the German’s narratives. In any case, the Germans were well-trained, serious, men who had a “professional pride in doing a job well” and were “themselves military history.” Having said this, Hudson did admit that there were “occasionally” problems of evasion, self-justification, and selective memory in the submitted reports (particularly in group projects), but that rigorous American supervision and editorial questioning “offset” these

⁶² “Draft of Press Release.”

tendencies, particularly when coupled with appeals to the officers' duty to speak the truth as witnesses to history.⁶³

Yet these processes and procedures for ensuring accuracy and accountability were consistently undermined as relations between the Germans and Americans became close. More than one senior officer in the Historical Division demonstrated "hero-worship" of German tactical genius, collecting autographs from their subjects and cultivating personal friendships that would last well into the 1950s, including extensive personal correspondence.⁶⁴ Shared Christmas holiday celebrations at Allendorf and Neustadt in 1946 and 1947, where the Americans and Germans came together as comrades, enhanced such relationships; the 1947 attendance of German officers' wives and children and an exchange of gifts built strong personal bonds on both sides.⁶⁵ The congenial relations between American officers in the Historical Division and their German colleagues manifested themselves in Historical Division patronage of the German officers' own journals and periodicals. For example, in April 1952 the Historical Division provided free review copies of Army publications written with the help of the Germans to *Wehr-Wissenschaftliche Rundschau* (edited by Alfred Toppe and supported by Franz Halder) to help bring attention to the periodical.⁶⁶ Furthermore, protective protocols would do little to reign in "wrong" ideas in an organizational structure designed to defer to "German

⁶³ German Manuscript Collection: Appendix A, pg. 4-5.

⁶⁴ Indeed, such personal bonds were by no means an uncommon occurrence; other prominent American military figures enjoying close personal relationships with German officers included William Donovan, Allen Dulles, and General Albert Wedemeyer. In certain American military circles, there was a distinct brand of pro-German sentiments, as well as anti-Semitism, before and during the war. See Smelser, "The Myth of the Clean Wehrmacht in Postwar America," 251-259 and Joseph W. Bendersky, *The Jewish Threat: Anti-Semitic Politics of the U.S. Army* (New York, Basic Books: 2000).

⁶⁵ "Story of a Program," 84-86.

⁶⁶ M.C. Helfers, "Review of *Cross-Channel Attack* in *Wehr-Wissenschaftliche Rundschau*," Memorandum for the Chief of Military History, 21 April 1951. NACP RG 549: Records of the United States Army, Europe – Historical Division, Entry A1 2197: Records of the Special Staff Historical Division – General Correspondence 1952-53, Box 1142: File 312.1.1-Personal Hist. Div.

expertise.” Finally, the institutional controls listed above did not evolve with the program – as the German officers earned the trust of their American colleagues and as their reports became more and more focused on interpretations and predictions of future events, the degree of editorial rigor decreased.

From the outset, the Historical Division’s employment of Franz Halder in a key leadership position as head of the German Section in 1947 considerably undermined the objectivity of the project. During the war Halder was thought of in American circles as a “good soldier” whose legendary disagreements with Hitler over strategy led to his September 1942 firing/retirement as Chief of the Army General Staff. Any criminal culpability on Halder’s part for the planning and execution of aggressive warfare was mitigated in American eyes by his assumed opposition to Hitler and the breadth of his operational and strategic knowledge. Halder, however, entered the program with a specific agenda. His personal correspondence with other officers in the program reveals his commitment to shaping the historical narrative in order to minimize *Wehrmacht* involvement in Nazi crimes and foster a continuing war against Bolshevism. His reports on the development of the program at Königstein were primarily concerned with maintaining tight control over the program and populating both the Control Group and home-workers with like-minded people.⁶⁷

“National character” as a mode of causal analysis was a recurring theme throughout many of the finalized German reports produced under Halder and his close acquaintances on the history of the war in the East. In their analysis of Soviet combat and intelligence-gathering capabilities, politics, state structure, or specific battle

⁶⁷ Smelser and Davies, 65-70. Wette, 231-232. See also the persistent calls for unity and centralization in MS#C-042 (*The Story of a Project: The Writing of Military History at Allendorf and Neustadt*) and MS#P-029a (*History of the Koenigstein Phase of the German Historical Project: Jun. 48-Apr. 49*).

outcomes, many of the German authors found innately “Russian” characteristics decisive. Recommendations in the reports for future actions by the United States against the Soviet Union were also informed by racial language, as inherent Soviet aggressiveness, intransigence, and fanatical devotion to world revolution called for a decisive Western response.

Former *Wehrmacht* General Dr. Lothar Rendulic’s 1947 study *The Fighting Qualities of the Russian Soldier*, based on his personal experiences on the Eastern Front and in Yugoslavia, was firmly grounded in racial assumptions. Rendulic, an Austrian of Croatian origins born in 1887, had served in the militaries of the Habsburg Empire during World War I and Austria during the interwar period, obtaining a doctorate in law from the University of Vienna in the interregnum. A faithful Austrian Nazi party member, he was incorporated into the *Wehrmacht* in 1938 after the *Anschluss* at the rank of *Oberst*, rising to the rank of *Generaloberst* by 1944. Rendulic commanded numerous divisions and army groups during the war, most importantly in Yugoslavia, where his anti-partisan reprisal campaigns earned him a twenty-year prison sentence at Landsberg prison in the 1947-48 “Hostages Trial” at Nuremberg. He served five before being paroled in December 1951. According to Rendulic, in order to assess the fighting capabilities of the Russian soldier it was necessary to consider national character. Since it was only logical that an enemy army would change over time, adapting to past experience in terms of technology, tactics, and organization, “the national characteristics of the fighting men which are based on the national character of the people, and the doctrine of leadership as far as it was influenced by this character,” would not change.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Dr. Lothar Rendulic, *Assimilation of the War Experience of Other Countries*, 16 February 1947, pg. 5. NACP Microfilm Publication M1035: MS#B-389.

In the case of the Soviet Union, “national character” was dependent on the temperaments of the Russian and Ukrainian elements of the population, as these groups formed the numerically largest contingents in the Soviet Empire. For both groups, the infusions of the “weak Germanic blood strain from the Gothic period,” and “Mongol blood during the 300 years of Tartar domination” firmly stamped the Russian national character, blending the “Mongol inclination towards passive resistance” and “fatalism” with Slavic “suspicion and caution” and “Slavic endurance of suffering and submissiveness to pain.”⁶⁹ As a result, the Russian people were receptive to the Bolshevik state, as their endurance, primitive nature, and relative docility complemented nicely the demands of a dictatorship. This very docility was their greatest weakness: Rendulic repeatedly attested that Russian operational leadership was poor and initiative and aggressiveness nonexistent. In the absence of commissars, Russian infantry operations were only successful when provided with overwhelming superiority in numbers in troops, tanks, and artillery along an entire front.⁷⁰ The downfall of the German armed forces in the East was due only to superior numbers of these innately inferior troops. The fact that it took the Russians over three years to defeat Germany in spite of their numerical superiority only provided further evidence for this interpretation. Thus, in a simultaneous study produced by Rendulic, *A Reflection on the Causes of the German Defeat*, Rendulic offers the conclusion that Germany was defeated for “purely military reasons,” which did not include any action whatsoever taken by the enemy but

⁶⁹ Dr. Lothar Rendulic, *The Fighting Qualities of the Russian Soldier*, Headquarters, European Command Office of the Chief Historian, 1 March 1947, pg. 1-3. NACP Microfilm Publication M1035: MS#D-036.

⁷⁰ Rendulic, 6-7.

rather party-amateur blundering and insufficient direction of manpower from the SS to the *Wehrmacht*.⁷¹

In *Waffen-SS Gruppenführer* Max Simon's 1953 study *Soviet Russian Infantry and Armed Forces*, the most important lesson learned from the German experience on the Eastern front was of the preeminence of infantry in modern warfare. Born in 1899 in Breslau, Simon had served as a rifleman in the Balkans and France in 1917-18 and *Freikorps* thereafter, remaining in the *Reichswehr* as a platoon leader until 1929, when he took a position as a civil servant in Weimar. Simon joined the Nazi Party in 1932, the SS in 1933, was commissioned an SS-2nd Lieutenant in November 1934, and rose to the rank of Colonel by 1939. During the war, Simon commanded regiments in France and Russia, SS-divisions in Russia and Italy, and finally SS infantry corps operating in the Rhineland and Southern Germany, ending the war as a *Generalleutnant*. He received a death sentence from the British government for his role in civilian massacres in Italy, later commuted to life in prison and eventually a 1954 release. Writing for the Historical Division, Simon looked to the ongoing Korean War as further evidence of the supremacy of infantry, noting that neither in World War II nor in Korea had mass bombings alone proved effective enough to subdue the enemy.⁷² The diametric opposition between Eastern and Western ideals and systems of government was readily apparent to Simon. As a result, in the inevitable global war to come,

⁷¹ Dr. Lothar Rendulic, *A Reflection on the Causes of the German Defeat*, 15 March 1947. NACP Microfilm Publication M1035: MS#D-077. This proved to be too much of a departure from reality even for his fellow writers, who in commenting on this last manuscript suggested that Rendulic add more nuance to his analysis and a better consideration of other factors.

⁷² Max Simon, *Soviet Russian Infantry and Armed Forces*, Historical Division European Command, 1953, pg. 1-2. NACP Microfilm Publication M1035: MS#P-077. The advent of the atomic bomb and its employment in Japan had not swayed Simon on this point. He postulated that even if future wars resulted in massive devastation through competing technologically advanced air forces, infantry would always be required to achieve victory.

The Western Nations can hope for final victory only if they realize and appreciate in time the value of infantry in modern warfare and, therefore, so increase the fighting power of their own infantry that, from the very beginning of a war, it will be equal or even superior to the infantry of the Eastern nations with their numerically superior and biologically more virile population.⁷³

As a result, a study of the strengths and weaknesses of Russian infantry was an urgent necessity. Both, Simon explained, were dependent on ethnic characteristics. Russian infantry therefore had advantages in that, regardless of the nationality or ethnic differences of its subjects, all possessed “in greater or lesser degree the Asiatic characteristics of frugality, cunning, cruelty, hatred to foreigners and indifference to death.”⁷⁴ Although there were a number of accompanying “defects” in the Asiatic races, a benefit to the “Asiatic conception of life” was that Soviet training and indoctrination could proceed along sufficiently brutal lines under “fanatical communists” so as to unify their disparate population into an effective fighting force.⁷⁵ Fortunately, however, Russian infantry was not completely invulnerable, since “the primitive way of thinking” and the “mental inertia” of Russian troops could serve to undermine their effectiveness in that these traits resulted in “a rigid adherence to decisions once made,” in contrast to the independent thinking and initiative present in Western militaries.⁷⁶ For Simon, a careful understanding of the traits innate to the “Asiatic” races of Russia was crucial if the Red Army was to be defeated in the field.

While the importance placed on race in Simon’s account and Rendulic’s are understandable given their personal engagements with National Socialism, other

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Simon, 3.

⁷⁵ Simon, 4-6.

⁷⁶ Simon, 6-11.

avowedly “non-political” German officers also reproduced similar arguments that placed Russian “nature” or “character” at the forefront of their analysis. For example, *The Soviet Army and Air Force*, a 1952 study produced jointly by former Field Marshal Albert Kesselring and General of the Artillery Curt Gallenkamp used the “characteristics” of Russian soldiers as the key starting point for their analysis of Russian army strategy, tactics, and combat capability. Once again, Russian/Soviet soldiers possessed “distinct qualities” separating them from their German/Western counterpart, including lower intelligence, less adaptability to fluid situations at the front, submissiveness, and an indifference to suffering and death.⁷⁷ These characteristics were stamped on the Russian people by the boundless geography of Russia itself, wherein the vast unpopulated forests and seemingly endless steppes highlighted man’s helplessness in the face of nature. It followed that,

This determines at the same time one of the characteristics of the Russian – capitulation before this overwhelming power and resignation to his fate. He accepts life and death as God-ordained and suffers his lot without question. The result is a certain undervaluation of life.⁷⁸

The introduction concluded with a notation that even the crash industrialization of the Bolsheviks after 1917 had not succeeded in fundamentally altering this hard indifference in the typical Russian, as “the great majority of the rural population has retained the characteristics innate to it for generations.”⁷⁹

Besides determining Russian strategy, operations, and training, these innate characteristics also predisposed the Red Army to the use of devious tactics and underhanded tactics to achieve victory. As Chapter 9 of Kesselring and Gallenkamp’s

⁷⁷ Albert Kesselring and Curt Gallenkamp, *The Soviet Army and Air Force*, Headquarters, European Command Office of the Chief Historian, 1952, pg. 1-7. NACP Microfilm Publication M1035: MS#D-395.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 1-2.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 3.

study, “Characteristic Soviet Combat Methods” explained, the Soviets were predispositioned to employ partisan brigades, implant spies and agents to weaken their foes, while also manifesting an ominous obsession with chemical and biological weapons research. The study decried the use of partisans as a “typically Communist measure,” noting the continuities in partisan deployment from the Spartacist revolt of 1918-1919 through the Korean War. In any future conflict with the Soviet Union, the deployment of fanatical partisans should be considered “inevitable” and it was doubtful that Western European police forces and border guards possessed the manpower and training to neutralize this threat. Such partisans were inevitably highly indoctrinated “fanatics,” who “frequently used “methods which defied laws and morals” to achieve their aims.⁸⁰ Implicitly, the most disquieting aspect of non-Russian communist partisan units was their Russian-ness. “In the field of espionage,” Gallenkamp and Kesselring continued, “the Russians excelled even under the Tsars. Their innate Slavic slyness predestines them for such activity.” Russian espionage frequently paid dividends since the Soviet Union could carelessly flood foreign governments with spies and agents, “in keeping with their national characteristic that the Russians [have] no qualms about risking large numbers of men.”⁸¹ The fact that Germany too had shown an affinity for research in chemical and biological weapons, considered the use of partisan troops in the later stages of the war on the Soviet model, and relied upon an extensive espionage network as a means of achieving victory apparently did not dissuade the authors from deploying ethnic and geographical determinism to explain the Soviet pursuit of these same objectives.

⁸⁰ Kesselring and Gallenkamp, 49-51.

⁸¹ Ibid, 52-53.

Similar reasoning appeared in studies on the German experience with the Russian intelligence services. Originally conceived as a limited study on interrogation techniques in the Soviet Union and Germany, the Historical Division later expanded this comparative project to include six volumes by 1949-1950, which relied heavily on reports and testimony of repatriated German POWs. In comparison to the “honorable” methods of German Army interrogation noted in Volume I of the series, the second volume, *Soviet Procedure for Interrogating Prisoners of War in World War II*, prepared by former Army Quartermaster General Alfred Toppe, painted a bleak picture of Soviet intelligence methods. From the outset, Toppe takes the brutal effectiveness of “Russian” methods as a given, attributing the desire of the former German prisoners interviewed to remain anonymous to “fear [of] the consequences of their testimony.”⁸² Toppe continued, “It must be considered a typical result of Russian methods that – even after their immediate effect has ceased – free men still feel subjugated by them...” and, as a result, “some [former POWs] doubt the possibility of successfully defending Europe against Communism.”⁸³ Why were “Russian methods” so successful? For Toppe and his colleagues, the answer lay in the national character of the Russian people, who were “generally known” to alarmingly fluctuate “between overflowing good-nature and cordiality and the severest cruelty,” a national character defect compounded by “susceptib[ility] to political and religious psychoses,” allowing for the employment of the severest brutalities toward their prisoners, including torture, exhaustive labor, and

⁸² Alfred Toppe, *PW Project Study No. 2: Soviet Procedure for Interrogating Prisoners of War in World War II*, Historical Division European Command, 1949, pg. 4. NACP Microfilm Publication M1035: MS#P-018b.

⁸³ Ibid.

starvation.⁸⁴ Toppe's study of Russian successes in the past yielded to dire conclusions for the possibilities of Western success against communism in the future. He warned his American colleagues that due to the effectiveness of the Russian intelligence network and because of the close ties between Russia the state and the political movement of communism more generally, that every communist worldwide should be considered a direct agent of the Russian government. The only remedy hinted at in the report for Western success against the "ruthless" successes of Russian intelligence was the example of Germany to 1939, where the communist party had been sufficiently repressed.⁸⁵

An extensive December 1951 classified-confidential report in the same series as Toppe's, written by an anonymous officer who had recently returned from Russian captivity, *The Secret of the Power of the Soviet State*, elaborated on many of these same themes. The author diagnosed the real power of the Soviet state as its' "psychological methods of control," and "tactics of political demoralization," which represented the fusion of Asiatic tendencies and the doctrine of dialectical materialism.⁸⁶ Once again, "The Slavic, Asiatic national character, which in Western Russia dates back to 250 years of Mongol domination," was decisive in giving the Soviet Union its' "racial stamp." This, along with the inherent expansionism of revolutionary communism, here interpreted as pan-Slavic politics run amok, accounted for the "Asiatic cunning/Asiatic spiritual traits" of commissars who were able to terrorize the population into submission.⁸⁷ Raw brutality characterized every action of commissars – relentless propaganda accompanied

⁸⁴ Toppe, 4-5.

⁸⁵ Toppe, 10; 39.

⁸⁶ Anonymous, *The Secret of the Power of the Soviet State*, (December 1951), pg. 3-5. NACP Microfilm Publication M1035: MS#P-018e.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 6-7, 9-10.

by starvation, demoralization and judicial terror kept the Russian citizen, as well as German POWs or newly incorporated populations, cowed.

The long-term effects of Soviet control were of course different, however, for “Asiatics” and Europeans. According to the German author, “The passivity of the Asiatic, his centuries-old habituation to dictatorship, enable him to endure the physical and moral strains of the present time... The whole Asiatic area harnessed to the coercive machine of the Communist structure.” Thus, there was no hope of resistance or internal revolt in the native Soviet population. As for the newly communist Eastern Bloc states, however, “the different mentality of the European, as well as the sense of freedom inherent in his intellectual history and brought about by his political institutions, will induce him to shake off the Communist yoke at the first opportunity.”⁸⁸ Based on this German’s experiences with sheer communist brutality, internal resistance against the Soviet Union, even for ethnic-Europeans in its satellite states, was impossible. Such captive peoples, however, could be encouraged to form dissident groups of resistance, so long as the West offered sufficient outside support to make up for communist brutality. The solution, the author claims, is for the Europeans to adopt a competing “all embracing philosophy” of anticommunism such as the Japanese (deemed immune to commissar brutality) possessed, in an attempt to awaken the cowed European masses.⁸⁹ Only then would the power of the Soviet state suffer a reversal. The catalog of Foreign Military Studies circulated throughout the Army described the completed project that included both reports as “Useful in understanding the Russian mentality.”⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Ibid, 57.

⁸⁹ Ibid, 58-60.

⁹⁰ Historical Division, *Guide to Foreign Military Studies: 1945-54 Catalog & Index* (Headquarters, United States Army, Europe: 1954), 84.

General Guenther Blumentritt's April 1947 report to the Historical Division, *Considerations on World Strategy*, took such ideas to their logical conclusion, arguing that the contrasting political and economic systems of East and West would inevitably result in a future world war, of which the innately Eastern characteristics of ruthlessness and aggression would be the cause. Born in Munich in 1892, Blumentritt entered the army as a Lieutenant in 1912 after attending the Danzig Officer Candidate Training School, seeing combat duty on both the Western and Eastern Fronts during the First World War, and in the *Freikorps* of Munich, Saxony, and Silesia in 1919. Joining the officer corps of the new *Reichswehr* in 1920, Blumentritt steadily rose through the ranks while building his intellectual acumen, attending War Colleges at Stuttgart and Berlin and completing additional studies in history, political science and national economy at the Berlin University. Blumentritt rose rapidly in the command structure of the *Wehrmacht* after 1938, attaining the rank of *General der Infanterie* in 1944 after significant roles in the planning and execution of the Poland, France, and Soviet campaigns from 1939-1942, the defense of Western Europe from 1942-44, and Germany in 1945, fighting in the Baltic until May 1945.⁹¹ Much to the chagrin of Operational History (German) Section translators who despaired at his tedious and obscure writing style, Blumentritt proved to be the most prolific author in the program, completing some 100 studies between 1946 and 1954. Although significantly diverse in scope and content, Blumentritt's submissions generally focused on Soviet methods in the Second World War or broad questions of political economy and military strategy in the past and possibilities for the future. Recurrent themes throughout included professed "respect" for the

⁹¹ Guenther Blumentritt, *Why Germany Was Defeated in Two World Wars*, April 1952, pg. iv. NACP Microfilm Publication M1035: MS#B-697.

accomplishments of “the Russian system” (often in racial, condescending, language) but also the continued insistence that, much as in the First World War, politicians’ lack of respect for the sound judgment of the military had stabbed the German Army in the back on the Eastern Front after the smashing successes of 1941.⁹² Chief of Military History Orlando Ward had a favorable impression of his work.⁹³

In reflecting on the world situation in 1947, besides offering a number of bizarre strategic musings involving the need for western military garrisons in Scandinavia and Alaska, Blumentritt’s writings reproduced familiar tropes in describing the origins and aims of the Soviet Union. Bolshevism, an “alien spirit,” had survived and reproduced itself (note the biological language) in the East through the use of “Asiatic-dictatorial means.” Its need for constant renewal to avoid stagnation would necessitate aggressive action against the West, inevitably culminating with the avowed objective of worldwide revolution.⁹⁴ The East would stop at nothing to achieve these aims, using innate duplicity and treachery to lull the West into a false sense of security. Thus, for Blumentritt, the world situation in 1947 was ominous, particularly since Germany, the only power to take a stand against Bolshevism (regardless of Hitler’s motives), lay weakened and divided. The only solution therefore was “to rally politically all that is left,” including the Western zones of Germany, in a union of common defense against the Red menace. In such an arrangement (as in the Operational History Section) the contribution of the Germans would be the lynchpin of success, able to provide men who “know the Russians well” and

⁹² Ibid, 1-16.

⁹³ Major General Orlando Ward (Chief, Military History) to Col. W. S. Nye (Chief, Historical Division), 15 April 1952. NACP RG 549: Records of the United States Army, Europe – Historical Division, Entry A1 2197: Records of the Special Staff Historical Division – General Correspondence, Box 1142, File 312.1.1 - Personal Hist. Div.

⁹⁴ Guenther Blumentritt, *Considerations on World Strategy*, April 1947, pg. 5-7. NACP Microfilm Publication M1035: MS#B-582.

could guide the otherwise “bloodless” Western coalition to a final victory over the Eastern hordes.⁹⁵

As another study produced simultaneously by Blumentritt made quite clear, blood-origins were of the essence in matters of warfare, playing a significant role throughout not just European, but American history. *International Role of the Anglo-Saxons*, a brief but wide-ranging meditation on the “inevitability” of the rise of the United States to world power status through political, economic, and cultural strength, also ended with an exhortation to accept Germany’s “valuable men” since “sixty millions of this people represent a valuable increment to the strengthening of the will of Western Europe which has become bloodless.”⁹⁶ These references to reinforcing the Western coalition were about more than just numbers of men. As Germans, these reinforcements were inherently valuable culturally and racially, as the greater context of Blumentritt’s misinformed march through American history makes clear. A recurring strength of America throughout its history, for example, could be tied to the early waves of European settlers. These “pioneers” were the bravest and boldest of European stock, as their readiness to abandon civilization to tame a wilderness demonstrated. These early Americans’ “anglo-Teutonic blood,” when coupled with constant warring with both “untamed virginal nature” and indigenous peoples “allowed only the best and strongest of [pioneers] to survive.” This forward evolution of a new American race set the stage for Washington’s successful revolution.⁹⁷ From this solid foundation, the rise and triumph of America both in the Western hemisphere and the wider world became inevitable,

⁹⁵ Ibid, 43-47.

⁹⁶ Guenther Blumentritt, *International Role of the Anglo-Saxons*, March 1947, pg. 19. NACP Microfilm Publication M1035: MS#B-386.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 2-4. The “German Frank” Benjamin Franklin also played a role in these developments.

bolstered along the way by the second large wave of “upright” and “strong” European immigrants after the American revolution, in spite of the fact that “not in every case were the English-Teutonic nationalities the outweighing.” The further annihilation of the American Indian in the 19th century served as proof-positive of America fulfilling its destiny. The elimination of the natives was a “deplorable” but inevitable byproduct of the continued interactions between a rising race and a declining one, much as the American victory over “practically dead” Spain in 1898.⁹⁸

Other studies authored by Blumentritt hinted at the possible dangers that could face the Western coalition should a future war with the Soviets actually break out. A significant problem, for instance, was the disturbing emergence of “illegal warfare” in the Second World War. Not to be confused with the waging of aggressive war or the mass murder of POWs and civilians regularly practiced by the Nazi regime as defined by postwar international law, Blumentritt’s conception of illegal warfare was rather narrow, limited entirely to partisan activity. Such activities did “not appeal to the German people” or “other Germanic nations” apart from the quite justified Prussian resistance to the Napoleonic invasions – this accounted for the complete failure of Hitler’s “insane” call for the German people to take to the mountains in resistance in *Werwolf* organizations after 1945. Russians, however, had a long history of troublesome partisan activities, from the resistance against Napoleon to the tenacious fighting behind the lines in the occupied Soviet Union. Blumentritt attributed this propensity for “illegal” warfare to the greater innate “passions” of the Slavic peoples, whose potential for illegal activity

⁹⁸ Ibid, 8-9, 13. This summary reflects standard Nazi propaganda tropes about American history.

was enhanced by the rise of Bolshevism.⁹⁹ For Blumentritt, Bolshevism led not only to more “illegal” warfare, but a more brutal, inhuman, mode of fighting. The Soviet regime uniquely inculcated a system of violence through the transference of wartime brutality into peacetime (in purges and terror), and waged war on God and organized religion (removing traditional moral barriers to violence) in the context of a world traumatized and socially dislocated from unabated, totalizing warfare. Although “National socialism certainly carr[ied] a great part of the guilt,” a truly “impartial” analysis led to the conclusion “that the Eastern Slav-Asiatic world under the G.P.U. idea of Bolshevism” was most responsible for the continuing climate of both “illegal” warfare and its inhuman brutality.¹⁰⁰ While Blumentritt clearly deplored this condition of perpetual barbarity, his recommendations to his American overseers were also obvious: should war break out, the West would have to fight just as brutally to obtain victory. Only through the eradication of the Soviet “system” could the modern cycle of brutality come to an end since Soviet operational methods, linked to race and ethnicity, would not change.¹⁰¹

Should such a war actually take place, however, the West would have to guard against more insidious communist tactics, according to a classified-confidential report produced by *Generalleutnant* Wilhelm Schmalz in 1949, *Notes on the Problem of the Defense of Western Europe in Case of a Conflict Between Russia and the Atlantic Pact Nations*. Schmalz, born in 1901, commanded *Wehrmacht* troops at the regimental and divisional levels in the East, the Balkans, and Italy during the war. Although his personal

⁹⁹ Guenther Blumentritt, *Views About Illegal Warfare*, 29 December 1950, pg. 3-8. NACP Microfilm Publication M1035: MS#B-297. The issue of Bolshevism worsening Russian “passions” is an implicit, yet obvious, connection given the author’s repeated assertion that no partisan activities existed on the Eastern Front in the First World War.

¹⁰⁰ Guenther Blumentritt, *Inhumanity of Modern Warfare*, October 1947, pg. 2-7. NACP Microfilm Publication M1035: MS#B-562.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, 8.

biography is scant due to his wish to remain an anonymous author, it is stated in the report that his assessment of measures necessary for the defense of Europe was compiled from a Florence prison, where he was awaiting trial for war crimes in Italy. A key security concern for the West, Schmalz argued, would be that up to 30% of the voters in Western Europe would not necessarily resist a Russian invasion, given their trade unionist sympathies. Due to its fear of the atomic bomb, the Russian state had thus far confined itself to combatting the West through maintaining “general world chaos,” presumably in the guise of social-democratic and communist political party agitation.¹⁰² Besides returning Europe to a state of economic prosperity, European political and military integration was essential to defend against both communist subversion and any tendency towards open aggression. For Schmalz, the inevitable and unprovoked assault from the East in the near future rendered European integration around a common military framework both logical and necessary. This was all the more true in light of the fact that, while the United States was obviously more committed to maintaining engagement in European affairs than in 1919, immediate aid from the United States could not be expected “if South America fell under Soviet influence,” a “definite possibility.”¹⁰³ Preparations for a federated military should begin immediately. And what of that unreliable 30 per cent of the Western European population? Schmalz recommended

Recruiting and induction centers composed of mixed commissions would be set up by the governments of all the countries...and there the political history of the volunteer would be investigated in addition to the regular medical examination. Communists would be excluded. Compare this to the policy of the Catholic Church. Communists would not be rejected for political reasons but solely because of a need for self-preservation...Let us

¹⁰² Wilhelm Schmalz, *Notes on the Problem of the Defense of Western Europe in Case of a Conflict Between Russia and the Atlantic Pact Nations*, 1949, pg. 1-3. NACP Microfilm Publication M1035: MS#C-091.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, 12-13.

not be timid for the Communists certainly will not be timid when they hold the reins.¹⁰⁴

Those who objected to such careful measures of political sanitation in the new military were only “parlor pinks...immoral enough to endanger the existence of their fellow citizens through their frivolous, coquettish dreams and their wilful blindness [sic].”¹⁰⁵ An assault from the East was inevitable, and would come from both without and within. Thus, only an alternative vision of unification around military (not economic) organizations could stem the tide from the East while simultaneously clamping down on internal support for communism. The rehabilitated manpower of Western Germany was, of course, vital to such a vision.

In the eyes of Halder and the Control Group, some use of force would be necessary to counter the relentless spread of the Soviet Union; Halder and his circle of authors roundly rejected alternative strategic approaches to the Soviet problem. Containment, for example (which had gained significant public attention through George Kennan’s ostensibly anonymous July 1947 *Foreign Affairs* article), was specifically rejected in a November 1948 report prepared by General Ernst Köstring, *The People of the Soviet Union*. This study, an outgrowth of personal conversations between Köstring (former German military attaché to Moscow and commander of Eastern troops fighting in the Soviet Union from 1943-44) and Halder, was meant to specifically address “what significance can be attached to the ‘centrifugal forces’ within the Russian empire.”¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 14.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ernst Köstring, *The People of the Soviet Union*, 1948, pg. ii. NACP Microfilm Publication M1035: MS#C-035. On the genesis and ideas of the “X Article,” as well as public reaction to it, see John Lewis Gaddis, *George F. Kennan: An American Life* (New York: Penguin, 2011), pg. 249-275. Quoted in Gaddis, pg. 261, Kennan’s clearest formulation of containment in the article was “Soviet power, like the capitalist world of its conception, bears within it the seeds of its own decay and...the sprouting of these

Köstring attempted to answer this question through a close analysis of the attitudes of the individual “tribes” or “peoples” that constituted the Soviet Republics, most importantly Russians, Ukrainians, the Baltic peoples, Finns, Tatars, Caucasians, Turki (sic), Germans and Jews. The results were not encouraging. The abject failure of German occupation policies (all due to Nazi Party interference) in the East had unintentionally resulted in binding the Soviet people closer to Stalin. The harsh German occupation created a longing for the return of the Soviet system in those previously disillusioned with it while the subsequent defeat of the *Wehrmacht* opened the way for Stalin’s ruthless postwar purges of any populations that had aided the Germans.¹⁰⁷ This was particularly true of the Ukraine, which due to its large population (30 million) and “tough” racial stock that had evolved through hundreds of years of conflict with Tatars, Turks, and Poles would have been the republic most likely to rebel against the Soviet Union before the war. Unfortunately, German occupation policies and Soviet eradication of the resistance had destroyed the strongest part of the Ukrainian people.¹⁰⁸

Meanwhile, other ethnic groups that might still harbor hostility to the Soviet system – Tatars and the Turkic peoples in the South and West and Finns, Lithuanians, Estonians and Latvians in the North, were numerically insignificant, while the Germans had been expelled after the war. Finally, an invocation of the old anti-Semitic tropes linking international Jewry to international communism led Köstring to determine and “That Jews should play a leading role in any resistance movement [to Bolshevism] is out

seeds is well advanced.” The ultimate result of containment, “designed to confront the Russians with unalterable counterforce at every point where they show signs of encroaching upon the interests of a peaceful and stable world,” would be “either the break-up or the gradual mellowing of Soviet power.” For Kennan, the decay of Soviet power would be dependent on internal contradictions within the Soviet system and internal discord, particularly in the previously independent nations of the Soviet Bloc.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 41-42.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 10-15.

of the question.” Orthodox Christianity could not be expected to form the nucleus of a resistance movement either, as the quality of their clergy and influence on the domestic population held no comparison with the Roman Catholic Church in the West, and could not overcome “militant atheist” movements in the USSR.¹⁰⁹ Thus, while the initial reception of Germans in the East and the existence of Eastern volunteers for *Wehrmacht* and SS divisions proved that, in theory, the peoples of the Soviet Union could come together to rise against Bolshevism, this experience was not repeatable in the present circumstances without significant outside intervention from the West. The “centripetal forces” most definitely outweighed the “centrifugal forces” in the USSR. Köstring pointedly concluded the report with a firm rejection of waiting for the Soviet Union to collapse of its own accord; the “*cordon sanitaire*” against Bolshevism after 1917 had already failed twice over, and the West could not afford to await the internal collapse of the regime that might never come. Indeed, the West could not simply hope that the Asian hordes would simply withdraw from Europe upon the death of their leader, as they once had under the Khanate of 1241.¹¹⁰

All of the above reports represent edited, translated manuscripts that fully passed muster within the Historical Division. Each was available for loan to approved military training sites and educational academies, as well as to interested American officers. According to the official *Catalog of German Studies*, the reports were in demand for use by American “agencies engaged in planning or training,” including the General Staff, service schools, and other military agencies, including the Intelligence Division, the Operations, Plans, Organization and Training Division, and the Seventh U.S. Army

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 34-36.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 43-44.

(EUCOM).¹¹¹ As early as December 1947, works by German Generals appeared on War Department reading lists for Army officers, while the works on the Soviet Union produced by the Germans were personally approved and expanded by Eisenhower, Army Chief of Staff Omar Bradley, and the Joint Chiefs in 1948.¹¹² Demand for access to the studies increased over time, as American defense doctrine in Europe shifted to favor German strategy of defense in depth (see below). The outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, for example, caused the Historical Division to receive some 1,182 requests for German reports, of which 972 were delivered. In addition to official doctrinal, informational, or instructional uses, a number of the German studies, furnished in the original German were also used for instructional purposes and translation exercises in German language programs at the military academies.¹¹³ German doctrinal concepts such as mobile defense enjoyed a heyday in this period in official publications such as the Command and General Staff College's *Military Review*, and the individual reports were sent to every Army unit down to the battalion level.¹¹⁴ Halder and the Control Group's yearlong review and analysis of the 1949 American field service regulations manual FM-100-5 commissioned by the Army on February 28, 1952 also illustrated American respect for the opinions of the German officers.¹¹⁵ The result, study P-133, recommended numerous revisions to American military organization, particularly in regards to combined arms integration and mobile defense based on German military practices; the

¹¹¹ *Catalog of German Studies: 1945-1952, Volume II, No. 1*, July 1952, pg. ii-iii. NACP RG 549: Records of the United States Army, Europe – Historical Division, Entry A1 2202AB: Records Concerning Foreign Military Studies, Box 5.

¹¹² Soutor, 664-665.

¹¹³ Smelser and Davies, 70.

¹¹⁴ “Mobile defense” here refers to the German practice on the Eastern Front of meeting Soviet attacks with highly selective counter-attacks at vulnerable points to neutralize the advance while avoiding an extended battle of attrition.

¹¹⁵ Soutor, 675-676.

U.S. Army implemented many of the suggested changes in the 1954 revision of FM-100-5.

German experiences in the anti-partisan war against the Soviet Union and its proxies also significantly shaped budding American counterinsurgency doctrine after 1945. American planners reasoned that the successful Soviet deployment of partisans during the Second World War would result in similar partisan actions in the event of a new war in Europe. By the time the Army commissioned two official manuals on guerilla and counter-guerilla warfare in 1949, the Historical Division had already produced and distributed some twenty-one monographs on German experiences with partisan and anti-partisan war in the East, another forty-four that dealt with the subject in some detail, and an English language translation of the German Army's 1944 manual *Fighting the Guerilla Bands*. These studies received additional attention with the outbreak of the Korean War, in hopes that commanders could use the German's experience in any struggles against Korean guerillas in the field.¹¹⁶ As a result, the 1951 publication FM 31-20 *Operations Against Guerilla Forces* explicitly relied on German myths and biases, particularly the self-serving myth that political blundering (and certainly not *Wehrmacht* atrocities) had fomented the partisan resistance.¹¹⁷ It is telling that the aforementioned review of FM-100-5 by the Control Group in 1952 also produced several additional recommendations on the subject of partisan and "irregular," warfare,

¹¹⁶ Andrew J. Birtle, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1942-1976* (Washington D.C.: United States Army Center of Military History, 2006), 131-33.

¹¹⁷ The extent to which partisan resistance was a figment of the *Wehrmacht's* imagination in the early years of the war in spite of Stalin's exhortations to resist the German occupation is still a matter of debate and dependent on the experience of individual units at the front. For two opposing views, see Hannes Heer, "The Logic of the War of Extermination: The Wehrmacht and the Anti-Partisan War," in Hannes Heer and Klaus Neumann, eds., *War of Extermination: The German Military in World War II, 1941-1944* (New York: Basic Books, 2000) and Ben Shepherd and Juliette Pattinson, eds., *War in a Twilight World: Partisan and Anti-Partisan Warfare in Eastern Europe, 1939-1945* (New York: Palgrave, 2010).

none of which was implemented because American and German thinking on this issue were so convergent that the changes had already been made by the time Halder's 1954 report was finished.¹¹⁸

Among the agencies interested in the expertise of Franz Halder's Control Group was the Operations Research Organization (ORO), an army-sponsored think-tank and research office loosely associated with Johns Hopkins University created in June 1948 to scientifically analyze warfare and long-range operational planning, logistics and supply questions, which employed some 220 staff by 1952.¹¹⁹ Illustrating the drift in the Historical Division's work from history writing to intelligence was an "official" request from a C. Darwin Stolzenbach and the young Henry Kissinger of the ORO in May 1952 to prepare a study on the "German Military Occupation of the USSR" based on the experiences of the Control Group officers and other Historical Division publications. Clearly interested in the problems of future postwar governance of Soviet territory, the ORO requested the study "be designed to develop data" on topics relating to German occupation administration organizations, delineations of responsibility between civilian and military agencies, and indigenous attitudes toward the German occupation. More specifically, the ORO was interested in "problems in the formulation and execution of population policy; methods for control of the indigenous population; methods for liaison with indigenous population," and "utilization of religious authorities in local

¹¹⁸ Birtle, 145-146.

¹¹⁹ The ORO is referred to in the documents sometimes as the Operations Research Organization, and others as the Operations Research Office. For the sake of consistency, I refer to it as the Operations Research Organization, since that is how it is named in the government report on its history cited below. The office was originally based in Ft. McNair, Washington, but moved to new headquarters in Chevy Chase, Maryland in 1952. U.S. Congress, Office of Technology Assessment, *A History of the Department of Defense Federally Funded Research and Development Centers*, OTA-BP-ISS-157 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, June 1995), pg.15-17. For examples of the ORO's analytical contribution to operations in the Korean War on topics ranging from B-29 support to uniforms see Herbert Yahraes, "The Mysterious Mission of ORO," *Saturday Evening Post*, Feb. 23, 1952.

administration.”¹²⁰ Although there was no doubt that this was an “official” request on behalf of the Army, Col. Nye (Chief of the Historical Division) suspected this request from ORO as also meant to provide “a channel of access or introduction to the German Officers” so that ORO could independently commission other studies from Halder and the Control Group at later dates.¹²¹

Indeed, German operational experience was sufficiently appreciated by the U.S. Army in the early Cold War that the true purpose of a number of ostensibly “historical” studies was explicitly to funnel intelligence to the U.S. Army and its affiliated offices. A shining example of this process is illustrated by the Historical Division’s commissioning of a comparative study in November 1952 on German and Russian military leadership during World War II. Halder and the Control Group, responding to the broad scope of the study, cited the need for an increased writing staff and research funds, estimating the cost of the completed study at some 40,000 DM, taking approximately one year of work to complete. Upon receipt of this estimate, Chief of Military History Orlando Ward suggested “that the study concern itself only with ‘Russian Military Leadership in World War II’,” since “the primary purpose of the study should be to furnish Intelligence with material useful for the evaluation of Russian military leadership.”¹²² Reports of the Control Group for the second half of 1953 also noted “increased interest” from July to December in “lectures held by former German officers in the English language” based on

¹²⁰ “Study of the German Military Occupation of the USSR,” C.D. Stolzenbach to Col. W.S. Nye, 28 May 1952. NACP RG 549: Records of the United States Army, Europe – Historical Division, Entry A1 2197: Records of the Special Staff Historical Division – General Correspondence 1952-53, Box 1143: File 314.7.2 Corr. Foreign Military Studies Branch.

¹²¹ W.S. Nye to Orlando Ward, 10 June 1952. NACP RG 549: Records of the United States Army, Europe – Historical Division, Entry A1 2197: Records of the Special Staff Historical Division – General Correspondence 1952-53, Box 1143: File 314.7.2 Corr. Foreign Military Studies Branch.

¹²² Orlando Ward to Chief, Historical Division, 9 December 1952. NACP RG 549: Records of the United States Army, Europe – Historical Division, Entry A1 2197: Records of the Special Staff Historical Division – General Correspondence 1952-53, Box 1143: File 314.7.2 Corr. Foreign Military Studies Branch.

German experiences in Soviet Russia. In the second half of 1953 the Control Group reported giving 14 such lectures, preparing a further nine for future use.¹²³ Home-writers also delivered lectures on the defense of Europe and German rearmament at the request of the West German government in Bonn; the Control Group reported that former General Günther Blumentritt, for example, delivered some 30 lectures on these topics in West Germany in October and November 1954 alone.¹²⁴

In addition to the American military intelligence and operational planning think tanks such as the ORO, German “expertise” also informed NATO planning. Many of the intellectual currents of the German studies already discussed came together in a classified-Confidential 1949-50 study *Assumed Plan of Attack by the USSR on Western Europe*, which circulated not only within EUCOM, but at NATO headquarters as well. This detailed operational assessment offered, in the words of its American editor, “skillfully organized and presented” factual information, based on the real possibility that the Soviet Union, met with the appropriate world situation, “would be tempted to overrun Western Europe.” Given the Korean situation, the time was ripe for such an attack, since the report made clear that the Soviets would only risk war in Europe with the Atlantic Pact when faced with the possibility of “a new world war on widely scattered fronts.” The anonymous German authors reckoned on a Soviet assault force of 99 divisions (with another 46 unreliable “satellite” divisions used for support and rear-area security) which, given only two months of preparation before the invasion, would completely overrun

¹²³ Control Group Koenigstein, *Koenigstein Historical Project: Second Half 1953, 1954*, pg. 13-14. NACP Microfilm Publication M1035: MS#P-029s.

¹²⁴ The Control Group and U.S. Army also arranged for a similar lecture tour in America for three home-workers for 1955-56. Control Group Koenigstein, *Semi-Annual Report of the Control Group: Second Half 1954, 1955*, pg. 2. NACP Microfilm Publication M1035: MS#P-029u.

Western Europe to the Atlantic and Mediterranean coasts in 22 days.¹²⁵ In effect, the Soviet Union would wage Operation Barbarossa in reverse, as three army groups would charge through Western Europe rapidly, allowing security and reserve forces to mop up any Western resistance; the authors deemed naval forces on both sides as irrelevant. Unlike the German experience, however, the Soviets could count on “forces openly or secretly sympathetic to...the offensive and...the subsequent suppression of the conquered states,” given “the high percentage of Communist elements among the [Western] populations.”¹²⁶ Additionally, given the advent of nuclear weapons (which, still limited in number at the time of the study, played no specific role on the battlefield itself but still figured prominently in terms of strategic bombing), Britain could not play the role of a Western base for the re-conquest of Europe as in 1943-44.¹²⁷ As a result, a strong defense of Europe by Western troops “on the ground” was absolutely necessary if Europe was to be saved from communism. This would, of course, necessitate an increase in Western troops, including the integration of a West German defense force and significant American reinforcements, and a more unified Allied command structure. Thus the German report to NATO stressed importance of command unification in NATO and the doctrine of defense in depth, since even the most futile or temporary resistance to the Soviet offensive could prove decisive in the long-run, much as the failure of the *Wehrmacht* to take Moscow in 1941 ultimately contributed to German defeat in the East.

The Germans’ advocacy of “defense in depth” in Western Europe was also a consistent thread in many of the later studies prepared by the Control Group on

¹²⁵ This timetable accounted for the presumed difficulties faced by the Soviets in terms of both stretched supply lines, changes in railway gages, and Western resistance. Control Group, *Assumed Plan of Attack by the USSR on Western Europe*, 1951, pg. i-3. NACP Microfilm Publication M1035: MS#P-104.

¹²⁶ Ibid, ii; 6; 10.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 6.

Wehrmacht operations in the East, and one of their more successful interventions in American doctrine. As Kevin Soutor has argued, after the demonstrable success of the Marshall Plan and American membership in NATO, the U.S. Army was firmly committed to a defense of Europe in theory but had no practical experiences with the doctrine of mechanized deep defense required to counter a Soviet invasion. By 1949, the U.S. Army began to see its strategic position as similar to that of the *Wehrmacht* on the Eastern Front in 1943. In this respect, the operational knowledge of the German officers could fill a disheartening absence of practical planning for war in Europe. At the same time, in what Walter Kretchik has termed an “Era of Multiservice Doctrine,” German ideas of combined arms and defense in depth as a means of successfully holding back the Soviet onslaught (and perhaps laying the groundwork for a devastating counter-attack) held wide appeal in an Army desperately trying to justify its own importance in a nuclear age.¹²⁸ In incorporating German strategic advice for defensive measures against the Soviets in FM-100-5, however, American planners ignored the fact that the *Wehrmacht* defensive measures that such a doctrine emulated, while grossly outnumbering the number of troops and equipment that NATO could field, had been roundly defeated by the Soviets.¹²⁹ Such an uncritical adoption of German doctrinal experience also ignored the rationale behind defense in depth in the report series, namely that the Soviets, as innately inferior troops, bloodthirsty and incapable of improvisation once committed,

¹²⁸ Walter E. Kretchik, *U.S. Army Doctrine: From the American Revolution to the War on Terror* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2011), 158-180.

¹²⁹ Soutor, 663-669; 680-683. Adoption of German doctrine signifies, for Soutor, that the Americans had wholly bought into the “myth” that the *Wehrmacht* would have succeeded in stopping the Soviet advances if it had not been for Hitler’s consistent bungling of defensive operations through his refusal to allow strategic withdrawals. This strategic rationale also served the purpose of reaffirming the budgetary importance of mechanized ground forces, as postwar American defense spending overwhelmingly favored the development of the nuclear arsenal and the Air Force as its means of delivery.

would easily be encircled and annihilated by “better” Allied forces employing these tactics. These were dubious conclusions given the Red Army’s own doctrinal evolutions after 1943.¹³⁰

Overall, the German officers of the Historical Division were a significant resource for U.S. Army planning organizations after 1945. Their strategic influence waned only as the rising expense of armor and increased proliferation of battlefield nuclear weapons rendered the defense in depth doctrine irrelevant for both the U.S. Army and NATO more generally, with President Eisenhower’s commitment to the “New Look” and massive nuclear retaliation as a deterrence against conventional Soviet attacks after 1954.¹³¹ Even so, the U.S. Army chose to honor Franz Halder with a United States Army Meritorious Civilian Service Award, the second-highest civilian decoration in the U.S. military, for “a lasting contribution to the tactical and strategic thinking of the United States Armed Forces” when the Control Group’s work ended in 1961.¹³²

Yet the Germans in the Operational History Division and Control Group established firm credentials working with the Americans, allowing a significant portion to transition successfully from service in the *Wehrmacht* and Historical Division to leadership positions in the West German *Bundeswehr*. Of the original eight members of the Control Group formed in April 1949, three (Müller-Hillebrand, Reinhardt, and Zerbel) attained the rank of Brigadier General or higher in the *Bundeswehr*. Of the other five: Greiffenberg had died in 1951, Bürkner and von Natzmer had left the Control Group in May/June 1949 due to an excess of personnel (although Zerbel had as well), and

¹³⁰ David M. Glantz and Jonathan House, *When Titans Clashed: How the Red Army Stopped Hitler* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1995), esp.167-319.

¹³¹ Smelser and Davies, 70-71. Soutor, 681-683. Trauschweizer, 27-29.

¹³² Mallett, 179.

Halder and Toppe were too immersed in controversy to play a public role in the new West German army. By 1956, the Control Group reported the winding down of its responsibilities and work capacity, partly as a result of “the effects of the activation of the new German Federal Army on the circle of homeworkers,” which saw numerous “highly qualified contributors” joining the *Bundeswehr* officer corps.¹³³ Based on a list of personnel files maintained by the U.S. Army of Germans working with the Historical Division as of August 1947, some 25 percent of officers who had reached the rank of *Oberst* or *Oberstlt* attained the rank of Brigadier General or higher in the *Bundeswehr*.¹³⁴ This was not a coincidence. The West German *Zentrale für Heimatdienst* under Gerhard von Schwerin (later the Theodor Blank Office), tasked with identifying candidates for the future West German officer corps initially lacked access to *Wehrmacht* personnel files, still kept under lock and key by the Allies, but did have access to the Historical Division’s personnel files, made available in December 1952 “to select personnel for the future German military establishment.”¹³⁵ This followed the American decision in November 1952 to allow the Blank Office access to a select number of studies prepared by the Germans working for the Historical Division, which the Blank Office deemed quite valuable.¹³⁶ The highest posts in the new *Bundeswehr* were also reserved for Germans who had cooperated with the Historical Division. *Generalleutnants* and future

¹³³ Control Group Koenigstein, *Semi-Annual Report of the Control Group and the Warlimont Project: First Half 1956*, 1956, pg. 1-2. NACP Microfilm Publication M1035: MS#P-029x

¹³⁴ A much more limited selection of Generals who had participated in the work of the Historical Division resumed their careers in the *Bundeswehr* for obvious reasons – their high rank had resulted in command positions at the front that had left them too politically compromised (or too old) to serve in the *Bundeswehr*.

¹³⁵ Secret Cable #DA-926501, Chief of Staff U.S. Army to Commander-in-Chief U.S. Army Europe, 15 December 1952. NACP RG 549: Records of the United States Army, Europe – Historical Division, Entry A1 2199: Records of the Special Staff Historical Division - Cables, Box 1152, Cables 1952-Secret. David Clay Large, *Germans to the Front: West German Rearmament in the Adenauer Era* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 59-60.

¹³⁶ Searle, 115-117.

overall commanders of the West German Armed forces Hans Speidel and Adolf Heussinger had both been well-regarded members of the home-worker ranks (Heussinger was also a member of the Gehlen Organization), as had Hasso von Manteuffel, who advised Adenauer on security policy from 1949-on while serving as an FDP representative in the *Bundestag*.¹³⁷

* * * *

In June, 1953, as the Korean War approached its armistice, The Historical Division, still led by Col. Nye, produced a policy manual at the request of the Chief of Military History designed to “outline and discuss a plan of organization and operations for future foreign military studies programs,” given the “conspicuous success” of the German writing program after 1946. The booklet began with a note of caution meant to temper expectations for repeating the successes of the German program, however, specifically with prisoners from a communist power. The pamphlet explained that the German officers employed by the Army were “educated, cultured, worldly-wise, and possessed a keen historical sense and appreciation,” while also possessing a “philosophical attitude” and an eagerness to cooperate with the U.S. given their “conviction that Germany’s destiny and security lay with the West.” In contrast, however,

The citizens or subjects of Eastern dictatorships appear to possess, in common, certain unpleasant characteristics. They are apt to be suspicious, intractable, rude, untruthful, scheming, secretive, and imperfectly educated by Western standards. They are amazingly opinionated, ignorant of the world outside the Iron Curtain, yet paradoxically have the inward feeling of inferiority of a backward, primitive people.

¹³⁷ Searle, 38-39. Their selection to these posts/influence in the formation of the *Bundeswehr* was an “open secret” at the time. See, for example, George Boulwood, “Generals Studied for German Army: Bonn Sifts Candidates for Top Posts; Political Considerations Rule Choices,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 19, 1954.

These innate flaws would likely retard any potential for early successes, until, after substantial efforts at re-education and socialization, the “deluded fanatics will awaken from the spell which has been cast over them and begin to react more like normal human beings.” After all, Hitler too had exerted a spell on some of the officers, but his death and their capture quickly brought them around, so perhaps there was some hope for the Stalinists. Overall, however, the same degree of success in a future historical program remained unlikely.¹³⁸

Recent historians of the Second World War and Nazi Germany who utilize the studies produced by the German writers of the Historical Division are aware of their biases but generally treat the German reports with some respect. After all, while the German officers may have exhibited some questionable interpretations of past events, German accounts of battles and personal reminiscences still added valuable perspectives from “the enemy side of the hill” to the historical record. The U.S. Army’s history of the Second World War was likely richer as a result of their careful incorporation of these manuscripts, and in this respect the work of the Operational History (German) Section was correctly judged a success.

The reports of the Foreign Military Studies Program, produced first at Allendorf and Neustadt, and then at private residences of a select number of ex-officers spread throughout West Germany however, were *not* merely studies in contemporary history. Particularly in regards to the Soviet Union, these “historical studies” contained very little actual history, except in cases where historical experiences proved useful to illustrate the

¹³⁸ Historical Division, *Instructional Notes No. 2: A Foreign Military Studies Program SOP for Establishment and Operations* (Karlsruhe, Germany: 1953), pg. 1-2. NACP RG 549: Records of the United States Army, Europe – Historical Division, Entry A1 2202AB: Records Concerning Foreign Military Studies (290/36/6/2), Box 5.

innate dangers, evils, and aggression of communism. Such studies, provided to an interested American audience, focused much more on contingencies and analysis of future Soviet aggression and lessons learned from the Germans' failed attempt to defend Europe from the specter of communism than on accurately reconstructing past experiences.

Taken as a whole, the report series was riven with contradictions, a familiar brew of Nazi social-Darwinism, racism, anti-communism and conspiratorial thinking fused with the traditional anti-Russian animus of the German officer corps. The German generals portrayed Soviet soldiers and officers (united by blood and culture in spite of their ethnic differences) as cowed, passive, and backwards, generally incapable of strategic innovations or creative thinking and ground down by the Bolshevik dictatorship. At the same time, the Red Army was comprised of tenacious troops that fought ferociously and resorted to any and all means including highly organized "illegal" partisan actions, outlawed weapons, and civilian massacres to achieve victory. Their "Asiatic" mentality or blood bound them to the Soviet dictatorship, unlike the "freedom-loving" European racial groups who would prove incompatible with the "Asian" brutality underpinning communist rule. At the same time, the German generals warned of the massive underground support for communism in the West, and the need for the Western countries to resort to un-free and brutal "Russian methods" to check this growing threat.

Such interpretations are not surprising. Historians would expect to find this discourse in right-wing veterans' circles in the Western Zones during the occupation and in the early years of West Germany.¹³⁹ What makes these ideas remarkable, however, is

¹³⁹ Lockenour, 135-138; 181-182.

that they appeared and reappeared not in limited-circulation German newspapers, memoirs, or journals, but in widely circulated U.S. Army publications created for the purposes of accurately recording the history of the Second World War and for educating and shaping future strategic doctrine, in spite of rigorous efforts to purge “politically unsuitable” elements from positions of strategic influence.¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, the evident rehabilitation of the German officers through the Army Historical Division paved the way for the cooperation and employment of many of the same officers as advisors or commanders in the new West German *Bundeswehr*.

In this sense, the German writing program was not merely an exercise in “myth-making” with the ultimate goal of political rehabilitation and historical vindication for the German officer corps, but also a reaffirmation of wartime anti-communist and anti-Russian prejudices. The consummate misunderstandings and underestimations of the Soviet Union responsible for the failure of the German war effort on the Eastern front were consciously or unconsciously repackaged after the war as valuable operational lessons that would lead to the ultimate defeat of the Soviet Union and the salvation of the West. For many of the officers in question, even if they had never held membership in the Nazi Party, National Socialist ideas and conceptions of the Soviet Union disappeared slowly, if at all, after 1945. Substantial intellectual baggage underpinned the very German operational experiences against the Soviet Union that the U.S. Army found so useful in the early phases of the Cold War. This rendered the specific changes to U.S.

¹⁴⁰ On the complicated matter of separating the legacy of the *Wehrmacht* from that of the *Bundeswehr*, see David Clay Large *Germans to the Front: West German Rearmament in the Adenauer Era* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), but also, Donald Abenheim, *Reforging the Iron Cross: The Search for Tradition in the West German Armed Forces* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), Stephen F. Szabo, ed. *The Bundeswehr and Western Security* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1990), and Jeffrey M. Diefendorf, Axel Frohn, and Hermann-Josef Rupierper, *American Policy and the Reconstruction of West Germany* (Washington, DC: German Historical Institute and Cambridge University Press, 2003), esp. 353-433.

military planning and doctrine occasioned by the German writing program just as dependent on a highly politicized and tendentious interpretation of events on the Eastern front as on the historical record.

CONCLUSION

In taking stock of the *Abwehr*'s wartime performance in a memorandum to FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, Special Agent Frederick Ayer, Jr, endeavored to make a broader point about the bifurcation in the wartime German intelligence services between Party-ideologues and non-political professionals,

Intelligence in a totalitarian state is always difficult; the state has a well-oiled propaganda machine and before long everybody differing with the facts as established by the machine is suspect of defeatism. Since any intelligence service depends on the objectivity of its members, there must needs be a clash between them and the government, for it usually does not take long for the government to believe its own propaganda. The German Intelligence Service was a case in point: It consisted of objectively-minded officers who were efficient but suspect to the government, and party minded and trained officers who were inefficient but trusted and believed by the government.¹

This mistaken conception that pitted “objective” experts and Nazi-Party ideologues against one another in a pitched battle for the soul of the German state was the source of much post-1945 disappointment for the American political and military intelligence services. Instead of invaluable expertise on the Soviet Union, the American search for honest brokers and palatably anti-communist technocrats in the wreckage of the Third *Reich*'s intelligence institutions all too often resulted in the employment and rehabilitation of unsavory individuals with questionable pasts. Recent revelations concerning the role of the CIA and BND in this process continue to inspire public consternation and official soul-searching in the United States and Germany alike.²

¹ Special Agent Frederick Ayer, Jr. to Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, “German *Abwehr* Activities – Espionage G” 15 August 1945. NACP RG 65, Entry 136-P, File 65-37193-Sec.13, folder 1/1.

² For two recent examples, see Erich Lichtblau, “In Cold War, U.S. Spy Agencies Used 1,000 Nazis,” *New York Times*, 27 October 2014, A1. “Zeitgeschichte: Nazi beim BND,” *Der Spiegel* 51 (2014). <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-130878584.html>

As the wartime intelligence reports show, such reactions are in many cases justified. Far from an oft-ignored haven of objective analysis on the margins of the Nazi dictatorship, the German foreign intelligence services' reports, when taken as a whole, repeatedly affirmed Hitler's misunderstanding of Great Britain, underestimation of the Soviet Union, and tendency to count out or downplay the economic and military contribution of the United States to the widening war in Europe. Moreover, these same reports (apart from those of the *Abwehr*) were vocal in their identification and denunciation of the malevolent influence of international Jewry on world affairs.

In the case of Great Britain, the dispatches from Foreign Office legations in Britain and foreign policy experts in Berlin prior to the outbreak of war in 1939 supported Hitler's insistence that Britain would not fight in spite of all available evidence to the contrary. After September 1939, reports on the military-political situation from the Foreign Office and the RSHA (repeated in *Abwehr* reports as well) continued to emphasize that Britain lacked the political will to continue the war. These assertions followed from a selective interpretation of events highlighting the British public's ever-growing privation and despondency, shaped by older stereotypes of an anti-democratic, aristocratic, and warmongering British government divorced from the will of its people. In the case of the RSHA and Foreign Office reports, the National Socialist preoccupation with Jewish power served as a ready explanation for both the outbreak of war and the British government's refusal to "see reason" from 1939-1941. In this respect, the accusations from Nazi propaganda that an elite cabal of warmongering ministers beholden to the interests of international Jewry (and freemasonry), were confirmed by the intelligence services' reporting on Britain.

Similar prejudices held sway in the German foreign intelligence services' reports on the United States from 1939-1941 as well, which mirrored Hitler's own dualistic views of the United States as an economic colossus whose potential to intervene in European affairs was undermined by exploitable domestic political divisions and Atlantic/Pacific security concerns. In this way, the intelligence reports from the United States could both confirm the all-pervasive and mendacious influence of international Jewry in all aspects of American life and its efforts to foment a war between the United States and Germany. At the same time German intelligence found hope in the will of "patriotic" American anti-Semites and isolationists to overturn the Jewish-dominated American political establishment. This interpretation of American politics inspired the ineffective secret interventions in the election of 1940 while also compromising the value of intelligence reports on the rearming American military. A misguided faith in the influence of a small number of pro-German elements in the American General Staff and the disruptive power of racial and class divisions led Foreign Office, military, and RSHA officials alike to exaggerate American political and economic unpreparedness. Thus, while recognizing the great potential in theory of the United States to decisively intervene in European affairs (as it had in 1918), the German intelligence services repeatedly underestimated the ability of the United States to for total war in practice, explaining away or ignoring evidence to the contrary.

While the German foreign intelligence services misunderstood British politics and downplayed American economic potential, they professed great respect for the American and British militaries and their leadership. This was not the case in reports on the Soviet Union. In accordance with the current historiography on the broader failings of

underestimation preceding the invasion of the Soviet Union, the reports of the RSHA, Foreign Office, and military intelligence organizations such as *Fremde Heere Ost* systematically crafted reports consistent with pre-existing cultural assumptions of Soviet and Russian racial/ethnic inferiority. In this regard, the tendency of German intelligence services' reports on the poor performance of the Red Army in Poland and Finland to editorialize on matters of racially-determined character, bearing, and behavior confirmed pre-existing cultural views about a teetering Russian colossus that could only offer token resistance to a numerically weaker but qualitatively superior *Wehrmacht*. Moreover, even after *Fremde Heere Ost* and other agencies' initial assumptions about the Red Army were proven incorrect in the summer and fall of 1941, the German intelligence services continued to underestimate the size and combat capabilities of the Red Army in accordance with anti-Russian prejudices. Indeed, veterans of the German General Staff, *Fremde Heere Ost*, and RSHA working American and West German foreign intelligence organizations continued to produce similarly flawed reports into the 1960s and 1970s.

Furthermore, as Germany's war against the Soviet Union gave way to an exterminatory racial war, the German foreign intelligence services contributed in several important ways to the genocidal activities of the *Reich*. Taken as a whole, the activities of the German intelligence services in the East offer a typical portrait of institutional improvisation, accommodation, and resistance to the criminal operations on the Eastern Front. From 1939-1941 the reporting of Foreign Office ambassadors, counselors, and attachés stationed in Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States repeatedly affirmed the existence of a world Jewish conspiracy pushing Germany towards war, providing objective evidence for Hitler's frequently invoked rationale that the Jews were

responsible for Germany's misfortunes. German military intelligence units, from divisional intelligence (Ic) officers to *Abwehr* and *Fremde Heere Ost* personnel participated in the identification, interrogation, and liquidation of Soviet commissars and other Red Army prisoners from 1941 on, coordinating their activities with relevant field commanders and the *Einsatzgruppen* in an effort to uncover any intelligence of use to the advancing *Wehrmacht*. Individuals in these organizations, including Admiral Canaris and Reinhard Gehlen themselves, expressed dismay at the brutal tactics of the race war, and worried that the brutality undermined the efficacy of the German occupation; others in the *Abwehr* conspired against Hitler and the Nazi regime, while still others took part in pogroms and murdered Jewish "partisans" by the thousands. Regardless of Canaris and Gehlen's objections, the interrogation and murder program proceeded, as did the *Abwehr's* patronage of notoriously violent anti-Semitic organizations such as those of the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem or Stepan Bandera, whose anti-British and anti-Soviet objectives would bolster the German war effort. Among the foreign intelligence services, RSHA Amt VI, as an institution of the Nazi Party and SS, was the most actively involved in the actual killings in the East, with foreign intelligence officers commanding *Einsatzgruppen* units at the front and coordinating the plunder of information and resources with the home office in Berlin. Meanwhile, the RSHA's foreign intelligence office also undertook (with only marginal success) grandiose espionage operations against the Soviet Union and Great Britain, such as *Zeppelin* and *Bernhard*, which at their heart embodied the logic of the racial war of extermination – those that accomplished their missions were marked for liquidation.

The history of the German foreign intelligence services during the war, similar to other radicalized institutions in the Third Reich, is a history of ideas in action, as Nazi ideology (or components of it) shaped the intelligence services' perceptions of the outside world. Intelligence reports, after all, were not propaganda, but informed explanations for discrete events and equally informed predictions of future developments. Treating the intelligence reports of the Foreign Office, RSHA, *Abwehr*, and *Fremde Heere Ost* as important texts in the intellectual history of Nazism offers valuable insights into the substantial overlap in belief and action between doctrinaire Nazis, the anti-Nazi conservative elite still present to some extent in the *Wehrmacht* officer corps and German civil services in the late 1930s. Historians have long understood the importance of conspiratorial and anti-Semitic narratives as explanatory frameworks for Hitler's personal *Weltanschauung*, or that of his dedicated paladins like Himmler, Heydrich, or Goebbels.³ Examining the reports of the German foreign intelligence services, however, reveals the unclear distinction lines between the amalgamations of older cultural and ethnic prejudices that served as key components of the Nazi world-view and Nazi ideology itself. Diplomatic and military officials who never joined the Nazi Party, and in fact rejected much of Nazism, could still agree that Jews exercised outsized influence on world events or that the Russians in the Red Army were innately inferior to German soldiers because of the cultural and intellectual limitations of the Slavic race. Such ideas

³ Eberhard Jäckel, *Hitler's World View: A Blueprint for Power* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1981); Gerhard Weinberg, *Germany, Hitler, and World War II* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Ian Kershaw, *Hubris: Hitler 1889-1936* (New York: Norton, 2000); Ian Kershaw, *Nemesis: Hitler 1936-1945* (New York: Norton, 2001); Peter Longerich, *Heinrich Himmler: A Life* trans. Jeremy Noakes and Lesley Sharpe (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Robert Gerwarth, *Hitler's Hangman: The Life of Heydrich* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, (2012); Peter Longerich, *Goebbels: A Biography* trans. Jeremy Noakes, Alan Bance, and Lesley Sharpe (New York: Random House 2015).

about foreign national stereotypes, precisely because they existed long before Nazism, survived the demise of Hitler's Empire.

In the context of its foundational mythos and institutional framework RSHA intelligence's insistence that Britain was controlled by a dictatorial Freemason-Jewish-Plutocratic elite, conviction that the Judeo-Bolshevist Soviet Union was an inimical threat to German security, and preoccupation with the Bolshevization of the American working classes is not particularly surprising. Nor is the RSHA's direct participation in the exploitation and murder of Jews and other ethnic minorities as both a means to victory and an end in itself. Yet self-avowedly non-Nazi (and occasionally anti-Nazi) intelligence figures such as military attaché Friedrich von Bötticher, Ambassador Herbert von Dirksen, Counselor Hans Thomsen, and their staffs, drew similar conclusions from their careful observations in Great Britain and the United States. The German General Staff under Franz Halder and its *Fremde Heere Ost* department under Eberhard Kinzel and Reinhard Gehlen also drew on a similar intellectual lineage in concluding that the Soviet Union was a tottering colossus propped up only by an innately inferior Red Army, whose tactics and strategy were dependent entirely on the racial and ethnic inheritance of its soldiers. If this represented the logical outcome of a systematic "politicization of intelligence" under the Nazi dictatorship, its origins lay more in the commonalities of racial and cultural prejudice widespread in the nationalist conservative elite than any direct intervention by Hitler or broad efforts at self-censorship meant to anticipate his decisions.

This is not to succumb to the temptation of painting the entirety of the German intelligence services from 1933 to the 1970s with the broad brush of Nazism as East

German and Soviet propaganda often did, but rather to recognize that an overlapping spectra of anti-British, anti-Russian, anti-American, anti-Semitic, and anti-communist prejudices and stereotypes across the German military and diplomatic services provided a common language and narrative framework for describing world events across an otherwise diverse intelligence bureaucracy. The result was a greater degree of attitudinal uniformity on foreign intelligence matters in the early phases of the war amongst old-hand civil servants, non-Party military officers, and the new generation of Nazi ideologues than was necessarily the case in other sectors of the dictatorship. If the cynical and mendacious East German and Soviet propaganda attacks on the CIA and BND during the Cold War had an element of truth to them, it was only because the foreign intelligence services offered an unusually straightforward vector of continuity for carrying this Nazi-era consensus forward into the post-1945 world, specifically when it came to evaluating the military potential of the Soviet Union.

The fact that these mistaken assessments had at their foundation slightly less exotic irrationalities or a more respectable brand of racism than the *völkisch* “blood and soil” narratives at the heart of Hitler’s Nazism did not diminish their radicalism before 1945 or after. Even the comparatively moderate Gehlen and the martyred Canaris authorized and supported secret operations during their intelligence tenures that, if implemented consistently with their visions, would (in Gehlen’s case quite literally) have set the world aflame in an all-encompassing effort to salvage the Nazi anti-Bolshevist crusade. With the same justification of serving the national interest in mind, *Abwehr* and *Fremde Heere Ost* directly participated in the regime’s ubiquitous criminality in the East, relying on exterminatory “interrogation” programs of captured Red Army soldiers to

further their security agendas, contributing to the racialized conception of the partisan war.

If there are indeed “multiple continuities” in German history that paved the way for a “usable past” in the Federal Republic, then the survival of otherwise politically compromised German intelligence elites after 1945 certainly represents an illiberal one.⁴ If racial anti-Semitism was effectively taboo in respectable political discourse in West Germany after 1945, racialized anti-communism persisted in the reports of many former General Staff and intelligence officers working on behalf of the United States there. In their stringently anti-communist outlook, uncompromising quest for absolute control over their respective intelligence operations and over-reliance on politically compromised wartime compatriots in the service of a renewed anti-communist crusade, figures such as Franz Halder and Reinhard Gehlen were not so much technocrats as slightly more respectable ideologues than those who had preceded them.

⁴ Robert G. Moeller, *War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001).

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