

Dr Craig Luther
Tehachapi CA
(661) 303-8884

**Role of German Killing Squads (*Einsatzgruppen*) and Regular Army in
Genocide along w/ Spontaneous Outbursts of Anti-Jewish Violence by
Local Peoples
(Class Presentation on 12 February 2014 for
Dr Herbert Marcuse at UCSB)**

INTRODUCTION

My decision to seek a Ph.D. in History:

Before we get on to the rather gruesome task at hand, a discussion of the killing squads that followed the German Armies into Russia, I'd like to tell all of you a little about my personal background:

- Grew up in S.F. Bay Area
- B.A. at Claremont McKenna College (1973)
- Music Career: Incident with president of major firm my *turning point!* (Describe anecdote!)
- M.A. SJSU (1976)
- Fulbright to West Germany (1979-80)
- PH.D. UCSB (1987)
- How I came upon my PH.D. dissertation topic (e.g. of roll chance plays in all our lives)

a) Unparalleled Savagery of War in the East:

I'd like to begin by throwing some statistics at you which should make acutely clear to all of you just how savage the war between Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia was between June 1941 and May 1945.

From my "*Barbarossa Unleashed:*"

"In 1898," observed British historian Niall Ferguson in a 2006 article in *Foreign Affairs*, "H.G. Wells wrote *The War of the Worlds*, a novel that imagined the destruction of a great city and the extermination of its inhabitants by ruthless invaders.

The invaders in Wells' story were, of course, Martians. But no aliens were needed to make such devastation a reality. In the decades that followed the book's publication, human beings

repeatedly played the part of the inhuman marauders, devastating city after city in what may justly be regarded as a single hundred-year “war of the world.”

The 20th Century “was the bloodiest era in history.” The First World War resulted in the deaths of nine to 10 million people (millions more if the influenza pandemic of 1918/19 is considered an outcome of the war). In the Second World War, an additional 59 million lives were lost. By one estimate, 16 conflicts throughout the last century claimed more than one million lives; six more resulted in losses from 500,000 to a million; and 14 cost between 250,000 and 500,000 lives. In sum, between 167 and 188 million people were killed over the past century in acts of organized violence, or as many as one out of every 22 deaths during the period.

In the Second World War, more than **4.0 million** German soldiers lost their lives on the eastern front. Irrecoverable Soviet military losses (i.e., those who died due to combat, sickness, or disease; perished in captivity; or went missing) amounted to just under **8.7 million**, while the total number of Soviet citizens (soldiers and civilians) who died during the war is now estimated at **27 to 30 million** or more. Taking the lower estimate of 27 million Soviet dead, and adding to it the German figure of over 4.0 million dead, two stunning facts emerge: a) More than half of all fatal losses between 1939 and 1945 occurred in the Russo-German war; and, b) more than **15 percent** of all deaths attributed to organized violence in the 20th Century took place in just **1418** days of warfare between the German Reich and Soviet Russia.

These astonishing figures amplify the unparalleled savageness of the fighting and genocide, the incalculable suffering, which came to pass along the eastern front in the Second World War. The war was waged by two totalitarian states and was existential in its scope; it was, put simply, total war in its most extreme manifestation. The primary protagonists were tens of millions of common soldiers imbued with ideological and racial hatreds and commonly encouraged to violate the cannon of international law. That such a scrupulously toxic environment was highly conducive to criminal behaviors of all kinds is no surprise.

b) Hitler, his Generals and Jewish Bolshevism:

Some 10 million German soldiers fought in Russia between 1941/44; they fought – whether consciously aware of it or not – to effectuate the genocidal vision of Adolf Hitler and his chief subalterns inside Soviet Russia. Central to Hitler’s thinking, and that of his General Staff, was the *conflation of Jews and Bolsheviks w/ one another* and w/ sources of resistance inside the Soviet Union. They perceived the annihilation of the Jews as not only a goal in itself, but as the key to eradicating the Soviet state and acquiring control

over conquered lands. Historians continue to debate just when Hitler took the decision to eliminate the Jews of the USSR, whether before or during the campaign. My view on this is that the final decision was made sometime in July 1941, when Operation Barbarossa was at a high-water mark, and the destruction of Soviet Russia seemed assured. In any case, the Jews would be the initial targets “for abuse, forced labor, and, ultimately, extermination.” The execution of policies against the Jews was, in the first place, the province of the *SS Einsatzgruppen* (or killing squads) along w/ *police and Waffen-SS* formations. These groups had received authorization from the Army’s leaders to conduct their “special missions” in the Army’s rear areas. No written orders said anything about Jews before the campaign opened, but evidence indicates that at some point in the weeks preceding Barbarossa, Reinhard Heydrich (Chief of the RSHA) briefed the commanders of the *Einsatzgruppen* about true nature of their impending mission inside the Soviet Union.¹

Yet for the Germans to succeed in their task of destroying so-called Jewish Bolshevism, they’d first have to destroy its defender – the Red Army. Here I’d like to draw on a rather fascinating historical analogy, which helps to illustrate the attitude of Hitler’s military elite toward their Russian adversary:

From “*Barbarossa Unleashed*:“

In *The Afghan Campaign: A Novel*, former U.S. Marine Steven Pressfield provocatively recreates Alexander the Great’s invasion of the Afghan kingdoms in the year 330 B.C. The great Persian Empire has fallen and “lies at Alexander’s feet;” Darius, the great Persian leader, is dead. Now Alexander plans to march on “mythical India,” but the road to it lies through Afghanistan, where the 28-year-old conqueror and his army will meet a new and very different foe. In one riveting passage, the fictional Alexander tells a group of replacements to prepare to fight “a different kind of war,” against an enemy unlike any hitherto encountered:

. . . Understand: The actions we take in this campaign are as legitimate as those enacted in any other. This is not a conventional warfare. It is unconventional. And we must fight it in an unconventional way. . .

[The enemy’s] word to us is worthless. He routinely violates truces; he betrays the peace. When we defeat him, he will not accept our dominion. He comes back again and again. He hates us with a passion whose depth is exceeded only by his patience and capacity for suffering. His boys and old men, even his women, fight us as combatants. They do not do this openly, however, but instead present themselves as innocents, even as victims, seeking our aid. When we show compassion, they strike

¹ **Note:** G.P. Megargee, *War of Annihilation*, 67-68.

with stealth. You have all seen what they do to us when they take us alive.

Prior to the start of Operation *Barbarossa*, the propaganda branch of the German Armed Forces High Command (OKW), in collaboration with the Army High Command (OKH), worked out the “Guidelines for the Conduct of Troops in Russia” (*Richtlinien fuer das Verhalten der Truppe in Russland*). These were then passed on to the individual *Wehrmacht* commands on 19 May 1941, but were only to be distributed to the troops on the eve of the invasion (along with Hitler’s order of the day). The guidelines contained several key sentences:

I. 1. *Bolshevism is the mortal enemy [Todfeind] of the National Socialist German people. Germany’s struggle is aimed against that disruptive ideology and its exponents.*

2. That struggle demands ruthless and energetic action against *Bolshevik agitators, guerillas, saboteurs, Jews* and the complete liquidation of any active or passive resistance.

II. 3. Extreme reserve and most alert vigilance are called for towards all members of the *Red Army* – even prisoners – as treacherous methods of fighting are to be expected. The *Asiatic soldiers* of the Red Army in particular are inscrutable, unpredictable, insidious, and unfeeling.

4. After the capture of units the *leaders* are to be *instantly separated* from the other ranks.

Why the parallels are imperfect, the similarity in tone between Pressfield’s Alexander and the guidelines of the German High Command is striking. In both cases, the troops are informed that their enemy is unconventional, even alien – a fanatic, who will strike without mercy, employing methods which are ruthless, insidious, and underhanded.² In Alexander’s speech the implication is that his men must meet fire with fire and employ equally uncompromising tactics. In the *Barbarossa* guidelines the objective is to indoctrinate the troops and ensure implementation of key directives, such as the Commissar Order of 6 June 1941 which, in crass violation of international law, authorized the summary extrajudicial execution of captured Soviet political officers. Indeed, the *Richtlinien* for the troops, by conflating “Bolshevik agitators, guerillas, saboteurs, [and] Jews,” must have had “spectacular results for mishandling of prisoners, and for eliminating and alienating many people who might well otherwise have

² **Note:** For example, German High Command absolutely convinced the Soviets would use chemical – even biological – weapons against them, and the soldiers were trained before the start of “*Barbarossa*” to address that eventuality.

espoused the German cause. And there were many cases where the massacre of Jews was reported as ‘anti-partisan operations.’”

Orders such as the “Guidelines for the Conduct of Troops in Russia,” the Commissar Order, and the Decree on Military Justice, all drafted and promulgated by German military authorities in the weeks before the start of *Barbarossa*, reflect just how deeply the *Wehrmacht*, by 1941, had burrowed into the ideology and aspirations of the National Socialist state. Far from standing apart from – or above – the *NS Staat*, the German armed forces were deeply embedded in the political “culture” of Hitler’s Third Reich, and shared, or were at least sympathetic to, its most basic objectives. Despite sporadic resistance, the synchronization (*Gleichschaltung*) of the German military with National Socialism had begun immediately after Hitler’s seizure of power in 1933, with *Reichswehr* Minister General Werner von Blomberg promising his “Fuehrer” that Germany’s soldiers would not only be trained to fight, but be educated to be conscious of their special racial characteristics (*Volkstum*). In the years which followed, the Supreme Command (OKW/OKH) shaped the *Wehrmacht* into a powerful instrument, and a “compliant tool,” of Hitler’s imperialist and genocidal policies, among other things engulfing its soldiers in a veritable flood of propaganda depicting the “brutish [Russian] enemy” and the “Russian *Untermensch*.”

THE EINSATZGRUPPEN

As noted, the *Einsatzgruppen* were the professional killing squads; they were first deployed in Poland in 1939 and then in the Soviet Union, beginning in late June 1941, by Himmler’s SS.

Four *Einsatzgruppen* (“A,” “B,” “C,” and “D”), created from within the Security Police and the SD, were set up prior to the German attack on the Soviet Union. Each was commanded by an officer from the Reich Security Main Office, a major component of Himmler’s SS empire, and composed of several commando units; these in, turn, were led chiefly by professional SS and Gestapo officers. The killing squads, or action groups, numbered between 500 and 1000 men apiece, their personnel including SS soldiers, members of the SD, Gestapo, police and local volunteers. (By comparison, a full-strength German infantry battalion numbered 700-800 men.) Each of the groups was attached to an army corps and acted in collaboration with it. Assigned to the sector of Army Group Center was *Einsatzgruppe B*, initially comprising **655** men and commanded by SS-*Brigadefuehrer* (Brig.-Gen.) Arthur Nebe. All told, these four killing squads amounted to about **3000** men. (*Barbarossa Unleashed*)

At the start of the campaign,, the *Einsatzgruppen* were tasked only w/ killing able-bodied Jewish men. However, in **Aug 41**, Himmler gave the order for the wholesale slaughter of

entire Jewish communities to commence - and women, parents and children, old and young, the sick and the healthy. Illustrative of the change in policy was the shooting of **30,000** Jews at Babi Yar, a ravine outside Kiev, at the end of **Sep 41**.³ On the central part of the front, which I address in my book “Barbarossa Unleashed,” such mass killings were also underway by September/October 1941.

As one Soviet scholar explains, the reason for this transition from selective killing of Jewish males to the mass murder of all Jews has been the subject of extensive discussion among historians of the Holocaust. It seems to have been connected to the *escalation of German anti-partisan tactics*. . . There was an intimate connection between the *Wehrmacht’s* anti-partisan tactics and the anti-Jewish campaign of the SS. All Jews were stigmatized as communists and partisans, and all partisans branded as Jews. “*The Jew is a partisan. The partisan is a Jew.*” “A Jew is a Bolshevik is a partisan.” These were the German slogans that served the dual purpose of rationalizing the mass murder of Soviet Jews and legitimizing the harsh and indiscriminate anti-partisan measures. . .⁴ From a more “macro” perspective, I’d also posit that the radicalization of the killing actions paralleled the growing radicalization of the war in general – indeed, by the end of the summer of 1941, it was clear to Hitler and his High Command that the Soviet nut was going to be much, much more difficult to crack than they had anticipated!

If Operation Barbarossa would end in failure, the murderous mission of the *Einsatzgruppen* would not: Between June 1941 and early 1943, with the support of the regular German Army, and local, indigenous killing squads, they would eliminate some **1.5** million men, women and children – mostly by shooting them into *killing pits*, as at **Babi Yar** in the Ukraine – *massive crimes that have been underestimated over overlooked by Holocaust historians*. . .

COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE KILLING SQUADS AND THE WEHR- MACHT – ARMY GROUP CENTER AS CASE STUDY

The advance of Army Group Center during the initial weeks of the campaign took it – and, in its wake, *Einsatzgruppe B* – through the former Pale of Settlement (*Cherta postayannoi yevreskoy osedlosti*), the region of Czarist Russia where residence of Jews was legally authorized. In **1897**, about **4.9** million Jews (**94** percent of the total Jewish population of Russia) had resided in the settlement area which, at the turn of the century, covered ca. one million square kilometers (**386,000** square miles) from the Baltic to the Black Sea, including Belorussian lands incorporated into the Pale upon their annexation

³ **Note:** Proximate cause of this notorious murder action was the massive explosions caused by delayed-action bombs the Russians had left behind in Kiev, captured by the Germans on **19 Sep 41**. The bombs destroyed German military HQs, and other sites, and went off for several days; the Russians had stored crates of *Molotov cocktails* in the upper stories of buildings to defend the city and left them behind when they abandoned it; the explosions shattered the glass bottles and spilled jellied gasoline across the floors that ignited and poured down stairwells to fuel raging fires. Many streets were thus set ablaze and, as one Soviet observer recalled, “It seemed as though the whole city was being blown up.” (See, *R. Rhodes, Masters of Death*, 170-79, for detailed account of German action at **Babi Yar**.)

⁴ **Note:** *G. Roberts, Stalin’s Wars*, 87.

by the Czars. Following the revolution of February **1917**, the provisional government abolished the settlement area, and the Jews who remained there led a simple, poor existence. In **June 1941**, the Jews of Belorussia numbered about **850,000** (including those belonging to the eastern portions of Poland occupied by the USSR in September 1939), while the borders of the former Pale in the operational area of Bock's army group stretched beyond Vitebsk, Mogilev, and Gomel. The Jews of this area, having no access to foreign newspapers and denied vital information by the Soviet government (the result of its appeasement of Nazi Germany in the years before 1941), were poorly informed about the anti-Semitic policies of the Third Reich. Many, in fact, recalling the German occupation during World War I, at first greeted the Nazi invaders as liberators, a tragic behavior which only facilitated their elimination.

During the course of its operations, *Einsatzgruppe B* appears to have enjoyed – at least initially – a smooth working relationship with the formations of Army Group Center, SS-*Brigadefuehrer* Nebe reporting “no difficulties” with any of the commanders of the armies or the panzer groups. On multiple occasions, in fact, small detachments from Nebe's group were attached to front line combat units, including units within **2 Panzer Group's** (Guderian's) area of operations. Support provided by the *Wehrmacht* – often by rear area commands, such as Rear Area, Army Group Center – included the registration, and resettlement of Jews; the rounding up and assembly of Jews prior to their execution; the delivery of supplies, such as ammunition; and even the provision of combat engineers to help with the mass graves.

Gradually, as the summer of 1941 dragged on and the struggle intensified, with no end in sight, German generals in the east began to consider the mass killings of Communists, Jews and others behind the front a key military objective. The conflation of the Russian Jew with the growing partisan threat led, in many cases, to an increased understanding of the escalation of genocidal actions against the Jews. On **22 September 1941**, for example, **Ninth Army** headquarters issued an order, stating that, “the struggle against Bolshevism demands most of all ruthless and vigorous action against the Jews, the principal agents of Bolshevism.” The entire Jewish population, the order went on, was “openly or secretly anti-German [*deutschfeindlich*] in its outlook.” The order, which justified practically any action taken against Jews, was distributed by the headquarters of the forwardmost combat units to their troops on the eve of, and during, Operation “Typhoon,” the advance on Moscow.

Given these attitudes, it is understandable that units of the *Wehrmacht* were also involved in the killing actions. Among the worst offenders were the Secret Field Police (*Geheime Feldpolizei*) and the second-line security divisions patrolling the vast spaces of the occupied interior; conversely, participation in such actions by regular combat units was much less common. In one instance, **354 Infantry Regiment** collaborated in the round up and mass shooting of Jews in Minsk, which began on **7 July 1941**. The regiment belonged to **286 Security Division**, one of three such divisions active at this time behind the front of Army Group Center; thus, it was not a front-line formation of the *Ostheer*. On **6 October 1941**, the regiment massacred about **1000** more Jews in the village of Krupka,

100 kilometers from Minsk; an activity followed by the shooting of a similarly large number of Jews in Kholoponichi several days later.

The mass killings by *Einsatzgruppe B* often took place in the presence of German troops, and were photographed (and, occasionally, even filmed) by them. A particularly gruesome massacre occurred on **14 August 1941**, in Vitebsk, where five SD men shot a large contingent of Jews with industry-like precision (*am laufenden Band*) just three kilometers outside the headquarters of General Adolf Strauss, Commander, Ninth Army. Other actions, in **July/August 1941**, took place in the vicinity of Bock's headquarters at Borisov. Despite small signs of discomfort on the part of the *Generalitaet* – and despite a number of protests after the killings began to engulf women and children as well – no attempt was made to put a halt to the murderous activity. On the contrary, from the start of the campaign, Army Group Center gave the killing units great freedom of action.

As for Field Marshal von Bock, he avoided taking a clear position on the systematic murder of Jews, and certainly did not intervene to stop it; only once, in **November 1941**, did he register a protest – when he learned that several trains from Germany, carrying Jews, were to be dispatched to the rear area of his army group, a move which threatened to tie up trains desperately needed for bringing supplies to the front and, hence, to interfere with military operations.⁵ Bock, of course, had no illusions about *why* the Jews were to be sent there. In his harsh assessment of the field marshal, German historian Johannes Huerter writes:

The highest ranking officers . . . reacted at best defensively, helplessly, and with resignation to the start of systematic genocide in their command area. Among the Army leadership, this was the case for Brauchitsch and Halder, who remained reluctant to get mixed up in these political and ideological matters. And among the troop leadership, that also applied to the commander-in-chief of Army Group Center and his chief-of-staff. . .

From [Bock's] entire conduct during this campaign, it is only possible to presume that, in the face of the “world-historical task” of defeating the Soviet arch-enemy, this highest ranking troop commander viewed the increasingly extreme persecution of the Jews as, at most, an admittedly very unpleasant, but unalterable marginal issue.

As it was, through mid-**November 1941**, *Einsatzgruppe B* reported the liquidation of **45,467** Jews within its area of operations (Belorussia). Altogether, the four groups were responsible for murdering more than *half a million Jews* in the first wave of killings by the end of 1941.

⁵ **Note:** Here mention the cabal of General Staff officers attached to Army Group Center, who were part of the Anti-Hitler Resistance. Point out that their growing awareness of the genocidal actions against the Jews compelled them to redouble their resistance to Hitler, his Reich, and all it stood for. They undertook several failed attempts to assassinate the Fuehrer. (Anecdote: Philipp Freiherr von Boeselager. The last surviving member of the Resistance who passed away just a few years ago.)

The evidence of Army Group Center's deep complicity in the genocidal acts of the SS commandos and police units is indisputable; as is the record of the murderous behavior of its own security detachments and *Geheime Feldpolizei*. What also seems apparent, however, is ***that only a small fraction of the army group's front-line soldiers could ever have taken part in these crimes***, willingly or otherwise. In the first place, as noted above, *Einsatzgruppe B* began the campaign with a roster of only **655** men, while both the police battalions and Army security divisions were limited in number. The army group, on the other hand, began *Barbarossa* with more than **1.3** million soldiers under its command; realistically, few of them would have ever had an opportunity to come into contact with, much less collaborate with, the killing units; and simply serving in the *Wehrmacht*, as some contemporary observers would have us believe, is not *prima facie* evidence of being a war criminal. Also exculpatory is the fact that most of the killing fields were located far behind the forward edge of battle, where the overwhelming majority of the *Landser* were fully absorbed in their legitimate combat duties. Such arguments are in no way meant to explain away the very real crimes committed by soldiers of Army Group Center (or by the *Ostheer* in general); rather, they serve to illustrate that the number of offenders was probably quite small, at least in terms of percentages.

COLLABORATION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES (POLES, UKRAINIANS, BALTS) W/ GERMAN KILLING SQUADS:

-- **23.-25.6.41** [Kaunas, Lithuania]: In his book, "*Masters of Death. The SS-Einsatzgruppen and the Invention of the Holocaust*," author Richard Rhodes describes in chilling detail what occurred after the first German troops marched into Kaunas, Lithuania: In wake of German assault, the *Einsatzgruppen* followed. Bristling w/ ***Mausers and MPis*** in their trucks and cars, they fanned out across Poland northeastward toward the Latvian port city of Riga on the Baltic and the old Lithuanian cities of Kaunas & Vilnius, eastward into, eastward into Byelorussia toward Minsk on the post road to Moscow, southeastward toward Rovno & Lvov, Tarnopol & Kamenets-Podolsky in the western Ukraine. When forward units of the German Army occupied Kaunas in central Lithuania on **23 Jun 41**, a small advance detachment of *Einsatzgruppe A* entered the city w/ them and set to work at once organizing "*spontaneous*" attacks against the Jews. In a square in the center of the town, locals beat the Jews to death w/ ***iron bars***. Many of the killings were carried out by recently released *Lithuanian convicts*. The SS had released violent criminals from prison and put them to work murdering Jewish victims to *make the "pogrom" look spontaneous*. The SS advance detachment also set about the work of *organizing Lithuanian irregulars* – hundreds of the most reliable men were organized into an *auxiliary police force*. On night of **25 Jun 41**, they bombed or set fire to several Kaunas synagogues and burned down **60** houses in the Jewish quarter; they also began to round up, plunder, and kill Jews – **1500** victims on the night of **25 Jun 41**. **Crux:** In period of just several days, *Lithuanian irregulars* murdered several thousand Jews. (R. Rhodes, *Masters of Death*, 38-43)⁶

⁶ **Note:** By his own admission, *Stahlecker's Einsatzgruppe A* organized the early Lithuanian pogroms. ***Why were the locals in the western territories of the Soviet Union so willing to do the SS's dirty work?*** "Personal aggrandizement and enrichment, long-standing anti-Semitism, private scores to settle, jealousy

Farther south, *Einsatzgruppe C* was able to start some pogroms in areas of Galicja where Poles and Ukrainians dominated. All told, thousands of Jews and others fell victim to German-inspired pogroms. On whole, however, Germans disappointed w/ many local citizens' unwillingness to attack their Jewish neighbors.⁷

In his memoirs, a German General Staff officer assigned to **251 ID** noted the following on **2 Jul 41**:

In Kowno haben litauische Aktivisten eine grosse Zahl Juden zusammengetrieben, mit Stangen tot geschlagen u. dann *bei Musik auf den toten Leibern getanzt*. Alsdann wurden die Toten weggeschafft, neue Juden herbeigetrieben u. das Spiel wiederholte sich!⁸

These kinds of “spontaneous” pogroms were witnessed in many other cities and towns in the Baltic states, eastern Poland, and western Ukraine.

Jul 41: About the same time, GFM Ritter v. Leeb, C-in-C of Army Group North, in *his* diary, was expressing shock at the massacres (pogroms) which broke out among the local Lithuanian inhabitants in the wake of the German invasion in June 1941; and, if I recall correctly, he intervened to put a stop to them. Field Marshal von Leeb was no Nazi,⁹ but I imagine his primary concern in doing so – that is, putting a stop to or at least tamping down such murderous activity – was his clearly realistic fear that it might compromise the discipline of his troops.

Mid-Jul 41: As scale of murderous task which confronted them became clearer, the Germans *augmented their killing forces*. In mid-**Jul 41** eleven **Order Police Battalions** and other **SS units** deployed to the east on so-called “*cleansing operations*,” the Germans also *recruited thousands of local auxiliaries* from the same sorts of groups that had carried out the massacre in Kaunas. Together w/ the *Einsatzgruppen*, in the opening weeks of the war they killed tens of thousands of Jews, Soviet officials, Communist sympathizers, criminals, the handicapped, POWs, stragglers, hostages, and anyone who

and currying favor for national independence (a forlorn hope) were primary reasons, but ‘*the more recent terror exerted by the Communists*’ was also a significant factor, esp. in Lithuania and the Ukraine, where the SS’s pogrom efforts were most successful. ‘When Lithuanian and Latvian forces were attached to the execution units,’ *Stahlecker* wrote, ‘the first to be chosen were those who had had members of their families and relatives *killed or deported by the Russians*.’ The deportations in particular had *poisoned Jewish-Gentile relations* in Lithuania. . . One week before *Barbarossa*, the **NKVD** had deported to the Russian gulag some **35,000** Lithuanian citizens; slightly more than half of the deportees were ethnic Lithuanians, the other half Jews and Poles, yet Lithuanian nationalists had *blamed the deportations on the “Bolshevik” Jews*.’ (R. Rhodes, 45-46)

⁷ Note: G.P. Megargee, *War of Annihilation*, 68.

⁸ Note: There had been pogroms in Kaunas (Kowno) from **25.-29.6.41**. (f.n. 190, 121)

⁹ Note: Hitler found him an “incorrigible anti-Nazi” and he was one of 16 German generals forced into retirement in **Jan 38**. However, he was restored to service during the Czech crisis later that year. *Oxford Guide to WWII*.

offered resistance to German rule. The perpetrators developed a *thoroughly euphemistic system* for describing the killings and their victims.¹⁰

CONCLUSION AND FINAL THOUGHTS

As I noted earlier, by late summer 1941, the killing process had become more all-embracing, culminating in the slaughter of the entire Jewish populations of villages and towns targeted by the *Einsatzgruppen*.

By this time (**Sep 41**), the SS was developing the *carbon monoxide poisoning techniques* w/ which they would kill hundreds of thousands of Jews and other victims in the east, building on the Nazis' earlier experience in killing handicapped Germans. In mid-**Sep 41**, a team in Mogilev field-tested a gas chamber that used car exhaust; the subjects were *mentally ill Russians*. From those experiments the killers developed *mobile gas vans*, which the *Einsatzgruppen* soon put to use. As historian Geoffrey Megargee has lamented: "One looks almost in vain for any protest to these developments from the Army's upper echelons."¹¹

Indeed, as I noted at the beginning of my talk, with the Army's often active support, the German *Einsatzgruppen* – supported by various local killing squads – eliminated some **1.5 million** human beings, mostly Jews, between 22 June 1941 and the beginning of 1943. Of course, the killing fields in the east were only the beginning of the Holocaust; by December 1941, the Germans had begun to experiment in occupied Poland with the killing agent Zyklon-B,¹² which would be used in the gas chambers of Auschwitz-Birkenau and other death camps in Poland to kill millions of Jews and other putative enemies of the state.

To sum things up, I've tried to address several key topics: the German killing squads, their mission and murderous accomplishments, the support they received from the regular German Army, and the support they received from local, indigenous folks in regions first occupied by the Germans in the summer of 1941. Maybe you've learned something new from my words, perhaps you haven't. Yet even more important than the Holocaust, which, of course, is history, and cannot be altered or undone – though certainly our *memory* of it can be, and is - is the "state of play," if you will, of Jewish peoples throughout the world today. And about this I can only say that the situation is really quite depressing.

Without going into too much detail just a few thoughts here:

Top Nazi Hunter: Eastern Europe Rewrote the Holocaust

¹⁰ **Note:** G.P. Megargee, *War of Annihilation*, 69.

¹¹ **Note:** G.P. Megargee, *War of Annihilation*, 94-95.

¹² **Note:** Zyklon B was the trade name for a cyanide-based pesticide invented in Germany in the early 1920s.

Eastern Europe minimizes Holocaust and equates it with Communist 'genocide,' says Dr. Zuroff - and Israel must act.

By Benny Toker, Ari Yashar

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Dr. Efraim Zuroff, the head Nazi hunter at the *Simon Wiesenthal Center*, told *Arutz Sheva* on Tuesday in time for International Holocaust Memorial Day that the ***battle over the Holocaust lives on - and is being waged on the field of public memory.***

According to Zuroff, aside from the widespread scourge of Holocaust denial, ***a new phenomenon has reared its head recently in eastern Europe, where there are attempts to minimize the genocidal horrors committed against the Jewish people and revise history.***

"This phenomenon should worry the state of Israel and the Foreign Ministry," emphasized Zuroff. "In post-Communist eastern Europe, they're trying to play down the crimes of the Nazi cooperators and claim that the crimes of the Communists were just as bad, and that both of them committed genocide."

This is simply one recent example of how certain people, or groups, are trying to minimize – even blot out – the historical reality of an event which, in my view, remains utterly unique. And why utterly unique? I believe it was the historian Lucy Davidowicz who claimed that what made the Holocaust a uniquely murderous phenomenon was that it virtually wiped out the *biological basis* of European Jewry.¹³ One example: Of the **3.2** million Jews who lived in Poland in 1939, **2.9** million of them were dead by the end of 1944.

But, again, what about the “state of play” as it exists today. Well, the terrible truth is that the persecution of Jews throughout the world is continuing and even accelerating in much of the world – in the Middle East, and Europe, for example. You are, of course, aware of the terrible events which recently transpired in France, involving the satirical journal Charlie Hebdo and a Jewish delicatessen. Simply put, the immigration of many millions of Muslims into Europe – and in my view, this immigration is more akin to a kind of ***colonization*** of Europe – is making life much more difficult for Europe’s Jews. The head of BBC Television, a man named ***Cohen***, recently said that he’s never felt so afraid to be a Jew in England as in last 12 months. In France, in recent years, 100,000 Jews have left the country, fully 20% of France’s Jewish population. Imagine, if you will, if Black Americans suddenly felt so afraid for their well-being – and also were becoming convinced that our government really wouldn’t protect them – that 20% had emigrated from the U.S. in just a few years time?

To end, I’d like to leave you w/ some recent thoughts by the brilliant conservative thinker & Pulitzer Prize winner, Charles Krauthammer, himself a Jew; if you are unfamiliar w/ this man, and his thinking, I would urge you all to change that. Speaking on 27 January,

¹³ **Note:** Her book, *The War against the Jews*, 1975.

on the 70th Anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, he said, and I'm directly quoting his comments here:

Let's understand, this resurgence of anti-Semitism in Europe – eventually the Jews will leave. The pressure of the anti-Semitism will become intolerable. It'll be empty of Jews ultimately. But the threat to Jewish life, the threat to the endurance of Jews as a people is not from Europe. That dead is done. The Holocaust happened. European Jews were wiped out. The threat today, and it is a real threat . . . is from its enemies in the Middle East.

Israel is now since the first time since Jesus not just the only Jewish state on the planet anywhere. And it is now threatened by a regime in Iran that openly says it wants to eradicate it. What it took Hitler seven years to do can now be done in seven hours in one day w/ nuclear weapons and we are talking [and by “we” Krauthammer means the U.S. government, the Obama Administration] as if we're ready to live w/ an Iranian state that has [nuclear weapons], and that, I think, is the threat, the new Auschwitz that the Jews as a people are looking at.

So let me leave you with a few thoughts to contemplate:

Just what do we do w/ the Jews now? Where might we send them this time? Where are the voices being raised that say, “Never Again!”?

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Notes

a) “Good” Germans & “Bad” Germans: Example of 6 ID and “*Pan Pankowski*.” Shortly after invasion (4.7.41), in Eastern Poland, a Polish national, bent on revenge for real or imaginary crimes against his country, had taken control of a local town; together w/ his group of vigilantes they had herded hundreds of the townspeople onto a meadow and presented them, almost as a gift, to the Germans. These people, so said *Pan Pankowski*, were the dregs of the earth – criminals, robbers murderers, Jews, Bolsheviks – and they all needed to summarily executed he said. He took out a picture of Adolf Hitler, and proclaimed his loyalty to Fuehrer and Germany. This incident was witnessed by Dr Heinrich Haape; soon other German officers had learned of the situation and quickly intervened. The terrified people – herded together, crying and afraid – were not killed. Rather, the Germans provided them w/ official slips of paper offering them safe passage.

b) Churchill & Summer of 1941: British intelligence – via wireless intercepts / ULTRA – learns of the mass killings of Jews in Russia; information is passed on to Churchill; he would place a red ring around the numbers of dead in each report.

c) Jewish escapees from Auschwitz reach England in 1942; they bring w/ them blueprints of the death camp, railway lines, etc. Still no effort was ever undertaken by the Anglo-American air forces to bomb the camp, or simply to dramatically slow down its operations by destroying the rail lines leading in to the camp.

d) Roosevelt acutely aware of the Holocaust by 1942; but did nothing. Why did the Western powers refuse to act?

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